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The Problem Stated

The fervent composition of commentaries to the Buddhist sutras could well be said to be one of the characteristic features of Chinese Buddhism. Translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese began around the latter half of the second century, thereby making it possible for the Chinese to study Buddhist teachings in their native language. The Buddhist scriptures were traditionally divided into three broad categories of sutra, vinaya, and treatise. As the study of Buddhist teachings progressed, commentaries began to be written for various works among these recently translated sutra, vinaya, and treatise materials. There had already been a long-standing tradition in China of composing commentaries for the Confucian classics and philosophical works such as the *Laozi* 老子 and *Zhuangzi* 莊子. This indigenous literary tradition is thought to have provided a stimulus to the production of commentaries on the Buddhist scriptures. Because the sutras, among the Buddhist scriptures as a whole, were considered to be the most legitimate basis for investigating the thought of the Buddha, expository works on the sutras (i.e., “sutra commentaries”) came to be produced with utmost fervor. Generally speaking, when Chinese Buddhists wanted to express their own thoughts, they did not necessarily author independent tracts. Instead, the common practice was to convey them through the medium of the sutra commentary. However, it is important not to overlook the fact that such collections as the *Hongming ji* 弘明集 and *Guanghongming ji* 廣弘明集 preserve quite a few independent tracts and according to the catalogue of the *Chu sanzang jijì* 出三藏記集, numerous treatises were compiled that are no longer extant today.

Enichi Ōchō wrote an article titled, “Investigations into the History of Sutra Exegesis” (Shakkyōshikō), which was specifically concerned with transitions and developments in the exegetical practices used in sutra commentaries over the course of Chinese Buddhist history.¹ Being a superb study that deals with the entire span of Chinese Buddhist history, I have consulted it extensively in the course of writing this article. However, this paper will focus on the investigation of sutra commentaries from the time of their inception in the Later Han down to the commentaries of Jingying

¹ Enichi Ōchō, “Shakkyōshikō,” *Chūgokubukkyō no Kenkyū*, vol. 3, (Kyoto: Hōzokan, 1979). First published in *Shina Bukkyō Shigaku* 1, 1, April, 1937.

Huiyuan 淨影慧遠 (523-592), Zhiyi 智顛 (538-598), and Jizang 吉藏 (549-623). So doing, I will attempt to provide an overview of developments in the form, content, and exegetical method of written commentaries to the Buddhist sutras that took place during this early formative period.

1. The Distinction Between ‘Interlinear’ (*zhu*) and ‘Exposition of the Meaning’ (*yishu*) forms of Commentary, and the Evolution from the ‘Interlinear’ to the ‘Expository’ form in Chinese Buddhist History

Ryūichi Kogachi, in his article on “The Ritual of Offering Food to Earlier Sages and Masters 釋奠禮 and the Scholastic Tradition of the Expository Commentary,”² raises the question of how we are to understand the basic distinction between the ‘exposition of the meaning’ or ‘expository’ (*yishu* 義疏) style of commentary, which took shape and became mainstream during the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, and the ‘interlinear’ (*zhu* 注) style of commentary that was popular from the Later Han through the Wei and Jin periods. Using commentaries to Confucian texts as his primary material, Kogachi defined the ‘interlinear commentary’ as a form that reproduces passages from the original scripture in their entirety. Explanations are then applied to the text, so that the original sutra text is accorded priority and the interlinear commentary itself does not stand independent of the subject scripture. On the other hand, the ‘exposition of the meaning’ style of commentary (which we shall call the ‘expository commentary’, for short) does not reproduce the entire text of the sutra. It includes only selected passages (duly abridged and edited by the author), to which comments are then added, making it something that must be regarded as the work of the compiler himself.

When we apply this distinction between ‘interlinear’ and ‘explanation of the meaning’ forms of commentary to the sutra commentaries composed during the early period of Chinese Buddhism (In this paper, the term “commentary” will be used inclusively to refer to both the interlinear and expository forms), it is clear that the oldest extant commentaries adopt the ‘interlinear’ form, while commentaries that adopt the ‘expository’ form (Daosheng’s 道生 *Miaofa lianhua jing shu* 妙法蓮華經疏 being a representative early example) come into vogue at a later date. This developmental transition from the interlinear to the expository format in Chinese Buddhist exegetical literature possibly reflects the influence of a parallel change from the use of the interlinear to the expository style of commentary in the exegetical literatures of the Confucian classics. But might not this shift from the interlinear to the expository style of commentary just as well be connected to a feature distinctive of Buddhist literatures?

As indicated above, the interlinear style of commentary entailed reproduction of the original sutra text in its entirety, followed by a suitable segmenting of the text’s constituent passages, with explanations inserted either beneath or after the respective

² Ryūichi Kogachi, “Sekitenrei to Gisogaku,” in Ichirō Kominami (ed), *Chūgoku no reisei to reigaku* (Kyoto: Hōyū shoten, October, 2001).

passage. Hence, if one were to compose an interlinear commentary for a sutra of unusually great length, might it not become an enormous burden, even to the point of practical impossibility? Even in the case of Buddhist commentaries of the ‘expository’ style we find many examples where explanations tend to become shorter as one proceeds to the latter part of the sutra. When we further consider the increasing number of translated sutras as well as their textual explanation, might not the shift from the interlinear to the expository form of commentary have been a necessity? Some extant interlinear commentaries indicate that they were generally written for shorter sutras. In the case of the *Dapan niepan jing jijie* 大般涅槃經集解, the text of the commentary incorporates the Southern Edition of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* through citation of its opening and closing lines. If the text of the commentary incorporated the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* in its entirety, it would have become unduly long.

Moreover, the analytic division or parsing (*fenke* 分科) that constitutes the core content of commentaries of the ‘expository’ style is quite difficult to apply to interlinear commentaries. Even in the *Jingang bore boluomi jing zhu* 金剛般若波羅蜜經注 (Interlinear Commentary to the *Diamond Sūtra*), which we shall take up later, analytic parsing of the sutra can be found, but those divisions involve no more than a simple analysis of the body of the sutra into three broad sections.

However, we must also consider the philosophical background of the shift from interlinear commentaries to expository commentaries. Whereas the interlinear commentaries tended to pay attention to relatively superficial matters, such as the meanings of the words themselves, the expository commentaries tended to focus on the underlying themes of the texts, as we can see, for instance, in Wangbi’s 王弼 (226-249) and Daosheng’s treatment of the Chinese classics and Buddhist sutras. I will discuss Daosheng’s attitude toward the sutras in the latter part of this paper.³

Now, we know from the *Chu sanzang jiji* that, early on, Zhiqian 支謙 (end of the second to the middle of the third century) composed an interlinear commentary to the *Liao ben shengsi jing* 了本生死經, and that Kangsenghui 康僧會 (?-280) produced interlinear commentaries to the *Anban shouyi jing* 安般守意經, the *Fajing jing* 法鏡經, and the *Daoshu jing* 道樹經,⁴ although these commentaries no longer survive. The following commentaries from the early period, composed in the interlinear style, are still extant in their complete form.

