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## Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia



*Edited by*

Charles D. Orzech (General Editor),  
Henrik H. Sørensen, Richard K. Payne

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Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in  
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Henrik H. Sørensen (Associate Editor)  
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

BUDDHIST TANTRAS, ESOTERIC BUDDHISM,  
VAJRAYĀNA BUDDHISM





1. INTRODUCTION: ESOTERIC BUDDHISM AND  
THE TANTRAS IN EAST ASIA:  
SOME METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Charles D. Orzech, Richard K. Payne, Henrik H. Sørensen

In all likelihood, it was the Buddhism scholars commonly designate ‘esoteric Buddhism’ that had the greatest geographical spread of any form of Buddhism. It left its imprint not only on its native India, but far beyond, on Southeast Asia, Central Asia, including Tibet and Mongolia, as well as the East Asian countries China, Korea and Japan. Not only has esoteric Buddhism contributed substantially to the development of Buddhism in many cultures, but it also facilitated the transmission of religious art and material culture, science and technology. The modern English moniker ‘esoteric Buddhism’ is often used interchangeably with other labels, such as tantric Buddhism, Vajrayāna, Mantrayāna, Zhenyan, Shingon, Mikkyō, Yoga, and so on. The relationship between these various labels is commented on below, and it is considered in some detail in Orzech (2006b, 36–78), Payne (2006, 1–31), in Sørensen, “On Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition,” and in Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra (651–780),” in this volume.

In planning this volume and negotiating assignments, Henrik, Richard and I avoided imposing definitions of the notoriously problematic terms esoteric Buddhism and tantra. Instead, we contacted people who are doing work in the field with the aim of producing a volume both cutting edge and definitive. Such an approach will inevitably lead to a volume that will reflect scholarly debate and disagreement. At the same time this approach cannot fill in existing lacunae in the field. This collection therefore reflects the state of the art, without claiming to be encyclopedically comprehensive. At the same time, the volume is unique in its scope. Its focus on East Asia underscores the cosmopolitan and trans-national context of Esoteric Buddhism while attending to its specific local manifestations. Rather than trying to recapitulate the eighty-eight essays in this volume, we will spend some time taking up a few theoretical considerations.

*Hermeneutics and Teleology*

At some level all research and interpretation involves bias and teleology. We always stand in the present interpreting the past in terms of present concerns. As historians, awareness of these biases can help us to disentangle our hermeneutical aims from those of the people we are studying. The modern study of esoteric Buddhism and the Buddhist tantras has been dominated by two grand narratives. On the one hand, scholars of Buddhism cited the tantras as evidence of the decay of Buddhism from a pristine rationalist beginning. On the other hand some have privileged relatively late tantras as embodying the most advanced insights of Buddhism. Both models—decay or progress—have served a range of contemporary agendas, some of them sectarian. We have intended that this collection contribute to understanding Buddhist practitioners in more accurately contextualized ways, while at the same time contributing to contemporary intellectual concerns.

*Contested Terminology: Esoteric Buddhism and Tantra*

The title of this volume, *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, was carefully chosen. There is broad agreement that the systems based on the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* (MVS), the *Susiddhikāra*, and the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* (STTS) developed in South Asia and introduced to the Chinese court in the mid-Tang (eighth century) represented a body of practice and ideology founded on the Mahāyāna but with a distinct identity.<sup>1</sup> But the import of the key terms of our title is anything but transparent or universally agreed upon.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, even the orthography of the term ‘esoteric Buddhism’ is contested. By and large we are following contemporary preference in style which encourages lower case usage whenever possible. But the meaning and scope of term ‘esoteric Buddhism’ is itself not agreed

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<sup>1</sup> The MVS is sometimes referred to as the Vairocanābhisambodhi, while Japanese scholarship often refers to the STTS as the Vajraśekhara. On this latter title see Davidson, “Sources and Inspirations,” in this volume. What the Chinese did with these materials is another matter. Thus, there is a difference between the tradition promulgated by Śubhākarasiṃha and that of Vajrabodhi / Amoghavajra. This does not even begin to consider purely Chinese, Korean, or Japanese developments and innovations.

<sup>2</sup> For our purposes we bracket any connections that might be drawn with Western “esoteric” or hermetical traditions, though it is not insignificant that the emergence of the term Esoteric Buddhism in English is traceable to doctrines put forward by the Theosophist A. P. Sinnett in his *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883). For more on this see Orzech, 2006b, 39–40.

upon, and capitalization of it (or not) may have ideological implications. Most authors were already using a lower case style while one in particular, Henrik Sørensen, capitalizes Esoteric Buddhism as a way of marking his theoretical understanding of it.<sup>3</sup> Unless it was the express intent of the author to distinguish Esoteric from esoteric (as in the case of Sørensen)—that is, because the author him/herself was making a theoretical point by using that orthography—‘esoteric’ was the default form used in this volume. This should not be taken, however, to mean anything systematic on the part of all the authors, since—as has already been mentioned—the work as a whole is intended to represent the state of the art, including present inconsistencies in the degree to which the subject is theorized, and disagreements between different theoretical understandings.

There are four primary scholarly positions on the use of the terms esoteric and tantra:

1. Some scholars use esoteric Buddhism and tantra as virtually interchangeable, generic terms covering distinctive developments all across Buddhist Asia from the third or fourth centuries C.E. onward.
2. For some the term esoteric Buddhism refers to a stream developing in the Mahāyāna prior to and distinct from the tantras. In this definition the tantras developed in the eighth century and beyond and are distinctively infused with imagery and practices—often seen as antinomian—associated with the rise of the siddha movement.
3. For others, esoteric Buddhism, while synonymous with Buddhist tantra, dates to no earlier than the sixth century when previously developed elements including mantra, mandala, *homa*, etc., come together in a comprehensive system accessed through *abhiṣeka* and guarded with secrecy.
4. A fourth position rejects “tantra” as a useful category in pre-modern East Asia and argues that esoteric Buddhism in China was understood not as a coherent movement, school, or sect, but as a new technological extension of the Mahāyāna.

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<sup>3</sup> For his discussion see Sørensen, “On Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition,” in this volume.

*Esoteric Buddhism*

As indicated by positions two and three above, a key area of contention has focused on whether there was a clearly defined and self-consciously distinctive stream of esoteric Buddhism that developed gradually in India in the first few centuries of the Common Era that preceded more mature developments from the sixth century onward.

Some scholars regard esoteric Buddhism as having evolved gradually, becoming a distinctive stream within the late Mahāyāna closely connected with *dhāraṇī* practice. Henrik Sørensen, for instance, argues that esoteric Buddhism has its roots in Indian Mahāyāna and developed from a special trend within it, namely that of ritualism and magic.<sup>4</sup> According to Sørensen, early forms of esoteric Buddhist practice are first evident in “esoteric” addenda to various Mahāyāna sūtras. They were followed by later, increasingly complex and mutually integrated layers of practices that eventually evolved into a full-fledged meta-system containing all, or at least most of the earlier strata of practices organized to form a comprehensive and inclusive whole.<sup>5</sup> He questions the view that esoteric Buddhism did not develop until the seventh century and also rejects the view that Zhenyan 真言 Buddhism of the eighth and ninth centuries represented mainstream esoteric Buddhism in China. According to this understanding esoteric Buddhism is a form of Mahāyāna, not a separate school, but a movement centering on attaining its spiritual and worldly goals through ritual practices. Esoteric Buddhism developed into a distinct form of Mahāyāna, actually in *tandem* with the rise of Mahāyāna, and we may therefore find embryonic, “esoteric” traces of what later became mainstream, esoteric Buddhist “building-blocks” in some of the earliest Mahāyāna scriptures. Central to Sørensen’s argument is his insistence on a heuristic approach: he considers the term “Esoteric Buddhism” as the most useful, if not perfect, way of expressing this form of Buddhism. Here one can draw parallels to discussions of Chan and Pure Land. Indeed, it is sometimes desirable to talk of Chan prior to the mid-Tang, or Pure

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<sup>4</sup> For an articulation of this position see Sørensen, “On Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition,” in this volume.

<sup>5</sup> For the early, undeveloped esoteric Buddhist elements encountered in the Mahāyāna literature he prefers the use term “esoteric Mahāyāna.” Sørensen uses “Tantra” and “Tantric Buddhism” exclusively for the esoteric Buddhist developments that took place in India (and later in Tibet and China) during and after the seventh century.

Land prior to their classic formulation. So too, it can be useful to discuss “esoteric Buddhism” *avant la lettre*.<sup>6</sup>

This position has not gone unchallenged as certain scholars have voiced serious doubt concerning the existence of esoteric Buddhism as a distinct movement very much prior to the sixth century. According to this line of thought esoteric Buddhism developed rapidly on the basis of previous Mahāyāna developments (*dhāraṇī*, etc.) and in response to changes in patronage in medieval *sāmanta* feudalism in India. Constructions of it that include developments before the sixth century are for all intents and purposes anachronistic projections. This position, championed by Ronald Davidson (2002a), has certain similarities to recent theoretical developments in evolutionary biology. It does not argue for the rapid appearance of something out of nothing. Rather, it argues that esoteric Buddhism was a new synthesis that pulled in elements of the Mahāyāna (*dhāraṇī* etc.) that had a long developmental histories.<sup>7</sup> It is notable that the two positions have much in common. While they differ on the usage of the terms esoteric Buddhism and tantra their major disagreement is in their reading of pre-sixth century evidence. Is the evidence of the proliferation of *dhāraṇī*, *abhiṣeka*, mantras, and so on in the Chinese translation record to be understood as a distinctive movement or not?

The final position mentioned above has been advanced by Robert Sharf (2002b) and Richard McBride (2004, 2005). Both writers seek to problematize assumptions concerning esoteric Buddhism in China that they argue have been uncritically accepted. Sharf in particular has argued that the highly sectarian circumstances of Tibet and Japan have misled scholars into constructing a ‘school’ of esoteric Buddhism in China distinct from the Mahāyāna where none existed. Most scholars now agree that seeking to understand esoteric Buddhism in eighth or ninth century China by imposing a sectarian template on it of the likes of medieval Shingon or Western Christianity distorts our view and this position may be a welcome corrective to the way both Japanese and Tibetan traditions have been viewed. Too little attention has been

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<sup>6</sup> In considering this argument it is important to avoid an overly reified conception of Mahāyāna, and recall that Mahāyāna is itself a largely retrospectively constructed category. There was not a clearly delineated Mahāyāna in relation to which an esoteric form could develop.

<sup>7</sup> Whichever position one takes, one is still left with the question of *when* it may be analytically and heuristically sensible to talk about “esoteric Buddhism.”

paid to the more diffuse esoterization of Chinese, Korean and Japanese Buddhism. At the same time there is evidence that there was conscious lineage formation going on from the mid-eighth century almost until the end of the ninth century, and that a variety of Buddhists from the late Tang through the Song period regarded esoteric Buddhism as distinctive.<sup>8</sup> A second proposal by Sharf (2002b) is that much of what we today regard as esoteric Buddhism was seen more as a new technology—a ritual technology—applied to already widely accepted Mahāyāna goals.

### *Tantra, Tantric Tantrism*

And what of the relationship between esoteric Buddhism and the tantras? Our title pointedly avoids the term “tantrism.” The issue of “tantrism”—as opposed to texts labeled tantras—has recently been analyzed by Hugh Urban. Urban argues that *tantrism* comes into being as an imagined category (like the category Hinduism), a category produced in the dialectical encounter between Indians and Europeans.<sup>9</sup> Urban does not argue that there were no tantras before the colonial period—there obviously were.<sup>10</sup> Nor does Urban argue that there are no premodern discourses concerning the tantras. There certainly were tantras translated from Indic and other languages and circulated in East Asia, and it is clear that the idea of the tantras and their meanings as a coherent system is not a modern invention. Buddhaghūya proposed a three-fold classification in his commentary on the *Mahāvairocana*, and Jacob Dalton has recently explored the variety of doxological taxonomies involving tantras dating back to the eighth century.<sup>11</sup> What Urban cautions against is the too easy elision of modern discourses with a variety of premodern discourses involving the word tantra, and the tendency to accept the recent construct “tantrism” and project it onto a variety of texts from widely ranging periods in South Asian

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<sup>8</sup> See Orzech, “After Amoghavajra: Esoteric Buddhism in the Late Tang,” in this volume, and Chen 2010, 83–109.

<sup>9</sup> Urban 2003, 27.

<sup>10</sup> In his brief examination of Abhinavagupta (ca. 950–1050), author of *Tantrāloka* and *Tantrasāra*, he points out that Abhinavagupta does not present tantra as the sort of “singular, comprehensive category that embraces most of the traditions modern interpreters identify by the term.” Urban 2003, 34.

<sup>11</sup> For Buddhaghūya’s comments see Hodge 2003, 43–46. Dalton, 2005, 115–181.

history to create anachronistically a “tantric tradition” with Hindu and Buddhist variants.<sup>12</sup>

Exactly how one defines the distinctiveness of the tantras is subject to debate. Some scholars have adopted a monothetic definition that settles on one distinctive characteristic as essential.<sup>13</sup> Thus, some scholars have proposed visualization of oneself in the body of the divinity (Sanskrit *ahamkāra*) as the sine qua non of the movement. For instance, Michel Strickmann argued that “le rituel du bouddhisme tantrique est l’union avec une icône.”<sup>14</sup> Tsuda Shin’ichi used the same criteria to posit a “critical” disjunction between Mahāyāna Buddhism and tantrism, with the former culminating in the *Mahāvairocanābhisamṃbodhi sūtra* (MVS) and the latter commencing with the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* (STTS).<sup>15</sup> Certainly texts with a *bhāvana* or visualization section inserted into otherwise unremarkable *vidhis* (ritual manuals) appear in Chinese records during the seventh century. But this definition is not without problems, chief among them, that visualization is common in the Mahāyāna (for a discussion see Payne 2006, 1–31). Ronald Davidson, moving in a more polythetic<sup>16</sup> and historical direction, has argued that tantra emerged out of Indian *sāmanta* feudalism and is structured around the metaphor of the *rājādhirāja*, and the systematic use of *abhiṣeka*, *mandala*, *homa*, and injunctions to secrecy.<sup>17</sup> As noted above, he sees the earliest evidence for a distinctive, and self-conscious movement appearing in Atikūṭa’s seventh century *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 (*Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha sūtra*, T. 901, 654 C.E.).

We should also note that many of the texts widely reckoned to be tantras, like the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, do not even have the term “tantra” in their titles, and the transliteration of the term tantra is extremely

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<sup>12</sup> Strickmann 1996, 24: “les agama du śivaïsme médiéval et les tantra du bouddhisme médiéval représentent simplement différentes versions, différentes rédactions d’une seule et même chose.” Despite Urban there is some logic in Strickmann’s statement.

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of definitions that emerged out of the Tantric Studies Seminar of the American Academy of Religion see White 2000, 3–38.

<sup>14</sup> Strickmann 1998, 203.

<sup>15</sup> Tsuda 1978, 167–231. Both Davidson and Giebel argue that *Vajrasekhara* is probably incorrect and should be rendered *Vajra-usṇīsa*. See Giebel 1995, 109 and Davidson, “Sources and Inspirations,” in this volume. The editors have left individual author’s usage intact.

<sup>16</sup> Definitions that employ a variety of overlapping characteristics are often termed “polythetic” definitions. These reflect the influence of Wittgenstein’s notion of “family resemblances.”

<sup>17</sup> Davidson 2002, 114, 117.



rare in East Asia before the modern era.<sup>18</sup> This does not mean that we cannot use the term for analytical purposes. But it does mean that the South Asian sūtra / tantra binary pair does not figure prominently in Sinitic linguistic settings and when we use it with regard to those settings we need to be very clear what we mean by it.

### *History, Context, Usage*

These disagreements are the result not merely of a lack of consistency on the part of modern scholars; they also reflect a wide variety of terms and usages in Indic and Sinitic languages. Although the English label esoteric Buddhism is a modern creation it seems apt as a designation for certain East Asian phenomena because it corresponds to an indigenous term, *mijiao* 密教 (Japanese *mikkyō*) that in turn appears to translate the Indic term *guhya* or ‘secret.’ Yet, when examined closely, the apparently simple equation of *guhya* > *mijiao* > esoteric Buddhism is fraught with problems. Not the least is the all too tempting notion that we can simply defer to on-the-ground usage as the ultimate arbiter of what esoteric Buddhism is.<sup>19</sup> Problems notwithstanding, careful attention to the actual context of usage and the semantic matrix of Sinitic terms like *bimi* 秘密, *mijiao* 密教, *mikkyō*, etc. is indispensable, and such careful attention is characteristic of the essays in this volume. We note especially the following seven points that complicate our understanding of esoteric Buddhism in East Asia:

1. Key terms have been used in a great variety of ways.
2. The introduction of new usages does not always make old usages obsolete. Often we find multiple usages coexisting in the same milieu.
3. Esoteric understandings often resulted in attempts at hegemonic reinterpretation. For instance, Kūkai argued to the Nara clerical

<sup>18</sup> *Tandaluo* 壇怛囉 occurs only once, in the *Ruixiye jing* 蕤呬耶經 T. 897.18:770b5. The text is attributed to Amoghavajra and is also known as the *Yuxiye jing* 玉呬耶經 and the *Juxitandaluo jing* 瞿醯壇怛囉 or *Guhyantra*.

<sup>19</sup> A. M. Hocart 2004, 46–52 has a perceptive critique of approaches that take such usage as the exclusive definitional criteria. Griffith T. Foulk, essentially makes the same point and adds that “it is absurd to argue that because medieval Chinese Buddhists never drew a distinction between lineages as semimythological entities and schools as historical ones we should refrain from imposing that distinction on them.” See his “The Ch’an *Tsung* in Medieval China,” 1992, 20.

establishment that his new hermeneutic could make sense of the *dhāraṇī* that appeared in old Mahāyāna scriptures.<sup>20</sup>

4. Religious propaganda often employs double talk—for example, claiming that at the same time that esoteric Buddhism is a part of the Mahāyāna, it is in some way “special.” Amoghavajra (Bukong jin’gang 不空金剛 704–774), for instance, was very adept at using religious language in this way.<sup>21</sup>
5. How a term is used may differ according to purpose and context (ritual, exegesis, lineage construction, sectarian affiliation, etc.). Some of these can be very instructive. For instance, in many Mahāyāna settings the term esoteric can simply mean “the best” as Richard McBride has pointed out.<sup>22</sup> In other cases it refers to a distinctive teaching marked by *abhiṣeka*, etc.<sup>23</sup> In yet other cases esoteric is circumscribed but nebulous. Thus the Song catalogue *Dazhong xiangfu fabao lu* 大中 祥符法寶錄 (1013) produced by the official Translation Institute has three sūtra categories: “The Hinayāna Scriptural Collection” (*Xiaosheng jinzang* 小乘經藏) “the Mahāyāna Scriptural Collection” (*Dasheng jingzang* 大乘經藏) and “the Esoteric Portion of the Mahāyāna Scriptural Collection” (*Dasheng jingzang bimi bu* 大乘經藏秘密部).<sup>24</sup> This last bibliographic category serves as a catchall for everything from the *Guhyasamāja tantra* to the simplest *dhāraṇī*. Indeed, under this rubric—one as vague as that used by some twentieth century scholars—all *dhāraṇī* are classed as “esoteric.”<sup>25</sup> If we were to follow the *Xiangfu fabao lu* we would have to argue that no *dhāraṇī* can be merely Mahāyāna. In other words, all *dhāraṇī* are esoteric (Kūkai’s position). Historically speaking, this is clearly flawed since *dhāraṇī* are coeval with the Mahāyāna.

<sup>20</sup> For this see Abé 1999, 242, 259.

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion see Orzech 1998, 169–198.

<sup>22</sup> McBride 2004, 329–56.

<sup>23</sup> See Orzech 2006, 48–51.

<sup>24</sup> This catalogue is an essential resource for the study of the period. Issued in 1013, the *Catalogue* was compiled under the leadership of Zhao Anren 趙安仁 (958–1018). It is found in *Zhonghua da zang jing* 中華大藏經 volume 73, pp. 414–523. See, for example, *Zhonghua da zang jing*, volume 73, p. 420 which has all three classifications.

<sup>25</sup> From an esoteric point of view, such as that espoused by Kūkai, all *dhāraṇī* are esoteric. However, from a scholarly analytic point of view *dhāraṇī*, mantras, etc. are not in themselves esoteric (though some on the ground texts label them such!) *Dhāraṇī*, mantras, etc. are a part of pan-South Asian religion and thus of the Mahāyāna. Esoteric Buddhism simply adapted this form and further developed it for its own purposes. For a recent discussion of *dhāraṇī* see Davidson, 2009.

So too, to argue that all spells are *merely* Mahāyāna is analytically flawed. This would reduce the esoteric to the Mahāyāna and does not account for real social, religious and institutional phenomena that are distinctly new developments. Both of these positions rob the researcher of analytical leverage and blur distinctions that Buddhists on the ground make (though again we need to be careful to note that Buddhists *do* erase these distinctions when it serves some particular end).

6. The use of analytic taxonomies suggested by sectarian sources has been the cause of much confusion. For instance, some treatments of esoteric Buddhism in China persist in applying the late Japanese Shingon hermeneutic distinguishing “pure” (*seijun mikkyō* 正純密教 or *junmitsu* 純密) from “miscellaneous” esoterism (*zōbu mikkyō* 雜部密教 or *zōmitsu* 雜密) without mention of its’ provenance.<sup>26</sup> So too, many scholars have been drawn to and have uncritically accepted the relatively late Tibetan four-fold doxological and evolutionary taxonomy of Kriyā, Caryā, Yoga, and Anuttarayoga tantras.<sup>27</sup> The danger here is twofold: anachronism and the uncritical use of sectarian taxonomies designed to champion a particular view. At the same time, we don’t want to reject analytical distinctions that may be helpful, simply because they originate in a period later than the one under study. As we see it, any use of such taxonomies requires careful explanation by the researcher.
7. The idea of the esoteric itself (*mi* 密, *bimi* 秘密) is quite potent and widespread in East Asia and not under some sort of central control. Even in the presence of formal esoteric Buddhism marked by *abhiṣeka*, lineage transmission, etc., it is common to find esoteric deities, ritual sequences, ideas, and so on circulated, appropriated, and integrated into other systems. One way to think of this is to use the metaphor of “penumbra.” This allows us to avoid the widely used “popular” or “folk” category which would be inappropriate in cases such as Fudō in Shugendō, which is itself an initiatory system, and *homa* and other rituals appropriated from Shingon in late

<sup>26</sup> The terms do not appear as paired doctrinal or textual classifiers in the Chinese canon and may be as late as the Edo period (1603–1868). For an analysis see Abé 1999, 152–154. A good example of such discussions is available in English in Kiyota’s *Shingon Buddhism*, 1978, 5–17, where the “pure” category is aligned with Mahāyāna doctrinal literature while the “miscellaneous” elements are aligned with “popular beliefs.” Also Strickmann 1996, 127–133, and Sharf 2002a, 265–267.

<sup>27</sup> Dalton 2005, 115–181 and Kapstein 2000, 15–17.

medieval Shintō. Thus we can talk about institutional esoteric Buddhism and its penumbra. Indeed, the penumbra might, in many settings, be the predominant phenomena.

*Disambiguating the Applications of “Tantra” and “Esoteric”*

In order to further disambiguate our use of the terms tantra and esoteric Buddhism, it would be useful to distinguish different applications of the terms—when in a sense they are used as adjectives that can be applied to a variety of different subjects. The relevance and significance of these terms will not be uniform across all of the different applications. For example, it is one thing to talk about Kōyasan as a tantric or esoteric Buddhist center, and quite another to talk about Fudō as a tantric deity appropriated into Shugendō. It seems that there are at least eight different contextual applications, each with its own significance, distinct from other such contextual applications. These eight are institutions, ideology, doctrine, practice, praxis, art, architecture, and material culture, pantheon, and texts.

1. Institutions

There are large monastic institutions, which in Japan were usually complexes that included both Buddhist and Shintō shrines and temples. The most prominent examples today are Kōyasan 高野山 and Hieizan 比叡山, though there are other important monastic complexes.<sup>28</sup> Although some of these continue into the present, several were destroyed in the second half of the nineteenth century, though in their own day they were very important. Some such institutions did not adhere to a centralized, hierarchical authority.

There are also non-monastic, periodic or seasonal institutions, such as, Shugendō 修驗道. The Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1868) mandated a close affiliation between Shugendō and either Shingon or Tendai, but now, as a result of postwar legal reforms, Shugendō is independent. As a result of this long affiliation, however, esoteric Buddhist influences can still be seen in the seasonal practices of austerities in the mountains of Japan. One also finds local shrines and temples with their own associations with esoteric Buddhism, a history of lineal relations, or practices that derive from esoteric sources. And, there

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<sup>28</sup> For Tang dynasty complexes see Chen, “Esoteric Buddhism and Monastic Institutions,” in this volume.

are regional phenomena, such as the Shikoku pilgrimage route, that are highly institutionalized as well. Because of the increasingly global mediascape, some of these institutional forms are now becoming globalized. International religious tourism to esoteric sites such as the Potala in Tibet, and Putuo shan in China has become an important kind of institution in itself. Similarly, Kōyasan has recently been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which not only makes it more visible internationally, but brings a different kind of clientele, which in turn changes the nature of the institution itself.

## 2. Ideology

As discussed above, esoteric Buddhism exists as part of an historical continuum and includes elements from pre-Buddhist Indian religious culture. It cannot therefore be defined in a way that is both precise and useful for broad, comparative inquiry. For the sake of analysis, however, it is heuristically beneficial to distinguish religious ideology from specific doctrinal claims. As used here ideology refers to more widely shared ideas, in common (typically) with the Mahāyāna.<sup>29</sup> These include concepts that despite being part of a wider religious culture play an important role in esoteric Buddhism. Such ideas include for example the efficacy of extraordinary language (*dhāraṇī*, mantra, etc.), with its historical roots in Vedic practice, and the idea that all sentient beings have buddhanature, a notion developed on the basis of Indic Buddhist conceptions of *tathāgatagarbha* and *alāyavijñāna*.

## 3. Doctrine

Doctrine is distinguished from ideology as more specifically esoteric Buddhist. Thus, although buddhanature is widely shared among East Asian Buddhist traditions, it becomes the basis for a much more uniquely esoteric doctrinal claim, that is, the possibility of awakening in this lifetime, *sokushin jōbutsu* 息身成仏. Similarly, the active nature of the *dharmakāya* in the form of the Buddha Mahāvairocana is an important marker of esoteric Buddhism in Japan.

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<sup>29</sup> For example, the “three esoterica” or “three secrets” (*san mi* 三密) deployed as a key element of esoteric ritual have a long history in the Mahāyāna, a history esoteric traditions drew on. See McBride, 2006.

#### 4. Practice

As with ideology and doctrine, practices vary between being precise and imprecise demarcations of esoteric Buddhism. Some practices seem to be uniquely esoteric Buddhist, e.g., *abhiṣeka*, *homa*, and *ajikan* 阿字觀. The three sets of vows (monastic, bodhisattva and tantric) constitute a kind of bridge, including as they do aspects common to all other forms of Mahāyāna, but also aspects that are unique to esoteric Buddhism. Other kinds of practices found in esoteric Buddhist institutions, such as confessionals, memorial services and other monastic activities, while part of general Mahāyāna practice, do have an important role in the institutional life and because of this context take on a different hue—a memorial service being conducted before a representation of Acalanatha Vidyārāja (Fudō Myōō 不動明王), for example.

One also finds practices being undertaken as part of esoteric Buddhism that are common to popular or folk religious forms, such as for example, cold-water austerities. Similarly, there are hybridized forms of practice. The *homa* has been adapted into Shugendō in the form of the *saitō goma* 齋燈護摩. Conversely, interaction with Daoist devotions to the Northern Dipper 北星 led to the creation of a Northern Dipper *homa* 北星護摩.<sup>30</sup>

#### 5. Praxis

Most frequently one finds practice being treated as something separate from ideology and doctrine. While this may serve some analytic purposes, it needs to be understood that the division between thought and action, which is both presumed and reinforced by separate treatment, is an artificial one (Bell 1992). While it does seem to be the case that not all practices are supported by explicit doctrine, and not all doctrine finds expression in practice, an argument may be made that it is the unique constellation of practice and doctrine/ideology that creates esoteric Buddhism. Thus, although as a practice the Shikoku pilgrimage is similar to any other pilgrimage, and its ideological base is the widely shared idea of stages on the path to awakening, as a praxis it is constituted by a uniquely esoteric constellation of practice and ideology. To uncritically accept a theoretical view that separates thought

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<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of some of these interactions see Capitanio, “Esoteric Buddhist Elements in Daoist Ritual Manuals of the Song, Yuan, and Ming,” in this volume.

from action, doctrine and ideology from practice, fragments the tradition in ways that make the tradition's dialectic unity harder to see.

#### 6. Art, Architecture and Material Culture

Another referent for the concept of esoteric Buddhism is to the art, architecture and material culture that supports practice. In temples one finds, for example, mandalas, and paintings and statuary of deities. Mandalas have long been identified with esoteric Buddhism, even to the extent of being considered by some scholars to be a defining characteristic. Other kinds of artistic forms and styles also serve to mark esoteric Buddhism, such as the representations of bodhisattvas in wrathful form.

Esoteric Buddhist architecture includes special purpose buildings, e.g., *gomadō* 護摩堂. Other buildings reveal an esoteric vision of the cosmos, recreating a mandalic structure in three dimensions. Upon entering the *Kondō* 金堂 and *Daitō* 大塔 on Mt. Kōya, for example, the Diamond and Womb worlds are revealed to the visitor. There are also forms that might be considered almost midway between architecture and material culture. For example, one finds miniature forms of the Shikoku pilgrimage, small enough to walk through in a half hour easily. These are to be found not only in temples in Japan, but also abroad, an instance being one at the Shingon mission in Kauai, Hawai'i.

Perhaps the clearest expression of material culture in relation to esoteric Buddhism is the implements and altar settings that are used in esoteric ritual performances. Vajras—single, triple and five-pointed—and vajra bells are found on esoteric Buddhist altars. The altars themselves are often two-dimensional representations of a mandala laid flat, but having a three-dimensional *stūpa* at the position of the central deity. Even more distinctive of esoteric practice than such mandalic altars are altars for the performance of *homa*, which include a hearth in which the fire is built. Disposable items used in ritual performance, such as incense of three different kinds (powder, chip and ball), candles, wood, oil, together with a minor economy in the production and supply of such disposable items, also constitute an important part of the material culture of esoteric Buddhism.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> See Payne and Orzech, "Homa," in this volume. For a more detailed discussion see Payne 1991.

## 7. Pantheon

The esoteric Buddhist pantheon may be initially referenced to the deities of the mandalas, some major figures such as Mahāvairocana, and others who are members of the retinues, found perhaps only in the mandalas and rituals that reference these retinues. One also finds Vedic and Brahmanic deities, such as Indra (Yintuoluo 因陀羅) and Brahma (Fantian 梵天). Some of these appear in Buddhist garb, or with their gender reversed—usually from female to male. Other Vedic and Brahmanic deities are present as subsidiary functionaries such as Vayu (Fengtian 風天) or Candra (Yuetian 月天), etc.<sup>32</sup>

Various deities from other East Asian religious traditions have also been integrated into the esoteric Buddhist pantheon. In some Shingon rituals for example, Amaterasu, the ancestral sun goddess associated with Shintō is referenced. One also finds rituals for the Northern Dipper 北斗, an asterism only venerated in Chinese tradition, and not found in Indic Buddhism.<sup>33</sup>

## 8. Canon

As in other categories discussed here, there are items in the canon with different degrees of identification with esoteric Buddhism. There are “core” texts, e.g., *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi* (MVS) and *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* (STTS), as well as “ancillary” texts, e.g., the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*. There are also key commentaries composed in East Asia, such as Yixing’s commentary on the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi* (T. 1796). More narrowly, one finds sectarian-specific commentaries and other texts, such as collections of ritual manuals and recent, large-scale bibliographic compilations.

Particularly important for research is the recent attention paid to ephemera and archival materials, such a *kirikami* 切紙. Other explorations have extended to non-Buddhist literatures, e.g., Daoist works and their interactions with esoteric Buddhism (Mollier 2009), and the “Shintō” *Nakatomi Harae Kunge* (Teeuwen and van der Veere 1998).

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of the esoteric pantheon see Sørensen, “Central Divinities in the Esoteric Buddhist Pantheon in China,” in this volume.

<sup>33</sup> Although there are early South Asian cults involving the seven ṛṣis and the dipper there is no evidence of Buddhist cults in South Asia involving the dipper. All evidence points to these developments as East Asian innovations. For the ṛṣis and the dipper see Michiner 1982. For details and bibliography concerning Chinese developments see Sørensen, “Astrology and the Worship of the Planets in Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang,” in this volume.



What is meant by esoteric in each of these different usages is different enough to suggest the importance of clarity regarding what is being identified as esoteric. It is one of the goals of this collection that scholars be better able to delineate the different meanings of the concept when applied to different referents, and to more adequately nuance future research.

One of the motivations for creating this collection was to establish the fact of esoteric Buddhism in East Asia, not just as a passing moment in the medieval period, but as a deeply influential stream of thought, and practice, having a pervasive role throughout East Asia from the medieval period into the present. The contributions that we have been fortunate enough to bring together here go much further than this initial impetus, providing a great deal of the structures and details of that history. As such, however, it simply maps the territory for further exploration.

## 2. SOURCES AND INSPIRATIONS: ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN SOUTH ASIA

Ronald M. Davidson

The development of mature tantric Buddhism was the consequence of a number of factors, some internal to the Buddhist communities in South Asia and some not. The greatest single factor was the extraordinary change in the sociopolitical dynamic of South Asia following the collapse of the Gupta-Vākāṭaka hegemony in the first half of the sixth century, completed by 550 C.E. This precipitated a number of events, all of which were to have profound consequences for Buddhist institutions. Heretofore subordinate, South India became a source of political and military power, precipitating invidious raids against the north for the next several centuries. At the same time, North Indian polities divided into smaller units, and newly formed regional powers in the tribal or rural areas of North and Central India developed into formidable forces. With these events, the larger metropolitan centers in the Gangetic Valley experienced population loss, as the economies of the region collapsed and the guild system came apart (Davidson 2002a).

Consequently, the ability of tribal clans and rural confederations to govern effectively for the first time was in great part due to the relocation of people from the great culture-bearing urban centers along the Ganges River. Whether seeking security from the southern raiders or seeking opportunity after the collapse of the Gupta-Vākāṭaka economic base, brahmins and artisans, merchants and politicians began to infuse the new regional polities of North India with their skills and their learning. In the process, however, the indigenous values of the new royal families from rural or tribal areas become intermittently enshrined in rituals and aesthetics that are only partially Sanskritized, with both the learned and the less informed attempting to achieve status or dominion through strategies of literature, ritual, art, architecture, and the martial aspects of court culture.

This process has too often been considered indicative of a period of degeneration, but such views are historiographically contradicted by the fact that much of the best of Sanskrit and Prakrit philosophy,

art, and literature was developed during the early medieval period, 500–1200 C.E. However, we also see that the range of sanctified behavior becomes much wider, with the new iconography now including extraordinary multi-armed deities, sporting weapons of war or violence, and with inscriptional evidence for the valorization of distinctive local religious practices in the literate horizon for the first time. As a result, new forms of literature were developed to adjudicate, discuss, and (eventually) sacralize practices that included ritual murder, suicide, sexuality, and the ritual employment of polluted substances (bones, blood, semen, feces, urine) and their manipulation or ingestion. Some of the practices had their sources in regional goddess rituals, some in local *yakṣa* or *nāga* rites, and some were Śaiva or Pañcarātra, or had other formal affiliation in origin. The monothetic interpretation of all cemetery or antinomian rites as uniquely Śaiva is contradicted by the Buddhist, Jain, and secular literature, as well as by analogies from modern Indian religious studies and anthropology (DeCaroli 2004; Lutgendorf 2003; Michaels et al. 1996; Sontheimer 1993). Such practices were previously evinced in Buddhist literature (*vinaya* and *jātaka* especially) as unacceptable, but as Indians became increasingly enamored of power, these practices receive limited approval in medieval texts. The new forms of literature include *purāṇas*, *āgamas*, tantras, *kalpas* (lengthy ritual works), *vidhis* (focused ritual texts), and *kavacas* (other focused ritual texts), to name but a few. Most of these genres eventually become homogenized as “tantric literature” in Tibetan writing or Western Indology, an unfortunate application of an omnibus category to a very diverse series of genres.

Buddhist institutions responded to the events in a variety of ways. Internally, they institutionalized a series of intellectual developments that subverted the authority of traditional Buddhist learning. This subversion was especially true of the skepticism of the extreme Madhyamaka of Candrakīrti and the epistemology of the logical schools; both of these called into question the positivistic suppositions of the previous Buddhist intellectual paradigms, suppositions that supported doctrines of karma, reincarnation, and liberation. Moreover, in the distribution of Buddhist institutions, entire areas became hostile to the Buddhist dispensation. The Kṛṣṇa River Valley especially—the site of early great communities, such as Nāgārjunakoṇḍa and Amarāvati—was lost to Buddhist activity for most of the period, in large part because of the militantly Śaiva polities like the Cāllukya, Pallava, and Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasties. Northern Indian monasteries began to assume

fortress identities, and over time they became de facto feudal holdings, in which the largest of the newly-formed institutions—Nālandā, Odantapuri, Somapura, Vikramaśīla, etc.—administered domains in the surrounding countryside. Their abbots exercised police powers, collected taxes, engaged other feudal lords in discussions, received their gifts, and otherwise assumed many of the trappings of *sāmanta* local lords by investing their dominion over a sphere of territory (*mandala*). Concomitant to, and perhaps a consequence of, the Buddhist institutional negotiation with non-Buddhist values, women’s participation in Buddhist activities dramatically declined throughout the period. This resulted in the complete eclipse of the nun’s ordination in North India sometime around the end of the first millennium C.E. (Schopen 1996), an eclipse coupled with the precipitous decline in laywomen’s involvement, as revealed through dedicatory inscriptions.

While institutions began to assume feudal dimensions, abbots, however, did not provide three important services that acted as much of the glue of the Indian feudal system: they did not engage in marital exchanges (being ostensibly celibate renunciates), they did not swear fealty to provide troops in time of war, and they did not provide the Brahmanical ceremonies needed by the king—marriage, postmortem, coronation, renewal, sacrifice, agricultural, and military rites among them. Buddhists had been aware of coronation ceremonies right from the early days of the order, but the earlier traditions had erected a strong ideological buttress between the law of the land (*rājadaṇḍa*) and the Buddhist administration (*dharmavinaya*). Both the Madhyama/Prajñāpāramitā ideology of the identity of samsara and nirvana and the feudalization of real Buddhist institutions eroded these ideological walls, so that earlier flirting that Buddhists had done with the Brahmanical practices of *homa*, coronation, image consecration (*pratiṣṭhā*), mantra recitation, and so on were now engaged in a much more sustained manner.

All of these items were brought together under the metaphor of the Buddhist ritualist becoming an emperor (*rājādhirāja* or *cakravartin*), either of the triple world or of the mythic spell holders, the *vidyādharas*. In fashioning a Buddhist response to the medieval world, Buddhists took material from their earlier ritual lives and appropriated rites from Brahmanical, Śaiva, Pañcarātra, Saurya, Gāruḍa, Jaina, tribal, village, and other sources. The characterization of tantric Buddhism as Śaivized Buddhism, as has been argued by many (most recently Sanderson 2009), places excessive weight on the obvious Śaiva influences

(sometimes stronger, sometimes less so) and gives insufficient weight to other factors; this formulation also ignores the evidence that some forms of tantric Śaivism (especially Kaśmīri Śaivism) owe an ideological debt to the Buddhist theoretical positions of Vijñānavāda and a ritual debt to outcaste and non-Śaiva expiatory behavior, explicit in the carrying of a skull cup as a vow. It is therefore evident that religious traditions throughout medieval South Asia were surreptitiously appropriating material from both institutionalized as well as non-institutionalized ideas and practices, and Buddhists were no exception to this process. Given these values, most forms of tantrism represent medievalized North Indian religion.

The earliest form of Buddhist tantrism arises in the first half of the seventh century and draws strongly from the *dhāraṇī* literature that had already been developed for the previous several centuries. Mantras had been in Buddhist employ in various forms during the first centuries of the Common Era. Indeed, later *vinaya* literature discusses the correct and incorrect uses of mantras, with the basic decision that mantras could be applied to protect oneself and others, just so long as that service is not sold for monetary gain or used to extort goods or other prerogatives from clients. While there were a few instances of mantras employed for religious uses (chiefly recollection of the Buddha in meditation), the principal difference between mantras in that sense and *dhāraṇīs* is that the latter were extensively and intentionally applied to soteriological goals, as well as mundane goals. Thus *dhāraṇī* literature was fully integrated into the bodhisattva's career, and this is recognized throughout Mahāyānist literature, which makes skill in *dhāraṇīs* an important component of the path. Recent scholarship has emphasized the idea of *dhāraṇīs* as memory or mnemonic devices in this regard, but this is only part of the application of *dhāraṇīs* (Davidson 2009).

Beyond mantras and *dhāraṇīs*, early tantric literature also clearly privileges the Prajñāpāramitā sources, especially the *Vajracchedikā*, as well as the other Perfection of Insight texts. These were employed throughout the Mahāyānist ritual enterprise for the purposes of sealing a ritual, establishing merit, focusing the mind, obtaining postmortem merit, and other purposes. The *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya*, whatever its genesis, certainly became part of the tantric corpus, taking its place by other *hṛdaya* (mantric) texts, and the place of the *Heart Sūtra* within the larger *hṛdaya* genre has yet to be discussed in the voluminous secondary literature already devoted to the short work in its various recensions and translations. By the eleventh century, the *Heart Sūtra* had

been included in several tantric practice systems, with a wide variety of interpretations. Likewise, the *Perfection of Insight in 150 Lines*, the *Perfection of Insight in 700 Lines*, and other forms became employed in a variety of venues for tantric purposes, although none of these was tantric in origin.

Outside of Buddhist and Śaiva/Pañcarātra literature, the greatest influence on the formation of tantrism was from political sources, including the rituals and ideology associated with kingship. These provided the basic model for earliest tantric system, that of the Ekākṣara-uṣṇīṣa-cakravartin (*Yizi foding lunwang* 一字佛頂輪王), the Universal Emperor from the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa [assuming the aspect of] a Single Syllable. The documents translated into Chinese, along with the surviving Sanskrit and Tibetan corpus, delineate an emergence of tantric materials out of the *dhāraṇī* literature, even while calling itself the “*dhāraṇī* teaching” or the “*dhāraṇī* method” (*tuoluoni jiao* 陀羅尼教, *tuoluoni fa* 陀羅尼法). However, it is clear that these documents engage many practices foreign to normative *dhāraṇī* literature, and it is also clear that normative Mahāyānist *dhāraṇī* literature continued on to be developed along traditional, non-tantric lines over the next two centuries, only peripherally influenced by the sudden and precipitous emergence of tantric practices.

By this standard, the earliest surviving tantric documents are those attributed to Atikūṭa (阿地瞿多), who is said to have translated his texts in the mid-sixth century. The most important works are those dedicated to or at least included the emerging Uṣṇīṣa system, especially his *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* (T. 901, *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經, 654 C.E.), which was constructed by Atikūṭa working with his colleagues Kāśyapa, \*Saṃghānandavimokṣa, and others, most of whom were said to be from a monastery of Bodhgayā ([Mahā]-bodhivihāra). This is the first document that brings together the essential ingredients: a candidate is consecrated with the *abhiṣeka* ceremony into a mandala (a) using *homa* ceremonies, mantras, and *mudrās*; (b) employing forms of Buddhist meditation; and (c) enjoining the individuals to secrecy following the ceremony. The ritual systems in the *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* have thematic analogues in the *abhiṣeka* rites used in kingship in the sixth and seventh centuries, as well as with rituals drawn from non-Buddhist practices, such as cults to Cāmuṇḍā and Hayagrīva, as well as rites from the larger Pañcarātra and Śaiva world. The reference to the imperial metaphor is explicit in the *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* (T. 901.18:897b13–14), as is the awareness that Buddhists were under increasing duress, with non-Buddhist teachers challenging the Buddha

or bodhisattvas to magical battle in the opening narrative of the text (T. 901.18:785b–c). Similar themes were to be found in Uṣṇīṣa texts translated by Bodhiruci II (T. 951 and 952) and by Amoghavajra (T. 950 and 953), to name but a few.

