

Article

A Study of Chinese Commentaries on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment

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Abstract: The *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, also known as *Yuanjuejing* 圓覺經 or, in full, *Dafang guangyuanjue xiuduoluo liaoyijing* 大方廣圓覺修多羅了義經, is a mindfulness meditation sutra with a particularly high reputation that has been the subject of a great deal of annotations and commentaries throughout the history of East Asian Buddhism. However, hitherto, the literature has not systematically organized and studied these annotations and commentaries. The aim of this paper is to organize the Chinese commentaries on this sutra from the 8th to the 17th centuries systematically and to introduce the different situations by the commentaries produced by different schools of Buddhism. Briefly, these works mainly include the commentaries by Weique 惟慈, Wushi 悟實, Jianzhi 堅志, Daoquan 道詮, and Tsung-mi 宗密 during the Tang Dynasty (618–907); the commentaries of the Huayan 華嚴宗, Tiantai 天臺宗, and Chan 禪宗 schools during the Song Dynasty (960–1279); and the literal interpretations and collected commentaries produced during the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368–1912).

Keywords: *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*; commentaries; meditation guidance



Citation: Wang, Kai. 2022. A Study of Chinese Commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. *Religions* 13: 1099. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13111099>

Academic Editor: Jeffery D. Long

Received: 8 August 2022

Accepted: 10 November 2022

Published: 14 November 2022

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1. Introduction

The *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* is a Buddhist scripture concerning mindfulness meditation that has been popular in Chan Buddhism since at least the 8th century. It is said to have been translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Buddhatrāta (佛陀多羅 or 覺救). Unfortunately, we cannot obtain more detailed information concerning the author and translator of this sutra because when the earliest catalog documents in Chinese Buddhism recorded this sutra, nobody knew who wrote it or when it had been translated into Chinese (Jun 2011). Accordingly, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a great deal of academic debate focused on the authenticity of this sutra. Some scholars believe that the sutra was not translated from Sanskrit into Chinese but was rather forged by Chinese monks. This view was first proposed by Mochizuki Shinkō, who, from the perspective of intellectual history, identified the sutra as identical with another Buddhist work written by a Chinese figure, *The Awakening of Faith* (Mochizuki 1946). Later, Kamata Shigeo and Yanagida Seizan, famous Buddhist scholars, supported this argument (Kamata 1975; Yanagida 1987), and it was gradually accepted by scholars. For example, Liang Qichao and Hu Shi also expressed this view (Nan 2016; Tang 2014). Lv Cheng even explicitly claimed that the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* was written on the basis of *The Awakening of Faith* and the *Shurangama Sutra*, indicating that they are all apocrypha (Lv 1979). Peter N. Gregory noted the existence of doubts concerning this sutra's authenticity as a sutra (Gregory 2005). However, even if this sutra was forged by Chinese individuals, it is not the case that there are no more problems with it, as some scholars have claimed. Some scholars have noted that the researchers mentioned above claimed that the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* is a Chinese forgery due only to the fact that it is similar in doctrine to Chinese philosophy; accordingly, there is insufficient historical evidence to prove that this sutra was a Chinese forgery (Sheng 2016; Yang 2016).

Although it can be seen from the chapter 12 of this sutra that there are two versions of this sutra: before the Southern Song Dynasty, there was no gatha at the end of the chapter 12, while the Southern Song version added a gatha. The body of the two versions is the same. The one widely used in scholarship is basically the same version that was transmitted by Tsung-mi (780–841) during the Tang Dynasty (618–907), which is said to have been translated by Buddhatrāta. This study mainly records the questions and answers discussed by twelve Bodhisattvas and the Buddha. The questions of each Bodhisattva and the answers of the Buddha constitute a chapter, so the sutra includes twelve chapters. In terms of structure, this sutra conforms to the general structure of Buddhist sutras, including three parts: the preface, the main teaching, and the dissemination section.

The main doctrinal part, which constitutes the core of the sutra, focuses on two questions. First, what is the state of perfect enlightenment? Second, in what kind of practices can we engage to achieve this state of perfect enlightenment? The state of perfect enlightenment refers to a calm state of mind that is able to view all people and things equally without making any rational distinctions or producing any feelings of desire, love, and hate. With the exception of Buddhas and some Bodhisattvas, sentient beings in real life do not realize this enlightenment. The reason for this failure is that sentient beings are ignorant; they are not aware of the dependent origination of the entire world and regard everything in the world as existent entities. Thus, on the one hand, sentient beings use reason to analyze these entities, naming them and seeking to understand them, etc., thereby filling their own minds with various judgments about those entities. Furthermore, sentient beings project their emotions onto these entities, thereby producing feelings of clinging and resentment toward them. This tendency is the reason that the minds of sentient beings are occupied with various distinctions and desires related to entities; accordingly, life becomes very painful.

According to the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, from the Buddha's perspective, the most fundamental way for sentient beings to alter their suffering state and achieve perfect enlightenment is to eliminate ignorance, i.e., to realize that the world is dependently originated, that everything is not an eternal entity but rather a fleeting illusion, and therefore, that they should not cling to anything. Different beings have different ways of eliminating ignorance and realizing this kind of enlightenment. Those who are gifted in spiritual practice will have an Epiphany as soon as they hear the contents of this sutra, and they will achieve perfect enlightenment at that moment. With respect to ordinary practitioners, their ability to control their thoughts and emotions is weak; they must practice step-by-step, and according to their own depth of practice, they must engage in three kinds of meditation in a certain order, i.e., śamatha, samāpatti, and dhyāna.

Śamatha means tranquil meditation. This form of meditation involves practicing quiescence. To practice this meditation, sentient beings should first practice perfect quiescence, i.e., existing without any thoughts. Quiescence taken to the highest degree leads directly to enlightenment. If you can exhibit this initial quiescence, beginning with your body, enlightenment will extend to the whole world in this manner (Buddhatrāta 1988).

Samāpatti refers to the full cessation of both sensation and perception. This form of meditation is an enlightenment method that entails practicing illusory meditation. To practice this method, sentient beings should fully realize that all faculties and objects are based on illusory transformations. Sentient beings should not concentrate on illusory things but should rather be mindful of the tathāgatas and the Bodhisattvas (Buddhatrāta 1988).

Dhyāna indicates meditative concentration. This form of meditation is an enlightenment method that involves causing the mind to focus on one object with the aim of reaching the state of extinction of distractions. To practice this method, sentient beings should practice observance of breath. They must clearly discern the number of their breaths and be fully aware of the arising, abiding and cessation of every thought (Buddhatrāta 1988).