The first is the two fascicle *Yin chi ru jing zhu* 陰持入經註, written by Chenhui 陳慧 (from the kingdom of Wu) for An Shigao’s translation of the *Yin chi ru jing* 陰持入經. Chenhui’s *Yin chi ru jing xu* 陰持入經序 is attached to the text as a preface. Therein we find some fifteen citations that begin with the phrase “the master says 師云.”⁵ In addition, the words “one interpretation states 一說云” (with the alternate phrasing, 一說

³ Both Wangbi and Daosheng placed primacy on the exegetical approach of “grasping the meanings and letting go of the words 得意忘言.” I was motivated to include this explanation of the shift from interlinear notes to expository commentaries based on personal discussions with Prof. Bernard Faure at the IABS conference in Thailand, December 2002.

⁴ *Chu sanzang jiji*, 13, T 55. 97a, 97c.

言), appear three times. Thus we have clear reference to other explanations or commentaries. In addition, citations from some thirteen different sutras appear in the commentary, the titles of which Zenryū Tsukamoto has already brought to our notice.⁶ Evidently, Tsukamoto was concerned primarily with citations from the *Zhongxin jing* 中心經 (two such quotes are to be found) and the question of whether this *Zhongxin jing* is the same text as the *Tunzhenjing* 屯真經 (Lokakṣema's 支婁迦讖 *Tunzhenjue* 屯真陀羅所問如來三昧經).⁷ It is clear, however, that the reference is to the *Zhongxin jing* 忠心經 translated by Tanwulan 曇無蘭. However, there is an anachronism here, for the Chinese translator Tanwulan was active during the fourth century, the period of the Eastern Jin, and, thus, postdates Chenhui. On this basis, Tang Yongtong has suggested that credit for translating the *Zhongxin jing*, the original translator's identity being unknown, was later ascribed to Tanwulan.⁸ Aside from this, there are three places in the commentary where we find the words "a gāthā states 偈曰." Two of these are citations from the *Faju jing* 法句經, translated by Zhiqian as the *Sihemei jing* 私呵昧經. (The source of the third citation is unclear.) In addition, we find two instances where the text uses the phrase, "a sutra says 經曰." However, the source has not been identified. Finally, there are four places where the commentary says, "the *Anban* explanation states 安般解曰." This probably refers to the interlinear commentary to the *Anban shouyi jing* compiled jointly by Chenhui and Kangsenghui.⁹

Second is the interlinear commentary that we find embedded in the original text of Zhiqian's translation of the *Damingdu jing* 大明度經. The *Damingdu jing* comprises six fascicles in total. The commentary is supplied only for the first fascicle, the Practice Chapter. The identity of the commentary's author is uncertain, but the style of commentary is also interlinear. The text contains some twenty citations that are introduced by the words "a master says 師云." The argument that these statements might refer to Zhiqian is persuasive.¹⁰ In addition, citations also appear from Weiqinan's 維祇難 translation of the *Faju jing*, Zhiqian's *Liao ben shengsi jing*, Lokakṣema's *Chunzhen jing*,¹¹ and Zhiqian's *Huiyin sanmei jing* 慧印三昧經.

⁵ As to the term "master" (*shi*) here, there are three explanations assigned variously to either Kangsenghui, An Shigao, or Zhiqian. See Stefano Zacchetti, "An early Chinese translation corresponding to Chapter 6 of the *Peṭakopadesa* — An Shigao's *Yin chi ru jing* T 603 and its Indian original: a preliminary survey," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 65.1 (2002), p. 93, note 108.

⁶ See Zenryū Tsukamoto, *Chūgoku bukkyō tsūshi*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Suzuki gakujutsu zaidan, 1968), pp. 94–95.

⁷ This same sutra passage is cited in the *Damingdu jing zhu* 大明度經註, where the source is identified as the *Chunzhen jing* 純真經.

⁸ Tang Yongtong, *Han Wei liang Jin nanbei chao Fojiao shi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 (1997, Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, first ed. 1939), p. 97.

⁹ See notes 21 and 22, below; also, Erich Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (first ed. 1959. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), p. 54.

¹⁰ Whalen Lai, "Before the Prajñā Schools: The Earliest Chinese Commentary on the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 6/1, 91–108.

¹¹ This same citation also appears in the *Yin chi ru jing zhu*. See note 7 above.

Third is the *Ren ben yu sheng jing zhu* 人本欲生經註, another interlinear commentary composed by Daoan 道安¹² (314-385) for An Shigao's translation of the *Ren ben yu sheng jing* 人本欲生經. This also includes Daoan's preface, the *Ren ben yu sheng jing xu* 人本欲生經序. One of its special attributes is its inclusion of citations from the three sutras of the *Yin chi ru jing*, the *Faju jing*, and Zhiqian's translation of the *Qichu sanguan jing* 七處三觀經. In addition, we find text critical remarks concerning the original form of the sutra. For example, the expression, "The sentence order is reversed 句倒,"¹³ appears five times in the text, indicating an error in the order or syntax of the phrasing of the sutra. We also find such statements as "[The character] *xian* should be *jian* 現當爲見,"¹⁴ which reflects a concern to correct the orthography of the text. There are statements indicating that words or characters are missing or have been added, and of particular interest, we find such remarks as "Indian language is straightforward, having no qualms about elaborating in extensive detail,"¹⁵ indicating that, although the verbose repetition often found in the Buddhist sutras was regarded as bad literary form in China, it was a feature distinctive to Indian language.

As Enichi Ōchō has pointed out, the three interlinear commentaries discussed above find a common attribute in the fact that they do not show evidence of analytically dividing their sutras into discrete sections.

We have a fourth example in the *Jingang bore boluomi jing zhu* (Interlinear Commentary to the *Diamond Sūtra*) attributed to Sengzhao 僧肇 (384-414).¹⁶ According to Hakuju Ui, this commentary is not by Sengzhao, but is actually the work of Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385-433).¹⁷ Although it is not identified as a preface to the sutra, before launching into explanation of the opening phrase, "Thus have I heard," the commentary inserts a section that is akin to a sutra preface. In that text, there is a line that reads, "The [fundamental] principle [expounded in the *Jingang bore jing*] is reversion to the middle way and the core tenet of the two truths",¹⁸ where we find evidence of discussions concerning the two truths and middle way. In addition, this introductory section provides an explanation of the title of the sutra similar to those routinely encountered in sutra prefaces. Moreover, we find the statement, "The essential substance of this sutra takes the wisdom of emptiness as its focus";¹⁹ and we see evidence of a

¹² My paper takes up interlinear commentaries extant in their complete form. However, I would like to mention the fragments of interlinear commentary to the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* preserved in a Dunhuan Manuscript. See Shi Guopu, *Dunhuang xiejuan P3006 Zhiqian ben Weimo jing zhuji kao* 敦煌寫卷 P3006 [支謙]本《維摩詰經》注解考, Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 1998. According to her opinion, this commentary should be attributed to Daoan.

¹³ T 33. 1b, 1c, 2b, 3a, 4a.

¹⁴ T 33. 1b, etc.

¹⁵ T 33. 4a.

¹⁶ See Mitsumasa Ukai, "Shareiun *Kongōhanyakyōchō* no kisoteki kenkyū, jō, part 1," *Bukkyō Daigaku Daigakuin kenkyū kiyō* 20 (March, 1992).

¹⁷ Hakuju Ui, "*Kongōhanyakyō* oyobi ron no honyaku narabini chūshaku," in *Ui Hakuju chosaku shū*, vol. 6 (First published in 1933. Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1967).