The greatest competition to the Uṣṇīṣa system did not initially come from the later works included in the Vajra-uṣṇīṣa canon, but from the Amoghapāśa literature, which highlighted the importance of Avalokiteśvara in the emergence of esoterism (Reis-Habito 1999; Grinstead 1994; *Amoghapāśahr̥daya* [Meisezahl 1962]; *Amoghapāśamahākālparāja* [Kimura 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2004]). Avalokiteśvara had stood as an early mediating figure in the ritual and iconographic integration of non-Buddhist inspiration, evident in both Xuanzang's description (T. 2087.51:932a20) and in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, this latter curiously not translated into Chinese prior to the Song (T. 1050) even though there is a Gilgit manuscript testifying to its early seventh-century existence. Avalokiteśvara's position remained central through late Indian tantrism, with the cult sites of Potalaka in the south and Khasarpaṇa in the east of particular importance. Likewise, Amitābha was a figure associated with certain tantric systems, ultimately becoming enshrined in the fully developed mandalas along with the other great Mahāyānist buddhas, Vairocana and Akṣobhya.

The Uṣṇīṣa system was to be the most important tantric system for the next several decades, eventually eclipsed by and subsumed into the scriptures included in a Vajra-uṣṇīṣa (*Jin'gangding* 金剛訂) canon in the mid-eighth century; 金剛訂 has been mis-rendered in Japanese literature as Vajraśekhara, but Giebel (1995, 109) has correctly discerned its identity, and it is probable that the Vajra-uṣṇīṣa idea was understood as a higher development, over and above the Uṣṇīṣa literature.

By the mid-eighth century, tantrism became increasingly radicalized, with nascent transgressive practices found in the *Subhāhuparipṛcchā*, the *Amoghapāśamahākālparāja*, and the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga* gaining increasing importance. These sanctified the involvement with tribal or outcaste spirits—*yakṣas*, *vetālas*, *ḍākinīs*, *yoginīs*, *herukas*, etc.—usually under the aegis of the greatest *yakṣa* of them all, Vajrapāṇi, whose career in esoteric literature has yet to be mapped in detail. Vajrapāṇi, indeed, became a marker for the full development of a rhetoric of sanctification of locality, so that he destroyed Śiva-Maheśvara and incorporated the associated spirits or gods into the mandala by prefacing all their names with the designation “*vajra-*” (*Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha* [Yamada Isshi 1981, 172–173]).

CANONICAL AND NON-CANONICAL SOURCES AND MATERIALS





### 3. TAISHŌ VOLUMES 18–21

Rolf W. Giebel

Among the many editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon, the most readily accessible and most widely used by scholars today is the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 (New Edition of the Buddhist Canon Compiled during the Taishō Era), hereafter referred to as the “Taishō edition.” Published in Japan from 1924 to 1934, it comprises one hundred volumes, made up of eighty-five volumes of texts containing 2,920 works, twelve volumes of iconography, and three volumes of catalogues. The eighty-five volumes of texts (except for vol. 85) have been arranged by and large in the order of works traditionally considered to be of Indian provenance, works composed in China, and works composed in Japan. These have been further classified into thirty-one categories, of which the tantric texts with which we are here concerned constitute the tenth (Mikkyōbu 密教部, “Section of Esoteric Teachings”), corresponding to vols. 18–21 among the first thirty-two volumes traditionally considered to be of Indian provenance (although a number of works in vols. 18–21 were in fact composed in China and some quite probably in Japan). In addition to vols. 18–21, works pertaining to East Asian esoteric Buddhism include non-canonical commentaries, treatises, ritual manuals, and so on composed in China and Japan, and these are dealt with in the following section.

The *Taishō* edition was compiled with the aim of providing a reliable and comprehensive edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon, but while the “Section of Esoteric Teachings,” consisting of 573 works (or 618 works if one includes multiple redactions, etc., of some works), is numerically speaking the largest of the thirty-one categories into which the *Taishō* edition is divided, its coverage is not exhaustive and there are a number of tantric texts found in earlier editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon that have been omitted. Although perhaps not immediately evident to the reader, the 573 texts contained in vols. 18–21 have been organized into fourteen categories (cf. Miyasaka 1983).

## Volume 18

1. *Mahāvairocana sūtra* and related texts (*Dainichikyōrui* 大日經類): nos. 848–864 (pp. 1a–206b; 17 texts).
2. *Vajrasekhara sūtra* and related texts (*Kongōchōkyōrui* 金剛頂經類): nos. 865–892 (pp. 207a–601c; 28 texts).
3. *Susuddhikara sūtra* and related texts (*Soshitsujikyōrui* 蘇悉地經類): nos. 893–907 (pp. 603a–915c; 15 texts).
4. *Homa* manuals (*Goma gikirui* 護摩儀軌類): nos. 908–914 (pp. 916a–940b; 7 texts).
5. Texts dealing with initiation rites (*Jukaihōrui* 受戒法類): nos. 915–917 (pp. 940b–946a; 3 texts).

## Volume 19

6. Ritual texts for buddhas (*Shobutsu gikirui* 諸佛儀軌類): nos. 918–943 (pp. 1a–99b; 26 texts).
7. Ritual texts for buddha-crowns (*Shobutchō gikirui* 諸佛頂儀軌類): nos. 944–981 (pp. 100a–414a; 38 texts).
8. Ritual texts for sūtras (*Shokyō gikirui* 諸經儀軌類): nos. 982–1029 (pp. 415a–744b; 48 texts).

## Volume 20

9. Ritual texts for Avalokiteśvara (*Shokannon gikirui* 諸觀音儀軌類): nos. 1030–1118 (pp. 1a–507b; 89 texts).
10. Ritual texts for bodhisattvas (*Shobosatsu gikirui* 諸菩薩儀軌類): nos. 1119–1170 (pp. 509a–704a; 52 texts).
11. Ritual texts for Mañjuśrī (*Monju gikirui* 文殊儀軌類): nos. 1171–1198 (pp. 705a–940a; 28 texts).

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12. Ritual texts for *vidyārājas* (*Shomyōō gikirui* 諸明王儀軌類): nos. 1199–1243 (pp. 1a–213c; 45 texts).
13. Ritual texts for gods, etc. (*Shotentō gikirui* 諸天等儀軌類): nos. 1244–1330 (pp. 215a–494b; 87 texts).
14. *Dhāraṇī* sūtras (*Shodaranikyōrui* 諸陀羅尼經類): nos. 1331–1420 (pp. 495a–968c; 90 texts).

The sheer number and diversity of tantric texts make any attempt at classification difficult, and while the above classification could be said to have been an improvement on earlier schemes proposed by Japanese scholar-monks such as Annen 安然 (841–?), Jōgon 淨嚴

(1639–1702), and Shinjō 眞常 (1719–1802), it is still not entirely consistent in that it mixes content-based categories with categories based on formal characteristics. This means that works dealing with the same subject matter are sometimes found scattered among several categories. To give just one example, no. 1170 (§10), no. 1241 (§13), and no. 1401 (§14) are all concerned with Vajragāndhārī and should, properly speaking, be grouped together. This example also illustrates the fact that the classification of texts is not only inconsistent, but sometimes also mistaken, for no. 1241 has been included in §13 on the basis of the erroneous assumption that it is associated with Āṭavaka. There are also instances in which different versions of the same work have been placed in different categories (e.g., no. 1147 in §10 and nos. 1333 and 1334 in §14).

Be that as it may, vols. 18–21 of the *Taishō* edition constitute the most comprehensive collection of tantric scriptures preserved in Chinese and provide the basis for any study of tantric or esoteric Buddhism in East Asia. While a good number of the 573 works contained in these volumes have also been preserved in Tibetan translation and, in some cases, in the original Sanskrit, many of them are unique to the Chinese Buddhist canon, and so they provide valuable material for elucidating tantric Buddhism as a whole. That greater use of them for this purpose has not been made is perhaps partly due to the fact that their content is not widely known. This makes a detailed descriptive catalogue of these volumes all the more desirable, and as a first step towards that end a brief overview of the works included in each of the fourteen categories listed above has been given below together with references to translations and studies in Western languages when appropriate.<sup>1</sup> References are given at the end of each section in abbreviated form (and in chronological order when there are two or more references dealing with the same text), preceded by the number of the corresponding text in brackets; for full details, the reader is referred to the main bibliography at the end of this volume. When appropriate, Sanskrit titles have also been given, with a double dagger (‡) indicating that the Sanskrit title has been taken from the Tibetan translation and an asterisk indicating that the Sanskrit title has been reconstructed on the basis of the Tibetan or Chinese translation (although the word

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<sup>1</sup> A brief overview by Paul Demiéville can be found in Renou and Filliozat 1996, 439–440.

*nāma* has generally been omitted). The references are by no means exhaustive, and for reasons of space not all partial correspondences with Sanskrit or Tibetan texts have been noted.

## Volume 18

### §1. Mahāvairocana sūtra and related texts

This section consists of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (or *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*) [848], a separate version of fasc. 7 (which, strictly speaking, is not part of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* proper) [849], four lengthy ritual manuals [850–853], a text giving all the mantras appearing in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* in Siddham script [854], and several further ritual texts [855–864].

Bibliography: [848] Tajima 1936, Kiyota 1982, Yamamoto 1990, Wayman and Tajima 1992, Giebel 2005.

### §2. Vajraśekhara sūtra and related texts

The *Vajraśekhara sūtra* here refers to the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha* (*STTS*), and this section begins with a translation of the first chapter of part 1 of the *STTS* [865]. This is followed by the *Lüechu niansong jing* 略出念誦經 [866], corresponding in content largely to the first part of the *STTS*; the *Yuqi jing* 瑜祇經 [867], generally thought to have been composed in China; the *Zhufo jingjie she zhenshi jing* 諸佛境界攝真實經 [868], also related to part 1 of the *STTS*; and several texts dealing with ritual and doctrinal aspects of the *STTS* cycle [869–881]. A complete translation of the *STTS* [882] is followed by several works all translated during the Song dynasty, including the *Guhyasamāja tantra* [885], †*Śrīvajramaṇḍalālamkāra tantra* [886], *Advayasamatāvijaya tantra* [887], †*Sarvarahasya tantra* [888], †*Māyājāla tantra* [890], and *Hevajra tantra* [892].

Bibliography: [865] Giebel 2001; [867] vanden Broucke 1990, Goepper 1993, vanden Broucke 1994 and 2006; [869] Giebel 1995; [883] Giebel 1995: 186–191; [890, 891] Sinclair 2000; [892] Abbott 1978, Willemen 1983.

### §3. Susuddhikara sūtra and related texts

The majority of works in this section describe basic practices of the so-called Kriyā Tantras, starting with the †*Susuddhikara sūtra* [893] and an associated ritual manual [894]. They also include the †*Subāhu-paripṛcchā* [895–896], †*Guhya tantra* [897], \**Vinaya sūtra* [898], and

\**Dhāraṇīsamgraha* [901], the last of which is a voluminous collection of rituals for the worship of various deities (see Davidson, “Sources and Inspirations”).

Bibliography: [893] Giebel 2001; [895] Strickmann 1996: 221–229 and 316–320, Strickmann 2002: 211–218; [898] Strickmann 1996: 311–316; [901] van Gulik 1935: 56–75, Smet 1989, Strickmann 1996: 133–136 and 146–163; [902] McBride 2005: 107–113; [905] Rambelli 2000; [905–907] Chen 1998: 47–73.

#### §4. *Homa manuals*

The works in this section describe either the *homa* rite per se [908, 909, 912–914] or deal specifically with the preparation of the site [910, 911].  
Bibliography: [912] Strickmann 1996: 349–354.

#### §5. *Texts dealing with initiation rites*

The three works in this section [915–917] deal in particular with the precepts to be observed by an initiand.

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#### §6. *Ritual texts for buddhas*

This section begins with two versions of the †*Buddhahṛdaya-dhāraṇī* [918, 919], followed by another work also concerned with the “Buddha’s heart” (*buddhahṛdaya*) [920]. The remaining texts in this section describe rites, etc., for various buddhas: Akṣobhya [921], Bhaiṣajyaguru [922–929], Amitāyus [930], Lokeśvararāja [931, 932], Amitābha [933, 934 (†*Aparimitaguṇānuśaṃsā-dhāraṇī*)], Amitāyus [935], Aparimitāyus [936–937 (*Aparimitāyur-mahāyānasūtra*)], Śākyamuni [938, 939 (†*Sarvadurgatipariśodhanamaṇḍalavidhi*)], Maitreya [940], Śākyamuni [941 (*Māravijaya-stotra*), 942], and \*Aparājitadhvaja [943 (*Dhva-jāgrakeyūrā-dhāraṇī*)].

Bibliography: [922] Birnbaum 1979: 88; [924A] Birnbaum 1979: 88–89; [937] Walleser 1916; [941] Chou 1945.

#### §7. *Ritual texts for buddha-crowns*

This section consists chiefly of texts pertaining to buddha-crowns (*uṣṇīṣa*), or personifications of the protuberance on the top of a buddha’s head, of which there are several: Sitātapatra [944 (*Sitātapatrā-dhāraṇī*)], 945 (\**Sūraṅgama sūtra*), 947, 975, 976–977 (*Sitātapatrā-dhāraṇī*), Padmoṣṇīṣa [946], Cakravartin [948, 949, 959, 960, 965],

Ekākṣaracakravartin/Ekākṣaroṣṇīṣacakravartin [950, 951, 953–958], Five Buddha-Crowns [952], Jvāloṣṇīṣa [963, 964, 966], Vijaya [967–971 (*Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī*), 972, 973, 974 (*Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī*), 978–979 (*Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī*)], and \*Mahājaya [980]. In addition, there are also texts dealing with the *cintāmaṇi*, or wish-fulfilling gem [961], the *śarīra*, or Buddha's relics [962], and Buddhālocanā [981].

Bibliography: [945] Beal 1871: 284–369, Luk 1966, Buddhist Text Translation Society 1977–1981; [961] Ruppert 2000: 283–286; [980] vanden Broucke 2006.

### §8. *Ritual texts for sūtras*

This section consists of a variety of works that do not deal with specific deities, as well as ritual commentaries on particular scriptures: *Mahāmāyūrī* [982–988], including a related ritual text [983A]; *Mahāmegha sūtra* [989–993]; ritual commentaries on the *Renwang jing* 仁王經 [994–996]; *Shouhu guojiezhū tuoluoni jing* 守護國界主陀羅尼經 [997], dealing, like the *Renwang jing*, with protection of the state; ‡*Parīṇāmacakra sūtra* [998]; *Mahāsāhasrapramardīnī* [999]; ritual commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra* [1000, 1001], *Amoghapāśa-kalparāja* [1002], *Liqu jing* 理趣經 [1003, 1004], and *Avataṃsaka sūtra* [1019, 1020, 1021 (\**Gaṇḍavyūha-hṛdaya*)]; *Mahāmaṇivipulavi mānaviśvasupraṭiṣṭhitaguhyaparamarahasyakalparāja-dhāraṇī* [1005–1007]; \**Bodhimaṇḍavyūha-dhāraṇī* [1008]; *Anantamukhanirhāradhāraṇī* [1009–1118], including a related ritual text [1010]; works on *stūpa* worship and longevity rites [1022–1023 (‡*Sarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhānaḥṛdayaguhyadhātukaraṇḍamudrā-dhāraṇī*), 1024 (‡*Rāsmivimalaviśuddhaprabhā-dhāraṇī*), 1025 (‡*Samantamukhapraveśaraśmivimaloṣṇīṣaprabhāsarvatathāgatāhṛdayasamayavilokitā-dhāraṇī*), 1026]; and works describing protective rites [1027–1029].

Bibliography: [991] Beal 1871: 416–423; [994] de Visser 1935: 160–175, Orzech 1998: 176–191; [1002] Unno 2004: 21–22; [1003] Astley 1994a; [1009] Inagaki 1987; [1020] Heng et al. 1983: 86–87.

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### §9. *Ritual texts for Avalokiteśvara*

The first group of texts in this section consists of texts that do not deal with a specific manifestation of Avalokiteśvara: rites for Avalokiteśvara and the Lotus Family [1030–1033]; a collection of five spells [1034], not all of which are related to Avalokiteśvara; *Sahasrāvartā-dhāraṇī* [1035; though the title of no. 1036 would suggest that it too is a ver-

sion of the *Sahasrāvartā-dhāraṇī*, it is of quite different content]; ‡*Samantabhadrā-dhāraṇī* [1037, 1038], expounded by Avalokiteśvara; further ritual texts [1039–1042], including parts of the ‡*Trailokyavijaya-mahākālparāja* [1040]; several texts grouped together on account of their reference to a “six-syllable spell” (*ṣaḍakṣarī-vidyā*) [1043–1047, 1049]; *Mahāmantrānusāriṇī* [1048]; *Kāraṇḍavyūha* [1050]; a ritual text based on the *Samāyoga-tantra* [1051]; and several works eulogizing Avalokiteśvara [1052–1055], including the *Avalokiteśvarasya nāmāṣṭaśataka* [1054]. These are followed by works pertaining to specific forms of Avalokiteśvara: thousand-armed and thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara [1056–1068], eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara [1069–1071 (*Ekādaśamukha-dhāraṇī*)], Hayagrīva [1072–1074], Cundā [1075–1079], Cakravartīcintāmaṇi [1080–1091], Amoghapāśa [1092 (*Amoghapāśa-kālparāja*), 1093–1095 (*Amoghapāśahṛdaya*), 1096–1098, 1099 (*Amoghapāśahṛdaya*)], Parṇaśabarī [1100 (*Parṇaśabarī-dhāraṇī*)], Tārā [1101–1104, 1105 (‡*Tārādevī-nāmāṣṭaśataka*), 1106 (*Tārābhāṭṭārikāyā nāmāṣṭottaraśataka*), 1107 (*Tārāyā daṇḍakastotra*), 1108 (*Tārānamaskāraikavimśatistotra*), 1109], Ekajaṭā [1110], Nīlakaṇṭha [1111–1113 (*Nīlakaṇṭha-dhāraṇī*)], Bhṛkuṭī [1114], and Amaḍā (?) [1115]. This section ends with three miscellaneous works [1116, 1117 (‡*Avalokiteśvaramātā-dhāraṇī*), 1118].

Bibliography: [1043] Reis-Habito 1993: 48–60, Yü 2001: 49–50; [1050] Reis-Habito 1993: 60–64, Yü 2001: 72–75; [1056] Reis-Habito 1993: 118–119; [1057] Reis-Habito 1993: 97–117, Yü 2001: 65–67; [1059] Sen 1945; [1060] Buddhist Text Translation Society 1976, Reis-Habito 1993: 153–244, Reis-Habito 1994, Yü 2001: 59–65; [1064] Reis-Habito 1993: 118; [1065] Yü 2001: 68–69; [1068] Reis-Habito 1993: 120, Yü 2001: 83; [1069] Grinstead 1994; [1072] van Gulik 1935: 84–94; [1093] Yü 2001: 56–58; [1097] Mair 1994: 116–120, Strickmann 1996: 217–220, Reis-Habito 1999, Strickmann 2002: 204–206; [1107] Chou 1945.

### §10. *Ritual texts for bodhisattvas*

This section consists of texts pertaining to various bodhisattvas other than the two preminent bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara (§9) and Mañjuśrī (§11): Vajrasattva/Samantabhadrā [1119–1126], Samantabhadrā [1127 (‡*Samantabhadrā-aṣṭottaraśatakanāma-dhāraṇī*)], Vajrapāṇi [1128, 1129 (*Bhūtaḍāmara-tantra*), 1130, 1131], Vajrarāja [1132], Vajrāyus [1133–1136], Vajrapāṇi [1137–1140 (*Sumukha-dhāraṇī*)], Maitreya [1141, 1142, 1143 (*Maitreyapratijñā-dhāraṇī*), 1144 (\**Maitreyapraṇīdhāna*)], Ākāśagarbha [1145, 1146, 1147 (‡*Saptabuddhaka sūtra*), 1148, 1149], Dharmacakrapravartin [1150], Prajñāpāramitā [1151, 1152], Mahāpratisarā [1153–1154 (*Mahāpratisarā-vidyārājñī*)],



1155, 1156], Gandhārārāja [1157], Kṣitigarbha [1158, 1159], Sūryaprabha and Candraprabha [1160], Bhaiṣajyarāja and Bhaiṣajyasamudgata [1161], Vasudhārā [1162–1164 (*Vasudhārā-dhāraṇī*), 1165], Aśvaghoṣa [1166], Eight Great Bodhisattvas [1167, 1168 (*Aṣṭamaṇḍalaka sūtra*)], Cundā [1169], and Vajragāndhārī [1170].

Bibliography: [1119] Astley-Kristensen 1988; [1133] Iyanaga 1985: 664–667; [1136] Birnbaum 1985–1986; [1158] Zhiru 2007: 97–101 and 253–257; [1159A] Zhiru 2007: 89–97 and 241–252; [1159B] Zhiru 2007: 65–67; [1161] Birnbaum 1979: 115–148.

### §11. *Ritual texts for Mañjuśrī*

This section consists of texts relating to Mañjuśrī, starting chiefly with forms of Mañjuśrī differentiated by the length of his basic mantra: five syllables (Arapacana) [1171–1173 (‡*Trailokyavijaya-mahākāl-parāja*), 1174–1176], six syllables [1179, 1180], one syllable [1181, 1182], and eight syllables [1184, 1185]. These are followed by the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* [1187–1190], *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* [1191] (of which individual chapters were also translated separately into Chinese: nos. 1181, 1182, 1215, 1216, 1276), and several ritual and laudatory texts, including the \**Mañjuśrībodhisattvamaṅgalagāthā* [1196] and ‡*Mañjuśrīnāmāṣṭasāta* [1197].

Bibliography: [1185] Giebel 2002: 759–753; [1191] Matsunaga 1985; [1196] Chou 1945; [1197] von Staël-Holstein 1913: 85–104, Kambayashi 1930.

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### §12. *Ritual texts for vidyārājas*

This section consists of texts relating to various *vidyārājas* and associated deities: Acalanātha [1199, 1200 (*Trisamayārāja-tantra*), 1201–1205], Kulika [1206–1208], Trailokyavijaya [1209, 1210], Amṛtakunḍalin [1211–1213], Yamāntaka [1214–1216, 1217 (‡*Krodhavijayakalpaguhyā-tantra*), 1218, 1219], Vajrayakṣa [1220, 1221], Vajrakumāra [1222–1224], Ucchuṣma [1225–1229], Mahācakravajra [1230, 1231], Padanikṣepa [1232], Aparājita [1233–1236], Āṭavaka [1237–1240], Vajragāndhārī [1241], Vajrabhairava [1242], and Mahābala [1243 (‡*Mahābala nāma mahāyānasūtra*)].

Bibliography: [1199] Strickmann 2002: 233–234; [1200] Strickmann 2002: 234–235; [1202] Strickmann 1996: 220–221, Strickmann 2002: 206–207; [1225–1229] Iyanaga 1985: 695–697; [1227] Strickmann 2002: 157–158; [1229] Strickmann 2002: 158–161; [1238] Strickmann 2002: 143–151; [1243] Bischoff 1956.

§13. *Ritual texts for gods, etc.*

This section consists chiefly of texts relating to miscellaneous deities: Vaiśravaṇa [1244, 1245 (*Āṭānātika sūtra*), 1246–1251], Mahāśrī [1252 (*‡Mahāśrīya sūtra*), 1253 (*Śrīmahādevīvyākaraṇa*)], Mārīcī [1254–1256 (*Mārīcī-dhāraṇī*), 1257 (*Mārīcī-dhāraṇī*, *‡Mārīcījāta tantra*), 1258, 1259], Hārītī [1260–1262], Piṅgala (= Priyaṅkara?) [1263], Jānguli [1264–1265 (*Jāngulī-mahāvidyā*)], Gaṇeśa [1266–1275], Garuḍa [1276, 1278], Maheśvara [1277, 1279], Goddess of the Arts [1280], Nārāyaṇa [1281], Jambhalā (?) [1282], Jambhala [1283 (*‡Jambhalajalendra-kaḷpa*), 1284], Māṇibhadra [1285 (*Māṇibhadra-dhāraṇī*)], Dṛdhā [1286], Mahākāla [1287], Naḍa [1288], Kumbhīra [1289], Yama [1290], General Deep-Sand [1291], Ten *Rākṣasīs* of the *Lotus Sūtra* [1292], Sixteen Protectors of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra* [1293], and Eight, Ten, and Twelve Tutelary Gods [1294–1298]. These are followed by a group of astronomical and/or astrological texts, including texts pertaining to celestial deities [1299, 1300–1301 (*Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*), 1302–1303 (*Grahamātrkā-dhāraṇī*), 1304–1312], a group of texts describing rites for the dead [1313 (*‡Pretamukhāgnijvālaśaraṇakāra-dhāraṇī*), 1314 (*\*Pretamukhājvālāśvāsanabalividhi*), 1315, 1316, 1317 (*‡Aparimitaguṇānuśaṃsā-dhāraṇī*), 1318–1321], a text describing a rite for bathing images [1322], and a group of texts describing rites for curing various ailments [1323 (*‡Sarvarogaprasāmani-dhāraṇī*), 1324 (*‡Cakṣurviśodhanī-vidyāmantra*), 1325 (*‡Arsāprasāmani sūtra*), 1326–1329, 1330 (*Kumāra tantra*)].

Bibliography: [1245] Hoffmann 1939; [1248] Strickmann 2002: 236–237; [1256] Hall 1989; [1260–1263] Peri 1917: 15–22 and 82–101; [1265] Strickmann 2002: 151–156; [1266–1275] Duquenne 1988, Sanford 1991b, Kabanoff 1994: 101–104, Strickmann 1996: 252–266; [1277] Strickmann 2002: 229–232; [1299–1311] Eberhard 1940; [1305–1307] Orzech and Sanford 2000, Mollier 2008: 136–140 and 143–146; [1307] Franke 1990; [1310–1311] Mollier 2008: 141–145; [1313] de Visser 1935: 77–81, Orzech 1996b; [1315] Orzech 1994a: 54–55; [1316] de Visser 1935: 108–109; [1318] de Visser 1935: 81–83; [1320] de Visser 1935: 83–84, Orzech 1994a: 56–61 and 70–72, Orzech 2002: 221–225; [1330] Bagchi 1941, Strickmann 2002: 221–223.

§14. *Dhāraṇī sūtras*

This section consists chiefly of sundry *dhāraṇī sūtras*, starting with some anthologies of *dhāraṇīs* [1331, 1332, 1333–1334 (*‡Saptabuddhaka sūtra*), 1335–1338]. Among the remaining works in this section, the following have Sanskrit and/or Tibetan parallels: *‡Vajramaṇḍa-*

*dhāraṇī sūtra* [1344, 1345], ‡*Sarvabuddhāṅgavatī-dhāraṇī* [1346, 1347], ‡*Dvāda-śabuddhaka sūtra* [1348, 1349], ‡*Agrapradīpa-dhāraṇīvidyārājā* [1351–1355], ‡*Puṣpakūṭa-dhāraṇī* [1356–1359], ‡*Ṣaṇmukhī-dhāraṇī* [1360], \**Ṣaṇmukhī-dhāraṇī-vyākhyāna* and \**Ṣaṇmukhī-dhāraṇī-vyākhyāna-ṭikā* [1361], ‡*Bhadrakarātrī sūtra* [1362], ‡*Bodhigarbhālaṅkāralakṣadhāraṇī* [1369, 1390], ‡*Mahā-dhāraṇī* [1371], ‡*Prajñāvardhanī-dhāraṇī* [1372], ‡*Sarvābhaya-pradā-dhāraṇī* [1373], ‡*Sarvad-harmaguṇavyūharāja sūtra* [1374], *Sarvatat hāgatādhiṣṭhānasattvāvalokanabuddhakṣetrasandarśanavyūha* [1375], ‡*Mekhalā-dhāraṇī* [1376, 1377], ‡*Caḡsurviśodhanī-vidyāmantra* [1380], \**Śrīdevīnāmadvādaśaka* [1381], *Parṇaśabarī-dhāraṇī* [1384], *Surūpa-dhāraṇī* [1386], *Abhayaṃkarī-dhāraṇī* [1388], *Aparimitāyur-dhāraṇī* [1389], *Mahāśītavatī-vidyārājñī* [1392], ‡*Jñānolka-dhāraṇī* [1397, 1398], ‡*Cūḡamaṇī-dhāraṇī* [1400], *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama sūtra* [1402, 1403], ‡*Hiraṇyavatī-dhāraṇī* [1404], ‡*Cauravidhvamsana-dhāraṇī* [1405], ‡*Viśeṣavatī-dhāraṇī* [1408, 1409], \**Padmanetra-dhāraṇī* [1411], ‡*Vijayavatī-pratyāṅgirā* [1413], ‡*Mahāvajrameruśikharakūṭāgāra-dhāraṇī* [1415], *Vajravidāraṇa-dhāraṇī* [1416, 1417], and *Daśatalan yagrodhaparimaṇḍalabuddhapratimālakṣaṇa* [1419].

Bibliography: [1331] Soper 1959: 170–178, Strickmann 1990, Strickmann 1996: 78–87 and 114–123 and 330–336, Strickmann 2002: 113–119 and 132–140, Strickmann 2005: 58–75; [1332] Strickmann 1996: 73–76; [1336] Strickmann 1996: 76–78 and 141–142, Yü 2001: 51–53, Strickmann 2002: 106–107; [1360, 1361] Mimaki 1977a, Mimaki 1977b; [1363, 1364] Giebel 2002: 753–752; [1378] Strickmann 2002: 104; [1385] Bagchi 1942–1943; [1387] Giebel 2002: 751–750; [1393] Strickmann 2002: 109–113; [1397, 1398] Giebel 2002: 750–748; [1402, 1403] Giebel 2002: 760–759; [1408, 1409] Giebel 2002: 759–753; [1410] Giebel 2002: 753–752; [1412] Giebel 2002: 752–751; [1418] Strickmann 1996: 197–202; [1419] Cai 2000; [1420] Davis 2001: 134–136, Strickmann 2002: 170–178.

#### 4. TEXTUAL MATERIAL RELATING TO ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN CHINA OUTSIDE THE *TAISHŌ*, VOLS. 18–21

Henrik H. Sørensen

##### *Introduction*

While the great majority of Esoteric Buddhist texts in Chinese can be found in the *Taishō* and *Zokuzōkyō*, and therefore are now available in electronic form for download or perusal through the CBETA (Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association) site, neither of these two important collections are comprehensive.<sup>1</sup> In order to get a more complete picture of the actual material available, we have to look farther afield and in diverse text collections.

Since the mid-1990s a new series of publications from China, the *Zangwai fojiao wenxian* 藏外佛教文獻 (Buddhist Texts Outside the Tripiṭakas; hereafter *ZFW*) has appeared.<sup>2</sup> The Esoteric Buddhist material contained in this collection is highly diverse and includes manuscripts from Dunhuang, works from the hoard of texts found in Yunnan during the 1950s, and other texts. Recently an important site operated by the Chinese Buddhist Tripiṭaka Electronic Text Collection, Taipei Edition, has started providing downloads of the texts found in *ZFW* (hereafter *EWZF*). This new site is an important addition to the electronic resources relating to Esoteric Buddhism already available; however it is still in its initial stages and it may take some years before full access to new material not previously available to the general public will be afforded.<sup>3</sup>

This essay is primarily devoted to a brief discussion of the Esoteric Buddhist works in Chinese not contained in the four volumes of the *Taishō* dedicated to Esoteric Buddhism, i.e., vol. 18–21. It therefore

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<sup>1</sup> For the material contained in the “esoteric” volumes of the *Taishō* canon see Giebel, “*Taishō* Volumes 18–21,” in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> This collection of extracanonical texts has been published in two series: Fang Guangchang, ed. 1995–2003 and 2008–. In addition to presenting primary source materials, both series also feature high-standard research articles.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. At the time of this writing, seventy-seven texts in nine volumes, corresponding to the first nine volumes of the *ZFW*, First Series, have been made available for download. New texts are being added *ad hoc*.

includes those texts in the *Taishō* outside the formal Esoteric Buddhist section, works in the *Zokuzōkyō*, works found among the hoard of Buddhists manuscripts at Dunhuang 敦煌,<sup>4</sup> texts in the non-standard Mt. Fang 房山 *Tripitaka* carved in stone,<sup>5</sup> and the text corpus found in Yunnan, most of which are of Dali 大理 provenance.<sup>6</sup> Information on the handful of relevant texts found in the other Chinese *tripitakas*, such as the *Qianlong dazang jing* 乾隆大藏經 (Qianlong *Tripitaka*; hereafter *QDJ*) from 1735–1738<sup>7</sup> and the recent *Zhonghua dazang jing* 中華大藏經 (Chinese *Tripitaka*; hereafter *ZDJ*),<sup>8</sup> are also included here. The intent is to provide an overview and succinct introduction to the Esoteric Buddhist material in Chinese, material that is either less well known or otherwise not readily available in *Taishō* volumes 18–21.

*Esoteric Buddhist Texts in the Taishō Not Included in Vols. 18–21*

There are several texts in the *Taishō Tripitaka* relating to Esoteric Buddhism that are not found in volumes 18–21, which contain the Esoteric Buddhist material. The discussion below includes most of these texts, but without a reassessment of the proper sūtras not included from these four volumes.

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*Da piluzhena chengfo jing shu* 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏 (Commentary to the Mahāvairocana Sūtra),<sup>9</sup> compiled by Yixing. This is one of the

<sup>4</sup> For a comprehensive, although far from complete, collection of this material, see Lin and Shen, comp. 2000a and 2000b.

<sup>5</sup> This incomplete *Tripitaka* was carved onto stone slabs between the early Tang and the Ming dynasty, thus reflecting a very long period in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Most of the Esoteric Buddhist texts not found in the standard *tripitakas* were carved during the Liao and Jin dynasties, i.e., between ca. 1000 and 1234 C.E. For additional information on this material, see Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism under the Liao” and “Esoteric Buddhism under the Jin,” in this volume.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Hou 2009. A detailed discussion of the Esoteric Buddhist texts can be found in Hou 1998.

<sup>7</sup> *QDJ*, 168 vols., Taipei, 197–2002. The various existing PDF versions of this material makes it relatively easy to use. Good indices are also widely available online.

<sup>8</sup> *ZDJ*, 220 vols. Beijing, 1982–87. Although this is the most recent of the Chinese *tripitakas* to appear, it is an unwieldy and old-fashioned collection with limited value as a resource.

<sup>9</sup> T. 1796.

primary commentaries on the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* based on the personal instructions Yixing received from Śubhākarasiṃha.

*Da piluzhena jing gongyang cidi fa shu* 大毘盧遮那經供養次第法疏 (The Outline of the Progressive Methods of Making Offerings [based on] the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*).<sup>10</sup> A commentary by the Silla monk Pulga Sauī 不可思議 (fl. eighth century),<sup>11</sup> it contains ritual instructions and a commentary on the last five chapters of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*.

*Jin'gangding jing da yuqie bimi xindi famen yijue* 金剛頂經大瑜伽祕密心地法門義訣 (Transmitted Meaning of the Methods of the Mahāyogā of the Secret Mind Ground according to the *Vajraśekhara sūtra*),<sup>12</sup> compiled or authored by Amoghavajra. This work is a kind of synopsis of the *Vajraśekhara sūtra* and also features a pseudohistorical account of its history, including its retrieval from the Iron Stūpa in Southern India. The text also contains numerous quotations from the scripture itself, as well as doctrinal observations.

*Shou lengyan yanyi shu zhu jing* 首楞嚴義疏注經 (Annotated Commentary on the Meaning of the Pseudo-Śuraṅgama Sūtra),<sup>13</sup> compiled by the monk Zixuan 子璿, also known as Changshui 長水 (965–1038). A monumental work in twenty rolls, it includes a discussion of some Esoteric Buddhist concepts, especially in connection with ritual and the use of the *śuraṅgama* spell.

*Qing Guanyin jing shu* 請觀音經疏 (Commentary on the Invocation of Avalokiteśvara).<sup>14</sup> Oral explication by Zhiyi 智顗 (538–595), the founder of Tiantai Buddhism, recorded by his disciple Guanding 灌頂 (561–632). This work sets forth the proper proceedings for a ritual dedicated to the cult of Avalokiteśvara. The Esoteric Buddhist elements consist primarily of spells and offerings.

<sup>10</sup> T. 1797.

<sup>11</sup> See Sørensen, “Early Esoteric Buddhism in Korea: Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla (ca. 600–918),” in this volume.

<sup>12</sup> T. 1798.

<sup>13</sup> T. 1799.

<sup>14</sup> T. 1800.

*Qing Guanyin jing shu chanyi chao* 請觀音經疏闡義鈔 (Essay Explaining the Meaning of the *Qing Guanyin jing shu*).<sup>15</sup> Written by the Song monk Zhiyuan 智圓 (976–1022) of the *shanwai* 山外 faction of Tiantai school 天台宗 during the Northern Song. This is a commentary on the abovementioned commentary, the *Qing Guanyin jing shu*.

*Shiyi mian shenzhou xin jing yishu* 十一面神咒心經義疏 (Commentary on the Meaning of the *Ekādaśamukha sūtra*),<sup>16</sup> authored by the Tang monk Huizhao 慧沼 (651–714). It follows Xuanzang's translation of the scripture in question.<sup>17</sup>

*Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing jiaoyi yiji* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經教跡義記 (Record of the Evidential Meaning of the *Bodoṣṇīsa-dhāraṇī sūtra*).<sup>18</sup> Recorded by the Tang monk Fachong 法崇 (fl. second half of eighth century). This is essentially a doctrinal work setting forth the “proofs” of the excellence of the scripture in question.

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*Qing guanshiyin pusa xiaofu duhai tuoluoni sanmei yi* 請觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼三昧儀 (Ritual for the Invocation of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva and the *Dhāraṇī* and *Samādhi* for Eradicating Evil),<sup>19</sup> written by the Tiantai monk Zunshi 遵式 (964–1032). This work is based on the *Saḍaṣṣaravidyā-dhāraṇī sūtra*, a work that exerted considerable influence on Zhiyi in his formation of ritual within the Tiantai school.

*Qianshouyan dabeixin zhou xingfa* 千手眼大悲心咒行法 (Method of Practicing the Great Heart of Compassion of the Thousand Hands and Eyes),<sup>20</sup> compiled by Zhili 知禮 (960–1028). A Tiantai ritual text based on the *Nilakaṇṭhaka* for the worship of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara.

<sup>15</sup> T. 1801.

<sup>16</sup> T. 1802.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. T. 1071. See also Grinstead 1994.

<sup>18</sup> T. 1803.

<sup>19</sup> T. 1949.

<sup>20</sup> T. 1950.

*Chishengguang daochang niansong yi* 熾盛光道場念誦儀 (Ritual for the Invocation of Tejaprabha at the Ritual Site),<sup>21</sup> compiled by the Tiantai monk Zunshi. This is a ritual text for the worship of Tejaprabha, Lord of the Constellations.

*Guanzizai pusa ruyilun zhou kefa* 觀自在菩薩如意輪咒課法 (Method of Using the Spell of Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara),<sup>22</sup> author unknown. A ritual text for the worship of Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara.

*Xianmi yuantong chengfo xin yaoji* 顯密圓通成佛心要集 (Collection of the Perfect and Complete Buddha's Mind Essentials according to the Manifest and Esoteric Buddhist Traditions),<sup>23</sup> compiled by the Liao monk Daochen 道殿 (fl. late eleventh–early twelfth centuries). This work combines Huayan and Esoteric Buddhist doctrines and practices.<sup>24</sup>

*Mizhou yuanyin wangsheng ji* 密咒圓因往生集 (Collection of Secret Spells of the Complete Causes for Attaining Rebirth [in the Pure Land]),<sup>25</sup> compiled by the Tangut monk Zhiguang 知廣 (fl. thirteenth century?) and others. This work belongs to the type of texts in which Esoteric Buddhism and Jingtu practices are combined.

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*Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi fufa ji* 兩部大法相承師資付法記 (Record of the Master-to-Disciple Dharma Transmissions of the Great Rituals of the Two Divisions),<sup>26</sup> recorded by Haiyun 海雲 (fl. 822–874) and dating from 834 C.E. This is a historical work setting forth the transmission of the Dhārmadhātu and Vajradhātu Mandalas during the eighth century.<sup>27</sup> In addition to information on Chinese monks, it also contains information on some of the Korean and Japanese monks who studied Esoteric Buddhism in China during the Tang.

<sup>21</sup> T. 1951.

<sup>22</sup> T. 1952.

<sup>23</sup> T. 1955.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhism under the Liao," in this volume.

<sup>25</sup> T. 1956.

<sup>26</sup> T. 2081.

<sup>27</sup> See Orzech, "After Amoghavajra," in this volume, and also Chen, 2010.



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*Daizong chao zeng sikong da bianzheng guangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* 代宗朝贈司空大辯正廣智三藏和上表制集 (Collection of the Memoranda on Regulations Bestowed by the Court of Daizong to the Minister of Works, the Greatly Skillful and Upright Guangzhi, the Venerable Tripiṭaka Master),<sup>28</sup> compiled by Yuanzhao 圓照 (d. 800), a major successor of Amoghavajra. This compilation contains all the official material relating to Amoghavajra's activities *vis-à-vis* the Tang court during the reigns of three emperors.<sup>29</sup>

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*Foshuo tiandi bayang shen zhou jing* 佛說天地八陽神咒經 (Scripture on the Spell of the Eight Yang Spirits of Heaven and Earth).<sup>30</sup> An apocryphal Esoteric Buddhist scripture, possibly predating the Tang. Numerous examples of the text are found among the Dunhuang manuscripts.

#### *Esoteric Buddhist Texts in the Zokuzōkyō*

The Esoteric Buddhist material found in the *Zokuzōkyō* that is not part of the *Taishō Tripiṭaka* is really a “mixed bag.” Much of the material that seems to represent Tang works is based on manuscripts found only in Japan, and must therefore be viewed with some caution until proper authenticity can be established. It is obvious, however, that some of these texts are Japanese apocryphal works. Many of the authentic Chinese texts in this collection are of a later date, i.e., post-Song, and many also occur in later Chinese *tripiṭakas* such as the *Yongle* and *Qianlong* canons.

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*Foshuo zhangshou miezui huzhu tongzi tuoluoni jing* 佛說長壽滅罪護諸童子陀羅尼經 (Scripture on the *Dhāraṇī* for Obtaining Longevity by Destroying Evil and Protecting Young Children).<sup>31</sup> This is not a *bona fide* Esoteric Buddhist scripture, as it includes only a single spell

<sup>28</sup> T. 2120.

<sup>29</sup> For a treatment of this work see Orlando, 1981, and Orzech 1998.

<sup>30</sup> T. 2897.

<sup>31</sup> ZZ. (1975–1989) 17.1.

and no ritual. It is stylistically close to the *Foding xin tuolouni jing*,<sup>32</sup> another apocryphal work from the Tang period. Doctrinally and ethically it bears some similarity to the *Pseudo-Śūraṅgama sūtra*.

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*Foshuo Amituo fo genben bimi shenzhou jing* 佛說阿彌陀佛根本祕密神咒經 (Scripture on Amitābha Buddha's Root and Secret Divine Spell),<sup>33</sup> translated by Bodhiruci. This text has the form and structure of a standard *dhāraṇī* sūtra centering on a powerful spell. Although the scripture teaches the practice of *buddhānusmṛti* in the usual form, Amitābha's name is itself treated as a sort of spell.<sup>34</sup> It would appear to be one of the earliest texts showing clear influence from Esoteric Buddhist practices and belief within the context of the Pure Land tradition.

*Foshuo Ruyi Xukongzang pusa tuoluoni jing* 佛說如意虛空藏菩薩陀羅尼經 (Scripture on the *Dhāraṇī* on the Wish-fulfilling of Akāśagarbha Bodhisattva),<sup>35</sup> translated by Bodhiruci. This text has the form and structure of a standard *dhāraṇī* sūtra and features a single spell which is said to bring enlightenment to a person at the time of death. One section is in verse form.

*Ajiatuomi yiyin qianlei qianzhuān sanshi zhe chengjiu jing fa* 阿迦陀密一印千類千轉三使者成就經法 (Method of the Scripture on Ajātami's Three Messengers' One Seal of a Thousand Sacrifices and a Thousand Wheels for Attaining Perfection),<sup>36</sup> translation attributed to Amoghavajra. This is a very short ritual text written in the form of a spell scripture. Avalokiteśvara is the main focus of the ritual and the various results of the worship are enumerated in traditional fashion. The three messengers are the Messenger of Heaven, the Messenger of Empty Space, and the Messenger of the Underground.