By means of these practices, perfect enlightenment occurs when sentient beings cease to distinguish anything either cognitively or emotionally and when they are able to consider things as precisely what they are in absolute equality.

Whether translated into Chinese or written by Chinese individuals, this sutra, particularly its content concerning the meditative methods mentioned above, had a tremendous influence on the meditation of various schools of Buddhism in China both during and after the Tang Dynasty. One of the manifestations of this influence is the fact that many monks annotated and interpreted this sutra, producing a large number of annotations and commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. However, few scholars have paid much attention to these commentaries. Hitherto, only Yusuki Ryoei and Gong Jun have conducted systematic studies of the Chinese commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* produced over a long period of time. Yusuki Ryoei discussed in detail the commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* produced in China and Japan from the Tang Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty but did not analyze the characteristics of these commentaries and did not pay attention to the commentaries produced in northwest China or those collected in the *Jiaying Buddhist Canon* 嘉興藏 (Yusuki 1931). From the perspective of the Huayan, Tiantai, and Chan schools, Gong Jun briefly introduced the characteristics of the commentaries produced during the Tang and Song dynasties (Jun 2011), but he did not study the literature written during the Ming and Qing dynasties or pay attention to the commentaries created in northwest China and those collected in the *Jiaying Buddhist Canon* in which a commentary work of the famous Tiantai monk Shanyue (1149–1241) is included.

Research concerning the Chinese commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* is even rarer in English scholarship. At present, only brief introductions to these commentaries can be found in the works of Charles Luk, Charles Muller, and Gregory. Charles Luk translated commentaries by the eminent Chan monk Han Shan (1546–1623) into English (Luk 1962). This translation has been regarded as an important reference for the study of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* in English scholarship through the 21st century (Sheng-Yen 1999). Charles Muller translated the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* from Chinese into English by relying on the commentaries of Gihwa (1376–1433), the major Korean commentator on this sutra. In the “Content Overview” included in this translation, the Chan, Huayan, and Tiantai schools were mentioned as commentators on meditation theory in this sutra (Muller 1999). Gregory implied in his translation that the large number of commentaries on this sutra produced during the Tang (618–907), Song (960–1279), Ming (1368–1644), and Qing (1644–1912) Dynasties is sufficient evidence of the sutra’s important influence throughout the history of Chinese Buddhism (Gregory 2005). However, he did not elaborate on the circumstances in which these commentaries were written. Gregory also focused on Tsung-mi’s (780–841) commentaries on this sutra, mainly on the task of analyzing the relationship between Tsung-mi and this sutra (Gregory 1991). In summary, none of these studies have comprehensively introduced these Chinese commentaries to English-speaking scholars.

This paper aims to organize the literary characteristics of the annotations to and commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* written from the Tang Dynasty (618–907) to the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) systematically to provide more comprehensive support to further research in this field. I should mention that introductions to some of these commentary works can also be found in a Japanese dictionary called *Foshujieshuodacidian*. However, this dictionary does not give a perfect account of these commentary works and their ideas. In view of this, I will systematically review these commentary works in English in this article, so that English readers can understand the overall picture of these commentary works.

2. Commentaries in the Tang Dynasty (618–907)

The annotations and commentaries of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* produced during the Tang Dynasty are represented by the commentaries written by the four Chan monks Weique 惟惔, Wushi 悟實, Jianzhi 堅志, Daoquan 道詮, which were collected by Tsung-mi 宗密, as well as the commentaries written by Tsung-mi himself, such as the *Yuanjue jing da shu* 圓覺經大疏 (Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment), *Yuanjue jing da shu chao* 圓覺經大疏鈔 (Sub-Commentary on the Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect

Enlightenment) and *Yuanjue jing daochang xiuzheng yi* 圓覺經道場修證儀 (Liturgy for Cultivation and Practice of the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment Bodhimanda). The works of these four monks are no longer extant, and information concerning their spread and editions is scattered throughout Tsung-mi's works. Tsung-mi's commentaries are numerous, but on the whole, they all focus on the *Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.

The four Chan monks mentioned in Tsung-mi's works are the earliest known Chinese individuals to comment on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. According to Tsung-mi, the first monk, Weique (fl. mid-eighth century), who wrote the *Commentary on the Śūrangama sutra*, annotated and commented on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*; he focused on explaining the meaning of the words of the sutra and did not discuss the overall philosophy of cultivation underlying the sutra. Weique's *Commentaries on Śūrangama-sūtra* was well preserved and spread to Japan, and it had a wide influence on East Asian Buddhism (Jia 2022). However, his commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* have not been preserved, and only some fragments remain embedded in the works of Tsung-mi. Although one scholar regards Weique as a monk of the Huayan School (Keyworth 2022), we cannot find evidence concerning the Huayan school in the fragments of his commentaries; instead, more is said about the Chan school. For example, when Weique discussed enlightenment, he claimed that if the light of the wisdom of sentient beings is fully radiated, the sensation of any organ of sense in sentient beings will immediately disappear, and their minds will become empty, thus indicating that all sentient beings will suddenly become enlightened (Tsung-mi 1975–1989b). In China, during the 7th and 8th centuries, similar theories of sudden enlightenment were widely endorsed by various Chan schools (McRae 1987). This similarity may imply a relationship between Weique's thoughts and Chan. Of course, as Tsung-mi criticized, Weique merely interpreted the words of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* in a more intelligible way and did not intend to interpret the sutra in accordance with the thought of any particular school of Buddhism (Tsung-mi 1975–1989b).

Unlike our more extensive knowledge of Weique, we know little regarding Wushi, Jianzhi, and Daoquan. The information presently available indicates that Wushi became a monk when he was a child and lived in Xiantian Temple, Luoyang for a long time. He was a monk of the Heze Chan school and is reputed to have lived 86 years. His commentaries on each section of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* are rather rough, and most of these commentaries merely show that all things or sensations are unreal and that the mind, as the agent of knowledge or enlightenment, is universal. Although his commentaries conform to the doctrine of the Southern Chan school, it is still insufficient to elucidate the thought contained in this sutra itself. Daoquan annotated the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* by quoting the original texts of other Buddhist classics. To avoid problems of interpretation, Daoquan interpreted the scriptures by using popular Buddhist terms to explain the terms used in this sutra without incorporating his own understanding. Jianzhi was the disciple of Wushi. His commentary is similar to some works aimed at propagating the Dharma among ordinary people and uses rhymes and poems to elucidate the text of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* (Tsung-mi 1975–1989a).