¹⁸ Z (大日本續藏經)1 38.3. 208c.

simple analytic parsing of the body of the sutra into three sections. This arrangement specifies that the first section clarifies the emptiness of objects; the second section, the emptiness of wisdom; and the third, the emptiness of the bodhisattva. Moreover, the scripture itself is accorded the status of being the first sutra preached during the “four phases or installments in [the preaching of] the *prajñā* [sutras]”²⁰ Frequent use of the term of “principle” (*li* 理) in the passage by passage explanations of the sutra content is another distinctive feature of the commentary, a feature that it shares in common with Daosheng’s commentaries. One senses that the text resembles the commentary of Daosheng in literary form as well. Also, we find various technical exegetical terms that often appear in later commentaries, such as the terms and “recounting firmly” (述成), “concluding firmly” (結成), “establishing doctrinal correspondences or equivalents to the simile” (合譬).

Aside from the four commentaries singled out above, we also have An Shigao’s translation of the *Anban shouyi jing*. In this case, the interlinear commentary is integrated directly into the text of the sutra itself, making it difficult to distinguish clearly between the two. In Kangsenghui’s preface to the text, the *Anban shouyi jing xu* (included in fascicle six of the *Chusanzang jiji*), we find the statement, “Chenhui composed a commentary to the text, and I have assisted in revising it.”²¹ From this we know that Chenhui wrote the interlinear commentary and Kangsenghui lent his hand to it.²²

So far we have introduced various extant interlinear commentaries. However, at this point we should mention the *Zhu weimojie suoshuo jing* 注維摩詰所說經 (Interlinear Commentary (*zhu*) to the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, hereafter abbreviated as *Zhu weimo*). This is a work that reproduces the text of the *Weimojie jing* or *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* in its entirety, incorporating into it the comments of Jiumoluoshi 鳩摩羅什, Sengzhao, and Daosheng.²³ Such reproduction of the complete text of the sutra is representative of the interlinear commentary format. However, there is some question as to whether the constituent commentaries of the *Zhu weimo* were interlinear commentaries or commentaries of the expository type prior to their combination into a single work. Since a separate interlinear commentary by Sengzhao has been discovered,²⁴ we presently know for certain that Sengzhao’s commentary was an interlinear commentary to the *Weimo jing* before it was incorporated into the *Zhu weimo*. Moreover, Masaya Kudō has surmised that, in contrast to Sengzhao’s commentary being of the ‘interlinear’ variety, Daosheng’s commentary

¹⁹ Same as above.

²⁰ See the Preface Chapter of the *Renwang bore jing* 仁王般若經, T 8. 825b, where it gives the list, “*Mohe bore boluomi* 摩訶般若波羅蜜, *Jingang bore boluomi* 金剛般若波羅蜜, *Tianwang wen bore boluomi* 天王問般若波羅蜜, and *Guangzan bore boluomi* 光讚般若波羅蜜.”

²¹ T 55. 43b-c.

²² Daoan’s *Anban zhu xu* (included in fascicle 6 of the *Chu sanzang jiji*) states, “At the beginning of the *Wei*, Kangsenghui wrote a commentary to the *Anban jing*, but its meaning was obscured and not yet fully illumined,” (T 55. 43c) indicating that it was Kangsenghui and not Chenhui who composed the commentary. However, in actuality it was probably composed jointly by Chenhui and Kangsenghui.

²³ An interlinear comment by Daorong 道融 appears in only one place. T 55. 371c-372a.

might have been of the ‘expository’ variety.²⁵ This makes sense. Daosheng’s *Miaofa lianhua jing shu* (Expository Commentary to the *Lotus Sūtra*) is the only extant text among his writings to survive intact, yet it is an ‘explanation of the meaning’ commentary. Be that as it may, what do we actually know about the commentary by Daosheng included in the *Dapan niepan jing jijie*? When we consider the sheer size of the *Dapan niepan jing* (the southern edition of the *Niepan jing* or *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* in thirty-six fascicles) and the fact that the recorded comments by Daosheng actually addressed to sutra passages are so few in number, we can infer that Daosheng’s commentary, after all, was of the ‘expository’ variety.²⁶

Sengrui’s *Pimoluojiedi jing yishu xu* 毗摩羅詰堤經義疏序 (Preface to the Expository Commentary to the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*) is preserved in fascicle eight of the *Chu sanzang jijie*. Thus we know that Sengrui authored an ‘expository’ commentary to the *Weimo jing*, although it no longer survives.²⁷ Some ten comments from Sengrui’s text are cited in Daoyi’s *Jingming jing jijie guanzhong shu* 淨名經集解關中疏 (included in T 85).

Sengzhao’s preface to the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* is attached to the *Zhu weimo* as well. Sutra prefaces, on the whole, include records of such things as the central concept of the sutra, explanation of the sutra’s title, and particulars of its translation. However, later these topical foci develop into the so called ‘profound meaning’ (*xuanyi* 玄義) or ‘profound treatise’ (*xuanlun* 玄論) commentarial literature typical of figures such as Jizang and Zhiyi. Moreover, we should take note of the fact that, just like the interlinear commentaries to the three other sutras described above, division or parsing of the sutra text is not discussed in the *Zhu weimo*.

2. One of the Oldest Surviving ‘Explanation of the Meaning’ Commentaries: Daosheng’s *Miaofa lianhua jing shu*

²⁴ Junzō Usuda, in “Yuimakyō Sōjō tanchūbon,” *Shōtokutaishi kenkyū* 11 (December, 1977), introduces a text discovered at Turfan that consists exclusively of the interlinear comments of Sengzhao. Chi Limei, “Tonkō shahon Yuimakitsukyōge,” *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 50.1 (December, 2001), introduces the oldest extant version of Sengzhao’s independent interlinear commentary, which has been preserved in the former library of Luo zhenyu 羅振玉.

²⁵ See Masaya Kudō, “Chūyuima Dōshōchō ni okeru kyōten chūshakuhō,” *Tendai gakuhō* 42 (November, 2000); also, “Chūyuima ni okeru chūshaku keishiki ni tsuite,” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 48.2 (March, 2000).

²⁶ The *Dapan niepan jing jijie* sections the southern edition of the *Niepan jing* into 2,864 passages and incorporates comments of the various masters for each. However, therein comments by Daosheng appear in 260 places. In some thirteen of the twenty-five chapters of the sutra not a single comment is cited from Daosheng. It is difficult to imagine that Daosheng would not have written any commentary for so many chapters, and so the compilers probably neglected and did not adopt Daosheng’s explanations for these chapters. Hiroshi Kanno, “*Daihatsunehankyō jūge* no kisoteki kenkyū,” *Tōyōbunka* 66 (February, 1986).

²⁷ Similarly, *Jiumoluoshi*’s disciple, Daorong (d.u.), seems to have composed an ‘exegesis of the meaning’ commentary to the *Weimo jing*. The biography of Daorong in the *Gaosengzhuan* states, “Exegesis of the meaning commentaries compiled for such sutras as the *Fabua*, the *Dapin* 大品, the *Jingguangming* 金光明, the *Shidi* 十地, and the *Weimo*, all of which circulate in the world.” T 50. 363c.

Commentaries composed by Daosheng for the *Fabua jing*, the *Weimo jing*, and the *Niepan jing* survive today. However, his commentaries to the *Weimo jing* and *Niepan jing* do not exist as independent works, but have been integrated with the commentaries of other authors. For example, when it comes to the commentary by Daosheng contained in the *Dapan niepan jing jijie*, in some thirteen of the sutra's twenty-five chapters explanations by Daosheng are not mentioned at all.²⁸ This probably stems from the fact that in the difficult task of combining commentaries from as many as eighteen different authors, the compilers opted for an editorial policy that centered on the commentary of Sengliang 僧亮.