*Quanxian jinse Jienapoti jiumu tian fa* 權現金色迦那婆底九目天法 (Method of Manifesting the Nine-eyed, Golden-Colored God

<sup>32</sup> See Sørensen, "The Apocrypha and Esoteric Buddhism in China," in this volume.

<sup>33</sup> ZZ. 205.2.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. ZZ. 205.2: 888c.

<sup>35</sup> ZZ. 192.2.

<sup>36</sup> ZZ. 190.2.

Ganapati),<sup>37</sup> translation attributed to Bodhiruci. This is a short ritual text for the worship of Gaṇapati/Vināyaka. Only one longer spell is given. Due to its wording and terminology, the text would appear to date to later than the seventh century.

*Ershiba yaocha dajiang minghao* 二十八藥叉大將名號 (The Names of the Twenty-eight Great Yakṣa Generals).<sup>38</sup> This is a very brief ritual text attributed to Amoghavajra for invoking the yakṣa spirits who control the twenty-eight constellations.

*Ershiba yecha dajun wang minghao* 二十八夜叉大軍王名號 (The Names of the Twenty-eight Great Yakṣa Generals and Kings).<sup>39</sup> A variant of the above mentioned text.

*Zhengliao zhi wang yaocha quanzhu fa* 正了知王藥叉眷屬法 (Method of the Yakṣa King Correctly Knowing Who Guards the Household),<sup>40</sup> translation attributed to Yijing. A short ritual text for domestic protection, centering on the worship of the twenty-eight yakṣa generals. Some of the concepts found in this text may derive from the *Mahāmayūrividyārājñī-dhāraṇī sūtra*, a version of which was translated by Yijing.<sup>41</sup>

*Da sheng miao jixiang pusa zuisheng weide bimi bazi tuoluoni xiuxing niansong yigui cideng fa* 大聖妙吉祥菩薩最勝威德祕密八字陀羅尼修行念誦儀軌次第法 (Ritual Proceedings and Ordinances for the Cultivation of the Invocation of the Great, Holy, and Wonderfully Auspicious Bodhisattva's Supreme, Majestically Virtuous, and Secret Eight-character *Dhāraṇī*),<sup>42</sup> attributed to Vajrabodhi, though it is likely a later apocrypha. A ritual text belonging to the cultic worship and invocation of Mañjuśrī, it is written in verse form and provides detailed instruction on the establishment of the ritual space and the altar for the rite. As indicated in the title, there are different rituals embedded in the text.

<sup>37</sup> ZZ. 185.2.

<sup>38</sup> ZZ. 184.2.

<sup>39</sup> ZZ. 183.2.

<sup>40</sup> ZZ. 182.2.

<sup>41</sup> For Yijing see Orzech, "Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang," in this volume. For the *Mahāmayūrividyārājñī-dhāraṇī sūtra*, see Sørensen, 2006c.

<sup>42</sup> ZZ. 181.2.

*Miaofa lianhua sanmei bimi sanmoye jing* 妙法蓮華三昧祕密三摩耶經 (Scripture on the Wonderful Lotus *Samādhi* and Secret *Samaya*),<sup>43</sup> translation attributed to Amoghavajra. This is not a genuine Indian sūtra but an extract or a composita that may have originally derived from a larger and more comprehensive text. It deals with various ritual practices for the *samaya* of the *Vajraśekhara* and mentions the thirty-seven primary divinities of the Vajradhātu Mandala.

*Qijudi Zhunti tuoluoni niansong yigui* 七俱胝准提陀羅尼念誦儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for Invoking the *Dhāraṇī* of Cundī of the Seven Koṭīs [of Buddhas]),<sup>44</sup> written by Amoghavajra. This is a ritual text based on the *Cundī-devī-dhāraṇī sūtra*.

*Maming pusa chengjiu xidi niansong* 馬鳴菩薩成就悉地念誦 (Invocation of Maming Bodhisattva for the Attainment of Perfection and *Siddhis*).<sup>45</sup> A short ritual text said to have been translated by Amoghavajra, in all likelihood it is a Chinese apocryphal text. Maming is a bodhisattva who first occurs in the Tang material, and should not be confused with the Indian Buddhist saint Asvaghōṣa. Maming is invoked in the text in connection with a rainmaking ritual.

*Zuo shishui zhaixin tuoluoni* 作世水宅心陀羅尼 (*Dhāraṇī* for Making the World's Water and Settling the Mind),<sup>46</sup> unknown author or translator. A scripture presenting a series of lengthy *dhāraṇīs* for a variety of purposes, such as protection, healing, and enlightenment. The text recommends that one of the *dhāraṇīs* be written on a banner.

*Wu daniu yuyu bao tuoluoni yigui* 五大牛玉雨寶陀羅尼儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for the *Dhāraṇī* of the Five Great Oxen of Jade Raining Down Treasures),<sup>47</sup> translation attributed to an unknown Esoteric Buddhist master, Furiluozhirenang (縛日羅枳惹曩 Vajrajñana?). A ritual text, partly in verse form, masquerading as a sūtra. It is probably an apocryphal work using elements from the *Vajraśekhara* or a related

<sup>43</sup> ZZ. 204.2.

<sup>44</sup> ZZ. 191.2.

<sup>45</sup> ZZ. 206.2.

<sup>46</sup> ZZ. 203.2. The exact meaning of the title is unclear, as there is no substantive mention of water in the text itself.

<sup>47</sup> ZZ. 201.2.

scripture belonging to the *Tattvasaṃgraha* cycle. The text consists of a series of mantras with corresponding *mudrās*, but has very little in the line of actual ritual. Mention of a “Five Buddha Crown” indicates that it was composed after the rise of the five buddha families (*pañcakula*) in Esoteric Buddhism.

*Foshuo da ruyi baozhulun niuwang shouhu shenzhou jing* 佛說大如意寶珠輪牛王守護神咒經 (Scripture on the Divine Spell of the Great Wish-fulfilling, Precious Pearl Wheel Ox King for Protection),<sup>48</sup> translation attributed to Amoghavajra, but it does not appear to be an authentic sūtra. The text teaches the ritual for the invocation of the Ox King Spirit (*niuwang shen* 牛王神) for achieving wealth and prosperity. There is no mention of mantras or *dhāraṇīs* but only of “spells,” which may indicate the dubious nature of this text.

*Foshuo que wenhuang shen zhou jing* 佛說卻溫黃神咒經 (Scripture on the Divine Spell for Driving Away the Spirits of Yellow Fever),<sup>49</sup> translation attributed to Bodhiruci. A very brief apocryphal scripture. Although it refers to the use of spells, they are not of the *dhāraṇī* type but are proper names to be invoked. The spirits causing the disease to be combated are seven in number and may be related to the Seven Mothers (*mātrkāś*).

*Bimi yaoshu fa* 祕密要術法 (Methods of Secret and Essential Arts),<sup>50</sup> translation attributed to Amoghavajra (Amojia 阿謨伽). A very short ritual text that teaches the use of the power syllable *hūṃ*. It is most likely a Japanese apocryphal work.

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*Zhunti xinyao* 準提心要 (Heart Essentials of Cundī),<sup>51</sup> compiled by the monk Xiaoting 堯挺 (fl. mid-seventeenth century) of the late Ming. A short ritual text for the worship of Cundī with instructions for the use of *mudrās*, iconography, etc. It includes four charts depicting *mudrās*.

<sup>48</sup> ZZ. 202.2.

<sup>49</sup> ZZ. 193.2.

<sup>50</sup> ZZ. 188.2.

<sup>51</sup> ZZ. 1078.59.

*Kanming yizhang jin* 看命一掌金 (Beholding Destiny in One Handful of Gold),<sup>52</sup> attributed to Yixing, the disciple of Śubhākarasiṃha. This is a text for prognostication.

*Chizhou xianren feibo yigui* 持咒仙人飛鉢儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings of the Flying Bowl of the *Vidyādhara*s),<sup>53</sup> attributed to Amoghavajra. The text deals with the attainment of the *siddhī* of flying.

*Chengjiu mengxiang fa* 成就夢想法 (Method of Attaining Perfection While Dreaming),<sup>54</sup> attributed to Amoghavajra, but probably an apocrypha, possibly of Japanese origin. The ritual described here involves the construction of an altar and the invocation of Mañjuśrī and various astral divinities. Both spells and mantras are used.

*Shijiamouni rulai bachu kunao xian da shenbian feikong da bo fa* 釋迦牟尼如來拔除苦惱現大神變飛空大鉢法 (Method of Śākyamuni Tathāgata Rooting Out Evil Vexations by Manifesting the Great Divine Transformation of the Great Bowl Flying Through Space),<sup>55</sup> attributed to Prajñā. An apocrypha written in imitation of a sūtra, it includes the outline of a narrative in which the Buddha manifests miraculous powers with his almsbowl. The text teaches the use of spells and *mudrās* for feeding hungry ghosts and bears some similarities with the *Chizhou xianren feibo yigui* mentioned above.

*Lianhua bu Duolixin pusa niansong fa* 蓮華部多利心菩薩念誦法 (Method for Invoking the Bodhisattva Duolixin of the Lotus Quarter),<sup>56</sup> compilation attributed to Vajrabodhi (Bazheluoputi). A lengthy ritual text that mainly describes the use of spells, mantras, and *mudrās* for the worship of Duolixin, i.e., Avalokiteśvara. The Lotus Quarter referred to in the title indicates the designated section of the Dharmadhātu Mandala.

*Jintai liangjie shixiang cheng* 金胎兩界師相承 (Masters in the Succession of Inheritance of the Two Realms of the Vajra and the Womb),<sup>57</sup>

<sup>52</sup> ZZ. 1043.59.

<sup>53</sup> ZZ. 1048.59.

<sup>54</sup> ZZ. 1052.59.

<sup>55</sup> ZZ. 1069.59.

<sup>56</sup> ZZ. 1054.59.

<sup>57</sup> ZZ. 1073.59.

compiled by Haiyun 海雲 (fl. 828–874). This text, dated 833 C.E., is a lineage chart setting out the transmission of the Vajradhātu and Dharmadhātu Mandalas in accordance with the Jingzhu Temple 淨住寺 lineage.<sup>58</sup>

*Taijin liangjie xiemai* 胎金兩界血脈 (Blood Line of the Two Realms of the Womb and the Vajra),<sup>59</sup> compiled by Zaoxuan 造玄 (?–865+) of Cien Temple 慈恩寺. This is a later lineage chart, dated 865 C.E., similar to the *Jintai liangjie shixiang cheng*, but it exhibits certain differences probably reflecting sectarian issues.<sup>60</sup>

*Zhunti jingye* 准提淨業 (Cundī [Method] of Purifying [One's] Karma),<sup>61</sup> Compiled by the Buddhist layman Xie Yujiao 謝于教 (fl. first half of seventeenth century). A lengthy ritual text in three rolls, featuring charts and elaborate details on the ritual proceedings for the worship of Cundī. The text integrates parts of both Divākara's and Vajrabodhi's translations of the *Cundī-dhāraṇī sūtra*.<sup>62</sup>

*Chisong Zhunti zhenyan fayao* 持誦準提真言法要 (Essential Method for Chanting Cundī's Mantra),<sup>63</sup> by Hongzan 弘贊 (1611–1685). A ritual text with commentary, it includes the writing and visualization of the syllables in Cundī's mantra.

*Yu mishen shishi jie gai* 於密滲施食旨槩 (General Summary on the Offering of Food With Secret Influence),<sup>64</sup> by the Ming-era Chan monk Fazang 法藏 (1573–1635). A ritual text concerned with making food offerings to the spirits, it is specifically concerned with visualization involving the use of Sanskrit *bīja*.

*Xiuxi yuqie jiyao shishi tan yi* 修習瑜伽集要施食壇儀 (Ritual for Cultivating the Yoga Essentials for Offering Food at the Altar).<sup>65</sup> This is

<sup>58</sup> See Orzech, "After Amoghavajra," in this volume, and Chen, 2010, 83–87.

<sup>59</sup> ZZ. 1074.59.

<sup>60</sup> See Chen, 2010, 88–91.

<sup>61</sup> ZZ. 1077.59.

<sup>62</sup> I.e. T. 1075 and T. 1077.

<sup>63</sup> ZZ. 1079.59.

<sup>64</sup> ZZ. 1082.59.

<sup>65</sup> ZZ. 1083.59. For more on the development of this genre of work see Lye, "Song Tiantai Ghost-feeding Rituals," and "Yuqie Yankou in the Ming-Qing," in this volume.

the main *shishi* text of the Ming. It exists in various versions, some with complete illustrations of the ritual proceedings, including charts of the dual ritual spaces and *mudrās*.

*Yuqie yankou zhuji zuanyao yigui* 瑜伽齧口註集纂要儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings Yoga of the Flaming Mouths Annotated Collection),<sup>66</sup> compiled and annotated by the Chan monk Jixian 寂暹 (fl. seventeenth century). A lengthy ritual text from the early Qing, based on Amoghavajra's ritual works on the *Pretamukhāgnijvālayaśarakāra dhāraṇī*<sup>67</sup> and possibly other *shishi* texts as well.<sup>68</sup> This text also features charts and illustrations, but it is especially significant for its elaborate commentary on virtually all aspects of the ritual proceedings.

*Yuqie jiyao shishi yigui* 瑜伽集要施食儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings of Yoga Essentials for Offering Food),<sup>69</sup> authored by the famous Pure Land and Chan master Zhuhong 祿宏 (1535–1615). This is one of the most important *shishi* texts of the late Ming, but it represents a different tradition than the *Yuqie yankou zhuji* above. It also follows a ritual work by Amoghavajra, the *Yuqie jiyao jiu Anan tuoluoni yankou guiyi jing* 瑜伽集要救阿難陀羅尼焰口軌儀經 (Ritual Proceedings of Yogā Essentials of the *Pretamukhāgnijvālayaśarakāra dhāraṇī*).<sup>70</sup> Most editions include charts of the *mudrās* used in the ritual.

*Xiushe yuqie jiyao shishi tan yi* 修設瑜伽集要施食壇儀 (Ritual of the Cultivation and Arrangement of the Yoga Collection's Essential Offering of Food at the Altar [for Hungry Ghosts]),<sup>71</sup> also by Zhuhong. This is an annotated text following the proceedings of ritual set forth in the above mentioned work.

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*Tianji Zhunti sanmei xing fa* 天溪准提三昧行法 (Tianji Method of Practicing Cundī's *Samādhi*),<sup>72</sup> compiled by the Tiantai monk Shoud-

<sup>66</sup> ZZ. 1084.59.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. T. 1313. On Amoghavajra's rituals see Orzech, 1994a, 1996b, 2002, and Lye, 2003.

<sup>68</sup> Such as T. 1318–1321.

<sup>69</sup> ZZ. 1080.59. See also Lye, "Yuqie Yankou in the Ming-Qing," in this volume.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. T. 1318.

<sup>71</sup> ZZ. 1081.59.

<sup>72</sup> ZZ. 1481.74.



eng 受登 (1607–1675). This is a brief ritual work involving repentance at the altar of Cundī together with the cultivation of meditation, including the method of eighteen forms of *samādhi*. Visualization practice involving the letters of Cundī's spell is also taught. The instructions given here would appear to reflect practices current during the late Ming.

*Zhunti fanxiu xidi zhanhui xuanwen* 准提焚修悉地懺悔玄文 (Abstruse Text of Repentance of the Ascetic Cultivation of Cundī's *Siddhi*).<sup>73</sup> Although this text of repentance is focused on the Cundī cult, all the divinities of the entire Esoteric Buddhist pantheon appear in the rite. The five buddha families and the three mysteries (*sanmi* 三密) are referred to directly, indicating that we are dealing with a text that is part of the mainstream Esoteric Buddhist tradition. Moreover, the text invokes the names of the earlier translations of the *Cundī-dhāraṇī sūtra*, including those of the Three Ācāryas of the Tang, as a means of underlining its authority.

*Shoulengyan tanchang xiu zheng yi* 首楞嚴壇場修證儀 (Ritual for Proof of Cultivation at the Śuraṅgama Altar),<sup>74</sup> evidently a Ming text. It places much importance on the erection of the altar as well as the ritual implements to be used. Given that the *Shoulenyan jing* is an apocrypha, the rite itself is of course pseudo-esoteric as well.

*Kongque zun jing keyi* 孔雀尊經科儀 (Regulations for the Ritual of the *Mahāmayūrīvidyārājñī sūtra*),<sup>75</sup> a Ming text by an unknown author. Most of the practices as well as the ritual concepts are based on Amoghavajra's translation of the *sūtra* in question. *Mahāmayūrī* is here referred to as a buddha.<sup>76</sup>

*Qianshou qianyan da beixin zhou xing fa* 千手千眼大悲心咒行法 (Method for the Cultivation of the Heart Spell of the Thousand-

<sup>73</sup> ZZ. 1482.74. The text itself would appear to be from the Ming, but the edition we have here is from 1652.

<sup>74</sup> ZZ. 1477.74.

<sup>75</sup> ZZ. 1479.74.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. ZZ. 1479.74: 539b.

handed, Thousand-eyed, Great Compassionate One),<sup>77</sup> compiled by the Tiantai monk Zhili with later commentary from the Qing period. This is a ritual text for repentance in connection with the worship of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara.

*Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiu zhai yigui* 法界聖凡水陸勝會修齋儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for the Cultivation of the Feast of the Dharmadhātu Holy and Worldly Water and Land Majestic Assembly),<sup>78</sup> authored by Zhipan (fl. thirteenth century), with later redaction and comments by Zhuhong. This is the foremost ritual manual on the *Shuilu* type of rituals.

*Fajie shengfan shuilu da zhai puli daochang xingxiang tonglun* 法界聖凡水陸大齋普利道場性相通論 (Comprehensive Treatise on the Nature and Characteristics of the Dharmadhātu Holy and Worldly Water and Land Great Feast and Ritual Space Benefiting All),<sup>79</sup> authored by the Qing monk Zhiguan 咫觀, also known as Miao-kong 妙空 (1826–1880). This is a densely written commentary on the details of the *Shuilu fahui*, pertaining both to ritual proceedings as well as to Buddhist doctrine.

*Fajie shengfan shuilu da zhai falun baozhan* 法界聖凡水陸大齋法輪寶懺 (Dharmadhātu Holy and Worldly Water and Land Great Feast of Precious Repentance of the Dharma Wheel),<sup>80</sup> recorded and reworked by Zhiguan. A monumental *Shuilu fahui* manual in the tradition of Zhuhong.

*Gongzhu tian keyi* 供諸天科儀 (Ritual Regulations for Making Offerings to All the Divinities),<sup>81</sup> authored by the monk Hongzan from Guangzhou. A ritual text for the worship of all the secondary gods and protectors in the Buddhist pantheon.

<sup>77</sup> ZZ. 1480.74.

<sup>78</sup> ZZ. 1497.74. Although the original Southern Song version of this work is no longer extant it is described in Stevenson 2001.

<sup>79</sup> ZZ. 1498.74.

<sup>80</sup> ZZ. 1499.74.

<sup>81</sup> ZZ. 1493.74.

*Esoteric Buddhist Material from the Qianlong Dazang Jing (QDJ)*

A brief review of the Esoteric Buddhist scriptures found in the *QDJ*, which are not contained in either the *Taishō* nor *Zokuzōkyō* collections, reveals that we are essentially dealing with texts associated with Amoghavajra and a few others, including the Indian monk Shihu who worked during the Liao empire.<sup>82</sup> While the authenticity of most of this material appears to be fairly well established, one must nevertheless exert some caution in accepting the author and translator attributions without question. Below is a list of the most important of these texts.

*Baiqian yin tuoluoni jing* 百千印陀羅尼經 (*Dhāraṇī* Scripture of a Hundred-thousand Seals).<sup>83</sup> A short, possibly abbreviated spell text, the translation of which is attributed to Śikṣānanda (fl. late seventh to early eighth centuries), the famous translator of the long version of the *Avataṃsaka*. Given that the name of this monk is not normally associated with Esoteric Buddhism, further study is needed before this attribution should be accepted.

*Tuoluoni men zhubu yaomu* 陀羅尼門諸部要目 (Essential Listing of the *Dhāraṇī* Methods of All Classes),<sup>84</sup> compiled by Amoghavajra. This short work is important for its classification of the major scriptures and *maṇḍalas* utilized by Amoghavajra and his disciples in accordance with the five buddha families.

*Jin'gangding yujie Jin'gangsaduo yigui* 金剛頂瑜伽金剛薩埵儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings of the Vajraśekhara Yoga on Vajrasattva),<sup>85</sup> translated by Amoghavajra. This ritual text forms part of the *Vajraśekhara* cycle of scriptures and is devoted to the cult of Bodhisattva Vajrasattva.

*Da Jixiang tiannu shier minghao jing* 大吉祥天女十二名號經 (Scripture on the Twelve Names of Śrī Mahādevī),<sup>86</sup> translation attributed

<sup>82</sup> For more on Shihu see Orzech, "Translation of Tantras and Other Esoteric Buddhist Scriptures," in this volume.

<sup>83</sup> *QDJ* 499.47.

<sup>84</sup> *QDJ* 1445.110.

<sup>85</sup> *QDJ* 1393.109.

<sup>86</sup> *QDJ* 953.61.

to Amoghavajra. This scripture teaches the worship of Śrī Mahādevī, the wife of Śiva.

*Da Jixiang tiannu shier qi yibaiba ming wugou dasheng jing* 大吉祥天女十二契一百八名無垢大乘經 (Mahāyāna Scripture on the Twelve Bonds and the One hundred and Eight Names of the Pristine Śrī Mahādevī),<sup>87</sup> translation attributed to Amoghavajra. Like the above-mentioned work, this scripture belongs to the cult of Śrī Mahādevī.

*Sheng zuishang Dengming rulai tuoluoni jing* 聖最上燈明如來陀羅尼經 (The Holy and Supreme Candrasūryapradīpa Tathāgata *Dhāraṇī* Sūtra),<sup>88</sup> translated by Dānapāla. This is a classic Esoteric Buddhist sūtra without explicit Tantric Buddhist material, in which a series of *dhāraṇīs* are given for the quelling of various kinds of demonic disturbances.

*Miji lishi daquan shenwang jing jisong* 密跡力士大權神王經偈頌 (Hymns on the Scripture on the Great Majestic Spirit King Secret Traces, the Powerful One),<sup>89</sup> composed by Great Master Guangfu 廣福 (fl. early fourteenth century) of the Yuan.<sup>90</sup> This work devoted to the cult of the *vajrapāla* Guhyapāda was composed under the influence of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism.

#### *Esoteric Buddhist Texts in the Zhonghua Dazang Jing*

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*Nilakanṭhaka sūtra, Qianyan qianbei guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shen-zhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神咒經.<sup>91</sup> A variant text of T. 1057AB.

*Nilakanṭhaka sūtra, Qianyan qianbei guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shen-zhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神咒經.<sup>92</sup> A variant text of T. 1057AB.

<sup>87</sup> QDJ 954.61. This is a longer variant of QDJ 953.61.

<sup>88</sup> QDJ 794.59.

<sup>89</sup> QDJ 1377.109.

<sup>90</sup> For further information on this monk, see *FDC*, vol. 6, p. 5879ab.

<sup>91</sup> ZDJ 308.19.

<sup>92</sup> ZDJ 309.19.

*Nilakanṭhaka sūtra, Qianyan qianshou guanshiyin pusa guangda yuanman wuai dabeixin tuoluoni jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼經.<sup>93</sup> A variant text of T. 1061.

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*Liuzi shen zhou wang jing* 六字神咒王經.<sup>94</sup> A variant text of T. 1045.

*Liuzi shen zhou wang jing* 六字神咒王經.<sup>95</sup> A variant text of T. 1045.

*Guanzizai pusa sui xin zhou jing* 觀自在菩薩隨心咒經.<sup>96</sup> A variant text of T. 1103A.

*Guanzizai pusa sui xin zhou jing* 觀自在菩薩隨心咒經.<sup>97</sup> A variant text of T. 1103A.

*Guanzizai pusa damoduoli sui xin tuoluoni jing* 觀自在菩薩怛磨多唎隨心陀羅尼經 (Scripture on *Dhāraṇī* of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva Dharma-Bhṛkūtī According with the Heart),<sup>98</sup> translation attributed to the monk Zhitong 智通 of Da Congchi Temple 大總持寺. This work centers on the lore of the female divinity Bhṛkūtī, an emanation of Avalokiteśvara. It contains many spells and descriptions of various ritual observances.

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*Baiqian yin tuoluoni jing* 百千印陀羅尼經 (*Dhāraṇī* Scripture of a Hundred-thousand Seals).<sup>99</sup> A variant text of T. 1369AB.

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*Jin'gang kongbu jihui fanguang guiyi guanzizai pusa sanshi zuishengxin mingwang da weili wushusemo mingwang jing* 金剛恐怖集會方廣軌儀觀自在菩薩三世最勝心明王大威力烏樞瑟摩明王經 (Scripture on the Ritual Proceedings of the Vaipulya Terrifying Vajra[-pāla])

<sup>93</sup> ZDJ 311.19.

<sup>94</sup> ZDJ 333.20.

<sup>95</sup> ZDJ 334.20.

<sup>96</sup> ZDJ 338.20.

<sup>97</sup> ZDJ 339.20.

<sup>98</sup> ZDJ 340.20.

<sup>99</sup> ZDJ 501.24–502.24. See also QDJ 47.499.

Assembly of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva of the Three Worlds' Supreme Heart King of Spells of the Great Majestic Ucchuṣma Vidyārāja),<sup>100</sup> translation attributed to the North Indian monk Ajitasena. A scripture on the cult of Ucchuṣma, it is associated with *T.* 1227–1230.

*Yiziding lunwang niansong yigui* 一字頂輪王念誦儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for the Invocation of the One-character Wheel King).<sup>101</sup> A variant of *T.* 954AB, it also differs from *T.* 955.

*Guanzizai ruyilun pusa niansong fa* 觀自在如意輪菩薩念誦法 (Method for the Invocation of Cintamāṇīcakra-Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva).<sup>102</sup> A variant of *T.* 1085.

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*Da Suiqiu tuoluoni* 大隨求陀羅尼 (Mahāpratisarā-dhāraṇī).<sup>103</sup> A variant of the spell found in *T.* 1153.

#### *Esoteric Buddhist Texts from the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang*

The Esoteric Buddhist manuscripts from Dunhuang consist of a great variety of different texts, including standard sūtras, commentarial literature, apocrypha, ritual works, spell manuals, miscellaneous prayers, etc. In effect, the entire typological range of Esoteric Buddhist literature is represented among this hoard of manuscripts.

There are also many unique Esoteric Buddhist texts among the Dunhuang material. Some of these are *bona fide* translations of Indian and Tibetan works, some are locally produced works, and others are noncanonical texts and/or apocrypha written elsewhere in the Chinese empire.

Although one should not dismiss the voluminous Esoteric Buddhist material from Dunhuang as simply a collection of provincial hybrid texts or apocryphal works *per se*, it is obvious that many of the texts are precisely that type of material. The very richness and diversity of this textual corpus is due to its general lack of homogeneity and inherently nonstandardized nature. Moreover, the fact that the Dunhuang

<sup>100</sup> ZDJ 1389.65.

<sup>101</sup> ZDJ 1449.65.

<sup>102</sup> ZDJ 1449.65.

<sup>103</sup> ZDJ 1612.68.

manuscripts as a textual corpus reflect a more than five hundred year-long history means that the same timeframe applies to most of the Esoteric Buddhist texts and scriptures contained among them. Nevertheless, the great majority of the Esoteric Buddhist texts from Dunhuang dates from between the second half of the eighth century to the late tenth century, a span of roughly two and a half centuries.

*Fo jin'gang tan guangda qingjing tuoluoni jing* 佛金剛壇廣大清淨陀羅尼經 (Scripture on the Extensive and Greatly Pure Dhāraṇī of the Buddha Vajra Altar),<sup>104</sup> translated by Tanqing 曇倩 (fl. late eighth century) in Anxi during the Tang. An authentic Esoteric Buddhist scripture featuring a ritual with the use of a powerful spell. Mañjuśrī is one of the main characters in the narrative.

*Da foding rulai dingji bojie tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 大佛頂如來頂髻白蓋陀羅尼神咒經 (Great Buddhōṣṇīsa Tathāgata Uṣṇīṣa White Umbrella Dhāraṇī Spiritual Mantra Sūtra).<sup>105</sup> This is an earlier text than those represented in *T.* 975–977.

*Foding xin Guanshiyin jing* 佛頂心觀世音經 (Buddhōṣṇīsa Heart of Avalokiteśvara Sutra).<sup>106</sup> A popular apocryphal scripture with spells in three chapters, probably dating from the mid-Tang. It also exists in a number of printed and illustrated editions dating from the Ming.

*Foshuo jiaju lingyan foding zunsheng tuoluoni shenmiao zhangju zhenyan* 佛說加句靈驗佛頂尊勝陀羅尼神妙章句真言 (Buddha Discourses on the Augmenting and Efficacious Buddhōṣṇīsa Dhāraṇī, Spiritual and Wonderful Section of Mantras),<sup>107</sup> compiler unknown. Mantras associated with the Buddhōṣṇīsa.

*Foshuo jie baisheng yuanjia tuoluoni jing* 佛說解百生怨家陀羅尼經 (Scripture on the Dhāraṇī for Liberating the Hundred Hateful

<sup>104</sup> A brief study of this fascinating text together with a complete edition based on several different manuscripts can be found in Ueyama 1990, 460–69, 630–43. See also *DMWJ*, pp. 557–73.

<sup>105</sup> *P.* 3916 (8).

<sup>106</sup> *P.* 3916 (5).

<sup>107</sup> *P.* 3939 B (5). Manuscript dated to the tenth century.

Families).<sup>108</sup> An apocryphal sūtra, this text belongs to the class of spells meant for domestic problems.

*Guanshiyin pusa bimi zang wuzhang ai Ruyi xinlun tuoluoni jing* 觀世音菩薩秘密藏無障礙如意心輪陀羅尼經 (Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva Secret Store No Obstructions Cintāmaṇi Heart-Wheel *Dhāraṇī* Sūtra).<sup>109</sup> An apocryphal work.

*Hushen jing qifo liushen ming* 護身經七佛六神名.<sup>110</sup> This text also contains the *Qifo zhou* 七佛咒 (Mantras of the Seven Buddhas).

*Foshuo anzhai shenzhou jing* 佛說安宅神咒經 (Scripture on the Peaceful Habitation Spiritual Mantra).<sup>111</sup> This apocryphal spell scripture shares some of the same concerns as the *Jie baisheng yuanjia tuoluoni jing* mentioned above.

*Da Piluzhe'na fo jin'gang xindi famen fajie fa guice* 大毘盧遮那佛金剛心地法門法界法規則,<sup>112</sup> translation attributed to Amoghavajra. This may very well be some of the missing parts of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* (and *Vajrasākhara*), although we cannot be completely certain of this at this stage of research. In any case, this is a major Esoteric Buddhist scripture relating directly to the lore surrounding the worship of Mahāvairocana in the Vajradhātu Mandala.

*An zi zan* 唵字贊 (Praising the Character Om).<sup>113</sup> A ritual text involving the visualization of the *bīja om*. Bilingual manuscript in Chinese and Tibetan with a drawing of a mandala.

*Da Yuanshuai qiqing* 大元帥啟請 (Hymn to the Great Yuanshuai).<sup>114</sup> A ritual text with spells devoted to the cult of Āṭavaka, the Demon General.

<sup>108</sup> P. 3932 (5); Beijing 14171.

<sup>109</sup> P. 3835 (1). Manuscript dated 798 C.E. (or 858 C.E.).

<sup>110</sup> S. 4456 (3). Manuscript probably from the early seventh century.

<sup>111</sup> S. 2110 (1). Different text than *T.* 1394, which bears the same title.

<sup>112</sup> A series of six fragmented manuscript parts (some overlapping), many of which are evidently in the same hand. Cf. *DMWJ*, vol. 1, pp. 96–300. Unfortunately, the reproduction of most of the relevant manuscripts here is of very poor quality.

<sup>113</sup> P. 3679.

<sup>114</sup> P. 2384 (a). Manuscript dated to 934 C.E.



*Dabei qiqing* 大悲起請 (Prayers to the Great Compassionate [One]).<sup>115</sup> A ritual text for the invocation of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara.

*Foshuo dalun jin'gang zongchi tuoluoni fa* 佛說大輪金剛摠持陀羅尼法 (Buddha Preaches the Method of the Great Wheel Vajra Practice of *Dhāraṇīs*); subtitled *Guanshiyin ruyilun wang Monibatuo biexing fa* 觀世音如意輪王摩尼跋陀別行法 (Different Method of the Avalokiteśvara Cintāmaṇicakra King Maṇibhadra),<sup>116</sup> variously attributed to Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, but probably an apocryphal work. This is a ritual text partly based on *T.* 1230 and it contains spells and talismans.

*Foshuo jin'gang lianhua bu Da Cuisui jin'gang qiqing* 佛說金剛蓮華部大摧碎金剛啟請 (Buddha Speaks the Invocation of the Great Destroying Vajra[pāla] of the Lotus Quarter).<sup>117</sup> A prayer text with *dhāraṇīs* for the worship of the *vidyārāja* Ucchuṣma.

*Foshuo da Suiqiu zhenyan qiqing* 佛說大隨求真言啟請 (Buddha Speaks the Mantras for Invoking Mahāpratisarā).<sup>118</sup> Contains spells for the worship of Mahāpratisarā lifted from various sources.

*Foshuo Yaowang Yaoshang erh pusa jing denglue li qijie fo chanhui fa* 佛說藥王藥上二菩薩經等略禮七階佛懺悔法 (Arrangement of the Ritual of the Seven Buddhas' Method of Repentance [According to] the *Buddha Discourses on the Medicine Kings, the Two Superior Bodhisattvas Sūtra*, followed by the Methods of the Abbreviated Ritual for the Seven Buddhas' Repentance).<sup>119</sup> The second part of this manuscript concerned with the rite of repentance is an Esoteric Buddhist text. The primary scripture referred to in the title is identical to *T.* 1161.

*Foshuo Qijudi fomu Zhunti da ming tuoluoni niansong famen* 佛說七俱胝佛母准提大明陀羅尼念頌法門 (Method of Chanting the *Cundī-devī-dhāraṇī*).<sup>120</sup> A ritual text for the worship of Cundī. It is

<sup>115</sup> S. 4378V° (1), P. 2105 (2).

<sup>116</sup> P. 3835V° (11). Possibly some connection to P. 2153.

<sup>117</sup> P. 3914 (3). See also P. 3861 (6).

<sup>118</sup> P. 2197 (10.2).

<sup>119</sup> *Beijing* 宇 16.

<sup>120</sup> P. 3916 (1).

probably based on a text similar to *T.* 1075 or *T.* 1077, but it differs from both.

*Guanshiyin Bukongzhuanso wangxin shenzhou gongde famen ming bukong chengjiu wang fa* 觀世音不空絹索王心神咒功德法門名不空成就王法 (Avalokiteśvara Amoghapāśa Royal Heart Divine Mantra Virtuous Followers Called the Amoghapāśa Royal Method).<sup>121</sup> A lengthy ritual text on the worship of Amoghapāśa with many details on the construction of the altar, the spells to be used, and the *siddhīs* that will be attained as the result of a successful rite. Some of the practices encountered here are similar to those found in the thirty-roll version of the *Amoghapāśakalparāja*.<sup>122</sup>

*Guanshiyin pusa fuyin* 觀世音菩薩符印 (Talismans and *Mudrās* [related to] Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva).<sup>123</sup> A lengthy ritual text featuring liturgy, *mudrās*, and several talismans, it also contains a *mandala* and *dhāraṇīs*.

*Guanshiyin pusa Ruyilun tuoluoni [jing] bingbiexingfa* 觀世音菩薩如意輪陀羅尼[經]並別行法 (Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva Cintāmaṇicakra *Dhāraṇī* [sūtra] with Alternative Methods of Cultivation),<sup>124</sup> translation attributed to Dharmagūpta of Shanglin Monastery 上林院. An apocryphal and composite ritual text with Daoist elements, including talismans. Similarities with *P.* 2602.

*Guanshiyin pusa Ruyilun tuoluoni changju zhou* 觀世音菩薩如意輪陀羅尼章句咒 (Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva *Dhāraṇī* Section of Spells).<sup>125</sup> Spells for the worship of Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara based on a text similar to *T.* 1084 or *T.* 1085.

*Guanshiyin toutong zhou* 觀世音頭痛咒 (Avalokiteśvara Spell [against] Headache).<sup>126</sup> A spell text for healing.

<sup>121</sup> S. 232. Cf. *DMWJ*, vol. 2, pp. 521–41.

<sup>122</sup> *T.* 1092.

<sup>123</sup> S. 2498 (1), *P.* 2602. The latter manuscript dated to the eighth century.

<sup>124</sup> *P.* 2153.

<sup>125</sup> S. 2498.

<sup>126</sup> S. 6978.

*Jin'gang ding yujie niansong guiyi* 金剛頂瑜伽念頌軌儀 (Ritual Proceedings for the Invocation of the *Vajraśekhara* Yoga).<sup>127</sup> A ritual text related to the *Vajraśekhara* cycle of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures.

*Jin'gang ershiba jie* 金剛二十八戒 (Twenty Eight Vajra Precepts).<sup>128</sup> A Sino-Tibetan bilingual manuscript that most likely dates from around 800 C.E., likely modeled on a Tibetan Buddhist ritual text.

*Jin'gang jie da manchaluō shiliu pusa zan* 金剛界大曼荼羅十六菩薩讚 (Hymns to the Sixteen Bodhisattvas of the Great Vajradhātu Mandala).<sup>129</sup> A ritual text related to the *Vajraśekhara sūtra*. This liturgical text is part of a manuscript containing only Esoteric Buddhist material.

*Jin'gang jun jing jin'gangding yiqie rulai shen miao mimi jin'gang jie da sanmeiye xiuxing sishier zhong tanfa jing zuoyong weiyi da Piluzhena fo jin'gang xindi famen mifa jie tanfa yize* 金剛峻經金剛頂一切如來深妙密秘金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二種壇法經作用威儀大毗盧遮那佛金剛心地法門秘法戒壇法儀則 (Vajra Lord Sūtra Vajra Uṣṇīṣa All Tathāgatas Body, the Secret Vajradhātu Great *Samaya* Cultivation Forty-two Types of Altar Methods Sūtra to be Used for Making the Ritual of the Great Vairocana Buddha Vajra Mind-ground Followers Secret Method All Altar Methods).<sup>130</sup> Neither a sūtra nor a proper ritual work related with Amogavajra, this text is a local composition in which Chan Buddhist historiography and Zhenyan practices are fused.<sup>131</sup>

*Bimi zang lianhua feibu zhong you shier bei Guanzizai pusa mohe fa* 秘密藏蓮華妃部中有十二臂觀自在菩薩摩訶法 (Great Method of the Secret Lotus Storehouse Female Section in Which There is the Twelve-armed Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva).<sup>132</sup> A ritual text used for the worship of one of the Esoteric Buddhist forms of Avalokiteśvara.

<sup>127</sup> P. 2105V°. Incomplete manuscript.

<sup>128</sup> P. 3861 (1).

<sup>129</sup> P. 2322 (2).

<sup>130</sup> P. 3913, P. 4661, Gansu Provincial Museum in Lanzhou 015, S. 2316V° (only Chapter 2, Sections 26, 28), S. 2144, S. 4478, S. 5981, S. 3212, S. 2791. See also *ZFW*, vol. 11, Second Series, pp. 17–145.

<sup>131</sup> See Sørensen, “The Presence of Esoteric Buddhist Elements in Chinese Buddhism during the Tang,” in this volume.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. P. 3874 (2).

*Jin'gangzang pusa sanzi guanxiang* 金剛藏菩薩三字觀想 (Visualizing the Three Characters of Vajragarbha Bodhisattva).<sup>133</sup> An Esoteric Buddhist meditation text.

*Lianhua bu puzan tan sanbao* 蓮華部普讚歎三寶 (Widely Extolling the Three Jewels of the Lotus Quarter [of the Garbhadhātu Mandala]). A ritual text with *dhāraṇīs*.<sup>134</sup>

*Niansong zhenyan guan xingxiu xi lüeyi* 念誦真言觀行修習略儀 (Outline of the Method of Intoning Mantras While Cultivating Contemplation).<sup>135</sup> An Esoteric Buddhist meditation text.

*Pilu zan* 毗盧讚 (Hymn to Vairocana).<sup>136</sup> A hymn text for the adoration of Vairocana.

*Sanshi fa* 散食法 (Method for Bestowing Food). A ritual text for presenting food to the hungry ghosts.<sup>137</sup> It may be related to the *Pretamukhāgnijvālayaśarakāra dhāraṇī* or one of the derived ritual works associated with Amoghavajra's name.

*Shishi zhou yuanwen* 施食咒願文 (Text for Prayers while Bestowing Food with Spells). This ritual text for the offering of food to the spirits<sup>138</sup> is an important early source on this type of practice.

*Shui sanshi* (a) 水散食 (Water and Offering of Food).<sup>139</sup> A *shishi*-type text.

*Shui sanshi* (b) 水散食 (Water and Offering of Food).<sup>140</sup> This text contains a number of *dhāraṇīs* that can all be found in the *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha*.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>133</sup> P. 3835V° (9).

<sup>134</sup> S. 2975. Manuscript dated to the tenth century.

<sup>135</sup> P. 2322 (21).

<sup>136</sup> P. 2322 (5).

<sup>137</sup> P. 3861 (4).

<sup>138</sup> S. 4494 (6). Manuscript dated to 545 C.E.

<sup>139</sup> P. 3835V° (2).

<sup>140</sup> P. 4961. Text at variance with P. 3835V° (2).

<sup>141</sup> T. 901.18:787c–8c.

*Wenshu pusa guanxiang* 文殊菩薩觀相 (Visualizing Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva).<sup>142</sup> A meditation text.

*Wuzhe dahui zhai wen* 無遮大會齋文 (Text for a *Shuilu* Great Assembly Feast). A text related to the Ritual of Feeding the Pretas in Water and on Land.<sup>143</sup> It may be seen as an early prototype of the later very important *Shuilu* Assembly 水陸會 of the Song.

*Yuanshuai qiqing* 元帥啟請 (Invoking Yuanshuai).<sup>144</sup> A ritual text with mantras.

### *Esoteric Buddhist Texts in the Stone-carved Canon at Mt. Fang*

While most of the Esoteric Buddhist scriptures found among the stone-carved scriptures at Mt. Fang are included in the four *Taishō* volumes, there are nevertheless a few that are not, as follows:

*Shijiao zuishang sheng bimi zang tuoluoni ji* 釋教最上乘祕密藏陀羅尼集 (Collection of the Secret Storehouse of *Dhāraṇīs* of the Highest Vehicle of Buddhism),<sup>145</sup> compiled by the *ācārya* Zhaowu Xinglin 超悟行琳 (fl. second half of ninth century to early tenth century)<sup>146</sup> from Da Anguo Temple 大安國寺 in Chang'an. This comprehensive collection of *dhāraṇīs* and mantras is one of the most important and significant of the Esoteric Buddhist works found in the *Mt. Fang Tripiṭaka*, and it reflects the final phase of orthodox Zhenyan Buddhism of the Tang.<sup>147</sup>

*Zunsheng foding zhenyan xiu yuqie fa* 尊勝佛頂真言修瑜伽法 (Method of the Sarvabuddhoṣṇīṣa Mantra for Cultivating Yoga).<sup>148</sup> A variant of *T. 973*.

<sup>142</sup> P. 3835V° (10).

<sup>143</sup> P. 3542, P. 3542.

<sup>144</sup> P. 3845 (1).

<sup>145</sup> *Zhonghua dazang jing* 中華大藏經, 1619.68, pp. 500–675. See also *Zhongguo fojiao xiehui Fangshan shijing zhengli yanjiu zu*, ed. 1986, vol. 22. The stone slabs for this compendium were carved in 1147 C.E.

<sup>146</sup> For additional biographical information, see *MDJ* (1968–1970), p. 1603c.

<sup>147</sup> For a brief discussion of this work, see Sørensen, “On Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition,” in this volume.