In the Tang Dynasty, in addition to the commentaries by the four monks mentioned above, Tsung-mi's commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* were the most abundant and profound. Scholars have generally maintained that Tsung-mi's commentaries are the reason that the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* played an important role in the history of Buddhism in China and even throughout East Asia (Sheng-Yen 1999; Jan 1988; Hu 2013). Tsung-mi played two roles in the history of Chinese Buddhism. He was both a monk of the Heze Chan School and the fifth patriarch of the Huayan School. Therefore, his commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* exhibit characteristics associated with both the Chan and Huayan schools. To date, seven important works of commentary are attributed to Tsung-mi.

Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment. This text was written in 823. This work is included in *Jiaying Canon*, *Qianlong Edition of the Canon*, *Zhonghua Canon*, and *Manji Shinsan Dainihon Zokuzōkyō*. Taking the *Manji Shinsan Dainihon Zokuzōkyō* version

as an example, this commentary work is divided into 12 volumes (X0243). Two preludes are included before the main text: the “Preface to the *Commentary on the Great Extensive Scripture of the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*” written by Pei Xiu 裴休 (786–860) and the *Dafangguang yuanjue jing shuxu* 大方廣圓覺經疏序 (Preface to the *Full Commentary on the Great Extensive Scripture of the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*) written by Tsung-mi.

Pei Xiu was a famous official working during the Tang Dynasty who became prime minister in 852. He was very close to Tsung-mi, wrote prologues for many of Tsung-mi’s works, and was a great admirer of Tsung-mi. In this preface, Pei Xiu summarized Tsung-mi’s commentary on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. He believed that the main meaning of Tsung-mi’s commentaries was that the central idea of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* could be summarized as “divinatory knowing”. From an ontological perspective, both sentient beings and the Buddha have the nature of perfect enlightenment. The Buddha achieved perfect enlightenment because he fully recognized this nature by making full use of the “divinatory knowing”, while sentient beings do the opposite. Therefore, to achieve perfect enlightenment, sentient beings must improve their ability to engage in “divinatory knowing” by practicing śamatha, samāpatti, and dhyāna meditations (Pei 1975–1989). In this context, Pei Xiu uses divinatory knowing to interpret Tsung-mi’s writings, which reflects his tendency to understand Tsung-mi’s thoughts from the perspective of Chan. Although some scholars have claimed that divinatory knowing is a concept developed by Tsung-mi as the patriarch of the Huayan school (Jan 1988), more evidence indicates that this term is borrowed from the Heze Chan school by Chengguan (738–839), the master of Tsung-mi (Ziporyn 1994; Kuo 2017; Zheng 2022). Moreover, in another article, Pei Xiu emphasized that Tsung-mi was a patriarch of the Chan school and downplayed his identity as the patriarch of the Huayan school (Han 2018). This evidence also proves that Pei Xiu was inclined to understand Tsung-mi’s commentary from the perspective of Chan.

According to the preface written by Tsung-mi himself and the specific content of the *Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, the main feature of Tsung-mi’s commentary is the combination of the teachings of Huayan and Chan. Namely, he did not merely use the teachings of one school to comment on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. First, judging from the process of writing this commentary, Tsung-mi first encountered the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* while he was learning Chan doctrine from Chan master Daoyuan 道圓 (Tsung-mi 1975–1989b). According to Tsung-mi’s own recollection, when he read the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, he was inspired and became determined to study and spread this sutra further. However, at that time, Tsung-mi had not systematically studied the Huayan classics. However, when Tsung-mi wrote the *Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, he had studied Huayan doctrine for a long time and had become a disciple of Chengguan 澄觀, the fourth patriarch of the Huayan school (Tsung-mi 1975–1989b). Second, judging from the contents of this commentary, on the one hand, Tsung-mi cited a large number of Buddhist classics, such as the *Awakening of Faith*, *Uttaratantra-sastra*, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi-śāstra*, and *Fa-chieh-kuan-mên*. There are works associated with the Chan, Huayan, and Yogācāra schools (Gregory 2005). On the other hand, the main idea of this commentary is the combination of the Huayan theory of the “arising of nature 性起” and the Chan theory of “divinatory knowing 靈知” (Wang 2021).

Sub-Commentary on the Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment, also known as the *Annotated Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, was collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō* tomes 14 and 15, in twenty-six or thirteen volumes (X0245). This sub-commentary was written by Tsung-mi in the period 823–841. The beginning of this work contains a preface written in 1138 by Yuanhui 元慧, a monk working during the Song Dynasty (960–1279). According to this preface, Tsung-mi’s subcommentary was circulated only in the form of Chinese manuscripts for a long time after its completion, and it was not printed and published. During the Song Dynasty, the subcommentary was reprinted based on the printed copies obtained from Goryeo and corrected by reference to the Chinese manuscripts (Tsung-mi 1994). With respect to its content, this work is actually a further explanation of Tsung-mi’s *Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. In the process

of this explanation, theories drawn from Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism were used comprehensively. This tendency shows that Tsung-mi was pursuing the integration of various theories at that time, and modern scholarship has also widely viewed “integration” as a significant theoretical feature of Tsung-mi (Gregory 1989; Kim 2007; Dong 2000).

Yuanjuejing dashu chaoke 圓覺經大疏鈔科 (The Scriptural Synopses of Sub-Commentary on the Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) were collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 87(X0244). This work originally consisted of three volumes, but only part of the second volume and the entire contents of the third volume have been preserved. This text is an outline of the *Sub-Commentary on the Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* and was written between 821 and 824.

Yuanjue jing lueshu 圓覺經略疏 (The Abridged Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) was collected in *Taishō Tripitaka*, tome 39 (T1795), and *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 15, in four volumes. This work is an abridged version of the *Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. The purpose of this text is to reduce the difficulty of reading.

Yuanjuejing lueshu ke 圓覺經略疏科 (The Scriptural Synopses of the Abridged Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) were collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 15, in two volumes (X0246). This text is an outline of *The Abridged Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.

Yuanjue jing lueshu chao 圓覺經略疏鈔 (Sub-Commentary on The Abridged Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) was collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 15, in twelve volumes(X0248). This work is actually a further explanation of *The Abridged Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. In fact, it was excerpted from the *Sub-Commentary on the Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.

Yuanjue jing daochang xiuzheng yi 圓覺經道場修證儀 (Liturgy for Cultivation and Practice of the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment Bodhimanda) was collected in *Manji Shinsan Dainihon Zokuzōkyō*, tome 74, in eighteen volumes (X1475). This text focuses on meditation rituals and was created by Tsung-mi in accordance with the meditation method described in the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. However, scholars have basically agreed that the main content of this work is not original to Tsung-mi but was rather taken from Xiao zhiguan 小止觀 (Small Cessation and Contemplation), which was written by ZhiYi 智顓 (538–597), the fourth patriarch of the Tiantai school (Hu 2013; Kai 2002).