As we noted above, Sengrui and Daorong composed 'explanation of the meaning' commentaries for the *Weimo jing*, so it cannot be claimed that Daosheng's *Miaofa lianhua jing shu* (Expository Commentary to the *Lotus Sūtra*) is the oldest 'explanation of the meaning' commentary. However, we can say that it is one of the oldest *extant* commentaries of this type. That being said, let us briefly review the distinctive features of Daosheng's commentarial style, using the *Miaofa lianhua jing shu* as our basic source.²⁹ Daosheng's *Miaofa lianhua jing shu* is considered to have exerted a major influence on sutra commentaries of the later Sui and Tang periods. The commentary does not include an independent preface for the sutra, but prior to embarking on its passage by passage explanation of the sutra's textual content, a brief discussion of the circumstances of the commentary's authorship and the meaning of the sutra's title does appear. In the explanation of the sutra's title, we find the doctrinal content of the sutra classified according to the four 'turnings' of the Wheel of Dharma and the thematic thrust (*zong* 宗) of the *Fabua jing* identified as the 'Great Vehicle'. During that period, the task of ascertaining the relationship between different sutras by illuminating the 'thematic thrust' of each sutra — a practice akin to what would become 'classification of the doctrine or teaching' — was a key concern, as Enichi Ōchō has pointed out. Here, however, I would like to draw out several points that bear on Daosheng's exegetical method, based on the section of his commentary that provides passage by passage explanation of the sutra text.

(1) First let us look at the formal features of his commentary, including such points as: (a) the retention of a section that resembles the section on explanation of the 'intention or motive behind the sutra's origin' (*laiyi* 來意) that we find in later commentaries; (b) evidence of explicit segmentation or division of the sutra text; (c) indication of the passage that is to be explained (through citation of its opening and closing lines); (d) explanatory notes on transliterations; and (e) inclusion of alternative interpretations that differ from that of the author.

²⁸ See note 25 above.

²⁹ See Hiroshi Kanno, *Chūgoku Hokkeshisō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1994), pp. 69-78. Also, Enichi Ōchō, "Jikudōshō sen Hokekyōsho no kenkyū," *Otani daigaku kenkyū nenpō* 5 (1975), and his aforementioned "Shakkyōshikō," in *Chūgoku bukkyō no kenkyū*, vol. 3, pp. 170-173.

(a) Before Daosheng embarks on explaining the specific content of passages from each chapter, he discusses the placement and significance of the chapter within the overall sutra and provides explanation of the chapter title. In the commentaries of later figures such as Jizang this is referred to as the ‘statement of intention behind the sutra’s origin’ (*laiyi*). As such, it is a feature encountered widely in sutra commentaries of later periods.

(b) Daosheng broadly divides the text of the *Fabua jing* into the three sections of ‘assimilating the three causal paths to the one cause’, ‘assimilating the three fruits or results [of the three paths] to the ‘one fruit or result’, and ‘assimilating the three persons or practitioners’ [of the three paths] to the ‘one person or practitioner’. This differs from the threefold division of a given sutra into ‘preface’ (*xu* 序), ‘main discourse’ (*zhengshuo* 正說), and ‘dissemination’ (*liutong* 流通) sections that becomes standard for later periods. However, in addition to using the terminology of ‘preface’ and ‘dissemination’ when he discusses the placement of individual chapters in the overall work, Daosheng also uses the expression ‘exposition of the principle’ (*lishuo* 理說) (which, in terms of content, refers to the *Lotus Sutra*’s doctrine of one causal path and one result) in a way that resembles the idea of the ‘main discourse.’³⁰

What we call ‘analytic division or parsing’ (*fenke* 分科) does not just involve this sort of generic division of the sutra’s content, but a much more analytically dense division. In Daosheng’s commentary we find various analytic divisions imposed on the section extending from the Preface Chapter through the Belief and Understanding Chapter. Multiple layers of division can especially be seen in the prose and verse sections on the ‘burning house’ in the Simile and Parable Chapter, making this analytic division of the commentary on which Daosheng exerted the most effort. Therein, we find such technical terms of exegesis as ‘external simile’ (*waibi* 外譬) and ‘inner meaning’ (*neiyi* 內義). Later on, Fayun’s *Fabua yiji* uses such exegetical formula as ‘introducing the simile’ (*kaibi* 開譬), ‘establishing indexical equivalents or correspondences for the simile[s]’ (*hebi* 合譬), ‘external similitude’, and ‘internal correspondence or equivalent’ (*neibe* 內合). It is worth noting that, although Daosheng uses the term ‘external simile’ and does not yet make use of the technical expression ‘inner meanings’, he does, in fact, convey similar content with such statements as “establishing doctrinal correspondences or equivalents for [the similes] on the basis of their inner meaning 以內義合之.”³¹ Incidentally, ‘internal correspondence or equivalent’ refers to the act of explaining what the similes actually strive to convey in the way of doctrinal meaning. In essence, the sutras themselves, after they set out their similes (known as ‘introducing the simile’), often explain just what these similes intend to convey in terms of actual content (this is known as ‘internal correspondence or equivalent’). However, in the case of Daosheng, the meaning of these similes is referred to as ‘inner meaning’, while ‘establishing doctrinal equivalents’ means just how or to which aspects of the simile’s contents this ‘inner meaning’ corresponds. In

³⁰ Z2B 23.4. 411d.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 402d.

contrast to referring to this as ‘internal’ equivalent or correspondence, the simile itself is called the ‘external’ simile.

To sum up, when we compare Daosheng’s analytic parsing of the sutra to the dense analytic division of sutra content seen in the commentaries of later figures such as Fayun and Jizang, it amounts to little more than a general sectioning. Nonetheless, the fact that it stands as a forerunner to the commentaries of later periods is perfectly evident.

(c) Daosheng reproduces only those passages in the sutra for which he supplies explanations. In this respect his technique differs from that of commentators such as Fayun. But that said, the passages for which Fayun provides direct commentary are only sections of the sutra. Nonetheless, through use of such shorthand expressions as “from here on . . . 此下” or “from [the words such and such] on . . . 已下” Fayun provides analytic parsing for the entirety of the sutra’s contents. As a result, he ends up representing the entirety of the sutra’s textual content.

Moreover, even though Daosheng presents the sutra text whenever he designates an analytic division, he does not reproduce the entire context within which the specific section is embedded. Hence his manner of presenting the sutra text must be characterized as incomplete. In instances where the passage in question is comparatively short, he will reproduce the entire text; where it is long, he will present it in abridged form using such expressions as “[the passage] from A to B . . . A 至 B.” This approach continued to be used in sutra commentaries of later periods.

(d) Explanation of transliterations with respect to names of individuals is indicated through such formulaic expressions as “in Song it says or means . . . 宋云” or “in Song we say . . . 宋言.” The term ‘Song’ refers to the Liu Song dynasty (420-479) under which Daosheng lived. This format is something that periodically turns up in the *Zhu weimojie jing* as well.

(e) The fact that Daosheng never cites other sutras or treatises in order to legitimate his own interpretations has already been pointed out by Enichi Ōchō. In a related capacity, the mention and critique of different interpretations in order to advance the orthodoxy of one’s own explanation is a format that often appears in later commentaries. However, in Daosheng’s case only in two places does he introduce alternative explanations by using the expression “one interpretation states . . . 一義云.”