<sup>148</sup> *Zhongguo fojiao xiehui Fangshan shijing zhengli yanjiu zu*, ed. 1986, vol. 21.

*Putichang suoshuo yizi touding lunwang jing* 菩提場所說一字頭頂輪王經 (Scripture Spoken at the Bodhimanda on the One Letter Uṣṇīṣa Wheel King).<sup>149</sup> Mentioned in the *Zhengyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (Catalogue of Newly Established Texts of Buddhism from the Zhengyuan Reign-Period).<sup>150</sup> A variant of *T.* 950.

*Foding xin Guanshiyin pusa da tuoluoni jing* 佛頂心觀世音菩薩大陀羅尼經 (Scripture on the Great *Dhāraṇī* of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa Heart of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva).<sup>151</sup> An apocryphal scripture. It exists as a Dunhuang manuscript.

#### *Esoteric Buddhist Texts from Dali*

First recovered from a dilapidated temple in the rural village of Beitangtian 北湯天 outside Dali in 1956, many texts from this important collection are now gradually being published in the *ZFW* (also in *EZFW*). The majority of the Buddhist works found here are Esoteric Buddhist texts, many of which are either unique to Yunnan or are works that have long been out of circulation in the rest of China. Despite the fact that many of the texts from this collection, in particular the printed ones, are relatively late, many dating from the Ming and Qing periods, a number of the manuscripts are much earlier and reflect the type of Esoteric Buddhism practiced by the Bai during the Dali kingdom.<sup>152</sup> The most important of the Beitangtian texts are listed below.

*Zhongguang shuilu fashi wuzhe dazhai yi* 重廣水陸法施無遮大齋儀 (Great Ritual of the Majestic and Extensive Water and Land Method for Making Offerings [on Behalf of] those Without Protection),<sup>153</sup> an

<sup>149</sup> Zhongguo fojiao xiehui Fangshan shijing zhengli yanjiu zu, ed. 1986, vol. 19. This scripture is mentioned in the *Zhengyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (Newly Established Catalogue of the Buddhist Teaching from the Zhengyuan Era). Cf. *T.* 2157.55:881b.

<sup>150</sup> *T.* 2157.55:1050a.

<sup>151</sup> Zhongguo fojiao xiehui Fangshan shijing zhengli yanjiu zu, ed. 1986, vol. 22. This work also exists in a well-preserved Dunhuang manuscript from the end of the Tang. Cf. *P.* 3916 (5). See also Yü 1995, 97–135.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhism in the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms (ca. 800–1253)," in this volume.

<sup>153</sup> A printed edition in seven volumes, said to date from the early Ming. Cf. Hou, 2009.

early and very rare ritual text for the performance of the *shuilu* 水陸 attributed to the Chinese Chan monk Zujue 祖覺 (1087–1150).<sup>154</sup>

*Da guanding yi* 大灌頂儀 (Ritual for the Grand *Abhiṣeka*),<sup>155</sup> translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by the Indian monk Canakuta 贊那屈陀 (n.d.), a native of Magadha, during the Dali period. It was a major text for rites of initiation into the lore of Esoteric Buddhism.

*Zhu fo pusa jin'gang deng qiqing yigui* 諸佛菩薩金剛等啓請儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for Invoking all Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Vajra[pālas], etc.).<sup>156</sup> A manuscript copied by the monk Zhaoming 照明 (n.d.), dated 1136 C.E. It consists of a compilation of verses and mantras for inviting various Esoteric Buddhist divinities, including the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, and Mahāpratisarā, as well as protectors such as the *mahākrodha* Vajrayakṣa into the ritual space. It contains bilingual spells in Chinese and Sanskrit, including talismans written in red. This is a major ritual work featuring many of the most prominent deities in the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon of Dali.

*Tongyong qiqing yigui* 通用啓請儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for Invocation).<sup>157</sup> A ritual compendium composed by Bai monks during the Dali period. Among other invocations, it includes a text for the recitation of the *Renwang jing*.<sup>158</sup> It contains bilingual spells, with the Chinese version in black and the Sanskrit in red.

*Mijiao sanshi yi* 密教散食儀 (Secret Teaching's Ritual for Bestowing Food).<sup>159</sup> A ritual text for the feeding of hungry ghosts. Manuscript from the period of the Dali kingdom, with bilingual spells in Chinese and Sanskrit.

<sup>154</sup> Biographical entry in *FDC*, vol. 5, p. 4243ab.

<sup>155</sup> Discussed in *YDFL*, pp. 294–5. Kept in the Provincial Library of Yunnan.

<sup>156</sup> The manuscript is presently kept in the Provincial Library of Yunnan, no. 00982. Discussed in *YDFL*, pp. 304–5.

<sup>157</sup> Provincial Library of Yunnan, no. 00984. Discussed in *YDFL*, p. 294.

<sup>158</sup> For a study of this text see Orzech, 1998.

<sup>159</sup> Provincial Library of Yunnan, no. 00983.

*Mijiao qiqing cideng* 密教啓請次第 (Invocations of the Secret Teaching in Successive Order).<sup>160</sup> This is a manual of spells with *bījas* for the primary deities to be invoked. A bilingual manuscript written in Chinese (black) and Sanskrit (red), with punctuation. It would appear to date from the middle of the Dali period.

*Mijiao guanxing cideng* 密教觀行次第 (Secret Teaching's Practice of Contemplation in Successive Order).<sup>161</sup> A ritual text by an unknown author that includes instructions in various forms of Esoteric Buddhist meditation. Like many other Dali texts, the manuscript features bilingual spells but also includes talismans in red.

*Dahei tianshen yigui* 大黑天神儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for [the Worship of] Mahākāla),<sup>162</sup> author unknown. A ritual text with full instructions for the altar, offerings, spells, etc. It shares some similarities with *T. 1287*.

*Foshuo guanding Yaoshi jing shu* 佛說灌頂藥師經疏 (Commentary on the Baiṣajyaguru *Abhiṣeka* Scripture),<sup>163</sup> written by an unknown monk, possibly of Bai origin. A commentary on the twelfth chapter of the *Guanding jing*.<sup>164</sup> Annotation is done in red, according to Bai customs. The manuscript said to date from the Dali period.

*Da zizai sui jiu fomu qiqing yigui* 大自在隨求佛母啓請儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for Inviting Mahāpratisarā, Mother of Buddhas).<sup>165</sup> A ritual text for the cult of Mahāpratisarā with instructions for the altar, including a detailed listing of offerings. Manuscript from the Dali period.

*Guangming qiqing sanshi yuxiang zhongzhu bai jin'gang jiqing* 光明啟請散食浴像中囑白金剛稽請 (Inviting the Bright and Illuminating

<sup>160</sup> Provincial Library of Yunnan, no. 00985.

<sup>161</sup> Provincial Library of Yunnan, no. 00986.

<sup>162</sup> ZWF, First Series, vol. 6, pp. 372–81.

<sup>163</sup> Provincial Library of Yunnan, no. 00966.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. *T. 1331* For a study of this text see Strickmann, 1990.

<sup>165</sup> Provincial Library of Yunnan. There are several Esoteric Buddhist texts devoted to the worship of this female divinity, including *T. 1154–1156A*. As is the case with many of the Dali Buddhist manuscripts, this work seems to represent a local tradition.



to Partake of Food Offerings Together with the Bathing of the Image of the Central White Vajra[pāla] who Searches Out [Demons]).<sup>166</sup> A manuscript from the Dali kingdom but composed during the Shaoxing 紹興 reign-period (1131–1162) of the Southern Song. The text includes bilingual liturgy and spells in Sanskrit and Chinese with punctuation in red, and is similar to the abovementioned *Zhu fo pusa jin'gang deng qiqing yigui*.

*Jin'gangsaduo huoweng tan shou guan yi* 金剛薩埵火瓮壇爰灌儀 (Ritual for the Vajrasattva Fire Urn Altar Bestowal of *Abhiṣeka*).<sup>167</sup> Another ritual text with instructions for initiation to Vajrasattva in connection with funerary rites. This text may post-date the Dali period and may possibly be from the early Ming period.

*Lengyan jieyuan shijie daochang yi* 楞嚴解冤釋結道場儀 (Regulations of the Ritual of the Pseudo-Śūraṅgama Sūtra for the Expulsion of Oppressions for Consolation and Expiation of Wrongdoings),<sup>168</sup> author unknown. A ritual text featuring many spells and *dhāraṇīs*, including the Great Compassion *Dhāraṇī*, the *Jie baisheng yuanjia tuoluoni* 解百生冤家陀羅尼 (*Dhāraṇī* for Liberating the One Hundred Oppressed Families), the *Māricī* mantra, the *Buddhoṣṇisa dhāraṇī*, etc. The text invokes and quotes from the apocryphal *Foding xin tuoluoni jing* 佛頂心陀羅尼經 (Scripture on the Buddha's Uṣṇisa Heart Spell)<sup>169</sup> several times. Annotation in red. Probably dating from the Ming period; the present edition is from 1786.<sup>170</sup>

*Guangshi wuzhe daochang yi* 廣施無遮道場儀 (Regulations for the Ritual of Widely Supporting Those Without Protection).<sup>171</sup> This is a *shuilu*-type text that would appear to have been composed in Yunnan during the later period of the Dali kingdom. The present version is dated 1379 C.E., i.e., early Ming. Vairocana, Śakyamuni, Mahākāla, and Indra are invoked along with with numerous spells and mantras.

<sup>166</sup> Translation of the title is tentative.

<sup>167</sup> Provincial Library of Yunnan.

<sup>168</sup> ZWF, First Series, vol. 6, pp. 35–226.

<sup>169</sup> For additional information on this interesting scripture, see Yü 2001, 118–27.

<sup>170</sup> For the complete ritual texts relating to the *Pseudo-Śūraṅgama* from Dali, see ZWF, First Series, vol. 6, pp. 35–226.

<sup>171</sup> ZWF, First Series, vol. 6, pp. 360–71.

*Foshuo xiaozai yanshou Yaoshi guanding zhangju yi* 佛說消災延壽藥師灌頂章句儀 (Ritual Spoken by the Buddha on Removal of Evil and the Attainment of Long Life According to the Baiṣajyaguru *Abhiṣeka*).<sup>172</sup> An extensive ritual compendium devoted to the cult of Baiṣajyāguru, consisting of several individual ritual texts. A Yunnanese work probably dating from the early Ming.

*Rulai guangxiao shizhong baoen daochang yi* 如來廣孝十種報恩道場儀 (Ritual for the Tathāgata's Extensive Filial Piety's Ten Kinds of Recompensating [Parents'] Kindness).<sup>173</sup> An extensive ritual compendium consisting of several individual ritual texts. Doctrinally, it combines Esoteric Buddhism and filial piety based on the apocryphal *Baoen jing* 報恩經 (Scripture on the Recompensation of Kindness). A Yunnanese work probably dating from the early Ming.

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<sup>172</sup> ZWF, First Series, vol. 7, pp. 114–226.

<sup>173</sup> ZWF, First Series, vol. 8, pp. 53–332.



## ESOTERIC BUDDHIST PRACTICES



## 5. ABHIṢEKA

Ronald M. Davidson

The practice of *abhiṣeka* in esoteric Buddhism stands as the gateway ceremony into the esoteric system and represents a ritual of passage that was required for a candidate to be considered a member of the esoteric community, authorized to perform the rituals and to say the mantras associated with the plethora of esoteric practices. In many ways it was unlike the Mahāyānist vows of the bodhisattva, which could have been declared through the process of visualization, with or without the presence of a consecrated bodhisattva giving the vows, and the acceptance of bodhisattva vows was generally done without the use of mantras or *dhāraṇīs*. Conversely, the esoteric rite theoretically required the presence of a master who had himself been consecrated, and the *abhiṣeka* additionally employed a variety of distinctive ceremonial activities—mandalas, *mudrās*, mantras, *homās*, etc. Because it was seen normatively as a transfer of authority between human generations, it had greater similarities to the two levels of ordination (*pravrajyā* and *upasampadā*) for the monk than to the practices of the Mahāyāna per se, and sometimes invoked the familial metaphors of consanguinity (father-son, brothers). Since individuals did not always have living masters, the *abhiṣeka* ceremony also developed a narrative of transmission, wherein the first human master may have received the initial consecration from a buddha or bodhisattva in a vision, in a miraculous manifestation, or in a dream.

The Buddhist *abhiṣeka* rite took its direct inspiration from classical and medieval coronation rites, although it also appropriated some of the dynamics of *abhiṣeka* as a purification visualization in Mahāyānist rituals as well. The non-Buddhist rituals on which it was based employ the *abhiṣeka* rite for several different purposes, although the different applications of *abhiṣeka* are in need of further exploration. Nonetheless, within discrete Indian ritual programs, *abhiṣeka* had at least six different uses: (1) as a rite of coronation, (2) as a ritual of renewal, (3) as a metaphor signifying recognition, (4) as a ritual of purification, (5) as a ritual of consecration, and (6) as a rite of bathing images as honor given the divinity (Davidson, forthcoming[a]).

To a greater or lesser degree, all of these had overlapping values and extended from the fundamental meaning of the term, derived from the root  $\sqrt{abhisin̄j}$ - (“to sprinkle or asperse”). This is the reason that Chinese translators rendered the term literally (*guanding* 灌頂 or rarely *jiaojing* 澆頭), although Tibetans opted for a metaphorical rendering, “empowerment” (*dbang bskur*), which identified the force of the rite; the difference highlights a curious instance in the reversal of their respective standard translation procedures, where Chinese tended in most cases to emphasize sense while Tibetans concentrated on a literal rendering.

The first two of the above list of six were rites appropriate to overlords or emperors (*rājādhirāja* or *cakravartin*), even if we sometimes encounter local princes arrogating both the rites and the epithets for the purpose of feudal posturing. The difference between the rite of coronation and renewal is that the former was more often referred to as the “great coronation” (*mahābhiṣeka*) while the latter was designated the “renewed consecration” (*punarabhiṣeka*), either to be performed on the anniversary of the great coronation or in the winter month of Pauṣa (December–January, *pauṣābhiṣeka*). In both kinds of *abhiṣeka*, the older versions of the rite found in early Brahmanical literature required the emperor/prince to be sprinkled with water drawn from the four directions, brought in cups of four kinds of wood, and the ritual paraphernalia were generally fashioned in accordance with the organic aesthetics of Vedic sacrifices generally (*Aitareyabrāhmaṇa* VIII.5–24 [Keith 1920, 322–339]; Gonda 1957, 32–44; Heesterman 1957; Thomas 1908–1926). Both coronation and renewal rituals were always associated with *homa* sacrifices and related Brahmanical rites, and generally fit into the category of “great” ceremonies (*śrauta*) rather than domestic (*gṛhya*) rites, so that coronation rituals are described as requiring three fires and the presence of Brahmins reciting from the various *Vedas*.

Over time, our sources indicate that the rite matured significantly, gaining importance through the increased attention to rituals associated with kingship or imperium. Consequently, by the beginning of the medieval period, the emperor was coronated/consecrated with water brought in vases (*kalaśa*) of four kinds of materials (gold, silver, copper, and clay) and aspersed with mud from sacred rivers, aspersed with milk and the other products of the cow, had a silk or gold crown (*paṭṭa*) tied over his turban (*uṣṇīṣa*), was toured around on a chariot, and was finally enthroned. He was then considered

to have become part of the corporate-familial or regional divinity (*kuladevatāṃśa/deśadevatāṃśa*). The more elaborate performances of the ritual lasted several days, with festivities involving theater troupes, musicians, dancers, and other forms of entertainment (*Bṛhatsaṃhitā* [Kern 1865, 48]; Kumari, *Nīlamatapurāṇa* vv. 834–869; Gonda 1957, 44–53). In the process, the emperor released prisoners, gave titles and deeds, rewarded the loyal, heard complaints from citizens, and generally exercised his regnal authority (*kṣatra*) by which he was accorded legitimacy to govern (*kṣatriya*) over his domain (*kṣetra*) and its circle of vassals (mandala). In the cases of the coronation of a crown prince (*yuvarāja*), a vassal (*sāmanta*), a state counselor (*amātya*), or a general (*senāpati*), the emperor or overlord would employ a reduced version of the ritual, with fewer elements and with the overlord acting as the patron (*yajyamāna*), thereby affirming that the authority of the individual being coronated was derivative from the overlord as the embodiment or extension of divinity rather than the subordinate figure becoming divinity himself (Law 1919; Inden 1988; Kane 1946, 73–83).

Although early Buddhist traditions were fixated on the mythic person of the *cakravartin*, they were surprisingly unconcerned with the question of coronation, even denying in the legends of Aśoka that human coronation was necessary for a *cakravartin*, who was selected instead by divine fiat (Strong 1983, 209). Buddhist literary acknowledgment of the rite emerged with the Mahāsāṃghika's identification of the final lifetime of the bodhisattva (as he becomes Buddha) as the "stage of coronation" (*abhiṣekabhūmi*) in the *Mahāvastu*. Mahāyānist literature altered the concept by specifying that the stage of coronation was at the beginning of the tenth stage, wherein a bodhisattva became recognized as the crown prince (*yuvarāja*), consecrated through light coming from all the buddhas in the ten directions. In the *locus classicus* for this mythology, the *Daśabhūmika sūtra*, the metaphor of coronation is explicit: the bodhisattva's throne is his great jeweled lotus in space, the coronation water is the light from the Buddha's spot between their eyes (*ūrṇakośa*), and so forth.

In a different vein, Mahāyānist meditators in the Tarim Basin (and probably in Gandhāra and Kāśmīr as well) began to fashion texts that included meditative visions of buddhas, Brahmās, or others consecrating meditators with colored light or imagined water, or other visualized substances (Schlingloff 2006, 41–44, Davidson forthcoming[a]). These visualizations were more often cleansing or apotropaic than



regal, and while the metaphor of kingship was occasionally inferred, it was seldom explicit. Instead, the other meanings of *abhiṣeka* were exploited: cleansing, recognition, bathing, and so on. Other meanings were added as well, including pacification of emotions or spiritual liberation from a sense of self, and extended to markers of the meditative path, but not markers indicative of coronation per se. The diffuse nature of the *abhiṣeka* under these circumstances indicates a ritual and cultural distance from the regular performance of *abhiṣeka* as an imperial rite, so that alternative forms of signification can be attributed to the term.

The earliest surviving work for which an *abhiṣeka* rite is employed for the transmission of Buddhist authority from one person to the next appears to be the well-known *Consecration Scripture* (*Guandingjing*, T. 1331, *Fo shuo guanding qiwanerqian shenwang hu bichiu zhoujing* 佛說灌頂七萬二千神王護比丘呪經), studied by Strickmann in his various works (1990, 1996). Strickmann thought that the importance of this text was not recognized by Japanese scholars for sectarian reasons and dismissed their opinions on the matter (Strickmann 1990, 85). However, while the *Guandingjing* does implicate the imperial metaphor for the transmission of the teaching, the text does not employ *abhiṣeka* to inaugurate a candidate into a mandala, transmit mantras, or do any of the other specific items associated with mature tantric Buddhism. It uses the rite to transmit the text itself from one person to the other (T. 1331.21:497b5–24), which has not been a function of Indian tantrism for most of its history. This employment appears to reflect the Chinese fixation on specific texts, with Buddhists in China ordering their sectarian affiliation along textual lines (e.g., Huayan, Sanlun) in a manner unseen in South Asia. It is arguable that the idea of *abhiṣeka* as a transmission rite was stimulated by the increasing emphasis on the coronation ritual in translations into Chinese, including the sections on regal *abhiṣeka* in three earlier translations of the *Daśabhūmika* (T. 285.10:491a4–10; T. 286.10:529a23–28; T. 278.10:572b15–21), where the *cakravartin*'s coronation rite is explained. In the *Guandingjing*, we see that Chinese civilization tends to collapse the distinction between the religious and political spheres, as Indian Buddhists were to do almost two centuries later in the formation of Buddhist tantrism.

The earliest *abhiṣekas* observed in the esoteric Buddhist system were patterned after the coronation rites, with ritual details influenced by other practices—pavilion consecration, Brahmanical initiation (*dīkṣā*),

and so forth (T. 901.18:885c26–892c28). The master (*ācārya*) first consecrated a piece of ground; spread out a mandala between one and four yards on a side; covered it with dry cow dung; placed posts, ritual daggers (*kīla*), and pots in the corners; and divided it into a number of “altars” (*vedi, yuan* 院) or other mandala sections for the respective buddhas. Incense offerings were made, and candidates were sprinkled with a special vase (*kalaśa*) blessed for the purpose, after which a *homa* was employed to invoke the Buddha, and related ceremonies were conducted, perhaps for as long as a week. Eventually, with the expansion of the mandala form and the inclusion of buddha-retinues (*parivāra, juanshu* 眷屬; later “families,” *kula, zu* 族), the candidate was asked to throw a flower into the mandala to affirm the mystical relationship between himself and the buddha-retinue. *Abhiṣekas* quickly developed to include the acts of tying on crowns (*paṭṭa*), receiving scepters (*vajra*), receiving new names, becoming an emanation of the deity (*devāṃśa*), and other signs of the royal coronation form.

Buddhist *abhiṣeka* rites were to become extremely complex over time. Whereas the earliest tantric rites transmitted during the Tang might take two to three days in abbreviated form, later rituals transmitted in the Song could have been punctuated over decades, with separate rites for the consecration of the disciple (*śiṣyābhiṣeka*), authorizing a candidate to become a preceptor (*ācāryābhiṣeka*), or any of the eighth–ninth centuries’ rites involving sexuality (*guhyābhiṣeka, prajñājñānābhiṣeka*). These latter were the most contentious *abhiṣeka* forms and involved the systematic transgression of social norms. Consequently the Song dynasty translations were often accomplished in a manner that occluded the overt language of the Indic texts in favor of Chinese courtly aesthetics, although this practice had also occurred during the Tang in more limited ways. Even then, it is apparent that some antinomian practices were communicated in some manner to select Chinese disciples, although it is difficult to determine to what degree the extreme rites were actually performed in China or anywhere else.

## 6. *MUDRĀ*, MANTRA, MANDALA

Charles D. Orzech and Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

Buddhist practice involving the use of *mudrā*, mantra and mandala are often regarded as the primary hallmarks of esoteric Buddhism. These practices originated in different stages and contexts in the history of Buddhism, but are nonetheless central to the formation of esoteric Buddhism as a historical phenomena.<sup>1</sup> In the more developed phase of esoteric Buddhism (sixth cent. onwards) *mudrā*, mantra and mandala became inextricably bound to the Three Mysteries (*sanmi* 三密), the unified “mysteries” or “secrets” of body (*shen* 身), speech (*kou* 口), and mind (*yi* 意) respectively.<sup>2</sup> This essay provides a brief overview of the role of *mudrā*, mantra, and mandala prior to their integration as a keystone of esoteric ritual and then discusses their use in that integrated system.<sup>3</sup>

### Mudrā

The origin of ritual hand-gestures in the context of Indian religion is obscure, but certain formalized gestures were used in the Vedic rituals long before the advent of Buddhism.<sup>4</sup> The term found its way into the Buddhist tradition, probably in the Buddha’s own lifetime, where “*mudrā*” or rather *mudda*, according to the Pali tradition, appears in various meanings as “counting on one’s fingers,” “gesticulating,” and

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<sup>1</sup> See Davidson, “Sources and Inspirations: Esoteric Buddhism in South Asia,” in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> The terms have a long history in Buddhism and broad semantic and religious range. They are often referred to as the “tri-karma” or “three modes of action” (*sanye* 三業). For a discussion see McBride, 2006, 305–55.

<sup>3</sup> More detailed treatments—particularly of mandala—can be found in several articles in this volume, including those by Sørensen, Winfield, Mack, and Bogel. A good discussion of *mudrā* is found in *BDJ* (1974) 1: 176c–178a, and an indispensable resource is Hatta’s *Shingon jiten*, 1985, which pairs mantras and *mudrās*. Both of these treatments are from the perspective of Japanese esotericism. Saunders 1960 is similarly keyed to Japan and iconography. Strickmann 1996 treats developments in China.

<sup>4</sup> On the use of hand gestures in Vedic rites see Gonda 1997, esp. 65–70.

even a “signet-ring,” i.e. for sealing.<sup>5</sup> It also means a certain art or craft and the practitioner is therefore called a *muddiko*. Hence it is obvious that even in the early sources, the term was used for ritual hand-gestures in a manner that approaches its use in the later, esoteric Buddhist material. However images of buddhas and bodhisattvas from Gandhāra and Mathura, all dating from the beginning of the Common Era, feature distinct hand-gestures, which may indicate the beginning of a more conscious focus on ritualized use of *mudrās* in Buddhism. In any case, it is clear that the ritual use of *mudrās* in Indian Buddhism was the result of the adaptation of a then common South Asian practice with a long cultural pedigree.

One of the earliest esoteric Buddhist scriptures in China to introduce the ritual use of *mudrās* is the *Mahāmaṇḍipulavimāna*.<sup>6</sup> It features the use of *mudrās* and spells as well as a fairly developed ritual for *homa*.<sup>7</sup> Although we cannot know for certain, it does not appear that *mudrās* as ritual hand-gestures were widely used until the seventh century.

The usage of the term *yin* 印 for both *mudrā* (i.e. a ritual hand-gesture) and seal in Chinese Buddhism, has allowed for some creative ambiguity in the interpretation of esoteric Buddhist scriptures in China. It is evident that the common understanding of “seal” as a tool for stamping a name on a short piece of text on paper or cloth influenced the way some Chinese Buddhists understood the word. This may have been bolstered by the widespread use of magical seals in Daoism. Whether creative misreading or simply a lack of clarity, the slippage is evident in various, early esoteric Buddhist scriptures. One of the more historically intriguing examples is the *Guanding jing* 灌頂經 (Consecration Scripture, *Fo shuo guanding qiwanerqian shenwang hu bichiu zhou jing* 佛說灌頂七萬二千神王護比丘呪經 T. 1331) that appeared in China as a composite text during the late fifth century.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See Rhys Davids 1899, 289, n119.

<sup>6</sup> T. 1007 *Mou li mantuoluo zhou jing* 牟梨曼陀羅咒經, said to have been translated during the Liang by an unknown author. As it is first mentioned in Zhisheng’s *智昇 Kaiyuan Catalogue* of 730 (*Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 T. 2154.55:667a), the Chinese version may have been produced later than the Liang. However, it does not appear to post-date 600 C.E.

<sup>7</sup> *Mudrās* are here called by a rare, archaic name; *mutuoluo* 母陀羅. See T. 1007.20:661a. The text states: “Seeing the *mudrā* and hearing the spell will cause one to receive advantages.” T. 1007.20:661c.

<sup>8</sup> For a study of the text see Strickmann 1990, 75–118. Davidson has noted however that the “consecration” or *abhiṣeka* the text takes its name from is for the transmission

The success and ritual importance of the *mudrās* in esoteric Buddhism had a major impact on Daoist ritualism. Following the ascent of the Zhenyan tradition in the course of the eighth century, Daoist practitioners began to take up the use of *mudrās* in their rituals.<sup>9</sup> It is almost certain that Daoist priests had been using some form of hand-gestures in their rituals prior to the influence from esoteric Buddhism, but under the influence of Zhenyan they were inspired to develop their own sets of *mudrās*. An exact date for these developments is not easy to determine in the light of the current research. However it is clear that by the time of the late Tang dynasty, Buddhist *mudrās* had become adapted and modified by Daoist ritual experts to fit with their own spiritual and doctrinal requirements.<sup>10</sup>

### *Mantras, Dhāraṇīs and Spells*

Mantras are ubiquitous in the practice of traditional South Asian religion and they were in use long before the rise of Buddhism.<sup>11</sup> But there has been considerable confusion over their introduction and use in Buddhism, over their definition, and over their relationship with *dhāraṇīs*.

One school of interpretation considers mantras and *dhāraṇīs* as two distinct types of incantations, another sees them as similar, although not exactly the same, while others consider them more or less the same. Scholars have tended to distinguish mantras and *dhāraṇīs* by form and function—as the former tend to consist of relatively short strings of syllables, normally not more than one or two lines long, whereas the latter are often more lengthy, sometimes taking up several pages in ritual texts. A long held position has been that *dhāraṇīs* are found throughout the Mahāyāna and in esoteric Buddhism and that

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of a text and not for initiation into a mandala. See Davidson, “Abhiṣeka,” in this volume. For a discussion of one example from this important scripture, where the *mudrā* has become a seal, see Sørensen 2005, 49–84 (esp. 55–58). Strickmann 1993, 1–83 explores the fertile ambiguity between *mudrā* and seal and its connections with Daoism, talismans, and printing.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of Daoist *mudrā*, see Mitamura 2002, 235–55. For Zhenyan see Orzech, “Esoteric Euddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra (651–780),” in this volume.

<sup>10</sup> See Ren 2004.

<sup>11</sup> There is a voluminous literature on mantra in South Asian religion. For a classic treatment see Gonda, 1963. For a collection of recent articles see Alper 1989, especially Padoux’s “Mantras—What Are They,” 295–318.

it was the use of *dhāraṇīs* that eventually led to the development of esoteric Buddhism.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, mantras have often been regarded as hallmarks of esoteric Buddhism and the tantras and for all intents and purposes to be absent from the Mahāyāna and earlier Buddhism. Yet it is arguable that mantras are found in some early materials, including Vinaya, though they are absent from Pali works.<sup>13</sup> A common theory is that *dhāraṇīs* have a mnemonic function.<sup>14</sup> The intelligibility or unintelligibility of mantras and *dhāraṇīs* has been hotly contested, with some scholars drawing on recent work in speech act theory to advance their positions.<sup>15</sup>

Not all of the confusion between mantras and *dhāraṇīs* stems from scholarly bias or myopia. A long history of interaction and influence virtually insures overlap. As Davidson points out, “*mantras* seemed to have become associated with *dhāraṇīs* first [as] an important subset and then through synecdoche each came to stand for each other in many environments.”<sup>16</sup>

It is therefore difficult to draw categorical distinctions between mantras and *dhāraṇīs*. Both are used for the invocation of Buddhist divinities and various kinds of spirits, both may and may not carry semantic significance, although most feature a combination of power syllables and proper intelligible and translatable meaning.

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<sup>12</sup> See Sørensen, “On Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition,” and Copp, “*Dhāraṇī* Scriptures,” in this volume.

<sup>13</sup> Davidson 2009, 20–24. Davidson’s essay includes a detailed history and examination of the definitional debate.

<sup>14</sup> A position held by Lamotte and others. For a summary of the argument see Davidson 2009, 8–12. For Davidson’s proposal concerning *dhāraṇīs* as encoding devices see 56–58.

<sup>15</sup> Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century arguments that *dhāraṇīs* and spells are essentially unintelligible nonsense words strung together has been revisited with more linguistic and theoretical sophistication within the broader contexts of the “meaning” or “meaninglessness” of ritual and the nature of speech acts. See Staal 1979, 1989, and Wheelock 1982, as well as their respective essays in Alper, 1989.

<sup>16</sup> Davidson 2009, 24. He continues, “We occasionally see that a *mantradhāraṇī* was an appositional compound indicating a *dhāraṇī* that was a *mantra* (*mantra eva dhāraṇī*), demonstrating the grammatical understanding of identity of reference (*samānādhikaraṇa*). This is most tellingly seen in various texts when the term “*mantra* words” (*mantrapadāni*) is used interchangeably with “*dhāraṇī* words” (*dhāraṇīpadāni*), and such interchangeability is a hallmark of semantic identity, as we have seen.” These usages are found in *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, etc. See Davidson 2009, 24–25, n. 68.

The use of spells (*zhou* 咒, mantra) and *dhāraṇī* (*tuoluoni* 陀羅尼) have a long history in China which dates at least to the 2nd century. In the course of the Nanbeichao period (440–589) the use of spells became fairly common among Buddhist practitioners due to the large number of spell-texts that were translated.<sup>17</sup> The term most frequently encountered in this period was *zhou*. Exactly when the use of the term “true word” (*zhenyan* 真言) as a translation of mantra came in vogue in China is not known for certain. However, it appears to have taken place sometime during the the middle of the seventh century at the very latest.<sup>18</sup> *Zhenyan* is used extensively in the sense of “mantra” throughout the *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 (*Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* T. 901), a compendium of spell texts rendered by the Indian monk Atikūṭa (阿地瞿多 fl. 650s) in 654 C.E. In Bodhiruci’s (菩提流支 ?–727) voluminous translation of the *Amoghapāśakalparāja* (T. 1092) from 707 C.E. the term *zhenyan* replaces the term *zhou* for “spell.”<sup>19</sup> However, the two are virtually identical which can be seen by comparing the long and short versions of the *Amoghapāśakalparāja*. The teaching and translation activities of Śubhākarasimha (Shanwuwei 善無畏 637–735), Vajrabodhi (Jin’gang zhi 金剛智 671–741), and Amoghavajra (Bukong jin’gang 不空金剛 704–774) in the Tang court during the first half of the eighth century cemented the usage of *zhenyan* as the preferred term.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See Copp, “*Dhāraṇī* Scriptures,” Robson, “Talismans in Chinese Esoteric Buddhism,” Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism and Magic in China,” and “Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Discursive Attempt at a Definition,” in this volume.

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the term see Orzech 2006b, 46–47 and “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra (651–780),” in this volume.

<sup>19</sup> This appears to be further evidence that “spell,” i.e. *dhāraṇī* and mantra were understood as meaning the same thing and functioning in much the same way. Note that the scripture has also changed the term “spell” and “*dhāraṇī*” in its title which otherwise appear in the titles of the earlier translations of the *Amoghapāśadhāraṇī sūtra*. See, for example, T. 1094, T. 1095 and T. 1097. Note that the latter translation uses both “spell” and “*dhāraṇī*” in its title.

<sup>20</sup> See Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang,” in this volume, and Orzech, 2006b, 46–47. But it is notable that the term *zhou* is not completely displaced and continues to occur. For example, the *Mohe feishiluomonaye tipo heluoshe tuoluoni yigui* 摩訶吠室囉末那野提婆喝囉闍陀羅尼儀軌 which is likely late eighth or ninth century, details the use of *zhou* T. 1246 21.221a26. See Orzech, “After Amoghavajra,” in this volume. For Śubhākarasimha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra see the relevant articles in this volume. For a translation of their biographies see Chou 1945.

*Mandala*<sup>21</sup>

As in the case of mantra the actual origin of ritual diagrams in Indian religion undoubtedly have a long history and pre-date Buddhism. However, cosmic diagrams made in the form of geometric matrices with each segment in the grid indicating a holy “field” or “sphere” inhabited by a divinity—a virtual “map” of the imagined cosmic order— did not find their place in Buddhism until quite late in the history of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Buddhist cave-temples of Kanheri and at Ellora in the Deccan contain what may be the earliest extant examples of rudimentary mandalas in the form of geometric matrices containing Buddhist divinities.<sup>22</sup> Davidson has argued that the distinctive use of mandalas in esoteric Buddhism is a product of the loss of patronage in the context of medieval sāmanta feudalism and the growing importance of the imperial metaphors of the “supreme overlord” (*rājādirāja*) or “universal ruler” (*cakravartin*).<sup>23</sup>

In the context of Chinese Buddhism, the use of mandalas (*mantuoluo* 曼陀羅) as iconic, cosmo-religious charts goes back to the sixth century. The early sources do not use the term *mantuoluo*, (or various other transliterations) but use the word “*tan* 壇,” i.e. “altar” or “platform.” From the context in which the term occurs, however, it is clear that we are dealing with a special diagram arranged or placed on an altar. Diagrams of this kind were normally drawn on paper or cloth, sometimes they consisted of rudimentary, graphic mandalas on which were placed images of various sorts according to the regulations for the rite to be performed.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The amount of scholarship on mandala, especially with regard to mandalas in Japanese esoteric Buddhism, seems to grow at an exponential rate. Classic works are by Tajima 1936, 1959, Toganoo 1982b. Chandra 1971 provides a summary of classical Japanese scholarship. ten Grotenhuis 1999, 1–11 provides a lucid introduction and her notes cover the major resources in English and Japanese. A collection of essays on mandala can be found in the *Journal of the International Buddhist Studies Association*, 19.2, 1996.

<sup>22</sup> See Malandra 1993. Malandra’s discussion is relatively spare on historical or doctrinal background of the square, mandala-like diagrams in Ellora. Nevertheless, in a few instances, such as in caves no. 6 (early seventh century) and no. 12 (early eighth century) we are obviously dealing with some form of early mandalas. For Malandra’s discussion of the dating see Malandra 1993, 23–90.

<sup>23</sup> Davidson 2002a, 113–131.

<sup>24</sup> Many such mandala-diagrams have survived, in particular among the hoard of manuscripts in the sealed chamber of cave 17 at Mogao. For an example see, Tokyo National Museum’s 1996 exhibition catalogue *Shirukurodo dai bijutsu ten* [English subtitle: Grand Exhibition of Silk Road Buddhist Art], 219, pl. 231.



Some texts are ambivalent about the difference between altar and mandala. Sometimes the altar is described as a mandala and sometimes the mandala is the altar. However, we must imagine the mandala as having been placed on a sort of built-up platform or area raised from the ground, serving as the central focus for a given rite. Around the three-dimensional mandalas were often erected a cordon made of rope or later five-colored threads—one color for each Buddha family in the case of the more developed esoteric Buddhism propagated in the Tang court from the mid-eighth century onward. The cordon functioned as a fence meant to keep out unwanted persons and demonic forces from the inner ritual space. This enclosure was empowered by the officiating monk through the use of mantras or spells.

Esoteric Buddhist literature from the seventh century contains detailed descriptions of how to build the altar on which the mandala is to be placed.<sup>25</sup> In India it was customary to build altars on a cleared space and cover them with cow dung and a final layer of whitewash. Even though this practice is often mentioned in the Chinese translations of esoteric Buddhist scriptures, it is uncertain whether this was followed in actual practice.<sup>26</sup> Probably the Chinese practitioners did not use manure for their altars, but special kinds of clay painted with colours.

Although the type of mandalas used in esoteric Buddhism are normally geometrical arrangements of circular or square ground plans sub-divided into sections, all circular arrangements, even in the context of esoteric Buddhism should not automatically be considered “mandalas.” In order for a given diagram of the type described above to qualify as a mandala it needs a pre-defined ritual context delineating its function as such (including instructions for liturgy, iconography and offerings to be used). Moreover, in the majority of cases there are also scriptural or orally transmitted sources available. These are necessary for the correct setting up of most mandalas, whether they be mere diagrams, paintings or three-dimensional structures.

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<sup>25</sup> For ritual metaphors relating altars and other types of construction, see Payne “From Vedic India to Buddhist Japan: Continuities and Discontinuities in Esoteric Ritual,” in this volume.

<sup>26</sup> For an example, see the description of the preparation of an altar for the expulsion of demons and illness in Manicintana’s *Scripture of the Amoghapāsadhārānī, Sovereign Lord of Spells* (*Bukongjuansuo tuoluoni zizaiwang zhou jing* 不空罽索陀羅尼自在王咒經 T. 1097.20:426c22–26).

In the later Buddhist tantras the “mandala” takes on an additional meaning, as “spiritual field” or “sphere of activity” in the sense of the space in which a given adept operates or functions. This meaning, which is of course an extension of the common ritual space with its physical mandala, reflects the appropriation and incorporation of the surrounding reality on the part of the tantric *yogin* (Davidson 2002a, 294–335).

### *Unified Three Secrets and the Rise of Esoteric Buddhism*

The use of mantras, *mudrās*, and mandalic diagrams and altars certainly precedes the rise of esoteric Buddhism and the tantras, and are found in various settings in the Mahāyāna. But it is only in early esoteric Buddhism where the three begin to coalesce into an integrated ritual system designed not only to evoke buddhas and bodhisattvas, but to produce them and harness their power.

A key element in this synthesis can be found in Mahāyāna discussions of the “three modes of action” (*sanye* 三業) or the ways in which buddhas (and bodhisattvas), while residing in *samādhi*, nonetheless employ wondrous supernormal powers of body, speech, and mind to rescue sentient beings.<sup>27</sup> In a fascinating passage in his *Miaofa lianhuan jing wenju* 妙法蓮華經文句 using the language of cause (*yin* 因) and result (*guo* 果) Zhiyi (智顓 538–597) links the three modes of action with the three secrets. “Further, cause refers to the three modes of action (*sanye*), result refers to the three secrets (*sanmi*). As cause compassion directs the three modes of action for the benefit others. As result it is called the inconceivable transformation of the three wheels.” For Zhiyi the two—cause and result—are joined by a further triad: the three modes of action are equated with practice of calmness, insight, and compassion.<sup>28</sup> Thus the three modes, the three secrets, and the triad of calmness, insight, and compassion are simply different manifestations of the same thing. Successful practice of the latter triad entails the previous two triads.

We do not know exactly how, when, or why speculation over the buddha’s wondrous salvific powers was transformed into a way of *ritually producing* such powers. Although it does not use the term “three

<sup>27</sup> The topic is taken up in a variety of texts including the *Dazhidu lun* 大智度論 T. 1509. See McBride, 2006.

<sup>28</sup> T. 1718.34:118c5–9.

secrets” the coordinated ritual use of *mudrā*, mantra, and mandala are already well established in the *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* of the mid-seventh century.<sup>29</sup>

By the time Śubhākarasiṃha translated *Mahāvairocanābhisam̐bodhi sūtra* (*Da Piluzhe’na chengfo shenbian jiachi jing* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經 T. 848)<sup>30</sup> in 724–725 a fully integrated ritual system structured around *abhiṣeka* and “the unified three secrets” of body, speech, and mind is in place, codified in the devices of *mudrā*, mantra, and mandala.<sup>31</sup> Śubhākarasiṃha, straightforwardly reaffirms the connection between the three modes of action and the three secrets, “The three modes of action are simply the three secrets, and the three secrets are simply the three modes of action. The three bodies are simply the wisdom of tathāgata Mahāvairocana.”<sup>32</sup> The key difference between Zhiyi’s position and that found in the *Mahāvairocanābhisam̐bodhi sūtra* is the use of a kind of mimetic ritual technology—that of *mudrā*, mantra, and mandala.<sup>33</sup>

It is possible that these developments were related to the development of *samaya* vows (*sanmeiye jie* 三昧耶戒). The taking of vows—the triple refuge in the Buddha, in his teaching or Dharma, and in the community or Sangha—is one of the earliest institutional forms of the Buddhist movement. It marks the aspiration to follow the teaching of

<sup>29</sup> For instance, the first fascicle of the text delineates fully elaborated ritual sequences including an integrated practice of *mudrā* (including instructions on how to intertwine the fingers), mantra, contemplation, image and altar construction, and sequences of worship that are hardly distinguishable from those of texts appearing more than a century later. T. 901.18:785b–804c. for a breakdown and preliminary analysis of the scripture see Davidson forthcoming b.

<sup>30</sup> Translated by Śubhākarasiṃha with the help of Yixing 一行 (683–727). For further information consult Pinte, “Śubhākarasiṃha,” Keyworth, “Yixing,” and Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra (651–780),” all in this volume. The English translation in Hodge 2003 is a good place to start in the study of the text.

<sup>31</sup> “Sons of the Buddha, listen well! One who is of my clan and abides in the vows unifies body speech, and mind.” T. 848.18:6a28–29.

<sup>32</sup> *Zunsheng fodong zhenyan xiu yuqiefu guiyi* 尊勝佛頂真言修瑜伽軌 T. 973.19:380a25–26). The three bodies mentioned here are the *dharmakāya*, *samboghakāya*, and *nirmāṇakāya*.