In addition to the seven works mentioned above, Tsung-mi also wrote works such as *Yuanjue jing zuanyao* 圓覺經纂要 (Essentials of the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) and *Yuanjuejing kewen* 圓覺經科文 (The Scriptural Synopses of the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment), which have been lost.

3. Commentaries in the Song Dynasty (960–1279)

Following Tsung-mi, the influence of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* on Chinese Buddhism became increasingly significant. From the middle and late Tang Dynasty to the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127), the Huayan and Chan schools adopted this sutra as their own guide to research and practice. During the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279), the Tiantai school began to attach importance to this sutra and to comment on it from its own perspective, hoping to develop a theoretical system that could compete with that of the Huayan school. The following are the commentaries produced by the Chinese Huayan, Tiantai and Chan schools during the Song Dynasty.

3.1. Commentaries of the Huayan School

The commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* produced by the Huayan school during the Song Dynasty exhibited strong sectarian and constructive characteristics, which strengthened the role of this sutra in the development of the Huayan school. In particular, Jingyuan 淨源's *Yuanjue jing daochang lue ben xiuzhengyi* 圓覺經道場略本修證儀 (Abridged Manual for Cultivation and Realization of Ritual the Scripture of Perfect Enlightenment Bodhimanda) (X1476), Guanfu 觀復's *Yuanjue jing chao bian yi wu* 圓覺經鈔辨疑誤 (The Examination of the Errors in Sub-Commentary on The Abridged Commentary on the Sutra

of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0249), Shanxi 善熹's *Chi miu* 斥謬 (Refute the Fallacy) (X1020), Xingting 行霆's *Yuanjue jing leijie* 圓覺經類解 (Categorized Interpretations of Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0252), Qingyuan 清遠's *Yuanjue jing shu chao sui wen yao jie* 圓覺經疏鈔隨文要解 (The Essentials of the Commentaries and Subcommentaries of Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0250) are the most representative works in this context.

The first commentator and commentary work are Jingyuan (1011–1088) and his *Abridged Manual for Cultivation and Realization of Ritual the Scripture of Perfect Enlightenment Bodhimanda*. Jingyuan was a famous Huayan monk. In his early years, Jingyuan began to learn the doctrine of Huayan from Wutai Chengqian 五臺承遷 and Henghai Mingqin 橫海明覃, and he was later trained by Changshui Zixuan 長水子璿 (965–1038). After concluding his study, he developed a close relationship with the Goryeo monk Uichon (1055–1101), from whom he acquired many lost Chinese Huayan scriptures. Jingyuan is known as the patriarch of the revival of the Huayan school and later became respected as the seventh (or tenth) patriarch of the Huayan School, an honor which was closely related to his collection and compilation of Huayan classics. Jingyuan's *Abridged Manual for Cultivation and Realization of Ritual the Scripture of Perfect Enlightenment Bodhimanda* serves as a brief guide to spiritual practice and rituals, and it was developed as an abridged form of Tsung-mi's *Liturgic for Cultivation and Practice of the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment Bodhimanda*. This text is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 129, in one volume. Jingyuan believed that Tsung-mi's work contained too much content and was too difficult to practice, so he created this abridged version to make it easier for practitioners to practice in accordance with the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* (Jingyuan 1994).

The second commentator and commentary work are Guanfu and his *The Examination of the Errors in Sub-Commentary on The Abridged Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. Guanfu, whose birth and death years are unknown, was also known as Xiao'an 笑庵. According to Chen Yongge's research, his main period of activity ranged from 1141 to 1152 (Chen 2010). Guanfu's master was Shihui 師會 (1102–1166), one of the four greatest masters of the Huayan school during the Song Dynasty. The examination text by Guanfu is a record of the errors made in the *Sub-Commentary on The Abridged Commentary on The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. This text is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 15, in two volumes. Guanfu found that the *Sub-Commentary on The Abridged Commentary on The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* was not written by Tsung-mi alone but was rather excerpted and abridged by Tsung-mi and his disciples in accordance with the *Sub-commentary on the Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. During this process of abridging and copying, many errors were made. In addition to the preamble of *The Abridged Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, Guanfu compiled this examination text by recording 103 errors about the body of this abridged commentary. In addition, Guanfu and his master Shihui engaged in a heated debate concerning the status of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* in the Huayan school. Shihui insisted that the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* could only be counted as a "common teaching" and that only the *Avatamsaka Sutra* can be counted as "distinct teaching", so the Huayan school should take the *Avatamsaka Sutra* as the most fundamental guide to practice. Guanfu held the opposite opinion, believing that the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* was both a "common teaching" (同教) and a "distinct teaching" (別教) and should thus enjoy the same status as the *Avatamsaka Sutra* in the practice of Huayan school. This debate is regarded as an extremely important ideological event within the Huayan school (Jun 2011).

The third commentator and commentary work are Shanxi (1148–1204) and his *Refute the Fallacy*. Shanxi was the most loyal disciple of Shihui and was known as a defender of Shihui's ideas in the history of the Huayan school during the Song Dynasty. *Refute the Fallacy* was written by Shanxi to support Shihui and refute dissenters in response to the debate between Shihui and Guanfu. This text is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 103, in one volume. This work firmly opposes the view that the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* should be viewed as a "distinct teaching". The reason why he put forward this point of

view, in addition to Gong Jun's "in case of damaging the status of *Avatamsaka Sutra* in Huayan school", is more important based on the following two points:

First, Shanxi believed that the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* does not contain the theories of "The Interfusion of The Three Holy Ones" (三聖圓融), "Integrated in the Main and the Associate" (主伴無盡) or "Arising of Nature" (性起), which are included in the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. Therefore, the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* cannot be as important as the *Avatamsaka Sutra* to the Huayan school (Shanxi 1994).

Second, Shanxi believed that the exclusion of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* from "distinct teaching" is consistent with both the Dharma Lineage and Continuity of the Way. He insisted that Tsung-mi and his master Shihui supported this view.

