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An Overview of Research on Chinese Commentaries of the *Lotus Sūtra*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. *Chinese Buddhism and Sūtra Commentaries*

Buddhist texts began to be translated into Chinese around the mid-second century A.D., and as a result it became possible for the Chinese to study Buddhism through the medium of the Chinese language. The Buddhist canon may be broadly divided into scriptures (*sūtra*), treatises (*abhidharma*) and precepts (*vinaya*), and as the study of Buddhism gradually advanced, commentaries began to be composed on works belonging to each of these three divisions. There already existed in China a long tradition of commentarial writings on the Confucian classics, and this tradition may have stimulated the composition of commentaries on Buddhist texts. This commentarial literature, which flourished especially from the Northern and Southern dynasties (Nanpeichao 南北朝) period through the Sui 隋 and T'ang 唐 dynasties, was such that it even surpassed in both quantity and quality commentaries on the Confucian classics produced during the same period.

Among Buddhist texts, the *sūtras* were the most suited to the study of Śākya-muni's thought, and so the greatest energy was devoted to composing commentaries on the *sūtras*. In addition, there was also a strong tendency, probably influenced by the above-mentioned native Chinese commentarial tradition, for Chinese Buddhists to give expression to their thought while adhering to the format of a scriptural commentary rather than by composing an independent work.

For example, in the case of Hui-yüan 慧遠 (523–592) of Ching-ying-ssü 淨影寺, T'ien-t'ai 天台大師智顛 (538–597) and Chia-hsiang 嘉祥大師吉藏 (549–623), known as the "three great Dharma-masters of the Sui," commentaries on the *sūtras* account for a considerable proportion of their writings. In the case of Chi-tsang 吉藏 we find that, among the twenty-five works that he wrote, eighteen were commentaries on the following eleven Mahāyāna *sūtras*: *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra*, *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanāda-sūtra*, *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama-sūtra*, *Larger Sukhāvativyūha*, *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* 觀無量壽經,

Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā, *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*, *Jên-wang pan-jo ching* 仁王般若經, *Saddharmaṣuṇḍarīka-sūtra* and the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*. A further feature characteristic of the period up until the Sui dynasty was that, as in the case of these "three great Dharma-masters," a single author would write commentaries on many different *sūtras*. In other words, one may perceive a stance on the part of the commentators such that, rather than selecting one particular *sūtra*, they would approach in an impartial fashion the *sūtras* representative of Mahāyāna Buddhism, such as those dealt with by Chi-tsang.

As may be inferred from the above, there exist in China a large number of commentaries on the *sūtras*. It is thus not unusual for there to exist several commentaries on the same *sūtra*, and tracing changes in the manner in which a particular *sūtra* was interpreted in China becomes a topic for research. The *Saddharmaṣuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, or *Lotus Sūtra*, is a typical example of such a *sūtra*.

2. Chinese Commentaries on the Lotus Sūtra

It goes without saying that the *Lotus Sūtra* has been widely revered in India, China and Japan as a *sūtra* representative of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and in China it was translated as the *Chêng-fa-hua ching* 正法華經 (Sūtra of the Flower of the True Dharma) in 286 by Chu Fa-hu 竺法護 (Dharmarakṣa; born ca. 230, died at age of 78). But because his translation was difficult to comprehend and, more importantly, because the study of Buddhism was at the time centered on Prajñāpāramitā doctrine, it may be said of this translation of the *Lotus Sūtra* that it did not attract the attention of Buddhist circles to any great extent. But when it was subsequently translated anew by Chiu-mo-lo-shih 鳩摩羅什 (Kumārajīva; 344–413 or 350–409) in 406 as the *Miao-fa lien-hua ching* 妙法蓮華經 (Sūtra of the Lotus Blossom of the Wondrous Dharma), it finally moved into the limelight, as it were, and came to be widely studied.

The oldest extant Chinese commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra* is the *Miao-fa lien-hua ching shu* 妙法蓮華經疏 (Commentary on the Sūtra of the Lotus Blossom of the Wondrous Dharma) by Chu Tao-shêng 竺道生 (ca. 355–434). Tao-shêng studied under Kumārajīva, and he was highly appraised for his original and penetrating understanding of Buddhism on account of his views supporting the attainment of Buddhahood by *icchantika* (*i-ch'an-t'i* 一闍提) and sudden enlightenment (*tun-wu* 頓悟). The version of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* in 6 fascicles introduced to China by Fa-hsien 法顯 (*Ta-pan-ni-yüan ching* 大般泥洹經) expressed a negative attitude towards the attainment of Buddhahood by the lowly class of people called *icchantika*, but Tao-shêng, in spite of being criticized for going against the purport of the *sūtra*, nevertheless maintained in anticipation of the thought of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* in 40 fascicles translated by T'an-wu-ch'ên 曇無讖 (*Ta-pan-nieh-p'an ching* 大般涅槃經) that the *icchantika* was also endowed with Buddha-nature and would eventually attain Buddhahood; fur-

thermore, asserting that Buddhist truth was indivisible and unitary, he also criticized the theory of gradual enlightenment (*chien-wu* 漸悟), according to which this truth was realized in partial and gradual stages, and he maintained that in regard to enlightenment it was only a question of whether one was enlightened or not.