<sup>33</sup> The similarity—and the difference—between Zhiyi and Śubhākarasiṃha on this topic is apparent in the latter’s discussion of body speech and mind as the “three universal” realities shared with the buddha and their realization in the integrated performance of *mudrā*, the recitation of mantra, and the “exquisite contemplation” of mandala. The discussion is found in Śubhākarasiṃha’s and Yixing’s *Da Piluzhena chengfo jing su* 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏 [Commentary on the Mahāvairocana sūtra] T. 1796.39:583a13–24.

the Buddha and perhaps, eventually, replicate his nirvana.<sup>34</sup> With the development of the Mahāyāna a new set of vows developed, and practitioners, in emulation of the great buddhas and bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna scriptures, themselves took bodhisattva vows.<sup>35</sup> Although vowing to behave as bodhisattvas and to become buddhas, the deployment of advanced supernormal powers was viewed by most practitioners as something available to the great bodhisattvas and buddhas of the scriptures, not to the ordinary person. But in the process of *abhiṣeka*, as described in the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*, the initiate takes further *samaya* vows.<sup>36</sup>

These vows—to uphold the true teaching, to uphold the seed of enlightenment, to share the Buddhist teachings, and to avoid harming sentient beings—are unremarkable in the context of Mahāyāna Buddhism. But in the context of *abhiṣeka* they signify a dramatic transformation.<sup>37</sup> The vows are whispered in the ear of the candidate as he or she first prepares to enter the mandala. While blindfolded, the aspirant tosses a flower onto the mandala to establish a karmic affinity with a particular deity of the mandala. The blindfold is removed and the aspirant then glimpses the mandala for the first time. On the following day the initiate will begin the process of learning how to visualize the deities of the mandala—usually Mahāvairocana and Vajrasattva. Thus, the process of *abhiṣeka*, of which there are three progressively advanced levels, marks entry into intensive study and ritual practice.<sup>38</sup> The *abhiṣeka* ritual itself reenacts the enlightenment of the Siddhartha

<sup>34</sup> For an overview see Prebish 1975, 1–10.

<sup>35</sup> Nattier, 2003, 147–151 has a convenient overview of the bodhisattva vows.

<sup>36</sup> For a brief discussion of the role of vows in esoteric Buddhism see Davidson, “Abhiṣeka,” in this volume. Abé 1999, 133–149 provides a fine-grained and lucid description of the processes of *abhiṣeka* as set out in the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* and the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha (STTS)* (*Jin’gangding yuqie zhong lue qu nian song jing* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經, T. 866). This text, translated by Vajrabodhi in 720 is one of the sources of the Vajradhatū mandala. See Orzech, “Vajrabodhi,” and “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra (651–780),” in this volume.

<sup>37</sup> The vows are the subject of passages in the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* and in the *Commentary*. See, for instance, T. 848:5b–6c, 42b5–42c4, and T. 1796.39:629c7–630a12, 661c3, 666c22. Also see Abé 1999, 43, 53–54, 134.

<sup>38</sup> The levels of *abhiṣeka* are the initial level that establishes a karmic bond between the disciple and a divinity of the mandala (*jiēyuan guānding* 結緣灌頂), the second level of studying the teaching (*xuéfǎ guānding* 學法灌頂), and finally that which qualifies one to transmit the teaching (*chuānjiao guānding* 傳教灌頂). Each ritual marks a beginning of intensive study. See Śubhākarasiṃha’s *Commentary*, T. 1796.39:613a–c, 617a, 625a, 674c–675a.

in the Akaniṣṭha palace at the summit of the universe as set out in the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* and the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, with master and disciple taking the roles of Mahāvairocana and Vajrasattva (in the *MVS*) or Mahāvairocana and Vajradhātu (in the *STTS*). The *samaya* vows are thus realized through ritual practice as the disciple replicates Siddhartha's enlightenment.

The practice itself employs *mudrās*, mantras, and mandalas—body, speech, and mind—the “devices” through which the Buddha transforms beings. Amoghavajra put it succinctly:

As for the three secrets, the first is the secret of body: as in the making of *mudrās* when inviting the sages of the assembly. The second is the secret of speech: as in the secret recitation of the mantras wherein the syllables are clearly distinguished and without error. The third is the secret of mind: as in dwelling in the resonant unity of yoga, contemplating bodhicitta as a pure white lunar disk. (*T.* 1665.32:574b13–16).<sup>39</sup>

It is the simultaneous fully integrated use of gesture (*mudrā*), mantra, and visualization (mandala) that makes this practice distinctive, and this integration is repeatedly emphasized.<sup>40</sup>

The deployment of these devices involves more than simple contemplation of the symbols of the Buddha's salvific power (*jiachi* 加持; *adhiṣṭhāna*). The devices themselves empower and transform. They are not mere models of the Buddha's power. Rather they function as sacraments to produce that power when deployed properly by the disciple. The ritual process of *abhiṣeka* can be seen, therefore, as a technology for the reproduction of Buddhas. It's rhetoric is the rhetoric of birth and genealogy.<sup>41</sup> It is also a technology for the production of a particular social body (those who have undergone *abhiṣeka*), and of a particular individual body.<sup>42</sup> This body is none other than the body of a buddha in his world, capable of wielding salvific and supernormal powers producing worldly and transcendent benefits.

<sup>39</sup> The Chinese phrase rendered “dwelling in the resonant unity of yoga” (*zhu yuqie xiangying* 住瑜伽相應) has a connotation that the process of yoga not only involves “unity” but the proper response (*xiangying*) between a sign or deity and the mind.

<sup>40</sup> For a brief introduction to the role of visualization see Copp, “Visualization,” in this volume.

<sup>41</sup> For a discussion of the metaphors of the womb in the *abhiṣeka* sequence see Abé 1999, 136–141.

<sup>42</sup> An analogy might be the way that ballet is the technology for the reproduction of certain kinds of dancers, and its practice a discipline that produces distinctive physical and social bodies.

*Devices: Mudrās, Mantras, and Mandalas*

*Mudrās*, mantras, and mandalas were potent devices, and these “devices” have come to permeate East Asian Buddhism and even East Asian religion more generally. The ritual system introduced to China in the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*, patronized by the Tang court, and spread by initiates throughout East Asia produced certain devices that have transcended their ritual settings.<sup>43</sup> The most obvious example of this are the mandalas drawn from the *MVS*, the *STTS* and other esoteric scriptures and manuals that were translated and produced from the eighth century onward. Indeed, as the Japanese master Kūkai noted on presenting a list of the items he brought back to Japan from the Tang court,

The dharma is fundamentally wordless, but without words it is not manifest. . . . As the esoteric treasury is deep and mysterious and difficult to record, [the teachings] are revealed for the unenlightened through pictures. The various devices and *mudrās* are produced of the great compassion [of Mahāvairocana]. A single viewing can transform one into Buddha. The secrets of the sūtras and commentaries are inscribed in these pictures and images, and the essential realities of the esoteric repository is contained therein.<sup>44</sup>

While the relationship between specific texts and the mandalas drawn from them is complex, a brief look at the ritual process involved with the “Womb world” conveys some sense of the grand conception of these ritual devices.<sup>45</sup> Chapter two of the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* first sets out preliminary practices (including the purification of the practitioner and site), then the process of constructing of the Garbha mandala and its use in practices that result in the attainment of union, and then the use of various attainments for a variety of communal and personal needs.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> On esoteric Buddhism and the Tang court see Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūta to Amoghavajra (651–780),” and “After Amoghavajra: Esoteric Buddhism in the Late Tang,” in this volume.

<sup>44</sup> *T.* 2161.55:1064b23–29. See translation by Hakeda 1972, 145–146.

<sup>45</sup> Several essays in this collection treat the topic of mandala in esoteric Buddhism, notably those of Sørensen, Winfield, Mack, and Bogel. Much of the classic scholarship on the mandalas has been sketched out in English in ten Grotenhuis 1999, Snodgrass 1988, and Mammitzsch 1991.

<sup>46</sup> *T.* 848.18:6b–9b; *T.* 1796.39:630c–642c For a discussion helpful in understanding the coherence of these ritual elements see Hodge 2003, 29–40.

The “Mandala generated from the womb of great compassion” (*Mahākaruṇā garbodhbhava* mandala, also called the Garbhakoṣa dhātu mandala, for an example see color plate 1) is literally and figuratively the place of the birth of the buddhas, and nowhere is the relationship between generative imagery, mantra, and mandala more evident. Having had the mandala revealed, and having undergone an initial *abhiṣeka*, the disciple is initiated into the secret mantras. In the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* this moment is depicted in a stunning image, the image of the Buddha’s “secret tongue,” a tongue that is, in fact, the Garbha mandala itself. From deepest *samādhi* Mahāvairocana reveals his tongue which fills all the Buddha worlds and which is none other than the speech of all the buddhas (*T.* 848.18:12c1–2). This speech—uttered in unison by all the buddhas—is itself the “powerful Vidyā-queen of great protection.” (*dali dahu mingfei* 大力大護明妃, *T.* 848.18.12c4–10). The syllables of the mantra are explained by Śubhākarasiṃha as the seeds of wisdom—the bodhisattva Prajñā—“the mother of all the buddhas” (*T.* 1796.39:673c7–29). As Abé has noted, “Mahāvairocana, out of his compassion for those sentient beings to whom the Dharmakāya’s secret language of the three mysteries remains inaccessible, unveils it (tongue/language) as his ritual language for initiation into the garbha mandala...the mantra, then, is the mandala’s manifestation in sound.”<sup>47</sup>

Thus, *mudrā*, mantra, and mandala, first evolved in a variety of practices prior to the rise of esoteric Buddhism. Undergirded by Mahāyāna theories concerning the salvific actions of the body, speech, and minds of buddhas and bodhisattvas, esoteric Buddhism developed the “unified three secrets” as a ritual technology for producing buddhas, bodhisattvas, and new social bodies, and harnessing their power.

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<sup>47</sup> Abé 1999, 138.



Color plate 1. Garbhakoṣadhātu maṇḍala, Edo period, Private collection.



## 7. CENTRAL DIVINITIES IN THE ESOTERIC BUDDHIST PANTHEON IN CHINA

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

The Esoteric Buddhist pantheon in East Asia is on the one hand a reflection of Indian Buddhist developments, and on the other hand the result of local imagination. The formation of the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon in China, i.e., that which became codified during the second half of the Tang, was the result of a long process lasting at least three centuries. This development took place simultaneously with the gradual introduction of Esoteric Buddhist texts. The cults of certain divinities that came about at a later stage in the history of Chinese Buddhism, in particular those associated with the full-fledged Tantric Buddhist tradition, developed in the post-Tang period, but by and large the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon was in place by the end of the ninth century. Nevertheless, it is important to note that many of the divinities in the mainstream Buddhist pantheon were also shared by the Esoteric Buddhist tradition. Indeed, in many cases the context and type of ritual procedures used to worship or invoke these deities determine their exoteric or esoteric nature.

The cults of the most popular Esoteric Buddhist divinities during the Tang (618-905) are also reflected in religious art. Clearly, the iconic norms for the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon as set forth in its literature were followed more or less faithfully in the production of sculptures and votive paintings. Iconic differences and interpretations certainly existed, especially on the local level, but by and large it is possible to trace most of the major iconographical forms back to the written sources.

### *Buddhas*

Vairocana: Esoteric Buddhism, especially in its mature forms, including the Tantric phase, signals a significant shift in focus from Śākyamuni as the spiritual center of attention to his transcendental form, Vairocana, usually referred to in the primary texts such as the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, as “Great Sun” (figure 1).



Figure 1. Vairocana of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*. Illustration from traditional iconographical manual. Japanese line-drawing, late Heian period.

There is still some uncertainty as to when Vairocana first arose as a central divinity in Indian Buddhism, but clearly the visionary elaborations of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* played a major role in bringing about this shift.<sup>1</sup> Of course Śākyamuni is Vairocana, and Vairocana is Śākyamuni, in accordance with the doctrine concerning the “reward body” (*nirmānakāya*) and the “body of the Law” (*dharmakāya*), and what later was expanded and elaborated on in the teachings on the three bodies (*trikāya*). This development introduced an additional aspect of Śākyamuni, namely his “body of bliss” (*sambhogakāya*) as Rocana.

In brief, both Mahāvairocana and Rocana eventually superseded Śākyamuni in importance as primary buddhas in Esoteric Buddhism.

<sup>1</sup> The Vairocana of the *Avataṃsaka* is a cosmic buddha, a transcendent principle of enlightenment and creative energy onto whom the Esoteric Buddhist Vairocana was grafted. For a discussion of the former, see, for example, Howard 1986.

This change also signaled a shift away from the more earthly, semi-historical locations for the propagation of Buddhism to heavenly palaces and other transcendental *loci*, a development that can already be seen in the *Avataṃsaka*. There is no doubt that the iconic figure of Mahāvairocana in Esoteric Buddhism developed from the adorned Vairocana of the *Avataṃsaka* tradition. Hence, the description, definition, and function of Vairocana in Esoteric Buddhism are best illustrated when compared to the Vairocana of the *Avataṃsaka*. During the late Tang and post-Tang periods, the Vairocana of Esoteric Buddhism and of the Huayan tradition became fused iconographically, evidenced in the iconic forms from the Song, Liao, and Dali.<sup>2</sup>

While Vairocana was placed in the position as the primary object of cultic worship in the Esoteric Buddhist tradition during the Tang dynasty, the Śākyamuni figure took on a polyvalent character, appearing in a variety of transformations. However, he continued to be of considerable importance in his own right.

The “*dhyāni* buddhas”<sup>3</sup> are transcendental *dharmakāya* buddhas who first appear as a group in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*. They include Vairocana (center), Amitābha (west), Akṣobya (east), Ratnasambhava (south), and Amoghasiddhi (north). Of these buddhas, both Amitābha and Akṣobya had a pre-history as important divinities in the context of exoteric Buddhism before finding their place as representative figures of their respective *kula* in accordance with the lore of the five buddha families.<sup>4</sup> As the lord of Sukhāvati, the Western Paradise of Bliss, Amitābha was already a well-established deity in Mahāyāna Buddhism during the second century, while Akṣobya’s rise to fame and importance was cemented with his central appearance in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa sūtra* during the fifth century. The group of Five *dhyāni* buddhas with Vairocana at the center first appeared in China with the advent of Śubhākarasiṃha in Chang’an and the subsequent translation of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* during the early part of the Kaiyuan period (figure 2).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Lai 1999. See also Sørensen 2008, esp. 385–86.

<sup>3</sup> Although the term *dhyāni* buddha is not attested in pre-nineteenth century sources it is widely used in art historical discourse and I use it here for convenience.

<sup>4</sup> For a brief discussion of *kula* in Esoteric Buddhism, see Davidson, 2002a, 140–142.

<sup>5</sup> On the introduction of this scripture see Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang,” in this volume.



Figure 2. Dharmadhātu Mandala central assembly with group of Five Dhyāni Buddhas. Illustration from traditional iconographical manual. Based on a Japanese line-drawing of the Heian period.

Baiṣajyaguru: Essentially an exoteric divinity, this buddha was incorporated into the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon during the early Tang. However, the primary sūtras associated with his cult are not Esoteric Buddhist scriptures. Baiṣajyaguru is the primary healer in Mahāyāna Buddhism, and a number of ritual texts evolved around his cult during the mid-Tang with the rise of Zhenyan Buddhism.<sup>6</sup> His entourage of Twelve Yakṣa Generals, who control the Zodiac, adds an Esoteric Buddhist dimension as well as placing him in an astrological context.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. T. 922; 926.

Probably due to this fact, there was an iconographic conflation between images of Baiṣajyaguru and Tejaprabha (see below) during the late Tang. Baiṣajyaguru has enjoyed considerable popularity throughout the history of Central and East Asian Buddhism right up to the present day.<sup>7</sup>

Tejaprabha, Lord of the Constellations, occurs primarily in connection with the worship of the heavenly bodies over which he is considered the primary astral divinity in late Tang Buddhism and onward. He is usually depicted as a normal *nirmānakāya* buddha holding a golden Dharma wheel (*cakra*). His cult came about during the second half of the Tang and quickly became important, especially in connection with Esoteric Buddhist rituals performed on behalf of the court to protect against perceived ominous astral movements.<sup>8</sup> The importance of the Tejaprabha cult is reflected in banner paintings from Dunhuang and stone carvings from various locations in Sichuan. Iconographically, Tejaprabha reflects certain traits of the Vairocana of the Dharmadhātu Mandala and his representation may have its origins in Zhenyan iconic forms.

Maitreya, the Future Buddha, did not become a major divinity in the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon until relatively late. During the Ming the personified Chan 禪 form of Maitreya in the form of Budai 布袋 or Daduze 大肚子, probably due to his enormous popular appeal, was elevated to the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon. Images reflecting this development show Budai with a five-buddha crown. However, Maitreya first appears as a fully integrated Esoteric Buddhist divinity with his own cult and elaborate ritual program in the Sino-Tibetan and Sino-Mongol forms of Tantric Buddhism of the Ming and Qing periods.<sup>9</sup>

### *Bodhisattvas*

Avalokiteśvara stands out among the numerous bodhisattvas inhabiting the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon in East Asia as the single most important divinity, eclipsing even Vairocana in popularity and influence. His many forms have spawned cults in China, Korea, and Japan.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See Birnbaum 1979.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Sørensen, "Astrology and the Worship of the Planets in Esoteric Buddhism during the Tang," in this volume.

<sup>9</sup> For these forms of Esoteric Buddhism see Shen, "Tantric Buddhism in Ming China," in this volume.

<sup>10</sup> For a very useful survey of the scriptural sources on Avalokiteśvara in the context of Chinese Buddhism, see Yü 2001, 231–291. Note that Yü is not primarily concerned with the Esoteric Buddhist aspects of the Avalokiteśvara cult(s).

The Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, a popular aspect of the bodhisattva as the personification of great compassion (*dabei* 大悲), entered the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon in China toward the end of the seventh century.<sup>11</sup> This is one of the most important Esoteric Buddhist forms of Avalokiteśvara and its cult has endured in Chinese Buddhism since it was first introduced.<sup>12</sup> Numerous votive paintings and carved images testify to its importance.<sup>13</sup>

Ekādaśamukha, the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara (figure 3), is counted among the primary Esoteric Buddhist forms of Avalokiteśvara.<sup>14</sup> In China his cult can be traced back to the sixth century, but it did not appear to gain prominence until after Xuanzang's translation of the *Ekādaśamukha-dhāraṇī sūtra*<sup>15</sup> in the mid-seventh century. For reasons unknown, this cult declined during the second half of the ninth century and seems to have died out in China's central provinces before the rise of the Song.

The Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara (figure 4) form of Avalokiteśvara is one of the latecomers to the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon. The primary canonical scripture on his cult is the *Padmacintāmaṇi-dhāraṇī sūtra*, which exists in several translations.<sup>16</sup>

During the Tang, especially after the Zhenyan tradition was established in the twin capitals Chang'an and Luoyang, the cult of this form of Avalokiteśvara became widespread and very popular. Images dating from the eighth century have been found in Dunhuang and in several locations in Sichuan province.<sup>17</sup> A Buddhist talismanic tradition has become part of the Cintāmaṇicakra cult, a development that may have originated due to the presence of Great Dipper worship in at least one of the related scriptures.<sup>18</sup> After the Tang, the Cintāmaṇicakra cult disappeared.

<sup>11</sup> A detailed discussion of his cult and its history can be found in Reis-Habito 1993 and 1994. See also Reis-Habito 1991.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Yü Chün-fang 2001, 263–91.

<sup>13</sup> See Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Tang," "Esoteric Buddhist Art in China, 960–1279," and "Esoteric Buddhism Art under the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms," in this volume.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Sørensen 1991–1992b, 303–304.

<sup>15</sup> *T.* 1071. See also Grinstead 1994.

<sup>16</sup> *T.* 1080, *T.* 1081, *T.* 1082, *T.* 1083.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Sørensen 1991–1992b, 305–306. Jiajiang, Dazu, and Bazhong counties in Sichuan feature images of Cintāmaṇicakra.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *T.* 1091. Also see Robson, "Talismans in Chinese Esoteric Buddhism," in this volume.



Figure 3. Ekādaśamukha Avalokiteśvara. Line-drawing based on Japanese Heian image.



Figure 4. Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara. Line-drawing based on Japanese Heian image.



Amoghapāśa is a martial form of Avalokiteśvara, usually represented as a six-armed or sometimes eight-armed bodhisattva, with sword and lasso (*pāśa*) as his principal weapons. This form of Avalokiteśvara evidently developed from that of Ekādaśamukha.<sup>19</sup> His principal scripture is the *Amoghapāśa-kalparāja*,<sup>20</sup> of which the thirty-chapter version contains the most comprehensive ritual material on this aspect of Avalokiteśvara.<sup>21</sup> Numerous votive paintings of Amoghapāśa, all of the Zhenyan dispensation, have been recovered from the so-called “hidden library” in the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang.<sup>22</sup> The continued popularity of the Amoghapāśa cult well into the Southern Song is testified to in the Buddhist sculptures in Dazu, in which numerous images are found.

Hayagrīva, the Horse-headed One, is the primary, wrathful aspect of Avalokiteśvara in the form of a many-armed *vidyārāja* with the head of a horse in his crown (color plate 2).<sup>23</sup> His cult developed during the eighth century in connection with the introduction and establishment of institutionalized Esoteric Buddhism under Amoghavajra. There are no primary, canonical scriptures for his cult, only ritual texts,<sup>24</sup> which might indicate that the entry of this form of Avalokiteśvara into the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon took place in China. During the Song period, Hayagrīva was incorporated into the expanded group of ten *vidyārājas* that appear, among other places, at Baoding in Dazu.<sup>25</sup>

Tārā is a female emanation of Avalokiteśvara whose presence in Esoteric Buddhism can be traced back to the early sixth century.<sup>26</sup> In later Tantric Buddhism she appears in a variety of forms. She was worshipped in China during the Tang period, especially in her semi-wrathful form of Bhṛkuṭī. Although number of central scriptures

<sup>19</sup> See Reis-Habito 1999.

<sup>20</sup> An entire cycle of scriptures under this name exists in Chinese translation, the earliest dating from the Sui dynasty. Cf. *T.* 1092–1098.

<sup>21</sup> *T.* 1092. While the translation of this greatly inflated scripture is attributed to Bodhiruci, a sizeable portion of it was most probably produced in China. For more on Bodhiruci and this scripture see Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra (651–780),” in this volume.

<sup>22</sup> For examples, see Tokyo National Museum 1996, 216–18. See also Sørensen 1991–1992b, 306–308.

<sup>23</sup> For a classical study on this divinity, cf. van Gulik 1935.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *T.* 1072AB, 1074.

<sup>25</sup> For a description of this group, see Howard 2001, 56–61.

<sup>26</sup> See Shaw 2006, 306–356.



Color plate 2. Hayagrīva-Avalokiteśvara. Mt. Baoding, Dazu, Sichuan, thirteenth century. Photo by author.

pertaining to her cult were translated during the Northern Song, Tārā did not become truly important until the Yuan dynasty with the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism. At that time her cult was highly popular and widespread, especially in Northern China.

Cundī is a female, many-armed martial divinity who may have originated in India as an off-shoot of Tāra in the sixth–seventh centuries.<sup>27</sup> Although her cult—or more correctly, her spell—was introduced to China in the late seventh century, the majority of the primary scriptures, including many ritual texts, were translated and/or written

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Shaw 2006, 265–275.

during the second half of the Tang.<sup>28</sup> The earliest scripture devoted to her cult is the *Cundīdevī dhāraṇī sūtra* (佛說七俱胝佛母心大准提陀羅尼經)<sup>29</sup> translated by Divākara (613–687).<sup>30</sup> The Cundī cult became increasingly important during the Song period and many new ritual texts were composed in the following centuries. Cundī also gained considerable popularity in the neighboring Liao, Jin, and Koryō. In particular, recitation of her nine-character spell appears to have been widely practiced. In the post-Song period Cundī was widely seen as a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara. In contrast to many of the primary and secondary divinities in the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon, the Cundī cult continued to thrive well into the Qing period (figure 5).<sup>31</sup>

Originally a hero of the *Avatamsaka* tradition, Samantabhadra, together with Mañjuśrī, gradually rose to prominence within Esoteric Buddhism. He appears among the group of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in the Dharmadhātu Mandala. A many-armed manifestation that may have derived from the Chinese Zhenyan tradition is known from Heian sources as well. In the Esoteric Buddhist tradition associated with Amoghavajra, Vajrasattva (see below) is sometimes seen as a manifestation of Samantabhadra.<sup>32</sup> With the decline of orthodox Zhenyan iconography after the Tang, the Esoteric Buddhist Samantabhadra was again replaced by that of the Huayan tradition.

Vajrapāṇi is an important bodhisattva and polyform divinity that first entered the Chinese Buddhist pantheon during the Nanbeizhao period (420–589) as a minor guardian deity, or rather as a generic group of protectors (*jin'gang lishi* 金剛力士).<sup>33</sup> Vajrapāṇi's status was gradually elevated to that of a major bodhisattva and he eventually became associated with Esoteric Buddhism. Vajrapāṇi's rise to prominence is underscored by the fact that he has a significant, if not primary role, in Esoteric Buddhist literature as one of the major personas, serving as chief-interlocutor in many scriptures. Acala, the wrathful

<sup>28</sup> One of the earliest occurrences of Cundī in the Chinese material is in the *Zhongzhong zazhou jing* 種種雜咒經 (Scripture on Various Kinds of Spells) translated during the Northern Zhou. Cf. *T.* 1337.21: 639c. Later texts include *T.* 1075–1079.

<sup>29</sup> *T.* 1077.20:185a–86b. This sūtra is known to have been translated in 686 C.E. Cf. *T.* 1077.20:186b. See also the entry in *T.* 2153.55:379c.

<sup>30</sup> Given that Divākara's stay in Tang China lasted less than seven years, from 680–687 C.E., it is hard to imagine that he exerted extensive influence on the development of Esoteric Buddhism. See *FDC*, vol. 3, p. 2310bc.

<sup>31</sup> For a studies on the Cundī cult under the Ming, see Tada 1989 and 1990.

<sup>32</sup> See *T.* 1121–1124.

<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of the iconography of these protectors, see Soymié 1987.



Figure 5. Cundi. Frontispiece from Ming edition of the *Cundīdevī-dhāraṇī sūtra*.

manifestation of Vajrapāṇi, became extremely important with his own cult in the mature Zhenyan tradition of the second half of the Tang.<sup>34</sup> During and after the Yuan, the traditional Zhenyan representation of Vajrapāṇi was transformed into a wrathful protector-deity due to influence from Tibetan Tantric Buddhism. Vajrapāṇi is included in the group of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, a primary constellation of deities in Esoteric Buddhist literature.

Vajrasattva is an exclusively Esoteric Buddhist divinity whose *raison d'être* is closely associated with the formation and systematization of the esoteric tradition during the sixth–seventh centuries in Central and Eastern India (figure 6).

This bodhisattva represents “great bliss” (*mahāsukha*).<sup>35</sup> The Vajrasattva cult, in its mature Esoteric Buddhist form, was introduced to China by Amoghavajra in conjunction with the various texts related to the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*, and more specifically the so-called *Nayāprajñāparamitā* (Jpn. *Rishukyō* 理趣經), translated by Vajrabodhi.<sup>36</sup> Vajrasattva’s importance in Amoghavajra’s new formulation of Esoteric Buddhism is also testified to in his *Boruo boluomiduo liqu jing dale bukong sanmei zhenshi Jin’gangsaduo pusa deng yishi qi sheng da manchaluo yishu* 般若波羅蜜多理趣經大樂不空三昧真實金剛薩埵菩薩等一十七聖大曼荼羅義述 (Abbreviated Meaning of the Prajñāparamitā Scripture and the Great Blissful Amoghasamādhi of True Reality of Vajrasattva Bodhisattva and the Other Seventeen Holy and Great Mandalas), a commentary on the *Nayā prajñāparamitā*.<sup>37</sup> With the later introduction to China of the Indo-Tibetan form of Tantric Buddhism during the Yuan dynasty, Vajrasattva retained his preeminent position in the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon.

The bodhisattva Akāśagarbha, originally a hero of mainstream Mahāyāna Buddhism, was only later incorporated into the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon, mainly through the efforts of Śubhākarasiṃha and primarily through his *Xukongzang pusa nengman zhuyuan zuisheng*

<sup>34</sup> Primary scriptures are T. 1129, 1130 etc. See Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang,” and on Japanese transformations as Fudō, Dolce, “Taimitsu, the Esoteric Buddhism of the Tendai School,” and Sekimori, “Shugendō and Its Relationship with the Japanese Esoteric Sects,” in this volume.

<sup>35</sup> See Astley 1994b.

<sup>36</sup> For a study of this important text, see Astley-Kristensen 1991. A discussion of the cult of Vajrasattva can be found in Astley 1988.

<sup>37</sup> T. 1004. See Astley 1994a.



Figure 6. Vajrasattva image from Dunhuang, ninth century. Courtesy of the National Museum, New Delhi.

*xin tuoluoni qiuwen chifa* 虛空藏菩薩能滿諸願最勝心陀羅尼求聞持法. A group of Five Akāśgarbhas representing the Five Wisdoms of the Vajradhātu Mandala has its own *maṇḍala* and rituals, described in the *Wu da Xukongzang pusa suji dashen yan bimi shi jing* 五大虛空藏菩薩速疾大神驗祕密式經 (Scripture on the Five Great Akāśagarbha Bodhisattvas' Timely, Great Divine, and Secret Rite of Response)<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> T. 1149.

translated by Vajrabodhi. Amoghavajra later produced a translation of the *Saptabuddhaka*<sup>39</sup> in which Ākāśagarbha figures prominently. Further rituals involving him appeared in the *Da Xukongzang pusa niansong fa* 大虛空藏菩薩念誦法 (Method for Invoking the Great Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva).<sup>40</sup> The two Ākāśagarbha scriptures translated during the Northern Song are later and slightly extended variants of the Tang texts.<sup>41</sup>

Mañjuśrī is the embodiment of transcendental wisdom and a major bodhisattva in Mahāyāna Buddhism. As is the case with Avalokiteśvara, the cult of Mañjuśrī focuses on a variety of forms, of which only some are directly connected with Esoteric Buddhism. In the mid-Tang dynasty Amoghavajra translated and compiled an entire cycle of Mañjuśrī-related scriptures, many of which were based on the *Vajraśekhara* (figure 7).<sup>42</sup>

He also played a major role in promoting the cult of this bodhisattva at Mt. Wutai.<sup>43</sup> One of the important forms is the Thousand-armed Mañjuśrī, a purely Esoteric Buddhist creation, which is also found among the wall paintings in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang.<sup>44</sup> Early in the history of Chinese Buddhism, Mt. Wutai in northern Shanxi province became identified as the holy abode of Mañjuśrī. For centuries this group of mountains has been the primary focus of his cult, where both exoteric and the Esoteric Buddhist forms of Mañjuśrī, including those associated with Tibetan Tantrism, were fused into a single cult after the Yuan dynasty.

#### *Vidyārājas, Mahākrodhas, and Other Protectors of Esoteric Buddhism*

A wide variety of spirits and demon-protectors inhabit the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon. These figures originally developed from the multitude of malevolent spirits of the Hindu pantheon, the *yakṣas* and *rakṣāsas* that were believed to dwell in the wilderness and occasionally invade the human world. Over time, these demons were harnessed and brought under the control of Buddhism and reappeared in this

<sup>39</sup> T. 1333.

<sup>40</sup> T. 1146.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. T. 1147–1148.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. T. 1171–1172, T. 1171–1177A.

<sup>43</sup> See Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang,” and Lehnert, “Amoghavajra,” in this volume.

<sup>44</sup> See T. 1178AB.



Figure 7. Mañjuśrī as he appears in the Dharmadhātu Mandala. Line-drawing based on Japanese Heian image.



converted mode as *vidyārājas* (*mingwang* 明王) and *mahākrodhas* (*danu shenwang* 大怒神王). Many originated as personifications of spells. A list of the most important of these protectors in Esoteric Buddhism follows.

The Five Vidyārājas: Acala, Trailokyavijya, Ucchuṣma, Cundali, and Mahātejas This group of Esoteric Buddhist protector-generals, in effect three-headed and many-armed demons, became important after the arrival of Śubhakarasiṃha in Chang'an in 716 C.E. and they occur with great frequency in the scriptures of the Zhenyan tradition. Sculptures of some of these protectors have been found among the hoard of images from the ruined site of Anguo Temple in Xian. During the Tang dynasty, this group was expanded to eight, and again expanded to ten during the Northern Song.<sup>45</sup> These expansions seem to have occurred as historical developments in tandem with the arrival of new texts and translations into Chinese. In any case, the proliferation of demon-protectors and *mahākrodhas* is a marked characteristic of later Tantric Buddhism.

Acala is the wrathful aspect of the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi. This protector first occurs in the Chinese translation of the *Amoghapāsakalparāja* from 709 C.E.,<sup>46</sup> but his cult rose to prominence only with the advent of Zhenyan Buddhism during the mid-Tang (figure 8).

He occupies a rather prominent position in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* and it seems that this central scripture gave rise to the popularity of his cult. By Amoghavajra's time, Acala had become a leading figure in the group of the Five Vidyārājas associated with the Five Buddha Families. He is considered a manifestation of Vairocana. There are several texts of primary importance to the Acala cult translated or written by the Three Ācāryas.<sup>47</sup>

The most important of the several different iconographic forms of Acala is a darked-skinned demon seated on a stylized rock, holding a

<sup>45</sup> The group of eight *vidyārājas* came about in the mid-Tang, shortly after the basic group of five had been introduced during the early part of the eighth century. See Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Tang," in this volume. The group of ten *vidyārājas* occurs in the new translations of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures that took place under the early Northern Song toward the end of the tenth century. Cf., e.g., *T.* 891. A sculptural group consisting of ten *vidyārājas* can be found at Mt. Baoding in Dazu. For more on Esoteric Buddhism in the Southern Song see Copp, "Esoteric Buddhism in Song Sichuan," in this volume. During the Southern Song they occur in Zhipan's comprehensive Shuilu manual. Cf. *ZZ.* (1975–1989) 1497.77:791b, 795c.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *T.* 1092.20: 271b.

<sup>47</sup> This material includes *T.* 1200–1204.



Figure 8. Acala. Line-drawing based on Japanese Heian image.

sword and noose. Images of Acala are known from the hoard of Buddhist sculptures recovered from the site of Anguo Temple.<sup>48</sup> His cult spread well beyond the twin capitals of the Tang to Sichuan, where stone-carved images can still be seen at Pantuo Temple 盤陀寺 in Xionglai and Mt. Bei in Dazu.

Trailokyavijaya, Subduer of the Threefold Worlds, is a special manifestation of Vajrapāṇi as subduer and defeater of the enemies of Buddhism. He is characterized by his special *mudrā* of intertwined index fingers and an iconographical feature in which he is shown trampling on the Hindu gods Śiva and Pārvatī (figure 9).

This *vidyārāja*, a latecomer to the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon, rose as a primary divinity at a time of increasing tension between Buddhist and Śaivaite communities in India.<sup>49</sup> Several scriptures are associated with his cult, including the *Jin'gangding yuqie jiang sanshi chengjiu jishen mimen* 金剛頂瑜伽降三世成就極深密門 (Vajrasekhara-yoga's Very Highest and Secret Methods of Trailokyavijaya Siddhi)<sup>50</sup> and the *Jiang sanshi fennu mingwang niansong yigui* 降三世忿怒明王念誦儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for Invoking the Wrathful Vidyārāja Trailokyavijaya).<sup>51</sup> His importance is underscored by the fact that two entire mandalas are associated with him within the greater Vajradhātu Mandala, i.e. the Trailokyavijaya Mandala and the Trailokyavijaya-samaya Mandala. Trailokyavijaya is considered an emanation of Akṣobya.

Kuṇḍali is a major *vidyārāja* who first appears in China as Caṇḍali-Vajrakumara 軍吒利金剛童子 in the thirty fascicle-version of the *Amoghapāśakalpa-rāja*.<sup>52</sup> His subsequent elevation to cult status took place with the rise of the Zhenyan tradition in the mid-eighth century. Scriptures associated with his cult include the *Ganlu Yunchali pusa gongyang niansong chengjiu yigui* 甘露軍荼利菩薩供養念誦成就儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for attaining Siddhi by Making Offerings and Invoking Amṛta-Kuṇḍali Bodhisattva)<sup>53</sup> and the *Xifang tuoluoni zang zhong jin'gang zu amiliduo junzhali fa* 西方陀羅尼藏中金剛族阿蜜哩多軍吒利法 (Vajra Kuṇḍali Method Contained in the Indian

<sup>48</sup> For a discussion of these sculptures, see Bogel, "Tōji," this volume and 2010: 78–88. See also Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Tang," in this volume.

<sup>49</sup> See Linrothe 1990, 26–27, 151–59, 178–211. Note however, that his discussion is chiefly concerned with Tantric Buddhist developments in India and Tibet, which in most cases took place well after the introduction of Esoteric Buddhism to China.

<sup>50</sup> T. 1209.

<sup>51</sup> T. 1210.

<sup>52</sup> T. 1092.20:270c.

<sup>53</sup> T. 1211.



Figure 9. Trailokyavijaya. Line-drawing based on ninth century painting from Dunhuang. Courtesy of KAW.

*Dhāraṇī-piṭaka*).<sup>54</sup> Both are ritual works; the former belongs to the dispensation of Esoteric Buddhist texts associated with Amoghavajra, while the latter, a more comprehensive work, seems to post-date Amoghavajra. Kuṇḍalī is an emanation of Ratnasambhava and thus forms part of the Five Vidyārājas group.

Yamāntaka, Vanquisher of Death, is sometimes known as Mahātejas. This *vidyārāja* is usually depicted with multiple heads, arms, and legs

<sup>54</sup> T. 1212.

and is normally shown riding an ox.<sup>55</sup> His appearance in the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon took place rather late, probably during the seventh century; in China he is first encountered in connection with the translations and writings associated with the Three Ācāryas in the first half of the eighth century. The *Mahāvairocana sūtra* is one of the earliest sources for this divinity in China, and he appears as a major divinity in the rituals connected with the *Renwang jing*. Yamāntaka is an emanation of Amitābha, and as such is part of the original group of Five Vidyārājas. The Yamāntaka cult became greatly important after the Yuan dynasty with the introduction of Indo-Tibetan practices (figure 10).

Ucchuṣma, Lord of Filth, also known as Vajrayakṣa, is another highly important *vidyārāja* of mature Zhenyan Buddhism. He is seen as an emanation of Amoghasiddhī. His cult became established during the mid-Tang, but may have been introduced to China in some form as early as the sixth century.<sup>56</sup> There is an entire cycle of scriptures devoted to him.<sup>57</sup> This material also includes apocryphal and/or hybrid works that reveal some degree of borrowing from Daoist practices.<sup>58</sup> Despite the fact that the cult of Ucchuṣma was central to the Zhenyan tradition, it seems to have first been established through the efforts of the North Indian monk Ajitasena (fl. first half of eighth century).<sup>59</sup> Together with Kuṇḍalī, Ucchuṣma appears as the attendant of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara.<sup>60</sup> In the banner paintings from Dunhuang he is often referred to as “Fiery Head.” He is counted among the original group of Five Vidyārājas.

Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī, the Peacock Queen: From the beginning this bodhisattva arose as an Esoteric Buddhist divinity, and is also the oldest among in the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon. She is a deified spell—a spell that was transformed into a divinity—before arriving in

<sup>55</sup> For detailed information on the history and textual sources of this divinity, see the excellent essay by Duquenne 1983c.

<sup>56</sup> An image of a many-armed, wrathful protector, which may in fact be an early representation of Ucchuṣma, is found at the entrance of the Bingyang Cave at Longmen, dating from the late Northern Wei. Cf. Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhist Art up to the Tang,” in this volume.

<sup>57</sup> T. 1225–1229. See also Bischoff 1956.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. T. 1228–1229.

<sup>59</sup> Ajitasena hailed from Northern India, and is known in Chinese as Wunengshengjiang 無能勝將. He is the translator of several Esoteric Buddhist works, including T. 1227–1229, 1264–1266, 2157–2158.

<sup>60</sup> For a brief discussion, see Sørensen 1991–1992b, 312–316.

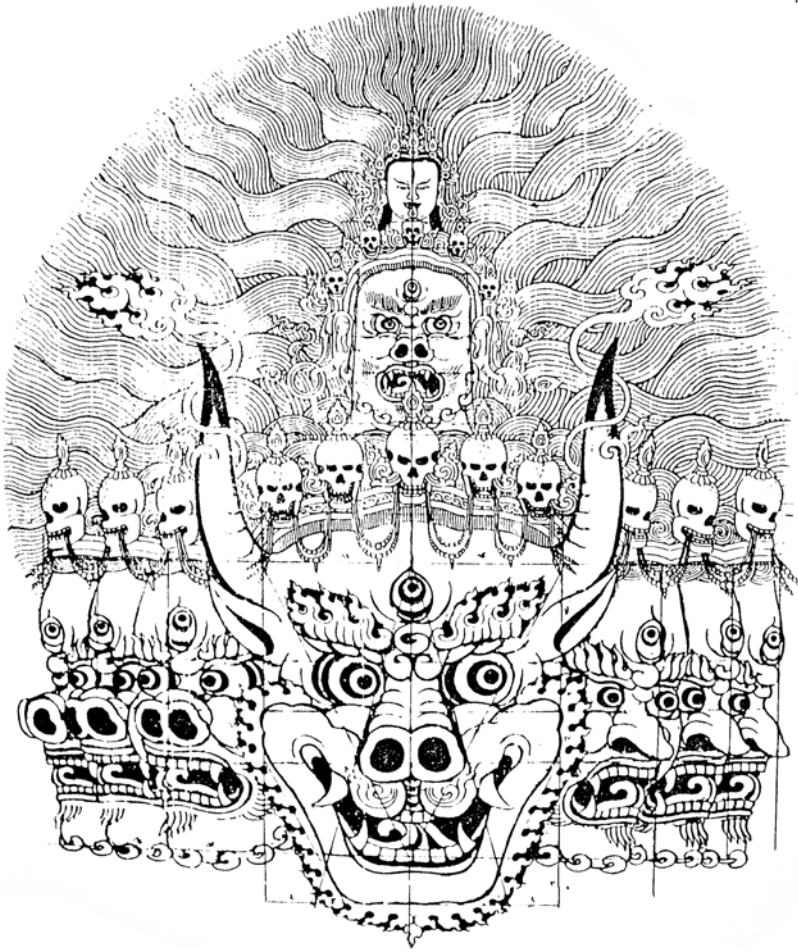


Figure 10. Tracing model for drawing images of Yamāntaka. Qing.

China. Surviving ritual scriptures in Chinese reveal that the cult was already present there during the late fourth century.<sup>61</sup> During the Tang dynasty, Mahāmāyūrī became a central deity in the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon of the Zhenyan tradition. The enduring importance and popularity of Mahāmāyūrī in the post-Tang period is evidenced by the Buddhist sculptures of Dazu dating from the Northern and Southern

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Sørensen 2006c.

Song (color plate 3), as well as in later Buddhist paintings and bronze images from the Ming.<sup>62</sup>

Sitātapatrā, the bodhisattva with the White Umbrella, is a semi-wrathful goddess also known as Aparājītā.<sup>63</sup> The origin of this female divinity goes back to Hinduism; however, within the context of Esoteric Buddhism, she is associated with the Tārā cult and by extension with Avalokiteśvara. It is interesting to note that Aparājītā appears in the earliest Chinese translation of the *Mahā Cundī dhāraṇī sūtra* as a bodhisattva.<sup>64</sup> The primary source for this female divinity in Tang Zhenyan Buddhism is the *Yiqie rulai Baisangai da guanding tuoluoni jing* 一切如來白傘蓋大佛頂陀羅尼經 (Sitātapatrā, Great *Buddhoṣṇīsa-dhāraṇī* Scripture),<sup>65</sup> translated by Amoghavajra toward the end of the eighth century. After the introduction to China of later Indo-Tibetan Tantric Buddhism, Sitātapatrā's cult became very important and continued in vogue until the end of the Qing dynasty.

Mahāpratisarā is a many-armed female divinity that, like Tārā, is iconographically related to Avalokiteśvara and his Esoteric Buddhist imagery. The primary scripture on this divinity is the *Mahāpratisarā-dhāraṇī sūtra*,<sup>66</sup> translated during the late seventh century. The cult of Mahāpratisarā rose to prominence due to the influence of Amoghavajra and his followers during the second half of the eighth century, in connection with rituals for the repentance of evil karma. In the early Song period Mahāpratisarā's cult became highly popular. A number of votive prints on paper, made for devotees to carry as personal talismans, date from this period.<sup>67</sup> In the Indo-Tibetan tradition, Mahāpratisarā is among the group of Five Female Divinities (Pañcarakṣa) that also include Mahāmayūrī, Mahāsahaśra-Pramardani, Mahāsativati, and Mahāmantranusarini. The goddess, in that form, was introduced to China during the Yuan period.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>62</sup> See Sørensen 1991.

<sup>63</sup> For detailed information on her cult in Indian Buddhism, see Shaw 2006, 289–290.

<sup>64</sup> See T. 1077.20:186a.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *Zhonghua dazang jing*, vol. 68. It is based on the engraved text found in the Fangshan Tripiṭaka. On the Fangshan finds see Sørensen, “Textual Material Relating to Esoteric Buddhism in China Outside the *Taishō*, vols. 18–21,” in this volume.