The third commentator and commentary work are Xingting and his *Categorized Interpretations of Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. Xingting, whose birth and death years are unknown, was a monk of the Huayan school during the Southern Song Dynasty. According to records, he wrote the *Chongbian zhutian zhuan* 重編諸天傳 (Recompilation of Biographies of the Gods in Heavens) in 1173 and is supposed to have lived from 1162–1189, i.e., during the reign of Emperor Xiaozong 孝宗 (1127–1194). His work is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 15, in eight volumes. This text is an abridged copy of the *Yuanjuejing jiangyi* 圓覺經講義 (Lecture Notes on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) written by Fu'an 復庵, the author of *Huayanjing lunguan* 華嚴經論貫 *The Imperial Quality of Avatamsaka Sutra*, who lived in Sichuan. Fu'an's lecture notes basically follow Tsung-mi's commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. In addition to these commentaries, the text also quotes some Buddhist sutras and Chan sayings to better explain the meaning of the scriptures (Xingting 1994).

Xingting's work explains the general idea of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* from the following eight aspects:

1. Essence-Function (體用). This work points out that the essence of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* is the perfect enlightenment and the function of this sutra is great and vast (Xingting 1994).
2. Dharma gist (法義). This work points out that the gist of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* is to take the perfect enlightenment as the inherent enlightenment (本覺) (Xingting 1994).
3. Seeing and Seen (能所). This work points out that the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* is the complete doctrine and it contains all the Buddhist teachings of enlightenment (Xingting 1994).
4. The meaning of the title (名義). This work points out that the title of this sutra means the *Great Extensive Scripture of the Ultimate Meaning of the Perfect Enlightenment Sutra* (Xingting 1994).
5. The origin of sutra's name (立名). This work points out that the name of this sutra is from the Chapter of Most Excellent of Worthies Bodhisattva (賢首菩薩) in which the Buddha's own interpretation of each word of the sutra's name is recorded (Xingting 1994).
6. Acceptance and reject (取捨). This work points out that this sutra deals with a total of five themes and focuses on two. The five themes are "the great extensive Dhāraṇī of perfect enlightenment" (大方廣圓覺陀羅尼), "the ultimate meaning" (修多羅了義), "the secret king Samādhi" (祕密王三昧), "the definitive sphere of the Tathāgata" (如來決定境界) and "Distinctions in the Self-nature of the Tathāgatagarbha" (如來藏自性差別). The first two of these have been given extremely important status (Xingting 1994).
7. Doubts and difficult questions (問難). This work answers some questions about the relationship between the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, the *Awakening of Faith* and the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. From the Xingting's point of view, the common idea of the three scriptures is inherent enlightenment, but different interpretations of enlightenment are carried out from different Phala (果位) (Xingting 1994).

8. Conclusion (總收). This work points out that this scripture is the most complete doctrine of enlightenment for the gifted practitioner. Complete enlightenment can be achieved simply by practicing according to the scripture (Xingting 1994).

The fifth commentator and commentary work are Qingyuan and *The Essentials of the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries of Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. Qingyuan, whose birth and death years are unknown, was a monk of the Huayan school during the Southern Song Dynasty who lived at the Huayan Temple in Piling (Changzhou, Jiangsu province, China today). His work is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 15, in twelve volumes. The beginning of this work contains a preface written by Daoshu, a monk of Tōdai-ji in Japan. This preface accurately summarizes the characteristics of Qingyuan's work as follows. First, it distinguishes between correct and incorrect commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* according to Tsung-mi's commentaries. Second, correct commentaries are used in combination with various theories of the Huayan school to explain the meaning of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.

This work has several characteristics: First, it believes that the doctrine of Huayan is more advantageous than the doctrine of Tiantai in the interpretation of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. For example, in the preface, Qingyuan pointed out that the "five periods of Buddha's teaching" theory of Tiantai cannot cover the profound truth of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* (五時難攝，圓頓可收). In addition, the author repeated the teachings of Huayan in this work to improve the status of Huayan school. According to incomplete statistics, the work discusses Huayan 287 times, five times as much as the contents of Tiantai. Second, this work has obvious characteristics of teaching handouts. In this work, the author specifically mentioned that the purpose of writing this work is to provide convenience for people to discuss the scriptures and promote the spread of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. Thirdly, this work has obvious practical characteristics. In the preface, the author emphasizes the study of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* which means that every thought should be adapted to perfect enlightenment and practice the doctrine of this sutra in the process of walking, standing, sitting and lying (Qingyuan 1994).

3.2. Commentaries of the Tiantai School

Although the commentaries of the Tiantai school written during this period are not as rich as those of the Huayan school, against the backdrop of the Tiantai school's struggle to attain status in the development of Buddhism, the Tiantai commentaries written during this period generally tend to establish a connection between *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* and the theory espoused by the Tiantai school, leading to the production of many unique commentaries.

The first commentator and commentary work are Shanyue 善月 (1149–1241) and his *Yuanjuejing lueshi* 圓覺經略釋 (Brief Interpretation on Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment). Shanyue was born in Dinghai (Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province, China). Under the influence of his father, he studied Confucianism at an early age and became a monk at Zhengjue Temple. He studied with Tiantai monks such as Caoan Daoyin 草庵道因 (1090–1167.5.14), Yuetang Huixun 月堂慧詢 (1119–1179.12.4), and Zhuan Keguan 竹庵可觀 (1092–1182.4.1). His work is collected in *Jiaying Canon (The Ethnic Publishing House Edition)*, tome 370, in two volumes. In this work, Shanyue first applied the "Five-Sectioned Interpretation 五重玄義" method of Tiantai to interpret the scriptures and abandoned the "Ten-Cates Interpretation 十門釋經" method used by the Huayan school. In addition, he paid special attention to the task of integrating the theory of cessation and contemplation into the interpretation of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.

The second commentator and commentary work are Zhicong 智聰 and his *Yuanjuejing xin jing* 圓覺經心鏡 (Mind Mirror of Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0254). Zhicong, whose birth and death years are unknown, lived during the periods of Baoqing (1225–1227) and Shaoding (1228–1233) in the Song Dynasty and was monk at Chongshan Temple, Chicheng Mountain, Taizhou. His work was written in 1227. It is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 93, in six volumes. The beginning of this work contains a preface writ-

ten by Zhicong. From this preface, we learn that Zhi Cong completed only five volumes initially due to personal financial difficulties, but he was subsequently able to complete six volumes with a grant of 400,000 qian from a couple (Zhicong 1994). Zhicong attached great importance to the use of the theory of the Tiantai school to interpret the scriptures, and the work as a whole mentions *Saddharmapundarika sutra* as many as 37 times and Tiantai as many as 26 times.

This work is characterized by the author's use of the 'matching meanings' (geyi 格義) method in the interpretation of the scripture. In the interpretation of the title of the text, the author abandons the traditional interpretation and uses some concepts of Confucianism to correspond to it. He interprets "yuan" (圓) as "compass" (規), "jue" (覺) as "square" (矩), and equates Buddha's "perfect enlightenment" with "moral norms" made by sages, apparently referencing the Confucian definition of "moral standards" (規矩) (Zhicong 1994).