Next there appeared the *Fa-hua i-chi* 法華義記 (Commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*) by Fa-yün 法雲 (467–529) of Kuang-chai-ssü 光宅寺, which was however not actually written by Fa-yün, but recorded by one of his disciples. Fa-yün was one of the “three great Dharma-masters of Liang 梁,” along with Chih-tsang 智藏 (458–522) and Sêng-min 僧旻 (467–527), and his exegesis of the *Lotus Sūtra* was held in high regard throughout the Northern and Southern dynasties period (i.e., from the era of contention in the early fifth century between the Sung 宋 dynasty [420–479] in Chiang-nan 江南 in the south and the Northern Wei 北魏 dynasty that unified northern China until the reunification of the Northern and Southern dynasties by Emperor Wên 文帝 of the Sui dynasty in 589). Fa-yün’s eminence was such that when interpreting the term ‘wondrous Dharma’ (*miao-fa* 妙法) in his *Fa-hua hsüan-i* 法華玄義 (Profound Meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra*), Chih-i wrote, “of all the past and present interpretations, that of [Fa-yün of] Kuang-chai [-ssü] is generally considered to be the best” (Taishō Ed., Vol. 33, p. 691c), and, treating Fa-yün’s interpretation as representative of earlier interpretations, made him the target of his criticism.

As for Chih-i himself, there is ascribed to him, in addition to the above *Fa-hua hsüan-i*, an annotated commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra* entitled *Fa-hua wên-chü* 法華文句 (Textual Commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*), but neither of these two works was in fact written by Chih-i, and they are said to be based on notes of Chih-i’s lectures taken by his disciple Chang-an Ta-shih Kuan-ting 章安大師灌頂 (561–632), who later edited his notes and thus brought these two works to completion. As will be discussed below, an epoch-making study of their compilation has been made by Hirai Shun’ei ((10)).

Chi-tsang, who is known for having completed the formulation of the doctrines of the San-lun 三論 or “Three Treatises” school (which attached greatest importance to Nāgārjuna’s *Madhyamaka-śāstra* and *Dvādaśamukha-śāstra* and the *Śataka-śāstra* by his disciple Āryadeva), was the most prolific of the commentators on the *Lotus Sūtra*, writing the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* 法華玄論 (Treatise on the Profundity of the *Lotus Sūtra*), *Fa-hua i-shu* 法華義疏 (Commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*), *Fa-hua yu-i* 法華遊意 (Elucidation of the *Lotus Sūtra*) and *Fa-hua t’ung-lüeh* 法華統略 (Synopsis of the *Lotus Sūtra*).

Lastly, Tz’ü-ên Ta-shih Chi 慈恩大師基 (632–682) of the Fa-hsiang 法相 school composed the *Fa-hua hsüan-tsan* 法華玄贊 (Eulogy on the Profundity of the *Lotus Sūtra*).

The above figures were all Buddhists of renown in the history of Chinese Bud-

dhism, and they each engaged in the study of the *Lotus Sūtra* from their respective religious and scholastic standpoints.

II. RESEARCH HISTORY

In the following I shall present a survey of the research that has been undertaken hitherto on the representative commentaries of the *Lotus Sūtra* alluded to in the foregoing section. I shall, however, take up for consideration only studies that have been published in book form.

(1) Yamakawa Chiō 山川智応, *Hokke shisōshijō no Nichiren shōnin* 法華思想史上の日蓮聖人 (Saint Nichiren in the history of *Lotus* thought). Tokyo: Shinchōsha 新潮社, 1934 (repr. Tokyo: Jōmyō Zenshū Kankōkai 淨妙全集刊行会, 1978).

The aim of this work is to determine Nichiren's position in the history of *Lotus* (or *Lotus Sūtra*-oriented) thought and to examine his own thought and religion, and in order to accomplish the former of these two objectives the author examines the thought associated with the *Lotus Sūtra* in India and China. That which concerns us here is Part 1, Section 3, dealing with *Lotus Sūtra* thought in China. The contents of this section are as follows:

Chapter 1: The Period Prior to the Establishment of Orthodox *Lotus* Thought

1. The Views of Chu Fa-hu and His Disciples on the *Lotus Sūtra*
2. The Views of Chiu-mo-lo-shih and His Disciples on the *Lotus Sūtra*
3. The Views of Fa-yün of Kuang-chai-ssü on the *Lotus Sūtra*
4. The Views of Chia-hsiang Ta-shih Chi-tsang on the *Lotus Sūtra*

Chapter 2: The Establishment of Orthodox *Lotus* Thought

1. The Views of T'ien-t'ai Ta-shih Chih-i on the *Lotus Sūtra*
2. The Views of Miao-lê Ta-shih Chan-jan 妙樂大師湛然 on the *Lotus Sūtra*
3. The Views of Ssü-ming Tsun-chê Chih-li 四明尊者知礼 on the *Lotus Sūtra*

Chapter 3: The Emergence of Subsidiary *Lotus* Thought

1. The Views of Tz'ü-ên Ta-shih K'uei-chi 慈恩大師窺基 on the *Lotus Sūtra*
2. The Views of Hsien-shou Ta-shih Fa-tsang 賢首大師法藏 and Ch'ing-liang Ta-shih Ch'êng-kuan 清涼大師澄觀 on the *Lotus Sūtra*
3. The Views of San-tsang Shan-wu-wei 三藏善無畏 and Ta-kuang-chih San-tsang Pu-k'ung 大広智三蔵不空 on the *Lotus Sūtra*