<sup>66</sup> For primary scriptures, cf. T. 1154–1156A.

<sup>67</sup> For a fine example from Dunhuang, see Whitfield and Farrer 1990, 106–107. See also Drège 1999–2000. For additional information on the iconography pertaining to this divinity, cf. Sørensen 1991–1992b, 295–298. For a study of the *Mahāpratisarā dhāraṇī*, see Copp, unpublished manuscript, Chapter Four.

<sup>68</sup> Frédéric 1995, 230.



Color plate 3. Stone sculpture of Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī. Mt. Shimen, Dazu, Sichuan, Southern Song, twelfth century. Photo by author.



Uṣṇīṣavijayā is a female divinity that originated as a spell or *dhāraṇī*. A latecomer to the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon, her cult comes to the fore only with the rise of Tantric Buddhism in India after the eighth century,<sup>69</sup> and became widespread under the Dali kingdom in Yunnan, especially in connection with funerary practices.<sup>70</sup> In the Xixia empire, under the influence of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism, Uṣṇīṣavijayā's cult became highly prominent and was absorbed into the imperial cult.<sup>71</sup> With the Mongol takeover in the thirteenth century, Uṣṇīṣavijayā eventually rose to prominence throughout China.

Āṭavaka/Dayuanshuai 阿吒婆拘/大元帥 (Great General) is a great *yakṣa* or demon general; for some reason his cult is not testified to in the Sanskrit or Tibetan Buddhist material. He appears for the first time in the context of Chinese Buddhism during the middle of the Nanbeichao period (late fifth century), and features prominently in the spell collection *Tuoluoni zaji*.<sup>72</sup> Not until the mid-Tang did Āṭavaka become a mainstream protector of Zhenyan Buddhism, and through this finds his way to the imperial court.<sup>73</sup> A sculptural example from the Five Dynasties period is known from Yuanjuedong in Anyue, Sichuan. He seems also to have been an important protector in the Dali kingdom of Yunnan, as he figures prominently in the Long Roll.

During the latter half of the Tang it became increasingly common for certain of the *vidyārājas* to be seen as emanations of leading buddhas and important bodhisattvas. During the Song dynasty this trend was canonized, and this doctrine is exemplified in sculptural group no. 22, depicting the Ten Vidyārājas, at Dafowan, Mt. Baoding in Dazu (color plate 4).<sup>74</sup>

### *Assimilated Hindu Gods and Other Spirits*

Various renderings of assimilated Hindu gods are among the earliest Esoteric Buddhist art found in China. In the early Esoteric Buddhist

<sup>69</sup> See Shaw 2006, 291–305.

<sup>70</sup> Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms (c. 800–1253),” in this volume.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Linrothe 1996 and 1998.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. *T.* 1336.21: 0628c14–631a3.

<sup>73</sup> See Duquenne 1983b. For a brief discussion, see also Sørensen 1991–1992b, 314–315.

<sup>74</sup> See Howard 2001, 59–61.



Color plate 4. The group of Ten *Vidyārājas* at Dafowan. Mt. Baoding, Dazu, Sichuan, thirteenth century. Photo by author.

material translated into Chinese, these divinities often appear as personified spells or *dhāraṇīs*. It is interesting to note that the iconic appearance of these Hindu gods and spirits in the form of sculptures and wall paintings follows closely translations of early Esoteric Buddhist texts from the fifth–sixth centuries. A work such as the *Tuoluoni zaji* 陀羅尼雜集 (Miscellaneous Collection of *Dhāraṇīs*)<sup>75</sup> features many spells associated with Hindu gods cast in the role of protectors of the *buddhadharma*. Many of the assimilated Hindu deities obviously underwent considerable transformation in the context of Esoteric Buddhism, and many became role models and templates for the creation of new Buddhist divinities. This is especially pronounced in the development of the wrathful deities populating the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> T. 1336.21:580c–637c.

<sup>76</sup> For an excellent study of these deities in the period after the eighth century, see Linrothe 1999.

Although the cult of Vaiśravaṇa and the Four Heavenly Kings is not directly associated with Esoteric Buddhism, that which developed around Vaiśravaṇa, King of the North, was chiefly practiced within an Esoteric Buddhist context (figure 11).<sup>77</sup> The Vaiśravaṇa cult attained great prominence during the mid- to late Tang, evident both in the surviving paintings from Dunhuang and in numerous sculptures found at many sites scattered throughout Sichuan.

Śiva-Maheśvara is one of the most important Hindu gods to be assimilated into the Buddhist pantheon.<sup>78</sup> In his wrathful forms he ranks among the primary wrathful protectors and continued to be of primary importance in the later Tantric Buddhist tradition as a role model for *yogis* and *siddhas*. His cult was introduced to China during the Nanbeichao period and related rituals can be found in the important *Tuoluoni zaji*.<sup>79</sup> Primary scriptures include the ritual texts *Moxishouluo tian fayao* 摩醯首羅天法要 (Essential Methods of the God Maheśvara)<sup>80</sup> and the *Moxishouluo dazizai tianwang shentong huasheng jiyi tiannü niansong fa* 摩醯首羅大自在天王神通化生伎藝天女念誦法 (Methods for Invoking Maheśvara, the Great Self-Existing King's Magical Transformation of Śrīdevī).<sup>81</sup> Mahākāla, Yamāntaka (Mahābhairava), and other wrathful deities inhabiting the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon are ultimately derived from the various martial forms of Śiva.

Mahākāla, the Black Lord, is originally a manifestation of Śiva.<sup>82</sup> He sometimes appears under the name Kapila. This many-armed, multi-headed demon-king is one of the most popular wrathful protectors in Esoteric Buddhism, though the popularity of his cult did not come about until the second half of the Tang with the advent of Zhenyan Buddhism (figure 12).

His main scripture is the ritual text *Da Heitian shen fa* 大黑天神法 (Methods of the Great Dark God).<sup>83</sup> He also appears among the

<sup>77</sup> This development is represented by works such as *T.* 1247, *T.* 1248, and *T.* 1250.

<sup>78</sup> For the leading article on this important Esoteric Buddhist divinity, including a detailed discussion of the related iconography, see Iyanaga 1983.

<sup>79</sup> *T.* 1336.

<sup>80</sup> *T.* 1279.

<sup>81</sup> *T.* 1280.

<sup>82</sup> See the detailed study by Iyanaga 1994.

<sup>83</sup> *T.* 1287.



Figure 11. Stone sculpture of Vaiśravaṇa. Mt. Bei, Dazu, Sichuan, Tang, ninth century. Photo by author.



Figure 12. Mahākāla. Line-drawing based on Japanese Heian image.

secondary divinities in the Dharmadhātu Mandala. In the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms the Mahākāla cult in was elevated to the status of a national cult. A special four-armed form, the so-called Brahma-Mahākāla, was worshiped in tandem with Vaiśravaṇa.<sup>84</sup> After the Yuan, the popularity of Mahākāla was revived in the new form according to the Indo-Tibetan pantheon, and as such his cult continued to the end of the Qing dynasty.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms (c. 800–1253),” in this volume.

<sup>85</sup> See Wang 1994.

Māricī, Goddess of War.<sup>86</sup> During the Tang this goddess appears in two major forms: as a standing, multi-armed martial form, and as a seated, peaceful form holding a fan. The importance of her cult is also reflected in paintings at Dunhuang from the ninth–tenth centuries and in stone sculptures from Sichuan dating to the early Southern Song (figure 13).<sup>87</sup>

During the Ming dynasty the figure of Māricī became merged with the Daoist astral divinity Doumu 斗母, while in the Sino-Tibetan tradition of Buddhist art she is depicted as a wrathful divinity, usually as one of the *pañcarakṣa*.<sup>88</sup>

Hārītī, Mother of Demon Children. The cult of this important female demon (*yakṣāsi*) as a distinct figure in the Mahāyāna Buddhist pantheon predates the formation of Esoteric Buddhism as such. She is depicted as a full-figured woman surrounded by several small children. Hārītī occurs with increasingly frequency in the context of Esoteric Buddhism from the early Tang onward. Her chief scriptures are the *Foshuo Guizimu jing* 佛說鬼子母經 (Scripture on the Mother of Demon Children),<sup>89</sup> the *Helidimu zhenyan jing* 訶利帝母真言經 (Scripture on the Hārītī Mantras),<sup>90</sup> and the ritual text *Da yaocha nu huanxi mu bing aizi chengjiu fa* 大藥叉女歡喜母并愛子成就法 (Methods for Accomplishing Siddhi of the Great Yakṣāsi, Happy Mother Who Loves Her Children).<sup>91</sup> The former is a basic *dhāraṇī sūtra* recounting the story of the Buddha's conversion of the child-devouring ogress Hārītī, while the latter two texts belong to Amoghavajra's dispensation of mature Zhenyan-type texts. The last is a purely ritual work. Textual material relating to the Hārītī cult has also been found at Dunhuang. Sculptural examples from the late Tang and Song can be found in Dazu in Sichuan, testifying to the widespread popularity of her cult in medieval China.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Hall 1989. For the Indian side of this deity, see Shaw 2006, 203–223.

<sup>87</sup> See Suchan 2003, 311–325.

<sup>88</sup> For a discussion of Daoist adaptations, including of Māricī, see Capitanio, “Esoteric Buddhist Elements in Daoist Ritual Manuals of the Song, Yuan, and Ming,” in this volume.

<sup>89</sup> T. 1262.

<sup>90</sup> T. 1261.

<sup>91</sup> T. 1260.

<sup>92</sup> See Suchan 2003, 325–336.



Figure 13. Stone sculpture of Mārīcī. Mt. Bei, Dazu, Sichuan, Tang, twelfth century. Photo by author.

Shensha 深沙, King of Ghosts.<sup>93</sup> One of the earliest occurrences of Shensha in the Chinese sources is in the apocryphal *Moniluotan jing* 摩尼羅剎經 (Maniratna Scripture), in which he is described simply as a demon (*gui* 鬼).<sup>94</sup> Shensha was later included among the sixteen protector spirits of the *Māhāprajñāpāramitā sūtra*, a group of demon-generals that is said to eliminate all kinds of problems.<sup>95</sup> He is sometimes considered a transformation of Avalokiteśvara. His cult gained in popularity after being reintroduced by Xuanzang upon his return from India in the 660s C.E.<sup>96</sup> Later in the Tang, the Shensha cult was popularized by Amoghavajra (figure 14).<sup>97</sup>

Examples of the standard iconography relating to his cult from the Tang were later transmitted to Japan during the Heian period. Sculptural examples are known from Dazu in Sichuan dating from the Five Dynasties period on.

Vināyaka (Gaṇapati, Gaṇeśa), the elephant-headed son of Śiva. The earliest known depiction of this important Esoteric Buddhist god in China is in a wall painting in cave no. 285 in the Mogao caves at Dunhuang. Here he has the role of Dharma protector, similar to that accorded the Four Heavenly Kings.<sup>98</sup> Later, during the Tang, Vināyaka occurs as a major Esoteric Buddhist divinity that can bestow *siddhi* or supernatural powers (figure 15).<sup>99</sup>

At the same time, he can also be found in representations of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, depicted as a minor spirit together with the boar-headed Cāmuṇḍā, representing obstructive and harmful forces. Iconographic representations of this type, of which many examples can be seen in the Dunhuang banner paintings, show the pair as under the control of the *vidyārājas* Ucchuṣma and Kuṇḍali.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Cf. *MDJ*, vol. 3, pp. 1280c–1b.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. *T.* 1393.21:910c.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. *T.* 1293.

<sup>96</sup> See *T.* 2163.55:1070c.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. *Shensha dajiang yigui* 深沙大將儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for the Great general Shensha), *T.* 1291.21:376b–77a.

<sup>98</sup> Smet 1988. See also Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhist Art up to the Tang,” in this volume.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. *T.* 1269, *T.* 1270 etc. See also Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism and Magic in China,” in this volume. For additional information on Vināyaka icons and iconography, see Sanford 1991b, and Kabanoff 1994.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. *Zhongguo bihua quanji bianji weiyuanhui*, ed. 1989, pls. 198–99.





Figure 14. Shensha. Line-drawing based on Japanese Heian image.



Figure 15. Vināyaka. Sino-Tibetan print. Qing.

Jāṅgulī, the Jungle Woman: This violent female figure is among the more peculiar forms of Avalokiteśvara.<sup>101</sup> As a female divinity, she is the embodiment of a *yoginī*, a female ascetic and non-monastic practitioner of Esoteric Buddhism. In mature Esoteric Buddhism, and later in the Tantric Buddhist tradition, she becomes identified with Mātāṅgī. The latter appears together with Jāṅgulī as a protector and demoness in the *dhāraṇī* chapter of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkā sūtra*.<sup>102</sup> Mātāṅgī also enjoys a career as a spell-holder in the *Sārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, commonly known as the *Mātāṅgī sūtra*,<sup>103</sup> and later in a more sinister role as seductress of Buddha's disciple Ānanda in the *Pseudo-Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (*Shoulengyan jing* 首楞嚴經).<sup>104</sup>

Kārttikeya, originally one of Śiva's sons according to the Hindu tradition, was incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon during the first centuries C.E. He is usually depicted as a many-armed child wielding a variety of weapons and riding a hybrid peacock. In China we first encounter him in a late fifth-century relief in the Yungang Caves 雲崗洞 near Datong, Shanxi.<sup>105</sup> He surfaces again in the mid-Tang as part of the elaborate Esoteric Buddhist iconography of the Zhenyan tradition in connection with the Dharmadhātu Mandala, but nevertheless remains a relatively minor figure.<sup>106</sup> Images from Dunhuang are also known.

At some point, possibly in China, Kārttikeya and Skanda-Kumāra merged into one figure. After the Tang he reappears in the form of the young heavenly general Skanda/Weituo 韋陀. When and how Kārttikeya's transformation from a martial child to a Chinese-style general occurred is not clear, but it was probably not until well into the Song period.<sup>107</sup> Images in the form of frontispieces for printed Buddhist books show Skanda as a youthful warrior clad in the heavy armor of a general with a winged helmet, holding a mace. Later, during the Ming dynasty, Weituo became the primary guardian and protector

<sup>101</sup> This female divinity is discussed in great detail in Strickmann 2002, 151–156. See also Shaw 2006, 224–233.

<sup>102</sup> T. 262.9:59a.

<sup>103</sup> T. 1300.

<sup>104</sup> T. 945.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhist Art up to the Tang," in this volume.

<sup>106</sup> See Mukherjee 1987.

<sup>107</sup> Frédéric 1992, 266–267.

of Buddhist temples and images of him are usually placed in or near temple gates together with images of the Four Heavenly Kings.<sup>108</sup>

Śrīmahādevī or Lakṣmī/Pārvatī, wife of Śiva, first appears in a Buddhist context in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa sūtra*. In China her cult developed gradually prior to the Tang, but did not attain popularity until the Kaiyuan period. At this time, she was transformed from her originally peaceful form to a more martial aspect.<sup>109</sup> The two main scriptures for her cult in this later period are the *Mahāśrī sūtra*<sup>110</sup> and the *Śrīmahādevī-vyākaraṇa*,<sup>111</sup> both of which are said to have been translated by Amoghavajra. She is also found as a minor divinity in the Dharmadhātu Mandala.

Yama, Lord of Death: The netherworld in medieval Chinese Buddhism represents a whole realm of its own, reflecting a cultural compromise between Indian Buddhist beliefs and those of the receiving culture. Hence, the accepted version of the netherworld during the Tang was a subterranean realm, a dark copy of our own world, lorded over by Yama, originally an Indian god who had been recast in the role of a Chinese judge and magistrate.

Sometime before the Tang, probably as a result of the lengthy and complex intercultural process through which Buddhism became a Chinese religion, the cult of Yama with its associated lore of the hells was mixed with local Chinese beliefs concerning Mt. Tai 太山 as the gate to the netherworld.<sup>112</sup> This resulted in a cultural compromise in which the Buddhist hells and the traditional Chinese images of the netherworld were conflated. By the second half of the Tang, a group of ten judges or kings, including Yama and his nine fellow judges, and an array of demonic assistants were in place to operate the netherworld.<sup>113</sup> Even so, in classical Zhenyan Buddhism of the mid-Tang (and later in Japanese Shingon), Yama retains his more obvious Indian form and function, evidenced by the iconography associated with the Dharmadhātu Mandala (figure 16).

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Shanxisheng Bowuguan, comp. 1988.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Ludvik 1999–2000.

<sup>110</sup> T. 1252.

<sup>111</sup> T. 1253.

<sup>112</sup> For a discussion of this phenomenon in the context of Esoteric Buddhism, see Osabe 1971a. Additional data may also be had from Gjertson 1989.

<sup>113</sup> See Teiser 1994.



Figure 16. Yama. Line-drawing based on Japanese Heian image.

*Astral Divinities*

Astral divinities, including the gods associated with heavenly bodies, were present in the Buddhist pantheon from early on in the history of Chinese Buddhism. However, they became important enough to appear as individual divinities with separate cultic status only at a later date. We first encounter them in the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon in the Tang.

Sudṛṣṭi (Miaojian 妙見) is an astral bodhisattva believed to reside in the Northern Polar Star, who controls the gods of the Great Dipper. Although this important astral god would appear to have an Indian identity, he exists in a variety of forms, some of which were evidently created in Heian Japan after the ninth century. The presence of Sudṛṣṭi in China can be documented as far back as the middle of the Nanbeizhao, but no icons from this early period have yet been identified.<sup>114</sup> While the sources testify to the existence of a Sudṛṣṭi cult during the second half of the Tang, it is most fully documented in Japanese ritual manuals as well as in surviving paintings from the late Heian period (figure 17).<sup>115</sup>

Planetary gods are the personified deities of Mars, Venus, Saturn, Jupiter, and Mercury. The orthodox Zhenyan tradition has transmitted the iconographical forms of these divinities, which reflect a curious blend of traditional Indian and Chinese imagery (or perhaps, more correctly, Indian imagery in Chinese interpretation).<sup>116</sup> Primary scriptures are the *Qiyao xingchen bixing fa* 七曜星辰別行法 (Alternative Practice of the Seven Luminaries and Planets) and the *Suyao yigui* 宿曜儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings of the Constellations).<sup>117</sup> Both involve divination and are attributed to Śubhākarasiṃha's famous Chinese disciple, Yixing.<sup>118</sup> The seven planetary gods, including the sun and moon, are depicted as astral officials in Tejaprabha's entourage in banner paintings from Dunhuang.

<sup>114</sup> See *T.* 1336.21:588ab.

<sup>115</sup> For additional information on this divinity, see Sørensen, "Astrology and the Worship of the Planets in Esoteric Buddhism during the Tang," in this volume.

<sup>116</sup> Sørensen, "Astrology and the Worship of the Planets in Esoteric Buddhism during the Tang," in this volume. For images of the Five Planets, see Little, Eichman, et al. 2000, 132–37.

<sup>117</sup> *T.* 1308–1309.

<sup>118</sup> See Keyworth, "Yixing," in this volume.



Figure 17. Sudṛṣṭi/Miaojian. Line-drawing based on Japanese Heian image.

Gods of the Great Dipper: Although they were of secondary importance, worship of the Great Dipper was one of the most important cults in East Asia; it was believed that the lifespans and destinies of sentient beings were controlled by the gods residing in this constellation. The primary scripture is the apocryphal *Beidou qixing yanming jing* 北斗七星延命經 (Scripture on the Seven Stars in the Northern Dipper and the Extension of Life).<sup>119</sup> These seven astral divinities, one for each star, are usually rendered as Chinese government officials and their iconography is closer to that of Daoist gods.<sup>120</sup> In Esoteric Bud-

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *T.* 1307. Other relevant scriptures include *T.* 1305–1306, *T.* 1310.

<sup>120</sup> See also Sørensen 1995c.

dhism it is common for higher divinities, such as buddhas or bodhisattvas, to be in control of these seven minor god-officials.

The Gods of the Twenty-eight Constellations are minor yet important gods, both positive and malignant forces, whose influence is connected with the moon's phases. In the forms that have been transmitted to the present, they are portrayed in a curious mix of Indian (or non-Chinese) and Chinese imagery.<sup>121</sup> These astral gods/spirits do not have scriptures of their own but are discussed (and depicted) in Yixing's *Qiyao xingchen biexing fa*.

### *The Esoteric Buddhist Pantheon under the Yuan and Ming*

During the Yuan and Ming, the Chinese Buddhist pantheon was transformed and expanded under the influence of Xixia 西夏 and Tibetan Buddhist art. In addition to the introduction and adaptation of the iconographical vocabulary of traditional Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese Buddhist artists began to modify and adapt these new influences to fit their own cultural needs. In practice this meant that a variety of new images were created, some with a completely new iconography, others with modified forms and attributes, as well as a large number of hybrid forms reflecting cultural compromise between the indigenous pantheon of Esoteric Buddhism and the new imported divinities.

During the Ming many sets of paintings were created to serve as icons for the *Shuilu* rituals 水陸齋 that were becoming increasingly popular all over China.<sup>122</sup> Several of these sets of paintings, usually thirty-five pieces to a set (in some cases fewer or more), have survived in more or less complete state. The finest is a set painted for the court of the Yongle Emperor (r. 1403–1424).<sup>123</sup> The *Shuilu* paintings feature what was then seen as the entire Buddhist pantheon—both exoteric and esoteric divinities—and includes major iconic topics of Esoteric Buddhism, such as the five *dhyāni* buddhas as part of a group of nine buddhas,<sup>124</sup> the Ten Vidyārājas,<sup>125</sup> the Eightfold Group of Gods and

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Little, Eichman, et al. 2000, 132–137. See also *T.* 1309.21:452a–57a.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Stevenson 2001.

<sup>123</sup> These are now part of the collection of the Musée Guimet in Paris. See Gyss-Vermande 1988.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Shanxisheng Bowuguan, comp. 1988, pls. 1–9.

<sup>125</sup> Shanxisheng Bowuguan, comp. 1988, pls. 21–31.



Nāgas,<sup>126</sup> and the Five Plague Spirits,<sup>127</sup> as well as the whole array of astral and elemental gods and spirits. Several of the paintings reflect a strong influence from the Daoist pantheon and related cosmology.<sup>128</sup>

In the course of the Yuan and Ming we also see an increasing conflation and integration of the Buddhist and Daoist pantheons. Moreover, their expanding pantheons indicate that the two traditions borrowed rather freely from each other. While the various sets of *Shuilu* paintings from the Ming and early Qing feature the best examples of this hybrid development, other examples include visions of the torments of netherworld and paintings with composite pantheons.

The ritual of feeding the hungry ghosts (*yankou zhai* 焰口齋), which originated in its orthodox form with Amoghavajra's translation of the *Yuqie jiyao jiu Anan tuoluoni yankou guiyi jing* 瑜伽集要救阿難陀羅尼焰口軌儀經 (Scripture of the Collected Essentials of the Yoga of Ānanda's Spell for Liberating Burning Mouth with Ritual Proceedings)<sup>129</sup> during the second half of the eighth century, also developed its own iconography. This resulted in sets of paintings depicting the process of ritual feeding that later became integrated with the so-called Ullambana ritual, with which the *yankou zhai* was conceptually affiliated.<sup>130</sup> Interestingly, the Daoists adopted the structure and concepts of this ritual and its related iconography from Esoteric Buddhism and created their own version with a largely similar iconography.<sup>131</sup>

On the popular level, the Buddhist and Daoist pantheons became increasingly syncretic, with many deities losing their original identities and contexts. Examples include the conflation of the Mārīci and

<sup>126</sup> Shanxisheng Bowuguan, comp. 1988, pl. 41.

<sup>127</sup> Shanxisheng Bowuguan, comp. 1988, pl. 147.

<sup>128</sup> Such as the presence of Xuanwu 玄武, the Warrior of the North (Shanxisheng Bowuguan, comp. 1988, pl. 78), the Sanyuan 三元, the three gods controlling the Water Department (Shanxisheng Bowuguan, comp. 1988, pls. 120–21), the Nine Niangniang 九娘娘 (Shanxisheng Bowuguan, comp. 1988, pls. 98–99), the Spirits Controlling the Taboos of the Year (Shanxisheng Bowuguan, comp. 1988, pls. 130–31) and Months, famous Daoist masters of the past (Shanxisheng Bowuguan, comp. 1988, pl. 157), etc.

<sup>129</sup> T. 1318. On Amoghavajra's rituals see Orzech, 1994a, 1996b, 2002, and Lye, 2003.

<sup>130</sup> See Teiser 1988b.

<sup>131</sup> For two examples of a Daoist painting relating to the *yankou zhai*, cf. *Zhongguo daojiao xiehui*, ed. 1995, 130–131.

Doumu 斗母 cults, mentioned above, and that of Vaiśravaṇa and Marshal Li Jing 李靖大將.<sup>132</sup>

*The Sino-Tibetan Pantheon*

Although Chinese Buddhists first came into contact with Tantric Buddhist art in Central Asia and Shazhou 沙州 (Dunhuang) during the period of the Tibetan occupation of the western parts of the Tang empire from 781–848 C.E., it appears that the formation of the Sino-Tibetan Buddhist pantheon took place under the Tanguts at the beginning of the eleventh century.<sup>133</sup> The cult of the personified Uṣṇīṣavijāya spell was a prominent feature in the territories controlled by the Xixia.<sup>134</sup> However, the divinities of the Tibetan Tantric Buddhist pantheon were introduced to the central provinces on a massive scale at the time of the Mongol invasions of China in the thirteenth century.<sup>135</sup>

Among the chief monuments that reflect the early presence of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon in Yuan China are the many sculptural groups carved in the rock formation known as Feilai Feng 飛來峰 at West Lake 西湖 in Hangzhou, dating from the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>136</sup> Nearly all of these images conform to Buddhist iconography typical of the Indo-Tibetan pantheon. While many divinities of the Tibetan Tantric Buddhist pantheon were known to the Chinese, they met them here in new and more strange forms.<sup>137</sup> New divinities, and old divinities in new forms, included Tārā, Vajrapāṇi/Acala, Jambala (Caishen 財神), Vajradhāra, Mahākāla,<sup>138</sup> and deified Tantric masters such as Padmasambhava, among others.

During the first century of the Ming, Esoteric Buddhism in its Tibetan Tantric form continued to be in vogue. Close relations existed between important lineage-holders of different sects and the Ming

<sup>132</sup> It is interesting to observe that both gods appear separately in the Shuilu sets of paintings, even though they overlap in function as protectors.

<sup>133</sup> For a useful overview of the Tangut representation of the Buddhist pantheon, cf. Piotrovsky, ed. 1993. See also the review of this book by Sørensen 1994b.

<sup>134</sup> For information on the cult of Uṣṇīṣavijāya under the Xixia, see Linrothe 1996 and 1988.

<sup>135</sup> See Shen, “Tibetan Buddhism in Mongol-Yuan China (1206–1368),” and Schmid, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Provinces: Dunhuang and Central Asia,” in this volume.

<sup>136</sup> See Li 1998, 94–109.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Karmay 1975, 21–71.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Wang 1994.

emperors, and the cults of many Tantric Buddhist cults were introduced at this time.<sup>139</sup>

Due to the great importance accorded Buddhist clerics in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the reformation of Esoteric Buddhism under the Ming and later under the Qing meant that portraits and votive images of important lamas, such as the Karmapas of the Kagyud-pa, and Tsongkapa and the lineage of Dalai Lamas of the Gelugs-pa, came to be venerated as divinities in Chinese Buddhist temples, primarily in the western and northern parts of the empire.<sup>140</sup>

With the rise of the Manchus and with them the Mongols, a new wave of Sino-Tibetan art became the dominant mode of expressing Esoteric Buddhist imagery under the Qing.<sup>141</sup> This last phase of Tantric Buddhism in China reflects the characteristics of the Mongolian Buddhist pantheon. This is most clearly seen in the works of Zanabazar (1635–1723) and the successors in his school.<sup>142</sup> Due to the influence of Mongolian Buddhism, a few new divinities were added to the Buddhist pantheon, including a number of nature spirits as well as the important demon-protector Begtse.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> The spread of the Tibetan Tantric pantheon in China during the early Ming is reflected in the surviving Buddhist art from this period. Cf. Watt and Leidy 2005, 61–101. See also Karmay 1975, 72–97; Berger 2001. See also Shen, “Tantric Buddhism in Ming China,” in this volume.

<sup>140</sup> For a discussion of one such temple, see Hammond 2001.

<sup>141</sup> Three iconographical manuals of the Qing Lamaist pantheon can be found in Zi Yi, 2001. Another important source is the *Foshuo caoxiang liangdu jing jie* 佛說造像量度經解 (An Explanation of the Scripture on Measurements for the Making of Buddhist Images), T. 1419. For additional information on the Qing Lamaist pantheon, see Lipton 1996. Contrary to the title of this book, *Treasures of Tibetan Art*, the majority of the Buddhist images and paintings in this collection are in fact of Manchu provenance and were produced in Qing China or in Inner Mongolia.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Berger and Bartholomew 1995, 261–304. See also Fontein, et al. 1999, 70–89.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Berger and Bartholomew 1995, 207–60.

## 8. HOMA

Richard K. Payne and Charles D. Orzech

### *Overview and Structure*

In addition to understanding the doctrinal bases upon which the esoteric traditions of Buddhism developed, we also need to know what they were doing—that is, what practices they employed that serve to delineate the esoteric forms of Buddhism. Indeed, some scholars have argued that for the most part tantric doctrine was not unique, and that it was the tantric ritual technology that demarcates the tradition (Sharf 2002). The idea of esoteric Buddhism comprising a set of cults employing related ritual practices is useful in this regard, using the technical meaning of the term “cult” and not its popular, derogatory connotation.

Aside from the use of rituals such as *homa* in esoteric cults, ritual practices per se have their own history, the study of which can provide an important complement to doctrinal and art historical approaches of scholarship on the history of tantra. Rituals are very slow to change and thus provide a different temporal horizon. While the cult of some particular deity might arise and pass away in a relatively short time, practices such as *homa* are more continuous over time. In order to more deeply understand processes of religious change and adaptation, therefore, the history of ritual can provide an understanding of one of the most stable elements in those processes.

Because *homa* is found across the tantric world (for example, see Brunner-Lachaux 1963), it provides an important tool by which comparative studies may be advanced. Given the similarities in the performance of *homa*, it also challenges how sectarian boundaries are defined. What does it mean to say that Hindu and Buddhist tantra are different, if they employ the same practices? While Western religious studies focus almost exclusively on beliefs as markers of distinct religious identities, this presumption is based on the unique historical development of Western religious studies. More generally, although ritual studies require further development as an historical discipline, they have the potential to add further nuance to our understanding of history. In just the same way that art history provides additional

nance to more traditional approaches, such as doctrinal and biographical studies, an historical ritual studies approach can reveal aspects of the tradition otherwise obscured.

*Homa* is a votive offering made in an act of exchange with a deity, and it is clearly identifiable by the use of fire, personified as the deity Agni, as the vehicle for making such votive offerings. The ritual use of fire and the symbolism of Agni as consumer and conveyor of offerings to the gods links *homa* to its origins in Vedic ritual culture. It can, however, be traced even further back to the ritual practices of Indo-European peoples more generally (Payne 2002). Based on Vedic ritual, practices such as *homa* were adapted to tantric contexts (Samuel 2008).

Although other systems are known, the most fully developed categorization of types of *homa* rituals is fivefold (*wuzhongfa*; *goshuhō* 五種法). *Sāntika* (*xizaiifa*; *sokusaihō* 息災法) is employed for protection; *pauṣṭika* (*zengyifa*; *sōyakuho* 增益法) for prosperity; *aṅkuśa* (*gouzhaofa*; *kōchōhō* 鉤召法) for captivating; *vaśīkaraṇa* (*jingaiifa*; *keiaiho* 敬愛法) for gaining love and respect; and *abhicāraka* (*zhoufufa*; *jōbukuhō* 調伏法) for subjugating adversaries. Each of these five kinds is to be performed employing different colors, hearth shapes, and times of day, and descriptions of the pertinent details are a frequent element in tantric ritual texts.<sup>1</sup> Each is also distinguished by the seed syllable, *bīja mantra*, appended to the mantras used in the different *homa*. For example, a *homa* for protection will have mantra ending in the *bija svāhā*, while the mantra employed in a *homa* for prosperity end with *namaḥ* (Payne 2005b).

As a form of ritual technology, *homa* can be adapted for any number of different cults, performed with different deities as the chief deity (*benzun*; *honzon* 本尊). There are instances of *homa* devoted to figures known throughout the Buddhist tantric world, such as Acalanatha Vidyārāja (Fudō Myōō 不動明王), also known as Candamahāroṣana, as well more local cult figures such as Kūkai.<sup>2</sup> The extent of this adaptability is evidenced by a modern *homa* devoted to Jesus (Payne 2010).

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Amoghavajra's *Regulations for Homa for Vajra Pinnacle Yoga* (*Jin'gang ding yuqie humo yigui* 金剛頂瑜伽護摩儀軌, T. 908).

<sup>2</sup> See Tinsley, "Kūkai and the Development of Shingon Buddhism," in this volume.

*Homa* is also employed in several different contexts. It is, for example, the culminating ritual in the contemporary training of Shingon and Tendai priests.<sup>3</sup> While in Japan it is frequently performed as a “stand alone” ritual, it is perhaps more frequently found elsewhere as part of a larger ceremonial complex (Bentor 1997; Beyer 1978).

*Homa* rituals from the time of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra onward (mid-eighth century) can be analyzed in terms of the following elements: purification, construction, encounter, identification, and dissociation (Payne 1991, 89). In purification, the practitioner cleanses his/her body, speech, and mind. Construction is the ritual creation of the altar as a purified enclosed space into which buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other members of their retinues may be evoked. Encounter occurs when the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and their retinues arrive in the ritual enclosure. Ritual identification is the moment in the ritual when the practitioner visualizes him/herself as the chief deity, a practice central to much—though not all—of esoteric Buddhism. The body, speech, and mind of the practitioner are made identical to those of the chief deity through the performance of *mudrā*, mantra, and *samādhi*.

This is followed by sets of offerings that can vary in number depending on the complexity of the ritual being performed. These can be as few as two, to Agni and the chief deity, though at least in the contemporary Shingon tradition there are typically five sets of offerings: to Agni, to the Lord of the Assembly, to the Chief Deity, to the Various Deities (the five tathāgatas, together with the “Deity who Extinguishes Evil Destinies”), and to the Worldly Deities (Vedic and astral deities). The identity of the Lord of the Assembly varies depending on the Chief Deity of the ritual.

The structuring of *homa* reflects the ways rituals were organized in Mahāyāna generally, as well as in esoteric Buddhism. One kind of organization found in Buddhist ritual is *sādhana*, “typically a mixture of evocation and visualization overlaying a classical Mahāyāna liturgy” (Gómez 2004, 525). One such classic Mahāyāna liturgy is the *saptavidhā-anuttarapūjā*, the “sevenfold supreme worship.” *Pūjā* constitutes one of the most enduring organizing principles of Indian ritual: the offering of a gift—“the gesture of making an offering to a deity or esteemed person and in return receiving a blessing” (Flood

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<sup>3</sup> See Payne, “The Fofold Training in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism,” in this volume.

2003, 6–7). The seven elements of the *saptavidhā-anuttarapūjā* are praise (*vandanā*), worship (*pūjanā*), confession (*deśanā*), rejoicing (*modanā*), requesting the teaching (*adhyeṣanā*), begging the buddhas to remain (*yācanā*), and transfer of merit (*nāmanā*) (Crosby and Skilton 1995, 10; cf. Yönten 1996).

Crosby and Skilton note that the *anuttarapūjā* “was flexible, even to the extent of having less or possibly more than its classical seven parts” (1995, 10). Bruce Williams’s examination of repentance rituals reveals that

Within this overall ritual pattern there exists, however, a bewildering diversity [of] composition, structure, and language. This diversity within an overall pattern testifies not only to the popularity and geographic and social dispersal of the basic ritual form but to its cohesion and tenacity as well (Williams 2002, 185).

For example, particularly important within the Tiantai tradition was a “five-limbed” *pūjā* (*Wuhui* 五悔) (Williams 2002, 156). The five limbs—“repentance, requesting the Buddhas to teach, rejoicing in the merits of others, transferring merit, and professing vows” (Williams 2002, 185)—provided the basis for repentance rites in medieval China. Elizabeth English (2002, 124) has examined thirteen different ritual texts, showing the overlaps and the existence of nine, and in one case ten, ritual elements. As mentioned above, the study of ritual texts at this level of detail offers the opportunity to uncover another kind of history of Buddhism, a history of Buddhist practice, which can shed important light on the history of Buddhist doctrine.

#### *Homa as seen in Chinese Translations and Manuals*

Our best access to the development of a distinctively Buddhist *homa* is through Chinese translations.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the amount of material available (excluding the many Japanese manuals) is extensive.

True votive *homa* to specific deities emerges in the sixth century. Before that time Chinese translations reflect the ritual use of fire in an apotropaic fashion, or as Michel Strickmann wryly observed, as “pious fumigation” (Strickmann 1983, 412).<sup>5</sup> Votive *homa* first clearly

<sup>4</sup> For studies, surveys, bibliography, and a more detailed coverage, the reader should consult Strickmann 1983 and 1996. For a Japanese historical work, see Kamei 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Strickmann 1983, 412. Saṅghabara’s early sixth-century translation of the *Mahāmāyūrī sūtra* (*Kongquewang zhou jing* 孔雀王咒經, T. 984) involves precisely this sort of “fumigation” to expel demons. See T. 984.19:459a.

appears in the sixth century *Avalokiteśvaraikādaśamukhadhāraṇī* (*sūtra*) of Yaśogupta (*Shiyimian guanshiyin shenzhou jing* 十一面觀世音神呪經, T. 1070) dating from 561–578. A more substantial description appears in Atikūta's *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 or *Collection of Coded Instructions* (*Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha sūtra*, T. 901) of 654.<sup>6</sup> Here Agni functions as the messenger of the rite, first enthroned in the hearth and transmitting offerings to buddhas, bodhisattvas, Vajra beings, and *devas*.<sup>7</sup> Less than half a century later, Bodhiruci's translation of the *Scripture of the Cakravartin of the Single Word of the Buddha's Crown* (*Ekākṣara-uṣṇīṣa-cakravartin*; *Yizi foding lunwang jing* 一字佛頂輪王經, T. 951) in 709 C.E. contains a long segment titled "Homa altar" (*humo tan*; *goma dan* 護摩壇), which forms the final section of this extensive compendium.<sup>8</sup> This is the first text that gives extensive instruction on performance and accoutrements and classifies *homa* into three types with differently shaped altars: *śāntika* for pacification (*anyin fa* 安隱法 T. 951.19:262a13), *pauṣṭika* for prosperity (*qiu dafeng rao zhu cheng shan fa* 求大豐饒諸眾善法 T. 951.19:262b3), and *abhicāraka* for subjugation (*zhoufu ta fa* 調伏他法 T. 951.19:262b21).<sup>9</sup> This makes clear that by the very beginning of the eighth century *homa* had become a highly developed, semiotically sophisticated ritual system and had taken on the form that was to be carried throughout East Asia.

Not more than a decade later the same system was evident in even greater detail in new translations by Śubhākarasiṃha. The translation of the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* (*Da Piluzhe'na cheng fo shenbian jiachi jing* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經, T. 848, hereafter *MVS*) in 724 and the production of its massive *Commentary* (*Da Piluzhe'na cheng fo jing shu* 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏, T. 1796) with the aid of Yixing, and the 726 translation of the *Susiddhikāramahātantra-saddhanopāyikā-ṣaṭṭala* (*Suxidi jieluo jing* 蘇悉地揭羅經, T. 893) describing the same three types of *homa* and with encyclopedic information

<sup>6</sup> For more on this text, see Orzech, "Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūta to Amoghavajra (651–780)," in this volume.

<sup>7</sup> T. 901.18:879c25–880a6.

<sup>8</sup> T. 951.19:261c16–263b3. This is the first appearance of the term *humo* 護摩, though it also calls the rite *huotan fa* 火壇法.

<sup>9</sup> Details of an *abhicāraka* rite (*apizhelujia fa* 阿毘柁嚧迦法, T. 952.19:272c6), including a triangular altar, the officiant facing south in a hostile crouch, etc., in what would become classical marks of the rite, are found in Bodhiruci's *Wu foding san mei tuoluoni jing* 五佛頂三昧陀羅尼經 (T. 952.19:272c11–12), translated sometime between 693 and 706.



on ritual times, implements, supplies, and performance, set the basic pattern for all subsequent *homa* ritual in East Asia.

*Homa* as presented in the *MVS* is set within a theological justification for the appropriation of fire rituals by Buddhists. Chapter twenty-seven of the sixth fascicle of the *MVS* propounds a genealogy of Agni traced through forty-four “generations,” many of which are “fires” for specific kinds of events, such as conceptions, weddings, and so on.<sup>10</sup> This serves to establish Agni’s lineage before the Buddha’s enlightenment. Once enlightened, the Buddha now sets out twelve fires for the accomplishment of various aims. Yet these fire offerings, even when carried out with punctilious piety, are merely “exterior.” True *homa* has a simultaneous interior aspect “which eradicates all karma.”<sup>11</sup> In other words, just as the *Upaniṣads* had appropriated and internalized the Vedic fire as the *tapas* of the yogi, now esoteric Buddhism, while preserving the external rite, also drew a parallel to the internal eradication of defilements.<sup>12</sup> Thus, *homa* could be a vehicle for enlightenment. In the words of Yixing, “*Homa* is the fire of the Tathagata’s wisdom. It is able to incinerate the karmic connections that produce all misfortunes.”<sup>13</sup> Giving eloquent voice to the entailments of the inner/outer metaphor, a text attributed to Vajrabodhi states, in the “adamantine inner *homa*... total enlightenment is the flame and my own mouth is the hearth.”<sup>14</sup>

It is clear that the system embodied in the *MVS* and the *Susid-dhikara* was not the only one propounded in South Asia. Not long after the arrival of Śubhākarasiṃha in the Tang court, Vajrabodhi and his disciple Amoghavajra also arrived. Almost immediately Vajrabodhi set out to translate an abbreviated form of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* (*STTS*), which is based on a five-buddha family model rather than the three-buddha family model found in the *MVS* and the *Susid-dhikara*.<sup>15</sup> In line with this fivefold taxonomy, we see the emergence

<sup>10</sup> The section on “Worldly and Transcendent *Homa*” is rendered as a *gāthā* in parallel lines of five characters each. For these “worldly” fires, see *T.* 848.18:43a7–b12; the discussion in Strickmann 1989, 417–18; and the translation in Hodge 2003, 381–90.

<sup>11</sup> *T.* 848.18:44a1: *fuzi nei humo miequ yu yeh sheng* 復次內護摩 滅除於業生.

<sup>12</sup> For the classic statement of the yogic transformation of the Vedic fire, see the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad, 2:12: “No sickness, no old age, no death has he who has obtained a body made out of the fire of Yoga.” Hume 1921, 398.

<sup>13</sup> *T.* 1796.39:662b7–8.

<sup>14</sup> *T.* 867.18:266a20.

<sup>15</sup> The text is the *Scripture Outlining Recitations and Contemplations of the Yoga of the Peak of the Vajra* (*Jin’gangding yuqie zhong lue qu nian song jing* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經, *T.* 866).

of an expanded taxonomy of *homa*. Thus, in another of Vajrabodhi's putative translations, the *Jin'gang fenglouge yiqie yujia yuqi jing* (金剛峰樓閣一切瑜伽瑜祇經, T. 867) we see an expansion to four kinds of *homa*: protection (*xizai* 息災), prosperity (*zengyi* 增益), gaining love (*aijing* 愛敬), and subjugation (*xiangfu* 降伏).<sup>16</sup> All five kinds of rites (*fa* 法) are mentioned late in the text, though they are not explicitly identified as five kinds of *homa*.<sup>17</sup>

The *locus classicus* for the fivefold taxonomy of *homa* is Amoghavajra's *Regulations for Homa for Vajra Pinnacle Yoga (Jin'gangding yuqie humo yigui* 金剛頂瑜伽護摩儀軌, T. 908) In which he says

As for the five kinds of *homa*, each has many different variants. [There are those for] protection and prosperity, the third is for subjugation, captivation is the fourth, and the fifth is for gaining love.<sup>18</sup>

Given the likely date of this text to the second half of the eighth century, we can infer that the fivefold taxonomy of *homa* was intimately tied to the emergence of the *STTS* and its system of practice in the latter part of the seventh century. Yet the five types of *homa* are not always explicitly mentioned. For instance, Faquan's *Jianli mantuoluo humo yigui* (建立曼荼羅護摩儀軌, T. 912), dating to the mid-ninth century, repeats the same four as Vajrabodhi's text mentioned above (T. 867), in a series: "protection and prosperity, gaining love, subjugation, etc.," but also mentions captivation (*gouzhao* 鉤召), though in a different passage, so perhaps the "etc." indicated the fifth type.<sup>19</sup>

The chaos marking the end of the Tang dynasty at the beginning of the tenth century also signaled a dearth of translation and production of esoteric (and other) texts. But the renewal of large-scale government-supported translation activities in the early Northern Song dynasty during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries saw the introduction of numerous esoteric texts—some new and some retranslations or more complete translations of earlier efforts, such as Dānapāla's full

<sup>16</sup> T. 867.18:256a10–11. Captivation (*gouzhao* 鉤召) is mentioned separately at T. 867.18:254c01, and its relationship to *homa* is not made explicit.