In the main text, the author interprets the scripture more explicitly in Tiantai terms. First, he uses Tiantai's theory of "Original Realm of fundamental cause" (本門因地) to interpret "tathāgatas in their originally arisen causal stage" (如來本起因地). Second, he uses the theory of the period of degeneration and extinction of the Buddha law in the *Lotus Sūtra* to explain why Mañjuśrī asked the Buddha about the practice guidance for sentient being in this period. Third, he uses "Three Thousand Realms in a Single Thought Moment" (一念三千), "The Doctrine that the Buddha-nature includes both good and evil" (性具善惡) to explain this sentence from the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*: "The unsurpassed King of the dharma possesses the great dhāraṇī-entrance. It is called 'Perfect Enlightenment.'" Fourth, he believes that perfect enlightenment can be regarded as three dogmas, namely, the immateriality (空諦), unreality (假諦), and the middle doctrine (中諦). Additionally, he also believes that the practice of the three contemplations is the necessary way to achieve perfect enlightenment. The three contemplations are Emptiness Contemplation (空觀), Provisional Positing Contemplation (假觀), and Intersubsumption Contemplation (中觀) (Zhicong 1994).

The third commentator and commentary work are Yuancui 元粹 and his *Yuanjue jing ji zhu* 圓覺經集註 (Collected Commentaries on Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0257). Yuancui, whose birth and death years are unknown, was born in Tiaoxi (presently Huzhou, Zhejiang Province, China). He was a second-generation disciple of the Tiantai monk Zhu'an Keguan (1092–1182.4.1) and a first-generation disciple of Beifeng Zongyin 北峰宗印 (1149–1214.27) during the Song Dynasty. His work is collected in Manji Zokuzōkyō, tome 16, in two volumes. This work is a collection of commentaries. Yuancui collected a few commentaries from the following five works: Tsung-mi's *Sub-Commentary on the Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, Zhangnan 鄭南's *Yuanjuejing shu* 圓覺經疏 (Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment), Jushi 居式's *Yuanjuejing shu* 圓覺經疏 (Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment), Keguan's *Yuanjue shoujian* 圓覺手鑑 (Handbook of the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment), Miaoyun 妙云's *Yuanjuejing zhijie* 圓覺經直解 (Interpretations of the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment). He attached these commentaries to the scriptures below and added some of his own brief comments in the conclusion.

In this work, the author pays great attention to use the interpretation of Tiantai school to annotate the scriptures. First, he uses "The Doctrine that the Buddha nature includes both good and evil" to explain Saṃbhogakāya. Second, when referring to the practice method, the author believes that "Using illusion to remedy illusion" (以幻修幻) in this sutra is the theory of "The Complete Combination of The Tree Dogamas" (三諦圓融) of Tiantai school. Third, he believes that perfect enlightenment can be achieved by practicing the "Cessation and Contemplation" (止觀). When talking about the specific meditation methods, he uses the "25 expedients" (二十五方便) of Tiantai school to explain the "śamatha" in the scripture. Fourth, he matched the three methods of eliminating illusions in the scripture with the three contemplations of Tiantai school. Specifically, the elimination of the illusion-body corresponds to the Emptiness Contemplation, the elimination of the sensation of any organ of sense corresponds to the Provisional Positing Contemplation, the elimination of the illusion-mind corresponds to the Intersubsumption Contemplation.

Fifth, in the interpretation of some important concepts, the author deliberately does not adopt the Tsung-mi's interpretation, but the Tiantai's interpretation. For example, Tsung-mi explained "The Nature's own equality" (性自平等) in detail, but the author does not cite Tsung-mi's explanation in his work, instead, he adopts the explanations of Keguang and Miaoyun.

3.3. Commentaries of the Chan School

The commentaries of the Chan school on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* during the Song Dynasty lack theoretical innovation. The content of these commentaries is basically a general explanation of the scriptures based on existing theories, and the interpretation of the scriptures is fundamentally associated with the traditional method of explaining the scriptures by citing other scriptures. It is worth noting that due to the need of Chan Buddhism to expand its power during this period and the love of scholars for the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, the commentaries of the Chan school during the Song Dynasty paid great attention to improving the readability and easy transmission of such interpretations, and they thereby exhibited strong practical characteristics.

The first commentator and commentary work are Emperor Xiaozong 孝宗 of Song (1127–1194) and his *Yuzhu yuanjuejing* 御注圓覺經 (Imperial Exegesis on Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0251). Xiaozong, also known as Zhao Shen 趙昚, was the second emperor of the Southern Song Dynasty. Xiaozong's encounter with the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* was related to Zilin 子琳, a Chan monk. According to the *Fozutongji* 佛祖統紀 (General History of Chinese Buddhism), Emperor Xiaozong asked Zilin in 1165 what sutra he should focus on if he wanted to read the sutra. Zilin replied that he should read the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. Emperor Xiaozong then asked about the essentials of Chan meditation, and Zilin replied that Chan meditation requires one to practice enlightenment on one's own. This work is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 15, in two volumes. The beginning of this work contains a memorial written by Baoyin 寶印 and a gatha. The memorial mainly discusses the reason why this work was granted to Jingshan, a Buddhist shrine, by the emperor and explicates the characteristics of its writing. The main part of this work employs the method of adding interlinear notes to explain difficult words and phrases in the original scripture of *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* more directly. The conclusion of this work contains an inscription written by Fuzhou Shuangbai Temple White Lotus Society for the society's edition of this work. Emperor Xiaozong mainly added notes to the words and phrases of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* according to his own understanding of Tsung-mi's commentaries, and these notes were mostly drawn from the works of Tsung-mi; accordingly Emperor Xiaozong's work can be regarded as a simplified version of Tsung-mi's commentaries.

This work is characterized by the use of the meditation theory of Southern Chan school to annotate the scripture. First, the author believes that the first step to achieve perfect enlightenment is to eliminate intelligence, consideration, and discretion. Second, the author uses the core doctrine of Southern Chan school, No-Thought (無念), No-Form (無相) and Non-Abiding (無住), to interpret the meditation methods of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. Specifically, he uses "No-Thought" to explain "separating from all illusory and false realms" (遠離諸幻) (Xiaozong 1994). He uses "No-Form" to explain "the perfect illumination of the attributes of pure enlightenment" (圓照清淨覺相) (Xiaozong 1994). He uses "Non-Abiding" to explain "their Perfect Enlightenment illuminates everywhere, and is perfectly still, without duality" (圓覺普照, 寂滅無二) (Xiaozong 1994).