(2) Secondly, let us inquire into Daosheng’s explanations of the sutra’s verses.

In terms of literary form, the sutras are comprised by both expository prose and rhymed verse, expounded alternately. Daosheng identifies four basic motives for using verse in the sutra.³² The first is that the verses are preached for people yet to come after the prose passages. The second is that the verses are preached for persons who have not yet understood the prose. The third is that because the prose is laconic, the verses are

³² Ibid., 398c.

elocuted in order to elaborate on the contents of the prose. Fourth, is the idea that song wells forth when one feels the exaltation of a boundless heart. This takes the perspective of the subjective feelings of the person who expounds the verses, which is to say that emotional exaltation spontaneously gives rise to poetic verse.

The third point, concerning assessment of the relationship between verse and prose in terms of the relative brevity or detail of their contents, becomes even more profound in the latter place of the explanation of the Preface chapter.³³ In essence, it refers to cases where elements contained in the prose sections are not reiterated in summary verse, or cases where material not found in the prose section is newly introduced in the verses. Moreover, given the diversity of these relationships between the prose and verse, and the desire to ascertain them, it makes it clear that one must identify a relationship suited to the respective occasion. It also refers to the fact that, elsewhere in the text,³⁴ there are cases where the verses are more detailed or more laconic in content than their prose counterparts, or else something expounded in the prose section is not repeated at all in the verses.

Daosheng's comments to the verses are actually very brief, but their central concern is to indicate the strict relational correspondence to the analytic divisions that he applies to their counterpart prose section. That relationship of correspondence is expressed by the formula, "A sets B to verse (A 頌 B)," in other words, passage A in the verses is a poetic rehearsal of passage B in the prose. As a fixed form of expression for indicating the relational correspondence between verse and prose, this continued to be used in later commentaries as well.

(3) The Fundamental Orientation and Theoretical Organization of the Interpretations.

As Enichi Ōchō has previously observed, Daosheng's basic perspective for interpreting the sutras takes its stance in the firm and certain belief that the concrete phenomenal content of the sutras (such as the emitting of radiant light, the quaking of the earth, and the manifestation of the jeweled stūpa), as well as the similes, are all possessed of profound conceptual significance. Moreover, no matter how we try to understand that significance, the words of the sutra remain analogous to a weir or trap used to catch a fish or hare.³⁵ At the stage when the profound meaning implied by the sutra is illumined, it is extremely important that one not cling to the concrete phenomenal aspects and illustrations of the sutra.³⁶

Next, we briefly touch on some of the structures that Daosheng uses to provide integral consistency to his interpretation of the sutra. The first structure concerns the transcendent nature of the enlightened 'sage' (*shengren* 聖人) [or Buddha]. The manifold

³³ Ibid., 399b.

³⁴ Ibid., 409b.

³⁵ Ibid., 410c.

³⁶ Ibid., 411d.

activities of the sage, such as his preaching of the Dharmas of the three vehicles and his entry into nirvāṇa, are undertaken in order to accord responsively with the actual circumstances of unenlightened beings (*fanfu* 凡夫), whereas the sage, in his own being, exists in such a way that transcends these activities. Secondly, the concept of ‘stimulus and response’ (*ganying* 感應) is adopted as the practical framework for explaining such similes as the burning house parable of the Simile and Parable Chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* and the prodigal son parable of the Belief and Understanding Chapter. The salvific impetus (*ji* 機), which represents the “constructive aspect of the sentient being that moves the Buddhas and bodhisattvas to manifest and, subsequently, receives that response,” acts to stimulate or move (*gan* 感) the sage. In response to that stimulus, the sage manifests (*ying* 應). This point is considered to have had a major impact on later sutra commentaries. Third is the frequent use of the general concept of ‘principle’ (*li* 理), a term that especially appears in connection with the idea of the One Vehicle. This interpretive strategy is also picked up and continued in later sutra commentaries.

3. The *Dapan niepan jing jijie* and Fayun’s *Fabua yiji*

(1) The *Dapan niepan jing jijie* (Assembled Explanations of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*).

The *Dapan niepan jing jijie* (the *Jijie*, or *Assembled Explanations*, for short), in seventy-one fascicles, is a compendium of commentaries to the Southern Edition of the Mahāyāna *Niepan jing* (*Nirvāṇa Sūtra*) compiled from respective commentaries by some eighteen different monks ranging in time from Daosheng, who was active during the Liu Song Dynasty, through the Southern Qi and Liang. For the history of transmission of the original text and its compiler, one might wish to consult this author’s prior work on the subject;³⁷ but here let me simply say that the theory holding Falang of Jianyuan Monastery 建元寺法朗 to be the compiler is compelling. (He is the same person as Huilang 慧朗, of whom we have record in the *Jijie*.)

The current text of the *Jijie* or *Assembled Explanations* fills seventy-one fascicles. Its first fascicle comprises various prefaces to the sutra, including the *Dapan niepan jing yishu xu* (Preface to the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*) that Emperor Wu of the Liang composed for Baoliang of Lingwei Monastery 靈味寺寶亮, as well as prefaces by ten different Dharma masters, such as Daosheng, Sengliang, Sengzong 僧宗, and Baoliang. In addition, the compiler of the *Jijie* parsed and organized the contents of these prefaces by the ten Dharma masters into eight topical categories: (1) explaining the title (釋名), (2) distinguishing the substance or essence [of the sutra] (辨體), (3) describing the original or fundamental nature of existence (敘本有), (4) discussing the severance or transcending of designations (談絕名), (5) explanation of the word “great” (釋大字), (6) exegesis of the word “sutra” (解經字), (7) revealing or setting out the doctrinal import or meaning (覈教意), and (8) determining the divisions [of the sutra] (判科段). To put it another way,

³⁷ Hiroshi Kanno, aforementioned “*Daihatsunehankyō jūge no kisoteki kenkyū*.”

he identified statements in the sutra prefaces that bore a common connection to each of these eight topical items, and placed those portions of the prefaces under their respective topical indices. Therein, names of eight other persons of renown are mentioned beyond the ten Dharma masters who composed prefaces for the sutra, including Sengzhao and Fayun. Their commentaries are also introduced. From the second fascicle on, the text launches into a passage by passage explanation of the sutra's meaning. It parses the thirty-six fascicles and twenty-five chapters of the Southern Edition of the *Niepan jing* into a total of two thousand eight hundred and sixty four passages, under which the commentaries of various masters are grouped. Apart from nine among the ten Dharma masters noted previously for their prefaces to the sutra (Tanhuai's 曇淮 commentary actually does not appear even once), the names of nine additional individuals who composed commentaries to the sutra are mentioned, including Huilang and Zhizang 智藏, making for a total of eighteen commentaries. Among these eighteen monks whose commentaries are incorporated into the text, Sengliang's commentary is cited two thousand one hundred and thirty times; Sengzong's commentary, one thousand one hundred and forty five times; and Baoliang's commentary, one thousand and eighty one times. By contrast, the commentaries of Huiling 慧令 and Zhizang are cited only once.³⁸ To edit together commentaries by so many different monks is quite a complicated task, but it seems that the editor accomplished this by taking Sengliang's commentary as his standard and determining, and adopted other monk's comments which had the special distinction of deviating from it.