As is evident from the the above table of contents, Yamakawa regarded the views of Chih-i and his successors as representing to orthodox interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*, while the views of people such as Tao-shêng, Fa-yün and Chi-

tsang were considered to belong to the "period prior to the establishment of orthodox *Lotus* thought," and interpretations differing from that of Chih-i, such as those of Chi of the Fa-hsiang school, Fa-tsang and Ch'êng-kuan of the Hua-yen 華嚴 school, and Shan-wu-wei (Śubhakarasiṃha) and Pu-k'ung (Amoghavajra), both known as translators of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures, are dealt with collectively as "subsidiary *Lotus* thought." One distinctive feature of the method adopted by Yamakawa in treating of the views of Chinese Buddhists on the *Lotus Sūtra* was to examine their respective interpretations of important doctrinal points expounded in each of the twenty-eight chapters of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

Yamakawa must be given credit for his achievement in having surveyed for the first time the various interpretations of the *Lotus Sūtra* found in China. In addition, there is still much that merits our attention today in his observations on these diverse interpretations of the *Lotus Sūtra* and in his understanding of individual thinkers. But his view that Chih-i's interpretation represented the orthodox interpretation, as a result of which he set less value on other interpretations, was not necessarily based on an objective comparison of Chih-i and the other commentators, and there is no denying the impression that his comments do at times tend towards the extreme. In particular, given that it has now been demonstrated by Hirai Shun'ei (see (10) below) that there is considerable evidence of the influence of Chi-tsang's commentaries in the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* and *Fa-hua wên-chü* compiled by Kuan-ting, Yamakawa's examination of Chi-tsang is outdated when considered in the light of the current state of research. Furthermore, since he deals with the views of a considerable number of people on the *Lotus Sūtra* within the space of only a limited number of pages, his presentation as a whole assumes the character of a very general outline.

(2) Kusaka Daichi 日下大癡, *Taigaku shishin—Hokke gengi teikō* 台学指針——法華玄義提綱 (A guide to T'ien-t'ai studies: An exposition of the *Fa-hua hsüan-i*). Kyoto: Kōkyō Shoin 興教書院, 1936 (repr. Kyoto: Hyakkaen 百華苑, 1976).

This work is an exposition of the content of the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* as a whole.

(3) Shioda Gisen 塩田義遜, *Hokke kyōgakushi no kenkyū* 法華教学史の研究 (A study of the history of *Lotus* doctrine). Tokyo: Chihō Shoin 地方書院, 1960.

This work resembles that by Yamakawa Chiō ((1)) in that it too is a study of the history of *Lotus Sūtra* thought in India, China and Japan. The contents of Part 2 ("History of Studies in China"), the section relevant to the subject of research on Chinese commentaries of the *Lotus Sūtra* with which we are concerned here, are as follows:

Chapter 1: Chinese Translations and the Study of the *Lotus Sūtra*

1. Chinese Translations of the *Lotus Sūtra*
2. An Overview of Studies on the *Lotus Sūtra*

Chapter 2: Early Chinese Commentators

1. Tao-shêng's *Fa-hua ching shu*
2. Fa-yün's *Fa-hua i-chi*

Chapter 3: The Period of the Revelation of the True Meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra*

1. The Doctrines of Nan-yüeh Hui-ssü 南岳慧思
2. T'ien-t'ai Chih-i's Three Main Works on the *Lotus Sūtra*

Chapter 4: The Period of Exchange with Exoteric Buddhism

1. San-lun Chi-tsang's Commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra*
2. Fa-hsiang K'uei-chi's *Fa-hua hsüan-tsan*
3. Hua-yen Wön-hyo 元曉's *Fa-hua tsung-yao* 法華宗要 (Essentials of the *Lotus Sūtra*)

Chapter 5: The Period of Exchange with Esoteric Buddhism

1. I-hsing 一行 Ācārya's *Ta-jih ching shu* 大日經疏 (Commentary on the *Mahāvairocanaḥhisambodhi-sūtra*)
2. Pu-k'ung San-tsang's *Fa-hua kuan-chih i-kuei* 法華觀智儀軌 (Ritual Manual for [Attaining] the Wisdom of the *Lotus Sūtra*)

As is evident from the above table of contents, Shioda's perspective is the same as that of Yamakawa insofar that he considers Chih-i's three main works to have revealed the true significance of the *Lotus Sūtra*. This book still merits reference today, however, in that Shioda summarizes in succinct terms the views of each thinker on the *Lotus Sūtra*, but his presentation as a whole is inevitably introductory in nature. As regards the relationship between Chih-i's three main works and Chi-tsang's commentaries, the comments made on Yamakawa's study apply in this case too.

(4) Satō Tetsuei 佐藤哲英, *Tendai Daishi no kenkyū* 天台大師の研究 (A study of T'ien-t'ai Ta-shih). Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1961.

This work essays a textual critique of all works ascribed to Chih-i himself or traditionally considered to represent records of his lectures, and it is a study that broke fresh ground in the history of research on T'ien-t'ai doctrine. Part 3 ("A Study of the Three Main Works of the T'ien-t'ai School") examines in detail the process whereby Chih-i's three main works were compiled, and Satō points out links between the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* and Chi-tsang's *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* and between the *Fa-hua wên-chü* and Chi-tsang's *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* and *Fa-hua i-shu*. But as is noted in Hirai's criticism discussed below, Satō does not go far enough in clarifying the manner in which Kuan-ting composed the *Fa-hua wên-chü* by referring to and modelling himself on Chi-tsang's commentaries.