The second commentator and commentary work are Zhouqi 周琪 and his *Yuanjue jing jia song ji jiangyi* 圓覺經夾頌集講義 (Lecture Notes of the Interlinear Hymns and Collected Interpretations of Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0253). The story of Zhouqi's life cannot be described in detail. His work is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 87, in twelve volumes. Judging from the concluding date listed in Zhouqi's preface, this book is alleged to have been completed on 24 January 1247. As seen from the title, this book is not a commentary on the theory of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* but rather a kind of a textbook

for preaching and cultivation. Its main content includes two parts: hymns and collected interpretations. Hymns express the main meaning of the scriptures in rhyme, which allows readers or audiences to memorize the content of the scriptures conveniently. Collected interpretations include commentaries and citations from other works. This work mainly consists of the original scriptures, *Xiaozong's Imperial Exegesis on Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, *Fu'an's Lecture Notes on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, *Zhicong's Mind Mirror of Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* and hymns taken from Tsung-mi's commentaries.

A clear presentation of the general idea of all the chapters is the main purpose of this work. The author succinctly chooses some of the Tsung-mi's summaries for the scripture as follows: the general idea of the first chapter is to explain the reasons why we should believe the perfectly enlightened marvelous mind of the Tathāgata (成發起因). The general idea of the second chapter is to explain the aroused state of the mind (令解用心). The general idea of the third chapter is to explain the theory of the "body and mind without natures" (身心無性). The general idea of the fourth chapter is to explain how to understand Samsāra (深悟輪回). The general idea of the fifth chapter is to explain how to eliminate desires (令斷貪愛). The general idea of the sixth chapter is to explain how to understand "according with pure enlightenment" (隨順修証). The general idea of the seventh chapter is to explain three meditation methods (立三觀門). The general idea of the eighth chapter is to explain the relationship between meditation methods (示觀網交羅). The general idea of the ninth chapter is to explain how to eliminate the "trace of self," "trace of person," "trace of sentient being" and "trace of lifespan" (除我四相). The general idea of the tenth chapter is to explain how to be free from the Four Maladies (免溺四病). The general idea of the eleventh chapter is to reaffirm the practice goal of complete enlightenment (普歸圓覺). The general idea of the twelfth chapter is to explain the circulation and benefits of this sutra (流通廣益) (Zhouqi 1994).

4. Commentaries in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and Qing Dynasty (1636–1912)

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, due to their emphasis on cultivation and tendency to favor literati and scholar-officials, Chan Buddhism gained unique advantages in the field of preaching. Chan monks became the main group to annotate and comment on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. However, since Chan Buddhism always adheres to the principle of "Not Setting up Written Scripts", the annotations and commentaries produced during this period lack creativity. Many of these texts merely quoted works from the Tang and Song Dynasties to produce popular interpretations of the scriptures.

The first commentator and commentary work are Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546–1623) and his *Yuanjue jing zhi jie* 圓覺經直解 (Literal Interpretation of Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0258). Hanshan Deqing was a famous monk of the Linji sect of the Chan school during the Ming Dynasty. Alongside Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲株宏 (1535–1615), Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可 (1543–1603) and Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599–1655), he was one of the "four great monks of the late Ming Dynasty". His work is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 16, in two volumes. In this work, Deqing annotated the scriptures in a manner that was basically coherent with the commentaries of Huanyan and Tiantai schools.

On the one hand, he used Huanyan's "Ten Xuan Men" (十玄門) to interpret the scriptures. For example, he interpreted "the nature of enlightenment is completely pervading (覺性遍滿) as "Non-interference between Principle and Things (理事無礙)" and "Non-interference of All Things (事事無礙)".

On the other hand, in the specific interpretive process, he used the "Five-Sectioned Interpretation" also known as Five Xuanyi (五重玄義) method of the Tiantai school to make the scriptures clearer. For example, at the beginning of his commentary, the basic situation of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* is introduced by the author from five aspects, which are: "explaining names" (釋名), "differentiating substance" (辨體) and "disclosing the essence" (明宗), "discussing the function" (論用) and "classifying scriptures" (判教).

The second commentator and commentary work are Tongrun 通潤 (1565–1624) and his *Yuanjue jing jin shi* 圓覺經近釋 (Recent Interpretation of Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment)

(X0259). Tongrun was a disciple of Xuelang Hongen 雪浪洪恩, a famous Huayan monk in the Ming Dynasty. At the end of the Ming Dynasty, Huayan, alongside Tiantai and Yogācāra, became the most popularly discussed school of Buddhism. As a representative figure of the Huayan school, Tongrun produced theory at a very high level and wrote many profound works, such as *Cheng weishi lun jijie* 成唯識論集解 (Collected Interpretations of Cheng Weishi Lun), *Lengqie jing hezhe* 楞伽經合轍 (Commentaries on Lankavatara Sutra) and *Lengyan jing hezhe* 楞嚴經合轍 (Commentaries on Shurangama sutra). His *Recent Interpretation of Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 16, in six volumes. This work does not contain a great deal of theoretical analysis and basically follows Tsung-mi's commentaries.

The interpretation of scripture in this work can be divided into three parts: annotations, sentences interpretation and thought analysis. This work assimilated Tsung-mi and Deqing's methods of interpreting the scripture. First, when interpreting the scripture, the author adopted the radical interpretation method of Tsung-mi. That is, he does not confine himself to the subject matter defined by the scripture, but puts some of its terms into a broader theoretical context. For example, the scripture mentions that the nature of perfect enlightenment is universal, and Tongrun explains this idea not by emphasizing universality, but by emphasizing the difference of this nature among Buddha, Bodhisattvas, monks of Theravada, and sentient beings (Tongrun 1994). Second, he also used the method of Deqing when interpreting the meaning of each chapter. He basically sums up the main idea of each chapter according to the original meaning of the scripture. For example, Deqing regards "the perfect illumination of the attributes of pure enlightenment" (圓照清淨覺相) as "mind as substance" (心體) in the Chapter of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva (Hanshan 1994). Tongrun also believes that perfect enlightenment is a state in which the mind as substance is eternally changeless (心體如如不動) (Tongrun 1994).

The third commentator and commentary work are Jizheng 寂正 and his *Yuanjue jing yao jie* 圓覺經要解 (Essential Interpretation of Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0260). The story of Jizheng's life cannot be described in detail. His work is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 16, in two volumes. This work basically follows Tsung-mi's commentaries.