As one of the outstanding features of the commentaries in the *Dapan niepan jing jijie*, we should pay particular attention to the compiler's analytic division of the prefaces of the ten Dharma masters into eight topical categories mentioned above. Various points in common can be found between these eight topical items of the *Jijie* and the topical rubrics evident in commentaries authored by later figures such as Zhiyi and Jizang. In so far as sutra commentaries from the Liang Dynasty have, for the most part, been lost and no longer exist, we should give close scrutiny to this eightfold rubric.

Under the first topical heading, 'explaining the title', the compendium explains the meaning of the term *panniepan* in the sutra title, *Dapan niepan jing*. The fifth item, concerning 'explanation of the term "great"', explains the meaning of the word *Da*; and the sixth rubric, 'explanation of the term "sutra"', involves elucidation of the word *jing*. Taken together, these three topical divisions explain the sutra's title, *Dapan niepan jing*, in its entirety. In later periods, explanation of a sutra's title was not divided into three sections like this, but treated in its entirety under the single rubric of 'explaining the title'. The cases of Zhiyi and Jizang are no exception to this rule.

Under the second topical category of 'distinguishing the substance or essence',

³⁸ Apart from the eighteen names cited above, the commentary of a certain Mingjun 明駿 is cited some eighty three times, as the last among the commentaries of the various masters. One group of modern scholars has posited Mingjun to be the editor/compiler of the *Dapan niepan jing jijie*, but there is an alternate theory which affirms the possibility that it was a later commentary integrated into the original text after compilation of the original work was completed. I would subscribe to the latter theory.

discussion of the sutra's fundamental essence is pursued. This feature is consistent with Zhiyi's and Jizang's rubric of 'distinguishing the substance'. The third topical heading of 'describing the original or fundamental nature of existence' advances the notion that nirvāṇa is the original nature of existence; and the fourth, 'discussing the severance or transcending of designations', discusses the general idea that the Dharma-body and nirvana are fundamentally beyond designation. These latter two categories concern notions of the Dharma-body and nirvāṇa that are, themselves, fundamental to the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Niepan jing*). Their orientation would seem to be topically close to the notion of the 'central thrust or theme' (*zong* 宗) found in sutra commentaries roughly contemporaneous with the *Dapan niepan jing jijie*. However, on the other hand, we can infer that in later periods there was also the possibility of organizing such concepts on the basis of the category of 'distinguishing the substance'.

(2) Fayun's *Fabua yiji* (Notes or Notices on the Meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra*).

Next, there is the *Fabua yiji* 法華義記,³⁹ which basically consists of Fayun's lectures on the *Fabua jing* or *Lotus Sūtra*, as recorded by one of his disciples. Although this scribe was a disciple of Fayun and, therefore, within his scholastic lineage, his exact identity remains unknown. This person did not record Fayun's lecture word for word, but in the interest of realizing the work's full completion as the commentarial text of the *Fabua yiji*, he made a special point of introducing and critiquing alternative interpretations. As such, it is possible to identify traces of his personal contribution to the text.

As for the structure of the *Fabua yiji*, at the very beginning we find a section that might properly be called a general preface. It contains remarks on the doctrinal classification of the sutra, explanation of the sutra's title, *Miaofa lianbua jing*, and a basic division or breakdown of the sutra's contents. The opening sections of Jingying Huiyuan's commentaries are similar in their treatment of the three elemental themes of doctrinal classification, explanation of the sutra's title, and analytic division of the sutra's contents. However, Fayun's *Fabua yiji* possesses content that fulfills what must also be called the model pattern of a sutra preface.

After this opening section there follows the portion of the commentary in which the meaning of the sutra's content is explained, passage by passage, beginning with the opening line, "Thus have I heard . . ." and ending with the sutra's conclusion. This kind of structure is identical with that found in Jingying Huiyuan's commentaries and Jizang's *Fabua tonghüe* 法華統略. The most distinctive feature of Fayun's *Fabua yiji* is his detailed analytic parsing of the entire text of the *Fabua jing*, and it would appear that this was something to which the commentator exerted utmost effort. The analytic parsing witnessed in the *Fabua yiji* exerted a great influence on Zhiyi's and Jizang's commentaries to the *Fabua jing*.

³⁹ See Hiroshi Kanno, *Chūgoku Hokkeshisō no kenkyū*, pp. 141-244; also, Hiroshi Kanno, *Hokke chūshakusho sbūsei 2: Hokke giki* (Tokyo: Daizō shuppan, 1996).

4. The Commentaries of Jingying Huiyuan

Commentaries by Jingying Huiyuan that survive today include the *Weimo jing yiji* 維摩經義記, *Niepan jing yiji* 涅槃經義記, *Shengman jing yiji* 勝鬘經義記, *Wenshi jing yiji* 溫室經義記, *Wuliangshou jing yishu* 無量壽經義疏, and *Guanwuliangshou jing yishu* 觀無量壽經義疏.⁴⁰ The sections of these various commentaries that precede their entry into passage by passage explanation of the sutra text share a fairly similar content. In essence that content includes (1) classification of the sutra according to the two scriptural canons of the śrāvaka canon and the bodhisattva canon, (2) explanation of the sutra's title, which begins with the heading "explaining its name" (*shi qiming* 釋其名), and (3) analytic parsing of the sutra's contents. The degree of explanation varies from one *Yiji* to the next, but when it comes to topical rubrics, the *Guanwuliangshou jing yishu* (Expository Commentary on the *Sūtra of the Contemplation of the Buddha of Measureless Life*) divides the first section on classification according to the two canons and the second sections on explanation of the sutra's title into the so-called 'five essentials' (*wuyao* 五要), while the *Wenshi jing yiji* divides them into 'six essentials' (the first section on classification of the *Guanwuliangshoufo jing yishu* is regarded as the first essential of six essentials). The explanations of the *Wenshi jing yiji* are quite brief, but let us at this point introduce its six essentials.

The first essential discusses the śrāvaka canon and the classificatory rubric of the twofold canon, noting that the sutra at hand belongs to the bodhisattva canon. The second essential explains [the difference between] sudden and gradual (*dunjian* 頓漸) presentations of the teaching, and clarifies the fact that this sutra uses the gradual strategy of teaching.⁴¹ The third introduces the threefold canon (*sanzang* 三藏 *tripitaka*) of sutra, vinaya, and treatise, and situates this sutra in the sutra canon or *piṭaka*. The fourth essential deals with 'thematic thrust' (*zongqu* 宗趣), indicating that this sutra takes merit making and generosity (that is to say, the practice of charity as the foundational cause for merit and blessing) as its central theme. The fifth essential explains the circumstances and rationale behind the devising of titles for sutras, and in so doing notes that the sutra at hand derives its title from both the person [who preached] and the Dharma [that is preached]. The term "Buddha" (*fo* 佛) indicates the person [who preaches], and the words "Preaches the Bathing Monk Sūtra" (*shuo xiseng jing* 說洗僧經) refer to the Dharma [that is preached]. The sixth essential brings up the relative differences between the five sorts of person who might preach the Dharma (i.e., a Buddha, a saintly disciple, a *deva* or god, a divine immortal or *ṛṣi*, an apparitional person produced by

⁴⁰ A fragment of Huiyuan's *Renwang jing shu* 仁王經疏 (Stein 2502; included T 85) also survives, and much like Huiyuan's other commentaries, sections on classification according to the twofold canon and explanation of the sutra's title appear therein.

⁴¹ In other *yiji*, this particular sutra is variously classified as belonging to the Dharma-wheel or Dharma-turning of the sudden teaching.

magical transformation) and reveals that this sutra is preached by the Buddha.