(5) Ōchō Enichi 横超慧日 (ed.), *Hokke shisō* 法華思想 (*Lotus thought*). Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten 平楽寺書店, 1969.

This is a volume of collected papers, and the papers relating to the subject under consideration here are Ōchō Enichi, "Chūgoku ni okeru Hokke shisō shi" 中国における法華思想史 (The history of *Lotus* thought in China [Part 1, Chapter 3]), and Andō Toshio 安藤俊雄, "Hokekyō to Tendai kyōgaku" 法華經と天台教学 (The *Lotus Sūtra* and T'ien-t'ai doctrine [Part 2, Chapter 2, Section 1]).

In Section 1 ("Lotus Doctrine at the Time of Chiu-mo-lo-shih's Translation") in the former of these two papers Ōchō deals very briefly with the views of Kumārajīva, Sêng-jui 僧叡, Chu Tao-shêng, Tao-jung 道融 and Hui-kuan 慧觀 on the *Lotus Sūtra*; this is because he deals in greater detail with this subject in (7) below. In Section 3 of the same paper ("The Study of the *Lotus Sūtra* in China") Ōchō examines the views of Fa-yün, Chi-tsang, Chih-i and K'uei-chi on the *Lotus Sūtra*. His presentation is on the whole of a general, introductory nature.

(6) Sakamoto Yukio 坂本幸男 (ed.), *Hokekyō no Chūgokuteki tenkai* 法華經の中国的展開 (The *Lotus Sūtra* and Chinese Buddhism). Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1972.

This is a volume of collected papers, and it contains a number of papers relating to the subject under consideration here. English summaries of the papers are appended to the end of the volume, and I shall accordingly give only the English titles of the relevant papers (with some minor emendations).

Part 1

Chapter 1: Sakamoto Yukio, "A History of Studies of the *Lotus Sūtra*."

Part 2

Chapter 1: Ōchō Enichi, "Chu Tao-shêng's View on the *Lotus Sūtra*."

Chapter 2: Tamura Yoshirō 田村芳朗, "Fa-yün's *Fa-hua i-chi*."

Chapter 3: Satō Tetsuei, "The *Fa-hua hsüan-i* and *Fa-hua wên-chü*."

Chapter 4: Satomi Taion 里見泰穩, "Chi-tsang's *Fa-hua ching hsüan-lun*."

Chapter 5: Maruyama Takao 丸山孝雄, "Chi-tsang's *Fa-hua i-shu*."

Chapter 6: Hirakawa Akira 平川 彰, "Tao-hsüan 道宣 and the *Lotus Sūtra*."

Chapter 7: Suguro Shinjō 勝呂信静, "K'uei-chi's *Fa-hua hsüan-tsan*."

Chapter 8: Hibi Nobumasa 日比宣正, "Chan-jan's *Fa-hua wu-tai-wên lun* 法華五百問論."

Chapter 9: Mizuno Kōgen 水野弘元, "Chieh-huan 戒環's *Fa-hua ching yao-chieh* 法華經要解."

Chapter 10: Asai Endō 浅井円道, "Chih-hsü 智旭's *Fa-hua ching hui-i* 法華經会義."

(7) Ōchō Enichi 横超慧日, *Hokke shisō no kenkyū* 法華思想の研究 (Studies in *Lotus* thought). Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1975.

This is a volume of collected papers and contains two papers relating to the subject under consideration here: "Jiku Dōshō sen *Hokekyō sho no kenkyū*" 竺道生撰『法華經疏』の研究 (A study of Chu Tao-shêng's *Fa-hua ching shu*) and "Hokke kyōgaku ni okeru busshin mujō setsu" 法華教学における仏身無常説 (The theory of the impermanence of the Buddha's body in *Lotus* doctrine).

The former paper is divided into two parts, which the introduction, entitled "Chu Tao-shêng's Philosophical Background," consisting of the following six sections:

1. Chu Tao-shêng's Philosophical Status
2. The Study of the *Chêng-fa-hua ching* during the Eastern Chin 東晉 Period
3. The Buddhist Studies of Chih-tun 支遁 in Chiang-nan
4. The Buddhist Studies of Tao-an 道安 in Ch'ang-an 長安
5. The Views of Hui-yüan and [Chiu-mo-]lo-shih on the *Lotus Sūtra*
6. The Views of [Chiu-mo-]lo-shih's Disciples on the *Lotus Sūtra*

The main body of this paper, entitled "Chu Tao-shêng's *Fa-hua ching shu*," consists of the following nine sections:

1. The Origins of the Organization and Composition of Tao-shêng's Commentary
2. Doctrinal Organization
3. The Ultimate Implications of the *Lotus Sūtra*
4. The Interpretation of the Title
5. The Subdivision of the Text
6. The Understanding of Its Diction
7. The Theory of the Three Carts, and the One Vehicle as an Expedient Means
8. The Meaning of Longevity and the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*
9. Conclusion

This paper constitutes the most reliable study of Tao-shêng's *Fa-hua ching shu*, and as such it has served as a firm base for subsequent research by other scholars. Its exposition of the views of Kumārajīva and his disciples on the *Lotus Sūtra* may also be considered to retain its value even today.

The second paper noted above deals with Fa-yün's views that the Buddha's body as described in the *Lotus Sūtra* is impermanent in nature and that the eternalness of the Buddha's body was first expounded in the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* and with Chi-tsang's and Chih-i's criticism of these views. Ōchō's treatment is very much to the point and laid the foundations for subsequent research on this subject, but more detailed studies have now appeared.