<sup>17</sup> T. 867.18:269b29–c6.

<sup>18</sup> T. 908.18:916a17–19. Oddly, Amoghavajra's *Guhyantra (Ruixingyeh jing* 羶咽耶經, T. 897) with its extensive discussion of *homa* techniques, uses the threefold scheme of protection, prosperity, and subjugation. See T. 897.18:770b6. The text is also known as the *Juxitandaluo jing* 瞿醯壇怛囉.

<sup>19</sup> T. 912.18:930b20–21. The mention of captivation is at 931b18. This text was acquired by Ennin and was supposedly compiled by Faquan but, as with all such texts, the provenance is not yet verified.

translation of the *STTS*.<sup>20</sup> Devaśāntika's *Yiqie rulai da bimiwang wei zeng yu zuishang weimiao da mannaluo jing* (一切如來大祕密王未曾有最上微妙大曼拏羅經, *T.* 889) in 986–987 has a fairly extensive treatment of *homa*, and continues the fourfold taxonomy of protection, prosperity, gaining love, and subjugation, along with the now standard discussion of shapes of the hearth, colors, proper *mudrās*, and so on.<sup>21</sup> Once again it is notable that in the discussion “captivation” is not explicitly treated as a distinctive *homa* and is grouped with the other four. Dharmabhadra's translation of the *Māyājālamahātāntra* (*Fo shuo yuqie dajiaowang jing* 佛說瑜伽大教王經, *T.* 890) executed during the same period contains a lengthy discussion of *homa*, proper *bījas*, and so on, but it too shows a fourfold taxonomy, here broken into two categories: rites for protection, prosperity, and gaining love, and a rite for subjugation.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The translation was executed between 1012 and 1015. For a discussion of these translation efforts see Orzech, “Translation of Tantras and Other Esoteric Buddhist Scriptures,” in this volume.

<sup>21</sup> *T.* 889.18:545a25–b1.

<sup>22</sup> *T.* 890.18:581b09–11. In each case, caption shows up in other discussions but is not entered into the lists of “types of *homa*.” See, for instance, *T.* 890.18:559c28–29, where it is listed with the smashing of demons, *abhiṣeka*, etc; the list does not contain the four *homās*. It also shows up in captivating females, *T.* 890.18:571b14, 571b26, etc.

## 9. VISUALIZATION AND CONTEMPLATION

Paul Copp

Visualization and eidetic contemplation practices within esoteric Buddhism in East Asia constitute a vast and complex subject, and one that is as yet not fully understood.<sup>1</sup> At the most basic level, the practices discussed in this essay center on the eidetic contemplation of an object—an image of a divine figure in personified or symbolic form, or any of a variety of other potent images—where that act is central to a ritual program described as leading to a higher state of being, consciousness, or understanding.

Certain styles of (and frames for) eidetic contemplation are usually said to be central to the esoteric tradition as a whole, particularly when they are understood as the activities named by the third of the tradition's emblematic “three mysteries” of body, speech, and mind. These three, which are re-workings of the much older model of the “three modes of action” (*sanye* 三業), are in the esoteric tradition the means by which (and the media *in* which) spiritual realities are made manifest in the person of the practitioner: in the corporeal body as postures (*mudrās*, etc.), in speech as incantations (mantras, *dhāraṇīs*, etc.), and in the mind as carefully cultivated images. Perhaps simply because they are easier to describe and depict in texts and paintings, historians are much clearer on the natures of the first two “mysteries” in premodern esoteric Buddhism. Postures are described and depicted in surviving sources, often with great clarity; and the syllables of incantations are written out, with elements of their pronunciations often nuanced in appended ritual directions.

When it comes to the mystery of “mind”—the mental operations engaged in within ritual—however, the scholar of premodern esoteric practice faces, as Robert H. Sharf has noted, a host of “complex epistemological problems.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the scholar is usually presented with only a single word, which most often features the element 觀, pronounced

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<sup>1</sup> In my use of the term “eidetic contemplation” I follow Bogel 2009 and Sponberg 1986.

<sup>2</sup> Sharf 2001, 153.

in Mandarin Chinese as *guan* (Jpn. *kan*, Kor. *gwan*). This graph has a range of referents in Buddhist writings, including meditative discernment or analysis, insight, eidetic contemplation of an image or other object, mental envisioning, or simple imagining. In technical doctrinal writings—and Tiantai writings are usually privileged here, though such uses of *guan* are hardly limited to them—the term centers on the first two meanings in this list. Accordingly, in these contexts it is commonly translated as “discernment,” the “seeing” of the true nature of existence: that it is “empty,” “ungraspable,” “evanescent as foam,” etc. In most cases, this basic sense of *guan* is maintained in esoteric usages—a point that is not always sufficiently understood.

In part for this reason, esoteric practices of contemplative imagination should be understood as distinct from (but related to) Buddhist accounts of the attainment of mystic visions. Descriptions of such visions—of all the buddhas of the multiverse arrayed before one’s eyes, to use a prominent example—have long been central to the Buddhist imagination.<sup>3</sup> They are found as well in a range of texts connected with esoteric traditions, from early *dhāraṇī* scriptures to the ritual manuals of later traditions. Indeed, Mahāyāna and esoteric Buddhist literatures are notably marked by descriptions of the vastness and luminosity of the cosmos that astound the imagination. Closely related to these visionary accounts are paintings in shrines and temples of the infinite array of buddhas said to fill the cosmos, or of dazzling pure lands and mythscapes, such as those found in many of the cave-shrines of Mogao, near Dunhuang.

Such discursive accounts and visual art reaffirm the profoundly visual and visionary character of Buddhism, a character expressed equally in writing, art, and architecture. They also affirm the great soteriological potency the tradition attributes to certain forms of seeing.<sup>4</sup> These elements of Buddhist visual culture and textual imagination are related to practices of eidetic contemplation, in the narrow sense that I understand them in this essay, in that both reproduce potent divine presences in the form of images. Indeed, the reproduction of such potent

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<sup>3</sup> For an excellent discussion of accounts of such phenomena in China, see Birnbaum 2004.

<sup>4</sup> For illuminative discussions of Buddhist visualization and seeing in Buddhism that find greater areas of overlap with visualization practices than are acknowledged in this essay, see (for example) Bogel 2009, especially 189–205; Wang 2007; and Yieng-pruksawan 2004.

presences, and the directing of the merit produced thereby, is a central part of Buddhist rituals of nearly every sort.

The key difference between the two general sets of practices—visions and visual culture on the one hand and rigorous eidetic contemplations on the other—is that the latter are components of ritual programs explicitly directed toward personal transformation and/or particular conceptual understanding. For an example of the first sort, the ritual transformation of the person of the adept into the contemplated divinity, we may reference a famous passage from Yixing's early eighth-century commentary on the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*. In this ritual prescription, the practitioner is directed to engage in a meditative sequence anchored in the eidetic contemplation of a painted image:

When the practitioner first cultivates the skillful means of the contemplation (*guan* 觀) of the supermundane he begins by contemplating the principal deity. Relying on a painted image (*yi huaxiang* 依畫像), he contemplates thoroughly. At first he attains illumination with eyes closed; later, gradually opening his eyes he perceives [the deity and the deity becomes] fully manifest and illumined without any obscurity.<sup>5</sup>

Next, the practitioner is to deepen his contemplation until he attains first the “stage of nonduality,” then the stage of “the apprehension of the non-distinction between the middle and the extremes,” and then a state characterized by the “mark of absolute equality.”<sup>6</sup> Having attained this last state, he begins a process whereby he ritually transforms his own body into that of the divinity (*zishen wei benzun* 自身為本尊). This transformation is effected through a ritual process involving the placing of mantras and mantric syllables, in the imagination and perhaps physically as well, upon the body of the divinity, who is now both spiritually (that is, eidetically) and physically present to the practitioner as a result of the first stage of the contemplation.<sup>7</sup>

The states of meditative awareness that are said to be attained along the way to this personal deification are themselves at times the goal of the respective eidetic contemplation practice. Indeed, though rites of deity-identification were new additions to the Buddhist repertoire brought in with the esoteric tradition, these more insight-oriented practices were already very old in Buddhism when the newer

<sup>5</sup> *Da Piluzhena chengfo jing shu* 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏, Yixing 一行 (684–727), *T.* 1796.39:695b. Translation in Sharf 2001, 156 (slightly modified).

<sup>6</sup> *T.* 1796.39: 695b.

<sup>7</sup> *Da Piluzhena chengfo jing shu*, *T.* 1796.39:695c.

traditions arrived. The use of props—such as the “painted image” from the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* visualization—were important parts of such rituals, a fact that demonstrates, among other things, the deep continuities carried forward in the newer esoteric practices. We can note, for example, the ways that later *dhāraṇī* and tantric forms of eidetic contemplation centering on visualized disks were updated versions of the ancient use of “earth disks” as props for the development of a form of eidetic memory necessary for certain kinds of meditation.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, the use of written syllables as objects of contemplation has a long history in *dhāraṇī* practice—including, in later tantric forms of these practices, their imagined inscription and transformation upon visualized disks. In the earliest examples, in texts such as the early third-century Chinese translation of the *Anantamukha-dhāraṇī sūtra*, the late third-century Chinese version of the *Bhadrakalpika sūtra*, and the early fifth-century Chinese rendering of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, such practices seem mainly to have been directed at the attainment of subtle understanding, typically of the “emptiness” or “ungraspability” of phenomena.<sup>9</sup>

We often find precisely the same goals in the later tantric versions. For example, the Japanese Shingon sub-rite called the “contemplation of the syllable-wheel” (*jirinkan* 字輪觀) is a version of a widespread and very old practice in which one visualizes a “full moon disk” above an eight-petaled white lotus blossom. “On top of the disk are the syllables *on ha ra da han domei un*, along with each syllable’s meaning.” The practitioner is to “contemplate 觀 [the disk] rotating once clockwise and once counter-clockwise.” Contemplations of the visualized movement of the syllables in these two directions produce different liberative insights into the ungraspable nature of the syllables and, by extension, of the nature of all things.<sup>10</sup>

To end on a note of caution, the scholar of premodern East Asian esoteric Buddhist writings should keep in mind Sharf’s ethnographic observations that, at least in contemporary Japanese Shingon ritual

<sup>8</sup> Sharf 2001, 154–55.

<sup>9</sup> *Foshuo wuliangmen weimichi jing* 佛說無量門微密持經, T. 1011.19:681b; *Xianjie jing* 賢劫經, T. 425.14:4c-5a; *Pusa dichu lun* 菩薩地持論, T. 1581.30:934a. For brief discussions of these early practices, see also Copp, “*Dhāraṇī* Scriptures,” in this volume, as well as Copp 2008, 499ff. For a more extended discussion, see my forthcoming book on Chinese Buddhist incantation practice, *Incantatory Bodies: Spells and Material Efficacy in Chinese Buddhist Practice, 600–1000*. See also Bogel 2009, 204–205; Sharf 2001, 184.

<sup>10</sup> Sharf 2001, 184.

practice, priests most commonly simply *recite* the prescriptions of the ritual manuals rather than take the time to carry out the rites prescribed within them. Based upon this observation, Sharf suggests that the “visualizations” actually carried out in these modern rites resemble more closely the envisioning that occurs when one reads a novel, for example, than the more careful and programmatic sort of eidetic contemplation described in the manuals and commentaries.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Sharf 2001, 166.



## 10. STŪPAS AND RELICS IN ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

Charles D. Orzech and Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

The veneration of relics (*śarīra*, Ch. 舍利) occupy a special place in Buddhism, as it does in many religious traditions. In early Buddhism, the cremated remains of Śākyamuni, and later of important monks, were placed in tower-like structures variously referred to as *stūpas* (Ch. *ta* 塔), *caityas*, or *dagobas*. These monuments were understood both as physical manifestations of the Buddha's body and as symbols of his Dharma or teaching. In the centuries following the *parinirvāṇa* of Śākyamuni, the erection and worship of these monuments became part of mainstream Buddhist practice.<sup>1</sup>

Buddhist traditions distinguish different types of relics. There are relics that are assumed to be the corporal remnants (*śarīrika-ceityaṃ*; Ch. 舍利 or 設利) of the Buddha or of an eminent follower or monk; there are objects that bear the traces of the Buddha's activities or "objects of use" (*pāribhogika-ceityaṃ*), usually items such as his bowl or robe; temples or symbols tied to the specific place where the activity took place (such as the bodhi tree at Bodhgaya or images of the Buddha's footprints in stone, such as those found at Gandhara, Amaravati, and elsewhere); and there are "reminders" (*uddeśika-ceityaṃ*) or objects thought to be imbued with special significance, particularly images.<sup>2</sup> Objects of use quite frequently included the Buddha's Dharma—his pronouncements in scripture and *dhāraṇī*—and in East

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<sup>1</sup> See *Thūpavamsa* (1971). Trainor 1997 summarizes the current scholarly debates on early Buddhist relic and *stūpa* worship. See esp. pp. 45–65. Strong 2004 is the most thorough treatment of the topic. Finally, Trainor and Germano 2004 collects seven essays produced for the Relic Seminar of the American Academy of Religion.

<sup>2</sup> See Huntington 1990, 405. A version of this taxonomy first appears in the *Kālinga-bodhi Jātaka*. See Trainor 1997, 26 n. 33. Ruppert 2000, 5 has a good discussion of this taxonomy and its sources but note that he has reversed the terms *pāribhogika* and *uddeśika*. For an analysis of Buddhist relics as well as their role in modern scholarship see Sharf 1999, 75–99.

Asia these are often found enshrined in *stūpas* and depicted in images or inscribed on pillars.<sup>3</sup>

The earliest canonical description of the use of a *stūpa* is found in the *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* and concerns the internment and worship of the Buddha's relics in a *stūpa*.<sup>4</sup> The worship of *stūpas* has been a central feature of Mahāyāna Buddhism from the time of its inception during the second century BCE. Some scholars even hold the cultic origin of Mahāyāna to have been intimately linked with *stūpa* worship.<sup>5</sup> The primary mode of worshipping *stūpas* is clockwise circumambulation (Skr. *pradakṣiṇa*), which was later extended by the practice of installing buddha images in them as well as relics of various kinds, scriptures, *dhāraṇīs* and mementos.<sup>6</sup>

In East Asia these practices were taken over from early on and became primary modes for expressing veneration and devotion in Buddhism. The veneration of relics and the creation of *stūpa* reliquaries is intimately tied to the creation and maintenance of religious, social, political, and economic relationships throughout South and East Asia.<sup>7</sup>

Relics and *stūpas* played a key role in the propagation of the Buddhist teaching in South and East Asia. Accounts of the introduction, spread, and influence of Buddhism in China, Korea, and Japan repeatedly testify to the importance of the presence of the "true body" (Ch. *zhenshen* 真身), or actual body of the Buddha, and of its extensions in iconography and architecture for worshippers of all backgrounds and social classes, right into the present.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For these *dhāraṇī* or sūtra pillars (tuoluoni jingchuang 陀羅尼經幢) see note 11, below.

<sup>4</sup> For scholarship on this text, complexities of its dating, and its importance as a paradigm for Buddhist worship see Trainor 1997, 45–54.

<sup>5</sup> For material on the Mahāyāna worship of *stūpas*, see Handurukande 2000. See also Hirakawa 1990, 270–74. For a critique of Hirakawa's theory see Schopen 1975, 147–181; reprinted in Schopen, 2005, 25–62.

<sup>6</sup> The predominant custom is to circumambulate in a clockwise direction, with one's right sholder nearest to the object of veneration, though Jain and Bon practitioners circumambulate in the counterclockwise direction. Yijing appears to argue that the proper direction is not necessarily to the right. His argument is decidedly obscure and open to interpretation, and Takakusu's translation is of little help. For Yijing's original, see T. 2125.54:225b17–b29. Takakusu's attempt to make sense of the original is in I-tsing 1896, 141–142.

<sup>7</sup> For an analysis and bibliography on this, see Ruppert 2000, 16–42.

<sup>8</sup> See, for instance, Ruppert 2000 and Aptilon, "Goddess Genealogy: Nyoirin Kannon in the Ono Shingon Tradition," in this volume. Wang 2004, 79–118 takes up the topic of the "true body."

East Asian, and especially Chinese, traditions concerning relics of the Buddha are linked to tales of Emperor Aśoka's construction of 84,000 *śarīra*-containing *stūpas* and the "rediscovery" of these in China.<sup>9</sup> Many rulers and members of the upper classes in Chinese society showed their devotion in public by having a *stūpa* and its Chinese counterpart, the pagoda, constructed.<sup>10</sup> Related buildings are the storied pavilions (Ch. *louge* 樓閣) that also served as repositories for relics and other holy objects. *Stūpas* and pagodas were eventually connected with the geomantic tradition (*fengshui* 風水), and erecting them was commonly believed to enhance the local energy or vitality of a given place.<sup>11</sup>

One may distinguish between a *stūpa* and a pagoda from the way they functioned in terms of cultic practice. While the *stūpa* was chiefly a monument for a deceased holy person, and could contain bodily relics or, in some cases, the entire body, the pagoda was more properly a monument of Buddhist power and truth, a beacon of enlightenment.<sup>12</sup> Even so, the respective meaning and function of *stūpas* and pagodas overlap. Though no cases are known in which pagodas functioned as part of a funerary tradition, they could contain bodily relics in some cases, such as we have seen with the celebrated pagoda from Famen Temple (法門寺) that housed what was believed to be a finger bone relic of Śākyamuni Buddha.<sup>13</sup> Both *stūpas* and pagodas contained holy objects, and both were empowered and sealed in accordance with special rituals.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For a concise account of the Aśokan *stūpa* traditions see Trainor 1997, 39–45.

<sup>10</sup> See Barrett, 2001 for a detailed analysis of the role of relics and *stūpas* in the politics of Empress Wu's reign.

<sup>11</sup> See Kieschnick 2003, 38–44.

<sup>12</sup> The bodies of embalmed monks played an important role in some Chan/Zen traditions. See Faure's discussion 1991, 132–147 and Sharf 1992, 1–31.

<sup>13</sup> For an introduction to the Famen temple finds, see Karetzky 1994, 78–85; and also Chen, "Esoteric Buddhism and Monastic Institutions," and Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Tang," in this volume. A beautifully documented accounting of the finds are in Wu and Han 1998, though scholars dispute some of their conclusions. Wang 2004, 79–85, 103, 111, 118 has argued for a funerary dimension to the Famen relics.

<sup>14</sup> The finger bone relic of the Famen Temple had served as a kind of dynastic palladia during the Tang, as it was brought to the palace and displayed for public worship on a thirty-year cycle. See Huang 1998, 483–533. This is to some extent true for "sūtra pillars" or *dhāraṇī* pillars 陀羅尼經幢 as well. See the discussion in Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan during the Tang and Five dynasties Period," in this volume.

Esoteric Buddhism continues Buddhist traditions regarding *stūpas* and relics but adds two distinctive dimensions to their use. These dimensions are readily apparent when we examine specifically esoteric sūtras and ritual manuals that address the worship of *stūpas* and relics.<sup>15</sup> First, the worship of *stūpas* and relics is enhanced through esoteric ritual technology; and second, *stūpas* and relics are situated in a particular ideological and semiotic matrix, especially within the “yoga” tradition stemming from the *Sarvatathāgatataṭṭva saṃgraha* (hereafter *STTS*).<sup>16</sup>

There are several important scriptures and manuals in the esoteric Buddhist tradition in China that detail various aspects of the worship of *stūpas* and pagodas. Among them is the *Mahāmaṇivipula vimāna* (*Mouli mantuoluo zhou jing* 牟梨曼陀羅咒經).<sup>17</sup> The central ritual of this significantly early esoteric Buddhist scripture revolves around the worship of a mandala altar on which a *stūpa* is placed. The text explains how through empowerment the ritual site becomes sanctified and identical with a location where the Buddha’s bodily relics are kept, thus creating “relics” through the application of esoteric technology.<sup>18</sup>

This was followed by the *Caityapradakṣiṇagātha*<sup>19</sup> (*Yourao fo ta gongde jing* 右繞佛塔功德經), translated by Śikṣānanda between

<sup>15</sup> For an overview of symbolism connected with *stūpas* see Snodgrass 1992.

<sup>16</sup> Vajrabodhi translated the first synopsis of this scripture (*T. 866* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦), but there was no full translation of the text until Dānapāla (Shihu 施護) translated it in 1012–1015, during the Northern Song (*T. 882*). It is interesting to note that most surviving canonical sūtras dealing with *stūpas*, and by extension pagodas, in China and East Asia belong to the esoteric Buddhist tradition.

<sup>17</sup> *T. 1007.19:657c–68b*. The full Sanskrit title is *Mahāmaṇivipulavimānaviśvasupraṭiṣṭhita-guhyaparamarahasyakalparājadhāraṇī(sūtra)*. The title first appears in the Tang catalogue *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* (*T. 2154.55:539a*) with no attribution. It appears later in the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mu lu* (*T. 2157.55:935a*), with a note that the translator’s name has been lost but also that the title was recorded in the Liang dynasty. There are other versions by Amoghavajra (*T. 1005a*) and by Bodhiruci (*T. 1006*). For a general discussion of the *Mahāmaṇivipulavimāna* with some analysis of the differences between the three main versions of the scripture, see *FDC*, vol. 1, 907a–8a.

<sup>18</sup> One early work on the making of *stūpas* is the *Zao ta gongde jing* 造塔功德經 (Scripture on the Virtues of Making Stūpas, *T. 699.16*), which was translated by Divākara in 680. Although not an esoteric Buddhist scripture per se, the religious contexts in which it was employed and used clearly indicate an esoteric Buddhist environment. This is underscored by the fact that Divākara was an important translator of esoteric Buddhist scriptures.

<sup>19</sup> *The Scripture on Merit Gained through Circumambulating Buddhist Stūpas*, *T. 700*.

695–700 CE, and the *Raśmivimalaviśuddhāprabhā-dhāraṇī sūtra* (*Wu gou jing guang da tuoluoni jing* 無垢淨光大陀羅尼經, T. 1024 from the hand of Mitraśānta (?) in 704 CE.<sup>20</sup> This text, which recommends techniques for the repair of old *stūpas* as a way to lengthen one's lifespan, was later retranslated by Amoghavajra under the title *Yiqie rulai xin bimi quanshen sheli baoqie yin tuoluoni jing* 一切如來心秘密全身舍利寶篋印陀羅尼經, of which two versions exist.<sup>21</sup> The final scripture to appear was the *Foshuo zao ta yanming gongde jing* 佛說造塔延命功德經 (Buddha Expounds the Sūtra on Extending Life [through the] Merit of Making *Stūpas*).<sup>22</sup> Addressed to King Prasena-jit and concerned with the extension of life, among other goals, it is a good example of the importance of royal ideology in the formation and propagation of Buddhist relic cults. It was translated by Prajña 般若 (734–after 788).<sup>23</sup>

In addition to these sūtras a fairly large number of ritual manuals address the topic of relics and *stūpas*, and many of these manuals were produced during the seventh and eighth centuries. Works having interesting treatments of relics include the long version of the *Amoghapāśa-dhāraṇī sūtra*,<sup>24</sup> the *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrāha*,<sup>25</sup> the cycle of texts related to the Ekākṣara-uṣṇīṣa,<sup>26</sup> *Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara*,<sup>27</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *The Great Dhāraṇī Scripture of the Stainless Pure Light*. Cf. T. 2152.55:369c. For a study of the oldest extant version of this scripture preserved in Korea, cf. the Munhwajaechōng, 1999. See also Sørensen, "Early Esoteric Buddhism in Korea," in this volume. This scripture had immense popularity in Liao Buddhism. For a discussion see Shen Hsueh-man 2001, 263–303.

<sup>21</sup> See T. 1022AB. Amoghavajra's title can be roughly rendered in English as "The Scripture of the *Mudrās* and *Dhāraṇīs* of the Precious Repository of the Secret Whole-body *Śarīra* of all the Tathāgatas." Another scripture by Amoghavajra, *The Precious Dhāraṇī Scripture of the Siddhi for Becoming Buddha* (*Bao xidi cheng fo tuoloni jing* 寶悉地成佛陀羅尼經 T. 962) addresses the efficacy and stature conferred upon those who employ a *dhāraṇī* in the worship of relics in the time of the decay of the Dharma. See T. 962.19:335c1–10.

<sup>22</sup> T. 1026.

<sup>23</sup> See Copp, "Prajña," in this volume, and Yoritomi 1979, 1–103.

<sup>24</sup> T. 1092.20:293b, 295a, by Bodhiruci. There were several translations of this scripture from two quite distinct Sanskrit originals. For an overview see Wong, 2007a, pp. 151–158. Forté 1984, 301–347 studied one version, and another look at the scripture is available from Reis-Habito 1999, 39–67.

<sup>25</sup> T. 901 *Foshuo tuoluoni ji jing* 佛說陀羅尼集經 translated in 654 by Atikūṭa. For this important text see Davidson, "Sources and Inspirations," in this volume.

<sup>26</sup> See T. 946, 947, 950, 951, and especially T. 952 by Bodhiruci and T. 953 *Yizi jite foding jing* 一字奇特佛頂經 translated by Amoghavajra.

<sup>27</sup> T. 961 *Ruyi baozhu zhuanlun bimi xian shen cheng fo jin lun zhouwang jing* 如意寶珠轉輪秘密現身成佛金輪咒王經 attributed to Amoghavajra details the use of various objects as relics, especially T. 961.19:332b–c.

the *Mahāmaṇivipulavimāna viśvasupraṭiṣṭhita guhya paramarahasya-kalparāja dhāraṇī sūtra*,<sup>28</sup> the *Bodhimaṇḍalalakṣālakāraṇāma dhāraṇī sūtra*,<sup>29</sup> the *Anantamukhasādhakadhāraṇī sūtra*,<sup>30</sup> the *Cundīdevī-dhāraṇī sūtra*,<sup>31</sup> and the *Vajrakumāratantra*.<sup>32</sup> The use of relics is also discussed in numerous other texts.<sup>33</sup>

The esoteric Buddhist tradition has also transmitted a number of scriptures in which *stūpas*, pagodas, and tiered pavillions are part of their respective narratives. Among such works mention can be made of the *Mahāmaṇivipulavimāna-viśvasupraṭiṣṭhita-guyhaparamara hasya kalparāja-dhāraṇī sūtra*,<sup>34</sup> which also contains instructions for the worship of a relic *stūpa*, and the *Jin'gang feng louge yiqie yujia yuqi jing* 金剛峰樓閣一切瑜伽瑜祇經 (Scripture on All Yogas and Yogins of the Diamond Peak Pavillion).<sup>35</sup> This shows how *stūpas*, pagodas, and related buildings played important roles on a number of levels, both concrete and imaginary, in the esoteric Buddhist traditions of the mid-Tang.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, the origin myth surrounding the transmission of the *STTS*,<sup>37</sup> one of the two most important scriptures promoted by the mid-Tang

<sup>28</sup> T. 1006 *Guangda baoulouge shan zhu bimi tuoluoni jing* 廣大寶樓閣善住祕密陀羅尼經, translated by Bodhiruci in 706 and its retranslation by Amoghavajra T. 1005.

<sup>29</sup> T. 1008 attributed to Amoghavajra.

<sup>30</sup> T. 1009 attributed to Amoghavajra. Also see T. 1011 and 1018.

<sup>31</sup> T. 1077 佛說七俱胝佛母准提大明陀羅尼經 attributed to Divākara.

<sup>32</sup> T. 1222ab *Shengjiani fennu jin'gang tongzi pusa chengjiu yigui jing* 聖迦怛忿怒金剛童子菩薩成就儀軌經 by Amoghavajra.

<sup>33</sup> Including, for instance, the *Susiddhikara tantra*, T. 893 *Suxidijieluo jing* 蘇悉地羯囉經, the *Subhāhupariprcchā*, T. 895 *Supohu tongzi qingwen jing* 蘇婆呼童子請問經, and the *Li shelita yishi* 禮舍利塔儀式 (Ritual Regulations for Worshipping a Relic Stūpa), ZZ. (1975–1989) 1491.74:627a–33c, though this latter is a late production.

<sup>34</sup> T. 1005A.19:619a–34b. The tiered pavilion that occurs here is a transcendental building that includes all the arcana of esoteric Buddhism. In other words, it is a kind of holy treasury.

<sup>35</sup> T. 867.18:253c–69c. For a brief description of this scripture, see Goepper 1993, 9–10.

<sup>36</sup> Vajrabodhi's relics were enshrined in a *stūpa* at Longmen and became the focus or rainmaking rituals in the Tang and in later periods, and Amoghavajra took pains to see that it was properly attended to. Amoghavajra's remains were also enshrined in a *stūpa*. See Biao zhiji, T. 2120.52:836a18–b15; 850c22–851a8.

<sup>37</sup> For a short version of the myth surrounding the recovery of the *Sarvathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, cf. *Jin'gangding puti xin lun lueji* 金剛頂菩提心論略記 (Abbreviated Record of the Treatise on the Bodhicitta of the Vajra-usṇīṣa), T. 777.46:200b. See also Giebel 2001, 5–107 and Orzech 1995b, 314–317. For further information see Davidson, "Sources and Inspirations;" Orzech, "Vajrabodhi;" Lehnert, "Amoghavajra;" Orzech, "Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra (651–780)," and "After Amoghavajra," in this volume.

*ācāryas* and the source of the yoga teaching expounded by Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, is directly concerned with the worship of a *stūpa* and with the *stūpa* as a receptacle, in this case not of holy relics but of a holy book. The story of the retrieval of the *STTS* from an “iron *stūpa*” in South India is found in Amoghavajra’s “Instructions on the Gate to the Teaching of the Secret Heart of the Great Yoga of the Scripture of the Diamond Summit” (*Jin’gangding jing da yuqie bimi shin di famen yigui*, T. 1798.39:808a19–b28).<sup>38</sup> The story centers on the ritual worship of an iron *stūpa* with the usual circumambulation and through special esoteric means: the chanting of mantras and *homa*. The entry into the *stūpa* is ritually reenacted with each disciple’s initiation into the mandala, and the *stūpa* and the mandala are homologized to the body of the disciple, the body of Mahāvairocana, and to the cosmos itself. With this in mind, we might consider the crypt of the Famen Temple and the logic of enshrining the finger bone relic of the Buddha in a golden *stūpa* wrapped in a mandala.<sup>39</sup>

The enduring importance of *stūpa* and pagoda worship in the context of esoteric Buddhism in China and its border regions can be inferred from the many pagodas built in both wood and stone dating from later periods. Both the Bai people (Baimin 白民) in Yunnan, and the Khitans of the Liao were avid worshippers of pagodas, and excavations and archaeological research in recent years have revealed many holy objects placed inside them for purposes of empowerment.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Amoghavajra’s version of the story is supposedly based on Vajrabodhi’s oral transmission.

<sup>39</sup> Four relics were found in the crypt of the Famen pagoda and their innermost receptacles are either coffins or *stūpas*. One, enshrined in a miniature gold *stūpa*, was in turn surrounded by seven other containers with a variety of images, including a variant of the Garbha mandala. Another relic was encased in a series of five boxes with clear reference to the Vajradhātu mandala, though the relic in this case is held in a white jade coffin. A third relic was held in a silver coffin enclosed in turn in a pagoda and a *stūpa*. The final relic, in a silver coffin, was enclosed by an iron casket and a spirit canopy. The profusion of motifs drawing on a range of Buddhist imagery and on traditional Chinese burial imagery has resulted in a variety of interpretations, but the presence and importance of esoteric imagery is undeniable.

<sup>40</sup> See Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhist Art in China, 960–1279,” “Esoteric Buddhism in the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms (c. 800–1253),” and “Esoteric Buddhist Art Under the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms,” in this volume; as well as Shen Hsueh-man 2001, 263–303.

ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN CHINA

DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE 3<sup>RD</sup>-7<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES:  
NEW SCRIPTURES AND NEW PRACTICES





## 11. ON ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN CHINA: A WORKING DEFINITION

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

The aim of this essay is to formulate a working definition of the term “Esoteric Buddhism,” a phenomena variously described as Tantric Buddhism, Vajrayāna, Mantrayāna, and even “Occult Buddhism.” While the many practices and doctrines underlying the use of these different terms correspond to religious phenomena that have much in common, considerable confusion concerning their use still abounds. One reason for the current confusion has to do with our understanding of the origin of Esoteric Buddhism. While there has been no shortage of explanations for the development of Esoteric Buddhism, these inquiries often founder on a lack of uniform definitions and access to the primary sources across a wide range of Asian languages.<sup>1</sup>

Specialists of Indian Buddhism have too often presented their opinions on Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantric Buddhist tradition without sufficient knowledge of the extensive Chinese translations or the numerous local compositions, which, in many cases, are much older textually than anything that has survived in Sanskrit or Pāli. As

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<sup>1</sup> It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the many attempts that have been made over the past few decades, and I will limit myself here to a few words on two of the most recent and best studies. David Snellgrove, in his now classical 1987 study, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*, an account of the history of Tantric Buddhism and its transmission to Tibet, carefully avoided any attempt at establishing a historical framework for the rise and development of Esoteric Buddhism in India, and instead focused on how its doctrines developed. Davidson 2002a has done much to improve on Snellgrove’s historical (and sociocultural) lapse. However, Davidson also avoids any discussion on the origins of Esoteric Buddhism in India, and instead settles on the arbitrary date of the seventh century as the time, he believes, that Esoteric Buddhism arose. To this writer, it appears that perhaps Davidson has substituted “Esoteric Buddhism” with “Tantric Buddhism,” i.e., the developed form of Esoteric Buddhism based on the Buddhist *tantras*, and if that is the case, then he is of course perfectly correct in his assessment and I can offer no argument. A similar way of reading the development of Esoteric Buddhism in India can be found in Linrothe 1990, a groundbreaking work on Tantric Buddhist images and their iconography; see pp. 19–30.

a result, their views remain confined by the information available to them in the limited number of surviving Sanskrit manuscripts, and occasional references to translations of Indian scriptures in much later Tibetan recensions.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, those working primarily from the side of the Chinese and East Asian materials, i.e., texts written in Chinese, have too often been ignorant of the existence of certain Sanskrit texts, and these scholars have often demonstrated limited knowledge of Tantric Buddhist developments in India, which has hindered them from gaining a sufficiently deep understanding of the context and origins of the Esoteric Buddhist tradition(s) in its motherland. Many earlier authors writing on the subject have ascertained that the mature Esoteric Buddhist tradition as represented by the East Asian Zhenyan 真言 or Shingon Buddhist traditions arose in India sometime during the seventh century, and that its origins should be found in the Indian pre-Buddhist substratum of popular cults in Hinduism as well as in Mahāyāna Buddhism itself.<sup>3</sup>

While I certainly do not intend to contest the second half of this view, I believe that much can be said for the ultimate rejection of the former. It is quite clear that the kind of institutionalized Esoteric Buddhism that existed in East Asia between ca. 700–1000 C.E., i.e., in China, Korea, and Japan, was in many ways quite different from that of contemporary India, not to mention early Tantric Buddhism in Tibet. Most important is the fact that until the advent of the Tanguts and Mongols during the twelfth–thirteenth centuries, mature Tantric Buddhism was not very well known in East Asia outside the narrow confines of a few specialists, with the possible exception of Buddhists living in the westernmost parts of Gansu and Yunnan.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> During the late 1980s and early 1990s there was an attempt by Chinese scholars from the People's Republic of China, most notably Wang Yao, to bring attention to the hitherto unidentified Tantric Buddhist texts in Sanskrit recovered from various surviving monastic libraries in Tibet. However, to my knowledge none of this supposedly rich Tantric Buddhist material has yet been made available to the scholarly community. In any case, it is doubtful whether any of the texts in this otherwise promising material pre-dates the tenth century.

<sup>3</sup> The chief champion of this view was the late Michel Strickmann. See Strickmann 1996, 17–58.

<sup>4</sup> I am here thinking of the isolated development that took place in Shazhou during the Tibetan occupation from ca. 784–848 C.E., as documented in the Dunhuang manuscripts, and the forms of Esoteric Buddhism reflecting Indo-Burmese influence

*The Premises for an “Esoteric Buddhism”*

In the following discussion I trace the development of Esoteric Buddhism back to its roots in Indian Mahāyāna and argue that it developed from a special trend within Mahāyāna, that of ritualism and magic. I question the view that Esoteric Buddhism did not develop until the seventh century and I also reject the view that the Zhenyan or Shingon Buddhism of the eighth–ninth centuries represented mainstream Esoteric Buddhism in China. I argue that Esoteric Buddhism, which I define as the form of Mahāyāna that centers on ritual magic and which employed a variety of performative strategies and implements (such as special altars, spells and *dhāraṇīs*, *mudrās*, mandalas, *homa*, a highly developed iconography, and a distinct range of offerings to effect divine response for its adherents) originated very early in the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism, although I accept that only later did it flower as Esoteric Buddhism.

According to this understanding, Esoteric Buddhism is a form of Mahāyāna—not a separate school but a movement centering on attaining its spiritual and worldly goals through ritual practices. Esoteric Buddhism developed into a distinct form of Mahāyāna in *tandem* with the rise of Mahāyāna, and we may therefore find embryonic “esoteric” traces of what later became mainstream Esoteric Buddhist “building blocks” in some of the earliest Mahāyāna scriptures. Central to my argument, however, is that I reserve the term “Esoteric Buddhism” as the most useful, if not perfect, way of designating this form of Buddhism. For the early, undeveloped Esoteric Buddhist elements encountered in Mahāyāna literature, I use the term “esoteric Mahāyāna” to underscore that we are dealing with particular forms of belief and practice. “Tantra” and “Tantric Buddhism” will be used exclusively for the Esoteric Buddhist developments that took place in India (and later in Tibet and China) during and after the seventh century.

General and unsystematic elements of Esoteric Buddhist practices first occurred within the context of traditional Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, followed by an increasingly systematic development of these practices, finally flowering into what may be termed “mature Esoteric Buddhism” some time during the sixth–seventh centuries. Esoteric Mahāyāna did not initially develop separately from mainstream

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that existed under the Nanzhao kingdom (ca. 653–937), and of course later under the Dali (ca. 937–1253).

Mahāyāna but as an integrated part of it and, in fact, has always remained part of the Mahāyāna tradition. However, one may argue that an increasing tendency toward the signification of ritual performance and the associated soteriological strategies based on belief in magic effected through ritual performance—the defining hallmarks of Esoteric Buddhism—allows us to characterize it as a distinct, if not separate, trend within Mahāyāna, in the same way the Madhyāmaka and the Vijñānavāda developed into distinct schools of philosophy in the realm of Buddhist doctrine.

Esoteric Buddhism established its own parameters, chiefly in the field of ritual and liturgy. In the course of time, the marked preoccupation with supernatural phenomena and a reformulation of mainstream Buddhist doctrine with almost exclusive focus on ritual and liturgical performance caused Esoteric Buddhism to develop into a distinct Buddhist tradition, complete with concepts of lineage and sanctified modes of transmitting teachings. Esoteric Buddhist practices, to a greater or lesser extent, were common within many Mahāyāna Buddhist communities on the Indian subcontinent by the mid-fifth century C.E.; a century later, Esoteric Buddhism had developed more complete “esoteric” programs and had become a more well-defined Buddhist tradition. By the sixth century Esoteric Buddhist practices in various forms and stages had already been introduced to China, mainly via Central Asia, and had begun to take on a life of their own in close interchange with Chinese cultural and religious norms.

In post-Gupta India, Esoteric Buddhism continued its steady development and flourished in several parts of the subcontinent, including the area around Patna and Gaya (the old Buddhist heartland of Bihār); in Kashmir; at Kanheri near modern Mumbai; and in the area around present-day Aurangabad in central Maharashtra, as well as in several locations in Bengal and Orissa. In my view, the final efflorescence of Esoteric Buddhism in India took place from the eighth century onward with the formulation of the Buddhist *tantras*, i.e., comprehensive scriptures and ritual compendia in which the whole array of earlier Esoteric Buddhist ritual practices and doctrines were fully integrated and systematized. To these were added an extra dimension in the form of sanctified, anti-nomian practices, many of which were undoubtedly taken over from traditional Hinduism and the religion of various tribal groups. We are here greatly assisted by the written tradition since we have at our disposal fairly comprehensive primary materials.

“Primitive” or undeveloped forms of Esoteric Buddhist practice came first in the form of “esoteric” addenda to various Mahāyāna sūtras. They were later followed by increasingly complex and mutually integrated layers of practices that eventually evolved into a full-fledged meta-system containing all, or at least most, of the earlier strata of practices organized to form a comprehensive and inclusive whole.

*Esoteric Mahāyāna and Esoteric Buddhism in the Light of Textual History*

As the history and dating of much of the early Mahāyāna literature available to us today is still deeply problematic, we are by necessity forced to take the Chinese translations, most of which are datable, as the *ante post terminus* for the creation of many Indian Buddhist scriptures. Given that it would have taken any new sūtra some time to reach China during the late Eastern Han (25–220) and early Three Kingdoms (220–280) periods, we should allow for a time-lag of no less than half a century before we can reasonably expect a given sūtra to have been in circulation there. This means that, on average, the production of most of the Buddhist scriptures we have in Chinese translation is not likely to have taken place much earlier than fifty years before they arrived in China. There are of course exceptions to this, but on the whole we may estimate that it took the Indian Buddhist scriptures considerable time to reach China from the time they were first written. This is especially the case during the first centuries of cultural exchange between the Indian subcontinent and China.

Let us begin by briefly reviewing when and how spells and *dhāraṇīs*, arguably the most central ritual elements in mature Esoteric Buddhism, first occurred in the context of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and how, in the course of history, their use in conjunction with ritual practices became a mainstream element in the Esoteric Buddhist tradition.<sup>5</sup>

I begin with the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras, which—in the estimation of most scholars—constitute the earliest layer in the development of

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<sup>5</sup> A solid discussion of the range of traditional understandings and modes of spells and *dhāraṇīs* in the context of Mahāyāna Buddhism can be found in Copp 2005, 113–67.

Mahāyāna.<sup>6</sup> One of the earliest sūtras of this class (where the concept of spells or *dhāraṇīs* can be found) is the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* (T. 226) dating from the first century B.C.E. In this early material we see the concept of the sūtra itself as spell or *dhāraṇī*. Another example can be found in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā sūtra* (T. 222).<sup>7</sup> Mokṣala's translation of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā sūtra* from 291 C.E. (T. 221) contains references to “*dhāraṇī* doors (*tuoluoni men* 陀羅尼門)” as *prajñāpāramitā*<sup>8</sup> and “*dhāraṇī* accomplishment” (*tuoluoni chengjiu* 陀羅尼成就).<sup>9</sup> It is clear from the context that the primary understanding of “*dhāraṇī*” is not of it as a spell *per se* but rather a device for maintaining or “holding” the teaching.

An interesting passage found in the latter recension actually warns bodhisattvas against “studying the spell arts (*zhoushu* 咒術) and talismanic books (*fushu* 符書).”<sup>10</sup> Although this warning occurs in the text as part of a general admonition against the use of magic and prognostication as practiced by non-Buddhists, it may indicate that a dichotomy existed between the way *dhāraṇīs* and spells were perceived and used in early Mahāyāna. A similarly negative attitude toward spells can be seen in an early version of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa sūtra* (T. 474) translated by Zhiqian 支謙 from 223–228 C.E. Here the text mentions the use of “prohibited spell words (*jin zhoyu* 禁咒語).”<sup>11</sup> Spells, however, were to become an important element in Mahāyāna Buddhism, as amply documented in the scriptures translated into Chinese during the second and third centuries.