Next comes explanation of the sutra's title, which is indicated by the words "next we will explain its name or title" (*ci shi qi ming* 次釋其名). In the *yiji* for the other sutras, some of the 'six essentials' are treated in the explanation of the sutra title. Finally, at the end, it discusses the three basic divisions [of the sutra's contents] into preface, main discourse, and dissemination.

On the whole, Huiyuan adopts this threefold division of the sutra into preface, main discourse, and dissemination [in all of his commentaries]. However, in the case of the *Niepan jing yiji* (Notes or Notices on the Meaning of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*) he divides the sutra into five divisions of 'preface' (*xufen* 序分), 'revealing the merits' (*xiande fen* 顯德分), 'merits completed or acquired through cultivation' (*xiuchengde fen* 修成德分), 'refuting the heretical and conforming to the correct' (*poxie tongzheng fen* 破邪通正分), and the 'extinction of the Thus Come One and the rite of his cremation' (*rulai miedu zhewei gongyang fen* 如來滅度闍維供養分). However, he points out that the fifth section was never transmitted to China. In the *Weimo jing yiji* (Notes on the Meaning of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*), Huiyuan uses the basic threefold scheme for dividing the sutra's contents, but he also displays a very complex analytic parsing.⁴²

That said, one major feature found exclusively in commentaries of Huiyuan and not seen in those of other commentators is his linguistic investigation of sutra passages. Having already examined this subject in a study of Huiyuan's *Weimo jing yiji*,⁴³ I will touch but briefly on its essential points. First of all, Huiyuan points out the fact that certain differences exist between the word order or syntax used in a given Chinese/Han translation of a Buddhist sutra and the word order used in the general run of literatures composed in Chinese. Secondly, he singles out a particular word or character from the sutra text (in this case, notional words and grammatical or functional particles are both included) and, through recourse to various formulas, clarifies its meaning. For example, one finds such patterns as "A connotes or means to say B" (A 謂 B 也), "A is like or analogous to B" (A 猶 B 也), "A has the significance of B" (A 是 B 義), "A is equivalent to or functions as the word B" (A 者 B 辭; this is used chiefly in explanations of grammatical particles) and "A connotes or means to say AB" (A 謂 AB; where he uses a format of setting the target character in a more familiar two-character compound). Thirdly, through attention to the particular context, he explains why certain auxiliary particles appear in a given passage of the sutra. This sort of feature is particularly valuable, and is something that is almost never seen in Zhiyi and Jizang.

⁴² See Hiroshi Kanno, "Jōyōji Eon *Yuimakyōgiki* no kenkyū," *Tōyō gaku jutsu kenkyū* 23-2, 1984.11.

⁴³ See Hiroshi Kanno, "Jōyōji Eon *Yuimakyōgiki* no kenkyū," *Tōyō gaku jutsu kenkyū*, cited above. For a research report that extends this particular investigation of Huiyuan's linguistic exegesis to other commentaries of Jingying Huiyuan, see Kiyotaka Kimura, "Kanyaku batten kaishaku no kisoteki kenkyū: Jōyōji Eon o chūshin toshite," *The Report of the research result of a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture*, 1985, also included in Kiyotaka Kimura, *Higashi Ajia bukkyō shisō no kiso kōzō* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2001), which I provided with the result of my prior research on the *Weimo jing yiji* and *Niepan jing yiji*.

5. The Commentaries of Zhiyi and Jizang

The foremost feature of the commentaries of Zhiyi and Jizang such as *Fabua xuanyi* 法華玄義, *Weimo jing xuanshu* 維摩經玄疏, *Fabua xuanlun* 法華玄論, *Jingming xuanlun* 淨名玄論, *Fabua youyi* 法華遊意 is that they do not include passage by passage explanation of the sutra text, but strive synthetically to clarify the overall meaning of the sutra. They can be said to represent a new form of sutra commentary that sought to unpack and develop the thematic contents of the sutra preface typical of earlier periods. Zhiyi in his *Fabua xuanyi*, (Profound Meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra*), for example, sought to provide a synthetic exposition of the *Fabua jing* from the vantage of the ‘five modes of profound meaning’ (*wuchong xuanyi* 五重玄義): (1) explaining the title (*shiming* 釋名), (2) distinguishing the substance or foundation [of the sutra] (*bianti* 辨體), (3) illumining the thematic thrust or core (*mingzong* 明宗), (4) determining the function (*lunyong* 論用), and (5) classifying the doctrine (*panjiao* 判教).⁴⁴ Explanation of the title refers to exposition of the meaning of the sutra’s title, *Miaofa lianhua jing*. Distinguishing the substance refers to determining the substance or foundational essence of the *Fabua jing* as being none other than the ultimate reality of all phenomena. (In Zhiyi’s case, ultimate reality is actually identified as the substance of all Mahāyāna sutras, not just the *Fabua jing*.) Illumining the thematic thrust or thread refers to clarifying the cause and effect [path] of the Buddha’s own self-cultivation as the central theme of the *Fabua jing*; determining the function, to discussion of the two wisdoms of provisional reality and ultimate reality in their threefold aspect (of self-cultivation, training of others, and simultaneous self practice and conversion of others) as the functional power of the *Fabua jing*’s ability to sever doubts and arouse faith. Classifying the doctrine refers to the question of where to place the *Fabua jing* in relation to the manifold teachings delivered over the entire span of the Buddha’s preaching career. In the case of Zhiyi’s *Weimo jing xuanshu* 維摩經玄疏 the structural organization of the commentary proceeds, in sequence, through explanation of the four *siddhānta* (悉檀), the three contemplations (that is to say, contemplation of emptiness, contemplation of the provisional, and contemplation of the middle way), and the fourfold teachings (the tripiṭaka teaching, the pervasive or shared teaching, the separate teaching, and the perfect teaching).

Taking as our example Jizang’s *Fabua youyi* 法華遊意, we find that Jizang sets up ‘ten topical points’ (*shimen* 十門) of discussion. The first chapter deals with the ‘topic of the reason for the [sutra’s] origin’ (*laiyimen* 來意門). ‘Reason of origin’ (*laiyi*) refers to the intention implicit to the preaching of the sutra and its constituent chapters, in other words, the reason for the very existence of the sutra and its chapters. The second chapter

⁴⁴ Jizang, in his *Renwang bore jing shu* 仁王般若經疏 shows the influence of Zhiyi in adopting the fivefold profound meaning as the method for explaining the content of the sutra. (See T 33. 314b). However, when it comes to similarities and differences in the concept of ‘substance’ and ‘theme’, he distinguishes two perspectives whereby they can be seen as identical and can be seen as different. See Hiroshi Kanno, *Chūgoku Hokkesbisō no kenkyū*, pp. 496–528.