(8) Inari Nissen 稲荷日宣, *Hokekyō ichijō shisō no kenkyū* 法華經一乘思想の研究 (A study of the One Vehicle thought of the *Lotus Sūtra*). Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin 山喜房佛書林, 1975.

This work contains a discussion of the different ways in which the text of the *Lotus Sūtra* was subdivided in China, and it also deals with various interpretations of the concept of the One Vehicle. In content it is of an introductory nature.

(9) Maruyama Takao 丸山孝雄, *Hokke kyōgaku kenkyū josetsu—Kichizō ni okeru juyō to tenkai* 法華教学研究序説——吉藏における受容と展開 (An introduction to the study of *Lotus* doctrine: Its acceptance and development in the case of Chi-tsang). Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1978.

As is indicated by the subtitle, this work brings together the author's research on Chi-tsang's commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra*. Since the amount of research on Chi-tsang's commentaries prior to the publication of this volume was by no means substantial, it may be considered to have greatly stimulated subsequent research. Chapter 2 of the "Introduction" contains a convenient overview of previous research on Chi-tsang's commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra* entitled "The Study of Chinese *Lotus* Doctrine in Modern Japan: With a Focus on Chi-tsang." The main body of the book is divided into two parts, and Part 1 ("The Acceptance and Development of the Idea of the Integration of Three Vehicles into One Vehicle in the *Lotus Sūtra*") consists of the following six chapters:

Chapter 1: A Summary of Chi-tsang's Conception of the Integration of Three Vehicles into One Vehicle in the *Lotus Sūtra*

Chapter 2: The Five Vehicles and Three Inductions in the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*

Chapter 3: The Five Vehicles and the Three Herbs and Two Trees in the Chapter "Parable of Medicinal Herbs"

Chapter 4: The Theory that the One Vehicle is True and the Two Vehicles are Provisional and the Theory that the One Vehicle is True and the Three Vehicles are Provisional in the *Fa-hua i-shu*

Chapter 5: The Inclusion of the One Vehicle in the Three Vehicles and Exclusion of the One Vehicle from the Three Vehicles in the *Fa-hua yu-i*

Chapter 6: The View of the Buddha's Body in the *Fa-hua yu-i*

Part 2 ("Various Questions in the Study of *Lotus* Doctrine") consists of four chapters, and the chapters of relevance here are as follows:

Chapter 2: Chi-tsang's View of the Three Periods [of the True Dharma, Imitative Dharma and Latter Dharma] and the Subsequent Five Hundred Years

Chapter 3: The Concept of the Last [Days of the] Dharma and the Subsequent Five Hundred Years in China

This book closes with an annotated Japanese translation of the *Fa-hua yu-i* (in the traditional *kundoku* 訓読 style).

(10) Hirai Shun'ei 平井俊榮, *Hokke mongu no seiritsu ni kansuru kenkyū* 法華文句の成立に関する研究 (A study of the compilation of the *Fa-hua wên-chü*). Tokyo: Shunjūsha 春秋社, 1985.

The objective of this work is to demonstrate that the *Fa-hua wên-chü*, counted among the three main works of the T'ien-t'ai school, was composed after Chih-i's death by his disciple Kuan-ting, who based himself completely on Chi-tsang's *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* and *Fa-hua i-shu*, to which he referred and on which he modelled the *Fa-hua wên-chü*. The text-critical study of Chih-i's writings had been initiated by Satō Tetsuei (see (4) above), but it was still not totally free of the constraints of sectarian loyalties and it had not been sufficiently thorough-going as textual criticism *per se*. But as a result of Hirai's study, the dependence of the *Fa-hua wên-chü* on Chi-tsang's commentaries was fully elucidated. Since this work represents an epoch-making study of the relationship obtaining between Chih-i's and Chi-tsang's commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra*, I shall discuss it in some detail. The table of contents is as follows:

Part 1 Introduction: Chih-i and Chi-tsang—Problems Surrounding

Their Commentaries on the *Sūtras*

Chapter 1: Chih-i and Chi-tsang's Commentaries on the *Sūtras*

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Chapter 1: Compilational Background of the *Fa-hua wên-chü*

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Section 1: The *Fa-hua wên-chü* and *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*

Section 2: The *Fa-hua wên-chü* and *Fa-hua i-shu*

In Chapter 1 of Part 1 Hirai criticizes Satō Tetsuei's study of the commentaries on the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* ascribed to Chih-i and Chi-tsang and puts forward a new view. It is believed that the *Chin-kang pan-jo ching shu* 金剛般若經疏 (Commentary on the *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*) in 1 fascicle ascribed to Chih-i was not actually composed by Chih-i, and when it is compared with the

Chin-kang pan-jo sho 金剛般若疏 (Commentary on the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*) in 4 fascicles by Chi-tsang, a considerable number of parallel passages are found in both works. According to Satō, when this is taken into consideration with the fact that the author of passages from the commentary ascribed to Chih-i is criticized by Chi-tsang and referred to as "a certain person," it would suggest that the commentary ascribed to Chih-i predates that by Chi-tsang. Satō maintains, moreover, that since Chi-tsang goes so far as to adopt *in toto* the *sūtra* subdivisions of the commentary ascribed to Chih-i, it may be assumed that the real author of this commentary, although difficult to pinpoint, was someone whom Chi-tsang held in high regard.