In this work, Jizheng emphasizes the content of meditation practice methods contained in the scripture. He first relates perfect enlightenment to the Great Perfect Enlightenment (大圓滿覺) emphasized by Chan meditation. Additionally, then explains the scripture with the idea of No-Thought (無念), No-Form (無相) and Non-Abiding (無住) emphasized by Chan practice. He regards the elimination of the understanding-obstruction as No-Thought (Jizheng 1994). Additionally, he sets the goal of the first stage of the practice of dhyāna as No-Form, and the so-called state of No-Form is a state that can regard everything as without self-nature (Jizheng 1994).

The fourth commentator and commentary work are Jiaohong 焦竑 (1540–1620) and his *Yuanjue jing jing jie ping lin* 圓覺經精解評林 (Forest of Comments of Detailed Interpretations on Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0261). Jiaohong was a famous official working during the Ming Dynasty and became a metropolitan graduate in 1589. He wrote many Buddhist works, such as the *Lengqie jing jing jie ping lin* 楞伽經精解評林 (Forest of Comments of Detailed Interpretations on Lankavatara Sutra) and the *Lengyan jing jing jie ping lin* 楞嚴經精解評林 (Forest of Comments of Detailed Interpretations on Shurangama sutra). This work is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 94, in one volume. It inherits the characteristics of the collected commentaries written by Zhouqi during the Song Dynasty; it first extracts the content of other commentaries and subsequently supplements that content with the author's own comments. This text is helpful for beginners to understand the history of commentaries and interpretations of *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.

The fifth commentator and commentary work are Tongli 通理 (1701–1782) and his *Yuanjue jing xi yi shu* 圓覺經析義疏 (Commentaries of Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0263). Tongli was the master of the revived Huayan school during the Qing Dynasty. He preached the doctrine of "Five Doctrines and Ten Schools" in the capital and the *Bao en jing* 報恩經

(Returning Favour Sutra) in Wutai Mountain. His work is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 94, in four volumes. It basically follows Tsung-mi's commentaries.

The sixth commentator and commentary work are Hongli 弘麗 and his *Yuanjue jing ju shi zheng bai* 圓覺經句釋正白 (Verbal Interpretation on Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0262). The life story of the Chan monk Jizheng cannot be described in detail. His work is collected in *Manji Zokuzōkyō*, tome 16, in two volumes. This work is a good example of a synoptic interpretation of scripture. The main theoretical features, contents and levels of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* are introduced clearly and succinctly in terms of three aspects: doctrines, purposiveness of the schools of Buddhism and the context of each chapter.

The seventh commentator and commentary work are Jingting 淨挺 and his *Yuanjue jing lian zhu* 圓覺經連珠 (Notes on Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment) (X0674). Jingting was a famous monk of the Caodong sect of the Chan school during the Qing Dynasty. This work is part of his *Yue jing shi er zhong* 閱經十二種 (Twelve sutras that have been read). It is collected in *Manji Shinsan Dainihon Zokuzōkyō*, tome 37, in one volume. It is a very brief vernacular interpretation of *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.

5. Conclusions

Although the number of characters used is relatively small and its translation into Chinese occurred as late as the Tang dynasty, the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* has had a tremendous impact due to its wide promotion by Tsung-mi. The sutra not only became the cornerstone of Tsung-mi's entire thought and theory but also had an enormous influence on the Chan, Huayan, and Tiantai schools of Buddhism during the Tang and Song dynasties. Therefore, numerous works of commentary in the history of Chinese Buddhism have focused on this sutra. It is important to note that the commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* produced during past dynasties exhibit obvious characteristics of the times in which they were written:

The annotations and commentaries of the Tang Dynasty are represented by the works of four masters as collected by Tsung-mi. Tsung-mi's commentaries inherit the characteristics of the Huayan and Chan schools. The *Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* is the core of Tsung-mi's commentaries.

Unlike Tsung-mi's interpretation and transformation of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* from the perspective of integrating theory, the research and commentaries on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* produced by the Huayan school during the Song dynasty show strong sectarian and constructive characteristics. Although this school inherited the general ideas of Tsung-mi, it strengthened the role of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* in the development of the school. The Tiantai commentary is overshadowed by the absolute superiority of commentary of Huayan school, who, however, exhibited an intention to strengthen its own view but did not develop a new theory. The Chan commentary is consistent with the school's developmental strategy as a practical sect with the aim of strengthening the ease of dissemination and offering simple guidance for practice.

With respect to the commentaries produced during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, on the one hand, Deqing and Tong Run inherited the traditional interpretation of Tsung-mi's integrating theory, using both Huayan's "Ten Xuan Men" and Tiantai's "Five Xuan Yi" to explain the scriptures; on the other hand, Hongli, Jingting and Jiao Hong inherited the tradition of a popular interpretation associated with the commentary produced during the Song Dynasty and favored concise language and a clear interpretive context. In this way, the diversified characteristics of these commentaries are highlighted.

These works of commentary have not been researched systematically in the English literature with the exception of the *Full Commentary on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* written by Tsung-mi. This paper can provide informational support for the study of Buddhist meditation in East Asia.

By analyzing these commentaries, we can learn that:

First, the significant role played by the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* in the history of East Asia Buddhism is closely related to Tsung-mi's commentaries with a combination of Huayan and Chan teachings.

Second, commentaries in the Song Dynasty indicate the strengthening of the denominational consciousness of Chinese Buddhism. In this period, The Huayan school, which had a dominant position among various Chinese Buddhist schools, tried to establish a set of meditation programs and practice rituals based on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* to counter the criticism of other Buddhist schools for the lack of religious practice guidelines. On the fringe, the Tiantai school wanted to elevate its status by associating its teachings with the popular sutra. This kind of practice shows "the will to orthodoxy" similar to that of Northern Chan Buddhism (Faure 1997; Jun 2011). The Chan school is keen to publicize its own theory of meditation practice and expand its sectarian power by means of popular interpretation of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.

Third, the commentaries in the Ming and Qing dynasties are the most deficient in theoretical innovation. This is related to the decline of Chinese Buddhist doctrine since the Ming Dynasty. After all, since the Ming Dynasty, the number of Buddhist monks in China with deep theoretical training had been declining. Moreover, the Southern Chan Buddhism, which insists on the principle of "Not Setting up Scriptures" 不立文字, generally focused on religious practice rather than theoretical research. This is also not conducive to the monks' in-depth study of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.

Funding: This research was funded by "2022 Qingdao Social Science Planning and Research Project" and "Rural Revitalization" Research Project of Ocean University of China (中国海洋大学乡村振兴研究专项), grant number ZX2022005.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: This article was written under the joint guidance of Yang Weizhong and Bart Dessein, and I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to both.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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