treats the ‘topic of thematic meaning or import’ (*zongzhi men* 宗旨門). ‘Thematic import’ refers to the basic thrust in meaning, or explanation of just what constitutes the basic import of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Compared to the emphasis on clarifying the concrete thought and pedagogy set forth in the *Fabua jing*, this topic of ‘thematic thrust’ involves examination of the basic import of the *Fabua jing* from the vantage of its theory of cause and effect, or religious practice and its results. The third chapter discusses the ‘topic of explaining the title’ (*shimingti men* 釋名題門); the fourth chapter, the ‘topic of classifying its doctrinal orientation’ (*bianjiaoyi men* 辨教意門). Classifying doctrinal orientation refers to explaining the orientation of the doctrinal teaching or content of the *Fabua jing* and involves the concrete effort to establish the status of the *Fabua jing* in relation to classification of the entire spectrum of teachings delivered over the course of the Buddha’s career. The fifth chapter deals with the ‘topic of the exoteric and esoteric, or manifest and hidden’ (*xianmi men* 顯密門). The [two] pedagogical approaches to teaching Hīnayāna-oriented śrāvakas and Mahāyāna bodhisattvas are divided into exoteric (that is, manifest meaning, in the sense of the meaning being explicitly and clearly stated) and esoteric (or secret meaning, in which the true import or meaning remains hidden). Thus the entirety of the Buddha’s preaching career is organized into a total of four aspects. These four permutations of the exoteric and esoteric are one of the core concepts of doctrinal classification that Jizang brought to completion in his *Fabua youyi*. It is especially applied to comparisons of the *Fabua jing* and *Bore jing*. Although, in the *Fabua youyi*, this ‘aspect of exoteric and esoteric’ becomes a discrete chapter unto itself, when it comes to its generic implications for classifying the teaching of the *Fabua jing*, it can also be said to figure substantially into the content of the fourth chapter on the ‘aspect of classifying doctrinal orientation’.

The sixth chapter treats the ‘topic of the three and the one’ (*sanyi men* 三一門), or the relationship between the three vehicles and one vehicle, a concept central to the Expedient Means Chapter of the *Fabua jing*. The seventh chapter concerns the ‘topic of efficacious function’ (*gongyong men* 功用門). It illumines the idea that the enormous salvific power possessed by the *Fabua jing* arises from the fact that the sutra is intrinsically endowed with ten sorts of inconceivability. The eighth chapter deals with the ‘aspect of disseminating the sutra’ (*hongjing men* 弘經門). It discusses the methods for disseminating the sutra, as well as the type of person who disseminates the sutra. The ninth chapter discusses the ‘topic of reduction of the sutra text’ (*budang men* 部黨門). It sorts out the relationship between different translations of the *Fabua jing* and the various sutras that belong to the extended *Fabua* or ‘Lotus’ cycle (*fabua bu* 法華部). As such, it represents historical research into the sutra’s translation [and formation]. The tenth chapter concerns the ‘topic of history’ (*yuanyi men* 緣起門). It sorts out the history of exegesis on the *Fabua jing*, and involves historical investigation into the practice of lecturing on the sutra.

The second distinctive feature of Zhiyi’s and Jizang’s commentaries is their establishment of a unique interpretive method. Zhiyi, in the *Fabua wenju* 法華文句 (Words and Phrases of the *Lotus Sūtra*), adopts a fourfold interpretive scheme consisting

of (1) '[determining] the causal circumstances [for genesis of the passage or text]' (*yinyuan* 因緣), (2) 'determining its doctrinal orientation' (*yuejiao* 約教), (3) [distinguishing] 'root meaning and manifest trace' (*benji* 本迹), and (4) '[examining the passage from the perspective of] contemplating the mind' (*guanxin* 觀心). Jizang adopts a fourfold scheme of interpretation comprising (1) 'exposition of the meaning based on names' (*yiming shiyi* 依名釋義), (2) 'exposition of the meaning based on the teaching of highest principle' (*lijiao shiyi* 理教釋義), (3) 'exposition of the meaning based on mutual inherence [of dualistic opposites]' (*buxiang shiyi* 互相釋義), and (4) 'exposition of the meaning that does not resort to any particular method' (*wufang shiyi* 無方釋義).⁴⁵ In the case of both Zhiyi and Jizang, it cannot be said that these methods of exposition are actually applied in full to the task of explaining the sutra. Nevertheless, they can be numbered among the greatest attributes of their commentaries.

6. Conclusion

We have sought, in the pages above, to provide an overview of the variety of sutra commentaries that circulated in Chinese Buddhist circles during the early period. We have seen concrete evidence in Buddhist sutra commentaries of a shift from the interlinear to the explanatory form, a development that appears to be grounded in an existing distinction between interlinear and 'exposition of the meaning' forms of commentary, as well as a shift from the interlinear to the expository style in scholarship on the Confucian classics. Even in Chinese Buddhist circles, interlinear commentaries were compiled first, and only later did the exposition of the meaning style of commentary become popular. It was Daosheng's era that marked this point of transformation. Daosheng's *Miaofa lianhua jing shu* being one of the earliest extant commentary in the 'exegesis of the meaning' style, we have thus given close scrutiny to its characteristic features. Basically, many of the attributes of Daosheng's commentary went on to be incorporated into later commentaries.

Because extant commentaries from the Liang Dynasty are so few, we focused on the *Dapan niepan jing jiji* and Fayun's *Fabua yiji*. For the 'Three Great Dharma masters of the Sui', — Jingying Huiyuan, Zhiyi, and Jizang — we looked at the opening section of Huiyuan's commentaries and aspects of Huiyuan's exegetical style evinced in his *Weimo jing jiji*. In the case of Zhiyi and Jizang, we have confined ourselves to their creation of commentaries on 'profound meaning' (*xuanyi*), 'profound treatise' (*xuanlun*), and 'survey of the meaning' (*youyi*) that do not involve passage by passage explanation of

⁴⁵ This is based on Jizang's *Sanlun xuanyi* 三論玄義, T 45. 14c. In Jizang's *Erdiyi* 二諦義 (T 45. 95a), they are given as Suiming shi 隨名釋 · Yinyuan shi 因緣釋 · Xiandao shi 顯道釋 · Wufang shi 無方釋. On Jizang's fourfold scheme of exegesis, see Shunei Hirai, "Kichizō Kyōgaku no kiso hanchū — innenshaku to likyōshaku," in his *Indo shisō to bukkyō* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1973); also his "Shishu shakugi" in Hirai, *Chūgoku hannya shisōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1976), pp. 429-440; and his "Mongu shishu shaku to kichizō shishushakugi," in Shunei Hirai, *Hokke mongu no seiritsu ni kansuru kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1985), pp. 229-250. Also see Hiroshi Kanno, "Ekin *Daijō shirongengiki* no sanshu shakugi to Kichizō no shishu shakugi" in *Higashi Ajia bukkyō* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2002).

the sutra text and touched only on the more salient points of their unique interpretive methods. In depth discussion of these two individuals will have to wait for another occasion.

Throughout this paper I have taxonomically divided sutra commentaries into the two categories of 'interlinear' and 'exegesis of meaning'. However, we should mention the fact that other forms of commentary do exist, the *Fabua jingwen waiyi* 法華經文外義 being one such example.⁴⁶ In this commentary, a series of topics are elicited relating to the thought of the *Fabua jing*, such as 'the two wisdoms', 'clarification of causal circumstances [that led to the preaching of the sutra], [the meanings of the passage] "whether there are two or whether three [vehicles]"', 'the burning house', 'the pure land', and 'the precipitous path that is five hundred *yojanas* long'. Investigations are added using a question and answer format, a format that, in fact, can be said to resemble Huisi's 慧思 *Fabua jing anlexing yi* 法華經安樂行義 and the section of Jizang's *Fabua xuanlun* that follows after the fourth fascicle.

⁴⁶ The manuscript copy of the text bears the copy date of *datong* 11 (545 CE). It is available in Fang Guangchang, *Zangwai fojiao wenxian*, vol. 2 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 1996).

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