By carefully comparing the two texts, however, Hirai demonstrates that the author of the commentary ascribed to Chih-i plagiarized the "views of a certain person" in Chi-tsang's commentary, citing them as if they were his own, and that he based himself completely on Chi-tsang's commentary, referring to it and modelling his own commentary on it. It is thus shown that the *Chin-kang pan-jo ching shu*, traditionally ascribed to Chih-i, was, as already recognized by Satō, an apocryphal work and that its real author was not someone predating Chi-tsang, as maintained by Satō, but an adherent of the T'ien-t'ai school postdating Chi-tsang.

Chapter 2 deals with Chih-i's commentaries on the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra* (*Wei-mo ching hsuan-shu* 維摩經玄疏 [Profound Commentary on the *Vimala-sūtra*; 6 fasc.] and fascicles 1-25 of the *Wei-mo ching wên-shu* 維摩經文疏 [Annotated Commentary on the *Vimala-sūtra*; 28 fasc.]), to which great importance has been traditionally attached since they have been regarded as representative of the few works actually composed by Chih-i. In 598, the year following Chih-i's death, they were presented by Kuan-ting and P'u-ming 普明 to King Kuang of Chin 晉王 煬 (who later became the emperor Yang-ti 煬帝), and since Chi-tsang, who was then in Ch'ang-an, would have written his commentaries on the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra* (*Ching-ming hsuan-lun* 淨名玄論 [Treatise on the Profundity of the *Vimalakīrti*; 8 fasc.], *Wei-mo ching lüeh-shu* 維摩經略疏 [Brief Commentary on the *Vimala-sūtra*; 5 fasc.] and *Wei-mo ching i-shu* 維摩經義疏 [Commentary on the *Vimala-sūtra*; 6 fasc.]) no earlier than 599, it is properly speaking inconceivable that there should be evidence of any influence of Chi-tsang's commentaries in Chih-i's commentaries. But given that Chih-i himself expected his disciples to make additions and corrections to his commentaries and that there is a strong possibility that Kuan-ting and Chi-tsang met in Ch'ang-an, it is possible that there may be evidence of influence from Chi-tsang's commentaries in Chih-i's commentaries, and when the commentaries of both are compared, it is in fact possible to discover a number of passages in Chih-i's commentaries, although few in number, where reference has been made to Chi-tsang's commentaries. By this means Hirai seeks to demonstrate that even Chih-i's commentaries on

the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra* are not untouched by the general tendency evident in Chih-i's *sūtra* commentaries, namely, the tendency to be marked by the influence of Chi-tsang's commentaries.

Chapter 3 deals with the *Fa-hua hsüan-i*, a work which according to the later traditions of the T'ien-t'ai school represents either a record of notes taken by Kuan-ting of lectures given by Chih-i on specific dates at specific places or a record of Chih-i's lectures to which Kuan-ting added his own views. But according to Hirai, the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* is of a totally different character, and he entertains strong suspicions that the entire work was composed by Kuan-ting himself and that Chih-i played no part whatsoever in its composition. As is discussed below, Hirai entertains similar suspicions in regard to the *Fa-hua wên-chü*, and in this latter instance they are fully borne out by his arguments. But in the case of the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* they are not adequately proven and remain no more than suspicions. He ascertains the influence of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* on the *Fa-hua hsüan-i*, already pointed out by earlier scholars, and also discusses fresh evidence of this influence, demonstrating that the section "Introducing Old Interpretations" among the four sections on "Revealing the Essence of the *Lotus Sūtra*" in the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* was composed on the basis of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*. But since these sections that have come under the influence of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* constitute but a small portion of the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* as a whole, one is forced to conclude that Hirai's suspicions have not been adequately proven.

In Chapter 1 of Part 2 Hirai summarizes the results of his research on the compilation of the *Fa-hua wên-chü*. Kuan-ting himself states that he heard Chih-i lecture on the *Lotus Sūtra* only once at Chin-ling 金陵 (Chien-yeh 建業) when he was 27 years old (587) and that he later revised his notes at the age of 69 (629), thus producing the *Fa-hua wên-chü*. When compared with the *Fa-hua hsüan-i*, however, the *Fa-hua wên-chü* contains in its extant form an incomparably larger number of passages that were written on the basis of Chi-tsang's *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* and *Fa-hua i-shu*. The text of the *Fa-hua wên-chü* was, moreover, made public only in 629, considerably later than the *Fa-hua hsüan-i*, and it is also known that Kuan-ting's revised text of the *Fa-hua wên-chü* was so confused that Tso-hsi Hsüan-lang 左溪玄朗 (673-754) had to reedit it.

On the basis of the above facts, Hirai conjectures that the stance of Chih-i, a revolutionary practitioner of rare genius whose expositions of the *Lotus Sūtra* were marked by pithiness and profundity, would have been in direct contrast to that of the traditional expositors of the *sūtras*, whose expositions were always literal, and he therefore suggests that Chih-i himself did not in fact give any lectures expounding the *sūtra* text word-by-word or, if he did, it would have been only in a very incomplete form. If this should have been so, it then becomes possible to explain the reasons for the considerable delay in the compilation of the *Fa-hua wên-chü* and for the marked influence of Chi-tsang's commentaries. Hirai also

makes the bold suggestion that Kuan-ting waited until after the death of Chi-tsang (623), author of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* and *Fa-hua i-shu* on which the *Fa-hua wên-chü* is totally dependent, before making public the text of the *Fa-hua wên-chü*.

As for Kuan-ting's motivation in composing the *Fa-hua wên-chü*, Hirai perceives here a strong desire on the part of Kuan-ting to exalt the achievements of Chih-i, a revolutionary practitioner of rare qualities, by further attributing to him the status of a traditional *sūtra* commentator. In addition, Hirai also speculates that Kuan-ting himself wrote only a part of the extant text of the *Fa-hua wên-chü* and that it may have been revised and expanded by later scholars.

In Chapter 2 Hirai collates the Ming 明 edition of the *Fa-hua wên-chü*, used as the base text of the Taishō edition, with the Hōryū-ji 法隆寺 manuscript (also referred to by the editors of the Taishō edition) and the manuscript formerly kept at Ishiyama-dera 石山寺 and thought to date from the early Heian 平安 period (with only fasc. 1 extant), and he presents some fresh material based on his collation of fascicle 1.

Chapter 3 deals with the subdivision of the text of the *Lotus Sūtra* as presented in the *Fa-hua wên-chü*, where it is divided into the essential teachings (*pên-wên* 本門) and trace teachings (*chi-wên* 迹門), both of which are further subdivided into an introductory section, a main section and a closing section. Hirai suggests that this method of subdivision is not based on Chih-i's exposition, but was devised anew by Kuan-ting with reference to Chi-tsang's *Fa-hua i-shu*, and he also makes the comment that it is not as logically consistent as Chi-tsang's subdivision of the text.

In Chapter 4 Hirai examines the four methods of interpretation employed in the *Fa-hua wên-chü* (*yin-yüan-shih* 因緣釈, *yüeh-chiao-shih* 約教釈, *pên-chi-shih* 本迹釈 and *kuan-hsin-shih* 觀心釈), maintaining that as methods of scriptural exegesis they have neither universality nor validity, and he suggests that when one takes into account the similarities between the basic ideas behind these methods of interpretation and Chi-tsang's fourfold interpretation, consisting of *sui-ming-shih* 隨名釈 (ordinary interpretation based on literal meaning), *yin-yüan-shih* (interpretation focussing on the relative relationship between one concept and another and on their interdependence), *li-chiao-shih* 理教釈 (interpretation that presents by means of concepts the ultimate truth transcending conceptual understanding) and *wu-fang-shih* 無方釈 (interpretation that takes cognizance of the free play of ultimate truth from the standpoint of ultimate truth), there is a possibility that they were formulated by Kuan-ting under the influence of Chi-tsang.

In Chapter 5 Hirai compares the works quoted in the *Fa-hua wên-chü* with those quoted in the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* and, pointing out that not only do both works share a considerable number of sources, but there are also many identical passages quoted in both works, he suggests that this too is the result of the author of the *Fa-hua wên-chü* having referred to the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*.

Chapter 6 deals with the *Hokkesho shiki* 法華疏私記 (Private Notes for a Commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*) by the Japanese scholar Hōchibō Shōshin 宝地房証真 (12th cent.—early 13th cent.), and, noting that this work refers to Chi-tsang's *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*, Hirai points out that Shōshin levels severe criticism at Miao-lê Ta-shih Chan-jan 妙樂大師湛然 (711–782) for having presented erroneous interpretations in his *Fa-hua wên-chü chi* 法華文句記 (Notes on the *Fa-hua wên-chü*) as a result of his failure to refer to the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*.

Part 3 constitutes the central part of Hirai's book, and in Section 1 he compares parallel passages in the *Fa-hua wên-chü* and *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* and demonstrates that the *Fa-hua wên-chü* was written after the model of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*, while in Section 2 he compares parallel passages in the *Fa-hua wên-chü* and *Fa-hua i-shu* and similarly demonstrates that the *Fa-hua wên-chü* was written with reference to the *Fa-hua i-shu* too, although its dependence on the *Fa-hua i-shu* is not as great as its dependence on the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*.

As a result of Hirai's research, it has now become necessary to undertake careful comparisons with Chi-tsang's commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra* when studying Chih-i's *Fa-hua wên-chü*, and this is greatly facilitated by the fact that Hirai's book presents all the material from Chi-tsang's commentaries on which the *Fa-hua wên-chü* draws.

(11) Tada Kōshō 多田孝正, *Hokke gengi* 法華玄義 (The *Fa-hua hsüan-i*). Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan 大蔵出版, 1985.

This work presents the original text of fascicle 1 of the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* together with a rendition in the traditional *kundoku* style, a modern Japanese translation, notes, and an exposition of its content.

(12) Muranaka Yūshō 村中祐生, *Tendai kanmon no kichō* 天台観門の基調 (The keynote of T'ien-t'ai practice). Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1986.

This is a volume of collected papers, and those of relevance here are the following papers dealing primarily with Chi-tsang's commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra*:

1. A Consideration of the Formation of Chia-hsiang Ta-shih's Concept of 'Two Canonical Divisions'
2. Chia-hsiang Ta-shih's Ideas on Doctrinal Classification
3. The Development of Chia-hsiang Ta-shih's Ideas on Doctrinal Classification
4. The Compilation and Revision of Chia-hsiang Ta-shih's *Sūtra* Commentaries

(13) Hirai Shun'ei, *Hokke genron no chūshakuteki kenkyū* 法華玄論の註釈的研究 (An annotative study of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*). Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1987.

This work represents a study of Chi-tsang's *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*. Part 1 ("Study") consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 ("The Compilation of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*") surveys the history of the study of the *Lotus Sūtra* prior to Chi-tsang and discusses the stance and methodology of Chi-tsang's commentary in the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*. Chapter 2 ("The *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* and *Fa-hua i-chi*") focuses on the criticism of Fa-yün's *Fa-hua i-chi* in the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*, and Hirai discusses in particular Chi-tsang's criticism of Fa-yün's view that the first half of the *Lotus Sūtra* reveals the cause and the second half reveals the effect and his criticism of Fa-yün's view that the Buddha's body as described in the *Lotus Sūtra* is impermanent. Chapter 3 ("The Transmission of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*") is a study of the transmission of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* in the Japanese Sanron 三論 sect (corresponding to the Chinese San-lun school). In Chapter 4 ("The *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* and Subsequent Commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra*") Hirai examines the influence of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* on Wōn-hyo's *Fa-hua tsung-yao*, Chi's *Fa-hua hsüan-tsan* and Shōtoku Taishi 聖德太子's *Hokke gisho* 法華義疏 (Commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*). Chapter 5 ("The Text of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*") describes the various manuscripts of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*.

Part 2 ("Annotated Translation") presents the text of the first 4 fascicles of the 10 fascicles of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* together with a Japanese translation in the traditional *kundoku* style and notes. In particular, the elucidation in the notes of sources quoted in the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* is the result of considerable effort on the part of the author and will be of great benefit to future researchers.

(14) Young-ho Kim, *Tao-shêng's Commentary on the Lotus Sūtra: A Study and Translation*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.

This work presents a study and annotated English translation of Tao-shêng's commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*. Since Tao-shêng's commentary has not yet been translated into modern Japanese, this represents its first rendition into a modern language. There has already appeared, however, a Japanese translation in the traditional *kundoku* style (*Sankō Bunka Kenkyūjo Nenpō* 三康文化研究所年報, Nos. 9 [1976] and 12 [1979]), and a single-character concordance has also been recently published privately by Okuno Mitsuyoshi 奥野光賢 and Hareyama Shun'ei 晴山俊英 (July 1992). The table of contents of Kim's work is as follows:

Part I: Introduction

Chapter 1. Tao-shêng's Prehistory: The State of Buddhist Studies in China

Chapter 2. Tao-shêng's Biography

Chapter 3. Tao-shêng's Works

Chapter 4. Tao-shêng's Doctrines

Chapter 5. Tao-shêng's Influence and the Impact of His Doctrines

Part II: A Critical Study of Tao-shêng's Commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*

- Chapter 6. Tao-shêng and the *Saddharmaṇḍarika*
- Chapter 7. Literary Aspects
- Chapter 8. Central Ideas
- Chapter 9. Traces of Tao-shêng's Doctrines
- Chapter 10. Conclusions
- Part III: Translation

(15) Paul L. Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-t'ai Philosophy*. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1989.

This work contains an annotated English translation of part of the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* (from towards the end of fascicle 1b [Taishō Ed., Vol. 33, p. 691a] to the end of fascicle 2b).

(16) Kanno Hiroshi 菅野博史, *Hokke to wa nani ka—Hokke yui o yomu 法華とは何か——『法華遊意』を読む——* (What is the *Lotus*?: Reading the *Fa-hua yu-i*). Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1992.

This work presents a translation in modern Japanese of the *Fa-hua yu-i* together with a rendition in the traditional *kundoku* style, notes, and an exposition of its content.

Among the studies of Chinese commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra*, I have in the above surveyed representative works that have been published in book form. Lastly, I wish to comment briefly on the present state of research as reflected in annotated translations of the representative commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra*.

As noted above, an English translation and single-character concordance of Tao-shêng's commentary have already been published ((14)). As for Fa-yün's *Fa-hua i-chi*, there has not yet appeared even a *kundoku*-style translation, and when one considers the extent of the influence exerted by this work on the commentaries by Chi-tsang and Chih-i, it is to be hoped that an annotated translation and study will be published soon. In regard to the *Fa-hua wên-chü*, there has appeared only a *kundoku*-style translation, while in the case of the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* there have appeared in addition to a *kundoku*-style translation an annotated translation of fascicle 1 in modern Japanese ((11)) and an annotated English translation of the final third of fascicle 1b and all of fascicle 2 ((15)). As for Chi-tsang's *Fa-hua hsüan-lun*, there has appeared an annotated *kundoku*-style translation of the first 4 fascicles ((13)), while in the case of the *Fa-hua i-shu* a *kundoku*-style translation is available, and there have already appeared translations of the *Fa-hua yu-i* in both modern Japanese and *kundoku* style with notes ((9) and (16)). There has not, however, appeared even a *kundoku*-style rendition of the *Fa-hua t'ung-lüeh*, and among Chi-tsang's commentaries this is the commentary about which there is the least amount of research available. It is

to be hoped at any rate that annotated translations and indexes based on sound textual research will eventually be made available for each of these commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra*.

There have also been published many academic papers dealing with Chinese commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra*, but space has not permitted me to discuss these here. Recent years have seen a burgeoning of research in Japan on Chi-tsang's commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra*, and on this subject reference may be made to the bibliography appended to Hirai Shun'ei (ed.), *Sanron kyōgaku no kenkyū* 三論教学の研究 (Studies in San-lun doctrine; Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1990).

additional note:

(17) Kanno Hiroshi 菅野博史, *Chūgoku Hokke shisō no kenkyū* 中国法華思想の研究 (A study of Chinese *Fa-hua* thought) Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1994.