<sup>6</sup> For a general survey of this literature, see Conze 1960, a classic, if now slightly outdated, study.

<sup>7</sup> It is interesting to observe that the earlier Chinese translation of this sūtra done by Lokakṣema in 179 C.E. under the Eastern Han has no references to spells. Cf. T. 224. This may indicate that spells and concepts of the text as a spell appeared in the Prajñāpāramitā literature some time after the earliest scriptures of this class of Mahāyāna texts were composed.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. T. 221.8:44a, 116a.

<sup>9</sup> T. 221.8:44a.

<sup>10</sup> T. 221.8:88b. In the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi sūtra*, another important early Mahāyāna scripture, the spell arts are counted among the worldly sciences alongside literature and medicine, which may be seen as an indication that the use of spells was not originally perceived in early Mahāyāna as a spiritual device but more as a secular tool. Cf. T. 642.15:632b.

<sup>11</sup> T. 474.14:530b. A similar injunction can be found in the *Akṣobhyatathāgata-syavyūha sūtra*. Cf. T. 313.11:758c.

Within a relatively short period, perhaps no more than a century, *dhāraṇīs* in the form of spells begin to occur in a number of other Mahāyāna sūtras beyond the ambivalent references found in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.<sup>12</sup> Among these early spell scriptures we find the celebrated *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, which may date as far back as the beginning of the first century C.E.<sup>13</sup> The earliest version of this scripture in any language was translated by Dharmarakṣa into Chinese in 286 C.E. (*T.* 263). The twenty-fourth chapter of the tenth scroll is titled “Holding (*zongchi* 總持),” in the sense of “holding on to,” i.e., to “retain”; or it may be read as “*vidyā*,” i.e., as a *dhāraṇī* in the meaning of “spell.”<sup>14</sup> Given that the text itself uses “holding” and “spell” interchangeably, both readings make sense.

Although the Chinese text clearly indicates the use of spells to invoke protective female demons (another example of the growing adaptation of non-Buddhist spirits in Mahāyāna), these spells have been left out of Dharmarakṣa’s translation and replaced with prose in the form of a standard prayer.<sup>15</sup> It is possible that the translator felt that such spells would not be conducive to spreading the Buddhist teachings among his Chinese audience, even though spells were widespread in China, especially in Daoist circles.<sup>16</sup> When comparing the *Vidyā Chapter* with the corresponding one in Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (*T.* 262.9) appearing more than a century later, in which it is entitled *Chapter on Dhāraṇīs*, the latter appears more complete textually, although the chapter in question still functions as a sort of appendix and is essentially disassociated from the rest of the scripture’s narrative and doctrinal exposition.<sup>17</sup> However, here

<sup>12</sup> Here I would like to call the reader’s attention to the simple fact that quite a substantial number of the standard Mahāyāna sūtras evolved over time. So we should be careful which “incarnation” of a given scripture we are referring to as evidence for a certain historical contention. This warning is relevant for the majority of the Mahāyāna sūtras, including a number of the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, etc.

<sup>13</sup> As with many of the seminal Mahāyāna sūtras, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* developed in a series of stages and only reached the form represented in Kumārajīva’s Chinese version after at least two centuries. For a discussion of the textual development of this important scripture, see Rawlinson 1977, 3–34.

<sup>14</sup> This chapter roughly corresponds to the twenty-sixth chapter in the seventh roll in Kumārajīva’s translation. Cf. *T.* 262.9:58b–9b. It is interesting to observe that this text contains the double-structure “*tuoluoni-zhou*,” i.e., *dhāraṇī*-spell.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *T.* 263.9:130ac.

<sup>16</sup> For the use of spells in early Daoism, see Strickmann 2002, 89–122.

<sup>17</sup> *T.* 262.9:58b–59b.



the spells are rendered in Chinese phonetic Sanskrit, which may indicate the growing familiarity of Chinese Buddhists with Indian-style spell literature.

In the early third century *dhāraṇīs* and spells in Mahāyāna literature begin to change. This shift—at first imperceptible—is marked by a new type of sūtra, the so-called *dhāraṇī sūtra*. Now *dhāraṇīs* and spells no longer play a secondary role in the scripture but have displaced, if not replaced, the traditional doctrinal discourse with one evolving around the *dhāraṇī* itself. In this new class of Mahāyāna sūtras, the central purport of a given scripture is no longer, or at least not primarily, a doctrinal one, but instead focuses on magic effected through ritual. For example, Zhiqian translated a series of sūtras during the period ca. 222–250 C.E., including the *Aṣṭabuddhaka sūtra*, one of the earliest sūtras in Chinese with the term “*shenzhou* 神咒,” i.e., “divine spell,” in its title (T. 427). The spells featured in Zhiqian’s scripture are not magic words but the names of eight buddhas. The scripture itself now functioned as a tool for empowerment<sup>18</sup> and thus stands as a bridge between the idea of text as *dhāraṇī*/spell and the use of special words of power.

Another early spell text translated by Zhiqian is the *Agrapradīpadhā-vidyārāja sūtra* (T. 1351), which contains three short spells against malevolent spirits, men, wild animals, poisonous insects, and disease in transcribed Sanskrit. None of the spells in this scripture is named but they are referred to as “spell-sentences for holding (*chi juzhou* 持句咒).”<sup>19</sup> Finally we have the short *Puṣpakūṭa-dhāraṇī sūtra*, also from Zhiqian’s hand (T. 1356), which features one long spell in Chinese transcription. It refers to *stūpa* worship in connection with the use of the spell, as well as worship of a buddha image including a list of the offerings to be used. This is probably the earliest Buddhist scripture in Chinese with the combined term *tuoluoni shenzhou* 陀羅尼神咒 in its title.

Later examples of the *dhāraṇī* class of Mahāyāna scriptures include the important but little studied *Qifo bapusa suoshuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神咒經 (*Dhāraṇī* Spirit-Spell Sūtra preached by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas; T. 1332), the *Anantamukha-sādhaka-dhāraṇī* (T. 1012), the *Fo shuo hu zhu tongzi*

<sup>18</sup> Cf. e.g., T. 427.14:72c.

<sup>19</sup> T. 1351.21:865a.

*tuoluoni jing* 佛說護諸童子陀羅尼經 (Buddha Speaks the Scripture on the Dhāraṇī that Protects all Children; T. 1028A), the early recensions of the *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī* (T. 986–87), and the *Mātangī sūtra* (T. 1300–1301). When looking more closely at the *dhāraṇī* sūtras translated or produced in China between ca. 300–500 C.E., we may also notice distinct changes within this corpus of spell literature.

In this period, the context in which the *dhāraṇīs* and spells function can be seen to have undergone new developments. Not only are the *dhāraṇīs* and the various results to which they are imagined to lead the central *foci* of these scriptures, the very setting in which they are used gradually changed into new ritual forms; new functions; and, perhaps most important, a new technical vocabulary.<sup>20</sup> Thus we find in the early translation of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa sūtra* (T. 663), from the beginning of the fifth century, a spell referred to as an “*abhiṣeka stanza* ( *guanding changju* 灌頂章句).”<sup>21</sup> This is in itself a highly important reference, as it indicates the rite of initiation and religious anointment, later a chief feature of Esoteric Buddhism, in a relatively early Buddhist context.<sup>22</sup>

Another important aspect of development of the fourth to fifth centuries is the increasing appearance of coopted Hindu divinities such as Hārītī and Mārīcī, the Four Heavenly Kings, and a host of demonic characters. Many of these no longer serve as secondary interlocutors or subservient generic figures and now begin to appear as major, even central, characters.<sup>23</sup>

During the fifth and early sixth centuries a further “esotericization” of Mahāyāna may be observed in the translated *dhāraṇī* literature, in which we now encounter an overwhelming appearance of spirits and demons of all descriptions and the ritual remedies to

<sup>20</sup> Actually we can observe several sets of terminologies, which depend, of course, on who translated a given text and where. This is one of the exasperating features of pre-sixth-century *dhāraṇī* literature in China. These texts are characterized by an acute lack of standardization in both the transcription of Sanskrit and the use of terminology.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. T. 663.16:345b.

<sup>22</sup> See Davidson, “Abhiṣeka,” this volume.

<sup>23</sup> The continued development of this trend can be seen as having fully unfolded in both the *Tuoluoni zaji* (T. 1336) and the *Dhāraṇīsamgraha* (T. 901), compiled during the sixth and seventh centuries respectively. The earliest iconography depicting these Hindu deities can be found among the sculptures at Yungang 雲岡 near Datong 大通 (second half of the fourth century) and slightly later in the Mogao 莫高 caves of Dunhuang.

control them. Examples of these are the extended translation of the *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī* by Saṅghabara (T. 984); the important spell collection the *Tuoluoni zaji* 陀羅尼雜集 (Collection of Miscellaneous Dhāraṇīs; T. 1336); as well as the important *Guanding jing* 灌頂經 (Consecration Scripture; T. 1331), which, although it is an apocryphon composed and compiled in late fifth-century China, does include a substantial amount of authentic Indian material.<sup>24</sup> One may actually speak of the development of a *bona fide* demonology in Mahāyāna as having come about at this point in time. In connection with this development, the cults of certain individual demon kings and spirit generals, such as Vaiśravaṇa and Āṭavaka, progenitors of the later *vidyārājas* and *mahākrodhas*, can be seen to have arisen.<sup>25</sup> We also see how the increasing sophistication of the ritual arcana has produced new methods and how they tend to converge in the notion of what has now become a well-defined ritual space that includes the use of specialized altars.

In the course of the sixth century this trend was obviously accentuated, seen in the overall structure and formalization of ritual practices; the formation of a standardized pantheon featuring a number of “new” divinities, especially new forms of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara; an elaborate vocabulary and integrated terminology revealing a high degree of sophistication; and, most important, the notion that the practitioners of this arcana represent a special form of Buddhism. Whereas the ritual practices in the earlier material were the province of what the Chinese referred to as “spell masters (*zhoushi* 咒師),” usually defined as members of the Buddhist monastic community (and who in the Chinese cultural context often were Indian monks), the translations from the second half of the sixth century indicate the appearance of a new type of ritual practitioner.<sup>26</sup> This practitioner was not just a Buddhist ritual specialist or thaumaturge but an adept of arcana, a seeker of *siddhi* (*chengjiuzhe* 成就者), a term which covers the acquisition of a motley mix of supernatural powers and divinely bestowed abilities as well as spiritual enlightenment.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> See Strickmann 1990, 75–118.

<sup>25</sup> Both of them figure prominently in the *Tuoluoni zaji*.

<sup>26</sup> For an excellent survey of the traditional image of thaumaturges and “spell masters,” see Kieschnick 1997, 67–111.

<sup>27</sup> For further details, see Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism and Magic,” in this volume.

From this point onward, we are justified in speaking of the existence of an “Esoteric Buddhism,” a form of Mahāyāna with its own ritual hermeneutics, moral codex, secret transmission, and self-understanding. Scriptures representative of this phase in the development toward a full-fledged Esoteric Buddhism are the various versions of the *Mahāmegha sūtra*. (T. 991–93), the *Mahāmaṇivipulavimānaviśvasupratīṣṭhita-guhyaparamarahasya kalparāja-dhāraṇī* (T. 1007), the *Azhapojū guishen dajiang shang fo tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 阿吒婆拘鬼神大將上佛陀羅尼神咒經 (Scripture on the Supreme Buddha, Divine Spell Dhāraṇī of the Great Demon General Āṭavaka; T. 1237), the *Amoghapāśa sūtra* (T. 1093), and the *Ekādaśamukha sūtra* (T. 1070). *Homa* rites occur and Vajrapāṇi makes his appearance as a major hero.<sup>28</sup>

During the seventh century the Esoteric Buddhist trend of the previous century can be seen to have continued unabated with the arrival in China of such scriptures as the the *Dharāṇīsaṃgraha* (T. 901) and the appearance of the first translation of the *Nilakaṇṭhaka sūtra* (T. 1057B.20) by Zhitong 智通 (fl. first half of seventh century) between 627–649. The most important of these was undoubtedly the *Uṣṇīṣāvijayā-dhāraṇī sūtra* (T. 967), a scripture with a simple message promoting belief in the power of one single *dhāraṇī*. Soon a number of translations appeared (T. 968–974), and eventually this *dhāraṇī sūtra* attained universal popularity among Buddhists from all walks of life.<sup>29</sup>

By the end of the seventh century, a new class of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures had arrived in China, all of which were translated within the span of a few decades, giving rise to a fully developed literature of Esoteric Buddhism. These scriptures also include the important cycle of esoteric *Avalokiteśvara sūtras*,<sup>30</sup> such as the extended *Ekādaśamukha sūtra* (T. 1071), the new recensions of the *Amoghapāśa sūtra* (T. 1094–97), the various new translations of the *Nilakaṇṭhaka sūtra* (T. 1057–60) that appeared one after the other within a span of ten years, as well as the scriptures on Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara

<sup>28</sup> See Lamotte 1966. A discussion of the development of Vajrapāṇi into a Tantric Buddhist divinity can be found in Snellgrove 1987, 134–41. For *homa*, see Orzech and Payne, “*Homa*,” in this volume.

<sup>29</sup> For a detailed study of this *dhāraṇī*, see Copp 2005, 171–92. See also Kroll 2001.

<sup>30</sup> For a useful survey of these scriptures and their cultic implications, see Yü 2001, 49–72.

(T. 1080–83).<sup>31</sup> Taken altogether, these sūtras feature a fully developed form of Esoteric Buddhism complete with integrated rituals, including practices involving *homa* offering, *mudrās*, *dhāraṇī*/spells, *mandalas*, *mahākrodhas*, and a corresponding iconography—in short, all the elements that normally define full-fledged Esoteric Buddhism.

Less than two decades after the appearance of Bodhiruci's long version of the *Amoghapāśa sūtra* (T. 1092), arguably one of the most complex and detailed Esoteric Buddhist scriptures in Chinese translation, Śubhākarasiṃha arrived in Chang'an, carrying with him the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* and the teachings of the Great Yoga (*mahāyoga*). This new dispersion of Esoteric Buddhist texts and ritual lore heralded the beginning of a new era.<sup>32</sup>

### *In Defense of "Esoteric Buddhism"*

Let me now return to the question of the use of the term "Esoteric Buddhism" and, by extension, the use of the concept of "secret" and "secrecy" (*mi* 密) in Chinese Buddhism. I contend that what is primarily indicated by the term is its secret or hidden aspects. In other words, spell arts and the entire range of magico-religious beliefs and practices that constitute the phenomena of Esoteric Buddhism were generally not in the public domain but were, for the most part, handed down from master to disciple and were beyond the reach of the uninitiated.<sup>33</sup> This transmission denied outsiders knowledge of ritual technicalities and hid certain modes of behavior deemed unsuitable for the public eye, such as necromancy, practices related to sexuality, and even treasure hunting. After all, many of the Esoteric Buddhist rituals, including exorcism, medium manipulation (*āveśa*), and putting spells on other people, involved elements of violent intent and sorcery.

In addition to *mi*, a word that is actually rarely found alone in Chinese texts associated with esoteric Mahāyāna and Esoteric Buddhism, we also find *bi* 秘, which, in the texts that have been surveyed here, has

<sup>31</sup> See Aptilon, "Goddess Genealogy," this volume.

<sup>32</sup> Tantric Buddhism of the Indo-Tibetan variety was introduced to those parts of Central Asia and Western China controlled by the Tibetans during the final decades of the eighth century. However, as its influence on Chinese Buddhism *per se* was very limited, I do not consider it of real relevance to this discussion. For additional information on this development, see Eastman 1983. For the Song Dynasty translations of *tantras* see Orzech, "Esoteric Buddhism in the Song," in this volume.

<sup>33</sup> This despite the ostensibly "public" display of *dhāraṇīs* on *dhāraṇī* pillars.

more or less the same meaning as “*mi*,” i.e., “secret.” The two indeed go together to further strengthen the idea of “secret,” something hidden or unrevealed. Thus we find the term *bimizhou* 祕密咒, i.e., “secret spells,” and the extended “secret divine spells” (*bimi shenzhou* 祕密神咒), which occur frequently in scriptures associated with both esoteric Mahāyāna and Esoteric Buddhism. In contrast, the simple, more general compound “secret spells” (*bizhou* 祕咒) is commonly found in both the standard exoteric Buddhist texts as well as in Esoteric Buddhist scriptures.

The further connection between Esoteric Buddhism and ritual secrets is borne out in the use of the term “secret altar” (*bimitan* 祕密壇). Virtually all references to “altar methods” or “altar practices” (*tanfa* 壇法) occurring in the *Taishō* and the *Zokuzōkyō* texts, regardless from which period they date, indicate that such practices took place within the contexts of esoteric Mahāyāna and Esoteric Buddhism. This does not mean that all Buddhist rituals in China were esoteric in nature, nor that they were performed by practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism—far from it; however, it does indicate that altars for specialized rituals and the use of special techniques were central to this form of Buddhism. In fact, the usage of the term “secret altar” is exclusively found in Esoteric Buddhist scriptures and in texts describing Esoteric Buddhist practices.<sup>34</sup>

Although terms such as “secret method” or “secret teaching” (*mifa* 密法) do occur in the Esoteric Buddhist material from the Tang period, they are more commonly found in scriptures associated with non-esoteric types of Buddhism, such as the Faxiang, the Huayan, and other doctrinal schools. One would think that a term such as “secret practice” (*mixing* 密行) would occur frequently in scriptures associated with Esoteric Buddhism, but this is not the case; rather it appears frequently in Chan texts. In the latter case, it may actually make more sense to translate the compound as “abstruse practice.”

In order to make a clearer case, let us first establish that there is a direct connection in terminology between Esoteric Buddhism and the use of spells, *dhāraṇīs*, and mantras. This connection is revealed in scriptures such as the *Pariṇāmacakra sūtra* (T. 998), where the term “secret words” (*miyan* 密言) occurs several times, in the

<sup>34</sup> Cf., e.g., T. 1092.20:385b; T. 952.19:264a; T. 1185B.20:803a; T. 1796.39:745b; etc.

meaning of “spell” or “mantra.”<sup>35</sup> We later find the same usage in the *Pretamukhāgnijvālayaśarakāra dhāraṇī* (T. 1313), i.e., in Amoghavajra’s *Hungry Ghost Scripture*<sup>36</sup> and in his *Shiyi mian Guanzizai pusa xin niansong yigui jing* 十一面觀自在菩薩心念誦儀軌經 (Scripture on the Ritual Proceedings for Invoking Ekādaśamukha-avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva Heart [Spell]; T. 1069), where it appears as part of a longer phrase, “the secret words of *samaya* of Avalokiteśvara’s original family (*Guanzizai benbu sanmoye miyan* 觀自在本部三麼耶密言).”<sup>37</sup>

There can be no doubt that during the Tang the term “*mijiao*” was to a large extent associated with Esoteric Buddhism and practices involving spells (and mantras). The *Zhengyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (Catalogue of the Newly Established Buddhist Teaching of the Zhengyuan Reign-period; T. 2157) contains a reference to the type of Buddhism taught by Amoghavajra as “the esoteric teaching of Yoga (*yuqie mijiao* 瑜伽密教).”<sup>38</sup> While this reference obviously links Yoga with Esoteric Buddhism, it also shows that in this catalogue “*mijiao*” was understood as a distinct form of Buddhism.<sup>39</sup>

It is clear from a number of sources, including the Japanese pilgrim-monk Annen’s 安然 (841–?) *Sho ajari shingon mikkyōbu* 諸阿闍梨真言密教部 (Esoteric Buddhist Section of All the Ācāryas’ Mantras), that Esoteric Buddhism had its own collection of texts.<sup>40</sup> Although Annen is a relatively late Japanese source, the title of his work signals not only the connection between the *ācārya*, i.e., the Esoteric Buddhist master *par excellence*, and the use of mantras, it also indicates the concept of a *mikkyōbu*, and therefore the existence of a special collection of Esoteric Buddhist texts. This becomes more obvious when reviewing the titles in the above catalogue (we shall return below to the question of the existence of a special Esoteric Buddhist text collection during the Tang).

The distinction between esoteric and exoteric usages of *mi* and *mijiao* becomes evident in the following source, the *Mingfofa genben bei* 明佛法根本碑 (Stele Illuminating the Roots of the Buddha’s Teaching;

<sup>35</sup> T. 998.19:578a, etc.

<sup>36</sup> T. 1313.21:465b.

<sup>37</sup> T. 1069.20:142b. For the same usage see also Amoghavajra’s T. 856.18:175a.

<sup>38</sup> T. 2157.55:882b.

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of these terms during the Tang see Orzech 2006b.

<sup>40</sup> T. 2176.55:1125c–32c.

T. 1954.46) by Jñānacakra/Zhihuilun 智慧輪 (fl. ninth century) where we read:

The secret of cultivating the Buddha body is the *vinaya*. Holding the secret of the Buddha's speech is the mantras and depending on the secret of the Buddha's mind is true wisdom. These are the circumstances relating to the Three Secret Doors of Liberation (*sanmi dumen* 三密之度門).<sup>41</sup>

This interpretation of the three mysteries or three secrets (*sanmi* 三密), a major tenet of mature Esoteric Buddhism, reflects the strong tendency in many Esoteric Buddhist texts toward the use of a distinct and hermetic vocabulary. This is, in effect, a rephrasing and reconfiguration of what is otherwise standard Mahāyāna doctrine.<sup>42</sup>

In the *Dili sanmeiye Budongzun shengzhe niansong bimi fa* 底哩三昧耶不動尊聖者念誦祕密法 (Secret Method of Chanting the *Trisamaya* of the Worthy and Holy Acala; T. 1201) by Amoghavajra we find several instances where the concept of "secret" is associated with the use of mantras and Esoteric Buddhist practice in general, such as "holding the secret (*michi* 密持)"<sup>43</sup> and "secret method (*bimi fa* 祕密法)."<sup>44</sup> And "this is why the Wise Ones calm their minds by using this method (*men* 門) whereby they take secrecy as their practice."<sup>45</sup> More specifically, the text refers to the practice of the Esoteric Buddhist adept: "It is for this reason that the mantrin (*zhenyan xing zhe* 真言行者),<sup>46</sup> thought after thought, should accord with the secret words (*miyu* 密語) of all the Buddhas."<sup>47</sup> The secret aspect is also stressed in the *Julijialuo longwang yigui* 俱力迦羅龍王儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings of the Dragon King Kulikala; T. 1208), translated by Vajrabodhi, where the ritual practices are referred to as "the Dragon King Kulikala's secret cultivation of mantras and *mudrās*."<sup>48</sup>

That practitioners of Buddhist arcana had a special view of practices involving spells and magic is evidenced in a *dhāraṇī sūtra* such as

<sup>41</sup> T. 1954.46:989a.

<sup>42</sup> For a discussion of the Mahāyāna precursors of the esoteric "three secrets," see McBride 2006.

<sup>43</sup> T. 1201.21:18c.

<sup>44</sup> T. 1201.21:20a.

<sup>45</sup> T. 1201.21:16b.

<sup>46</sup> It is also interesting that we here find the practitioner referred to as "mantrin," in contrast to the older "spell master." In any case, this term clearly denotes a practitioner of Esoteric Buddhism.

<sup>47</sup> T. 1201.21:14b.

<sup>48</sup> T. 1208.21:39a.



the *Da fagu tuoluoni jing* (T. 1340), where we encounter the following phrase, “the *upāya* of the esoteric teaching of all the Buddhas, the World-honored Ones.<sup>49</sup> This type of understanding of Esoteric Buddhist practices is later echoed in Amoghavajra, where we find a reference to “the *upāya* of secrecy (*mi fangbian* 密方便).”<sup>50</sup>

As for altars and ritual practices, including the use of special paraphernalia, we find that the connection between secrecy and performance is also stressed in the relevant texts. In the *Shiyi mian shenzhou xin jing yishu* 十一面神咒心經義疏 (Commentary on the Meaning of the *Ekādaśamukha-dhāraṇī Sūtra*; T. 1802.39), authored by Huizhao 慧沼 (651–714) of the Tang, parts of the commentary are couched in the form of an imaginary dialogue:

Question: “If with this spell one empowers the water and the clothes, is the spell placed in the water and in the clothes [used in the rite]?”

Answer: “The water and the clothes are without consciousness. And likewise is the spell without characteristics. At the time of empowering these things (i.e., to prepare them for use in the rite), all accord with the [power of the] spell. This is the holy and secret art.”<sup>51</sup>

Here the magical aspect of the spell is invoked, and we learn that the underlying *modus operandi* is entirely due to the workings of the “holy and secret art (*shengmi shu* 聖密術).” The further connection between Esoteric Buddhism and ritual secrets is borne out in the use of the term “secret altar” (*bimitan* 祕密壇). In fact, this usage is exclusive to Esoteric Buddhist scriptures and to texts describing Esoteric Buddhist practices.<sup>52</sup> Special altars are defined and recognized as a feature of Esoteric Buddhism.

There are of course reasons why secrecy was considered important by the practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism. A passage in the *Dasheng miao Jixiang pusa shuo chuzai jiaoling falun* 大聖妙吉祥菩薩說除災教令法輪 (Great and Holy Bodhisattva Śrī Lakṣmī Discourses on the Teaching for the Removal of Calamities by Turning the Dharma Wheel)<sup>53</sup> gives a very straightforward and clear discussion of the reasons for maintaining secrecy when carrying out the ritual proceedings:

<sup>49</sup> T. 1340.21:708a.

<sup>50</sup> T. 856.18:175a.

<sup>51</sup> T. 1802.39:1009a.

<sup>52</sup> Cf., e.g., T. 1092.20:385b; T. 952.19:264a; T. 1185B.20:803a; T. 1796.39:745b, etc.

<sup>53</sup> T. 966.19:342b–47b. See also the description in *Foguang da cidian* (hereafter FDC), vol. 5, p. 4340a. It is said to have been lifted from the *Wenshu dajihui*

If on behalf of the country's king it is necessary to make a mandala, one should twist five-colored powder between the fingers and with polychrome colors paint buddha images, bodhisattvas, and all the gods and the different figures and shapes. Inside and outside [the mandala] one must arrange and display the divinities in sequential order. It is necessary to show caution, be quiet, and act in secret when carrying it out. To be sincere in one's disposition and respectful in one's determination is necessary when seeking to obtain [a desired] response. [Then] calamities will be destroyed and blessings and longevity obtained. It is just like a sound and its responding echo. Without seeking there can be no fruit. Do not allow non-believers [to create] the cause and effect [of those following] deviant ways because of their distorted views. [Hence, one should prevent] those of shallow wisdom and without thinking, as well as idiotic and stupid people and so forth, including butchers, children, men of power (*kuiguai* 魁膾),<sup>54</sup> the five [kinds of] *caṇḍālas*,<sup>55</sup> eunuchs, female slaves, prostitutes, and other kinds of people from trying to see this mandala (lit., *lun* 輪). Otherwise this will cause ordinary sentient beings to [give rise to] slander, whereby both those who cause it and those who slander [them] will meet with injury. [Moreover, there are those] who do not gather together all the images of the gods and cause worldly and stupid people abruptly to see it. If they disrespectfully display [the ritual secrets] and reveal them [to the unqualified], the numinous spirits will be displeased, and then their blessings and protection will be hard to request. Dharma people (*faren* 法人) will come to harm if they do not maintain secrecy. [Moreover] their [ritual] arrangements will be in vain!<sup>56</sup>

This passage emphasizes that if the ritual methods are divulged to the uninitiated, harm may follow. Second, secrecy ensures the proper performance of rituals, and ritual secrecy prevents the creation of evil karma. The text makes clear that secrecy is to be maintained in order to avoid trouble with “those people of shallow wisdom and without understanding of the Tathāgata's *upāya* of great compassion and the

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*jing* 文殊大集會經 (*Mañjuśrī-mahāvaiṣṭhī sūtra*), the translation of which has been attributed to the Indian monk Śilabhadra/Huilin 慧琳 (737–820), a disciple of Amoghavajra. For his biography, cf. *T.* 2061.50:738ab.

<sup>54</sup> Interpreted as government officials who abuse their power. Cf. *FDC*, vol. 1, p. 345c.

<sup>55</sup> It is interesting to note that *caṇḍālas*, i.e., low-caste people, are included in this list, as they—in particular the women—are considered by Tantric Buddhist practitioners to be the best partners for the performance of ritual *maithuna*. The fact that this text mentions them as unworthy of participation in the esoteric rite described in our text may indicate something about its date and the context in which it was employed. Probably we are here dealing with a relatively early text, perhaps no later than the seventh century, and rather likely one that was chiefly used in a monastic context.

<sup>56</sup> *T.* 966.19:342c.

majestic, divine power of the mantras.”<sup>57</sup> The same element of secrecy applies to other Esoteric Buddhist texts, one of which states: “This method is secret, and one may not allow a person *abhiṣeka* who has not obtained proper instruction in it.”

*A Dhāraṇī Collection from the Late Tang*

Ranking high in importance among the extant collections of Chinese Buddhist scriptures is the so-called *Fangshan Tripiṭaka*. In contrast to the other Buddhist text collections, it has been carved on stone slabs, which were originally kept at Mt. Fang 房山 in Hebei province, south of present-day Beijing.<sup>58</sup> During a survey of the scriptures comprising this impressive “Stone Tripiṭaka,” I came across a highly interesting work entitled *Shijiao zuishang sheng bimi zang tuoluoni ji* 釋教最上乘祕密藏陀羅尼集 (Collection of the Secret Storehouse of *Dhāraṇīs* of the Highest Vehicle of Buddhism; hereafter *Dhāraṇī Collection*) in thirty rolls; this text is not found in either the *Taishō* or *Zokuzōkyō*.<sup>59</sup> From the preface to this work, entitled *Shijiao zuishang sheng bimi zang tuoluoni ji xu* 釋教最上乘祕密藏陀羅尼集序 (Preface to the *Zuishang sheng bimi zang tuoluoni* of Buddhism; hereafter *Preface of Dhāraṇī Collection*),<sup>60</sup> we learn that it was collated by the monk Zhaowu Xinglin 超悟行琳 (fl. second half of the ninth century to early tenth century),<sup>61</sup> an Esoteric Buddhist master from Da Anguo Temple 大安國寺 in Shangdu 上都 (i.e., Chang’an).<sup>62</sup> Although no author for

<sup>57</sup> T. 966.19:342c.

<sup>58</sup> There are several useful publications pertaining to the *Fangshan Tripiṭaka*, including Beijing tushuguan jinshi zu and Zhongguo fojiao tushu wenwuguan shijing zu, ed. 1987; and Zhongguo fojiao xiehui, comp. 1978. See also Zhongguo fojiao xiehui Fangshan shijing zhengli yanjiu zu, ed. 1986.

<sup>59</sup> *Zhonghua dazang jing* 中華大藏經, 1619.68:500–675. Cf. Zhongguo fojiao xiehui, comp. 1978, pls. 60a–2b, 95. The stone slabs were carved in 1147 C.E. during the Jin dynasty (1125–1234). Cf. Zhongguo fojiao xiehui, comp. 1978, pl. 62b.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Zhongguo fojiao xiehui, comp. 1978, pls. 60a–2b, 95. The stone slabs were carved in 1147 C.E. during the Jin dynasty (1125–1234). Cf. Zhongguo fojiao xiehui, comp. 1978, pl. 62b.

<sup>61</sup> For additional biographical information, see *Mikkyō daijiten* (hereafter *MDJ*), 1603c.

<sup>62</sup> One of the important temples in the Tang capital whose history is associated with Esoteric Buddhism. See *MDJ* (1968–1970), 44bc. During the Huichang suppression of Buddhism it was converted into an imperial garden. Cf. Weinstein 1987b, 132. It is also important to note here that a hoard of high-quality Esoteric Buddhist images in marble have been recovered from the grounds of the site. For a discussion of this material, see Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhist art under the Tang,” in this volume.

the preface is given, it seems likely that it was written by one of Xinglin's disciples. The *Preface of Dhāraṇī Collection* is dated Qianning 乾寧 fifth year, but given the fact that this reign-period ended with the fourth year, i.e., in 897 C.E., the preface was evidently written or completed in 898 C.E.

We have only meager knowledge of Xinglin, who compiled the *Dhāraṇī Collection* and wrote its preface. However, we do know that he was considered a "Master of the Tripiṭaka" (*sanzang* 三藏), that he was a "transmitter of the Esoteric teaching at Da Anguo Temple (*Da Anguo si zhuan mijiao* 大安國寺傳密教)," and that a purple robe had been bestowed upon him by the Tang court in recognition of his spiritual endeavors.<sup>63</sup> Thus we are on fairly safe ground in considering Xinglin an *ācārya* of standing in the Esoteric Buddhist tradition of the Tang.

When combined with the dating of the preface, i.e., 898 C.E., this data allows us to conclude that Xinglin was a relatively prominent Buddhist master in his own day. Second, he was considered a master in the tradition(s) of Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra, as stated in the preface, which indicates the idea of an Esoteric Buddhist lineage of transmission. Third, Anguo Temple was still an important center of Esoteric Buddhism at the end of the ninth century, which means that institutionalized Esoteric Buddhism did not disappear with the Huichang suppression of Buddhism, as has been commonly held. And fourth, the view entertained by some scholars that "*mizang*" or "*bimi zang*," as in this case, did not signify Esoteric Buddhist scriptures in particular, is hereby proven wrong (although the term did also have a more general and nonsectarian meaning as "secret repository of teachings").

Finally, the *Preface to the Dhāraṇī Collection* refers to Esoteric Buddhism as a distinct tradition, seen from the way it employs such terms as "Mizong 密宗," i.e. "Secret School," and "*zongshi* 宗師," i.e., "master of the school."<sup>64</sup> Although until now taken as foundational Zanning's discussion pertaining to Esoteric Buddhism (Payne 2006) dates to nearly a full century after the *Preface to the Dhāraṇī Collection*, and in light of the information provided by this significant source his views should by now be considered much less relevant than these

<sup>63</sup> See Zhongguo fojiao xiehui, comp. 1978, pl. 61a.

<sup>64</sup> See Zhongguo fojiao xiehui, comp. 1978, pl. 61a.

contemporary sources to our understanding of the development and formation of the Tang Esoteric Buddhist tradition.

### *Conclusion*

When compared with other terms used to designate this particular form of Buddhism, I believe that the inherent logic behind “Esoteric Buddhism” should by now be evident. That being said, “Esoteric Buddhism” is merely a term; it does not ultimately correspond to something in the sense of a singular fixed historical reality.

In sum, the use of spells and associated beliefs in magic appear as early as the beginning of the Common Era, although it is highly probable that spells existed alongside orthodox Buddhist practices earlier. From the second and third centuries onward, the spell literature and ritual arcana become increasingly important, eventually developing into a tradition of their own. In Chinese translations from the third through fifth centuries, the usual narratives and normally well-defined doctrinal discourses have been omitted, toned down, and/or replaced with instructions in ritual magic. In many cases we even find that the traditional Mahāyāna quest for universal and full enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*), as well as the perfected deeds of a bodhisattva (*pāramitās*) have been omitted, though perhaps not completely abandoned, as they sometimes remain as an oblique presence in the background. Instead, believers are provided with spells and detailed lists of demons and the suggested ritual methods on how to defeat and control them.

Scriptures of this type may be considered “esoteric Mahāyāna,” as we are obviously not dealing with mainstream Mahāyāna Buddhism but instead with a distinct and special class of Mahāyāna, a form of Buddhism focused on ritual arcana, where spiritual attainment to a large extent has been displaced by success in the magic arts. Moreover, the injunctions we find in these “esoteric” Mahāyāna sūtras, as well as their appearance on the historical horizon, precede mainstream Esoteric Buddhist scriptures in which similar and related practices are contextualized and augmented with the use of *mudrās*, mantras, mandalas, *homa*, *siddhi* seeking etc., the main defining aspects of Esoteric Buddhism.

It is correct, then, to see these earlier scriptures as formative examples of what later became full-fledged Esoteric Buddhism. We are in fact dealing with an unbroken tradition of practices and beliefs that

grew and developed as part of traditional Mahāyāna Buddhism but took on a distinct form and direction of their own, complete with hermeneutics and ritual lore, and which eventually coalesce into the phenomena of a developed Esoteric Buddhism. I would place the historical presence of this in the Indian subcontinent no later than the early sixth century, and in China less than a century later.

If we remain confined to the historical reality of Chinese Buddhism, I would certainly insist on the existence of an Esoteric Buddhist tradition in China and on seeing the term as precisely justified as when one refers to the traditions of Huayan, Tiantai, Jingtu 淨土, or Chan 禪, for that matter. While I am not suggesting that Esoteric Buddhism existed as a distinct sectarian denomination with a firm institutional structure (with the exception of the Zhenyan 真言 phase during the mid- to late Tang), no one, I believe, would seriously question the existence of the Jingtu or Pure Land cult as a major pan-Buddhist tradition in China from the fifth century onward. Actually, a comparison between Esoteric Buddhism and the Jingtu is especially poignant, since both share similarities in their historical development, their largely non-institutional character, and the ways in which they both related to the canonical Mahāyāna literature. They were similarly integrated and absorbed into other forms of Chinese Buddhism while influencing each other.

Finally, I would like to say that a substantial component of the arguments against “Esoteric Buddhism” seems to come from a general misunderstanding on the part of its detractors—namely, that the term is meant to designate a “school” of Buddhism (though it has been used this way in certain cases). One may well argue, as I also do, that the term is valid as an indicator of a “school of practice” or a “tradition of practice,” but of course not as a school in the sense of a sect or institution such as Tiantai or Huayan. Indeed, the Zhenyan tradition of the mid- and late Tang is the only form of Esoteric Buddhism in late medieval China that comes close to what we may think of as a school or sect.

## 12. DHĀRAṆĪ SCRIPTURES

Paul Copp

“*Dhāraṇī* scriptures,” those Buddhist texts that center on the presentation and means to actualize the incantations known as *dhāraṇīs*, constitute a large and diverse corpus within Buddhist literature in Chinese. These texts, identifiable in general terms by the words “*dhāraṇī* scripture” (*tuoluoni jing* 陀羅尼經, *zongchi jing* 總持經) or “incantation scripture” (*zhoujing* 咒經), etc., in their titles, range in size and complexity from the small and simple, such as the *Zhu fo xinyin tuoluoni jing* 諸佛心印陀羅尼經 (*Scripture of the Mind Seal Dhāraṇīs of the Buddhas*; T. 919), a text of only five hundred and eighteen characters,<sup>1</sup> to the vast and multidimensional, such as the *Tuoluoni za ji* 陀羅尼雜集 (*Scripture of Collected Dhāraṇīs*; T. 1336), a huge anthology of ritual methods spanning fifty-seven pages in the *Taishō* edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon. It is not useful to regard *dhāraṇī* scriptures as forming a true genre of Buddhist writing. Instead, the term refers to works from quite different textual genres, ranging from technical manuals, written (like others of its kind) in mainly unadorned declarative language, to prosimetric sūtra narratives rich in metaphor and literary conceit.

By definition, all forms of *dhāraṇī* scriptures center on directions for the ceremonial enactments of incantation(s), most prominently ritual chanting, but also on the hearing, reading, and writing of the spells. The texts often provide extremely detailed instructions for the set-up of the ritual arenas for these enactments, including precise details of the layout of the space, the objects used to delineate it, the proper execution of the image or images on which the devotion of the rites are focused, and, in some cases, the substances to be used to inscribe the incantations. Early *dhāraṇī* scriptures, such as the two listed above,

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<sup>1</sup> A looser understanding of the genre might include early incantation texts whose spells are not identified as *dhāraṇīs*, such as Tanwulan’s (fl. 381–395) *Foshuo zhouchi jing* 佛說咒齒經 (*Scripture Spoken by the Buddha for the Enchantment of Teeth*; T. 1327), a text of only one hundred and two characters, or the anonymous and undated *Foshuo zhoutu jing* 佛說咒目經 (*Scripture Spoken by the Buddha for the Enchantment of Eyes*; T. 1328), in fifty characters.

consist of little other than these elements. Often such texts are simply lists of prescriptions for specific ailments or situations.

Over time, however, the authors of *dhāraṇī* texts embedded their ritual directives within typical Buddhist scriptural narratives, a practice that by the late seventh century became standard in the literature. As Ryūichi Abé has noted, taken in the context of Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptural literature as a whole, *dhāraṇī* scriptures of this kind featured a reversal of the earlier place of *dhāraṇīs* in narrative sūtras. Whereas in early Mahāyāna scriptures, such as the *Lotus Sūtra*, the incantations are presented as ancillary to the main doctrinal and narrative thrusts of the texts—usually as protection for those who would chant them and propound their doctrines—in *dhāraṇī* sutras this situation is reversed: the narrative and doctrines of these texts serve as the frameworks for the incantations, which are their central events and purports.<sup>2</sup>

Changes over time in *dhāraṇī* sūtras extant in Chinese suggest, as well, a picture of a larger ritual tradition in which small elements of an originally vast and diffuse landscape of incantations and practices grew in popularity and came to shape individual and highly popular traditions of practice and imagination. This is most clear in cases of particular incantations—or, perhaps more to the point, particular *names* of incantations, since the actual syllables associated with these names, like their practices, proved to be unstable over time. Spells such as the “Great Peacock King” (*Da kongque wang* 大金孔雀王) the “Wish-Fulfillment” (*Suiqiu* 隨求; *Mahāpratisarā dhāraṇī*), and the “Superlative” (*Zunsheng* 尊勝; *Uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī*), which came to be the foci of individual cults of great popularity in the late medieval period, first appeared as relatively unremarkable components of the large compendia of earlier centuries.<sup>3</sup>

The expansion of small ritual components into features emblematic of specific incantatory traditions is also visible in the transformation of ritual practice and imagination over the centuries. For example, the two basic techniques of bodily enchantment (and their attendant models of efficacy) described in a great many early collections—the wearing of enchanted objects and the infusion into the body of incantatory power, whether directly by speaking spells into the body or by

<sup>2</sup> Ryūichi Abé 1999, 166–67.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of this process in regard to the *Zunsheng zhou*, the Chinese version of the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī*, see Ronald Davidson, “Sources and Inspirations: Esoteric Buddhism in South Asia,” in this volume.



first enchanting material such as oil or ash and then rubbing it onto the body—by the eighth century had themselves, just as much as particular incantations, come to be emblematic of certain *dhāraṇī* cults. Thus, the practices described in the *Foshuo suiqiu jide da zizai tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 佛說隨求即得大自在陀羅尼神咒經 (*Mahāpratisarā dhāraṇī sūtra*; *Scripture of the Dhāraṇī of Wish Fulfillment*; T. 1154) center on the wearing of inscribed (and thereby enchanted) objects, while the most emblematic practices recounted in the *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經 (*Uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī sūtra*; *Scripture of the Superlative Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Crown*; T. 967, et al.) involve the infusion into the body of the inscribed spell's power. By the seventh century at the latest, what had simply been small components of the standard incantatory repertoire had become the emblematic logics of widely popular individual cults.

Just as there is great range in the forms and structures of these scriptures, the natures of the *dhāraṇīs* on which they are centered also vary. Crucial to any attempt to describe the overall character of *dhāraṇī* scriptures is the fact that the term *dhāraṇī*, taken over the long history of its use, refers to quite different kinds of texts, as understood through the practices associated with them. Not only did they figure in these practices as the potent incantations most widely associated with the term *dhāraṇī* today, but also as brief runs of syllables construed as the foci of various kinds of contemplative practice. It is crucial, in fact, to understand that the terms *tuoluoni*, *zongchi* 總持, *chi* 持, and most of the other words used to render *dhāraṇī* and its close cognates, especially in early *dhāraṇī* texts and in Buddhist philosophical explorations of every age, meant most basically “to hold,” “to grasp” (including the sense of “to understand how”), and “to wield” (as in a spell, etc.) rather than “incantation,” and that in such usages these terms could refer both to the *capacity* to employ incantations and also to the very *practice* of doing so.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the earliest extant *dhāraṇī* scriptures, including Zhi Qian's 支謙 (fl. 223–253) early third-century translation of the *Anantamukha-dhāraṇī-sūtra*, the *Foshuo wuliangmen weimichi jing* 佛說無量門微妙密持經 (*Scripture of the Sublime Grasp of the Immeasurable Portal*; T. 1011), featured *dhāraṇīs* that were not incantations at all in the

<sup>4</sup> On the meanings of *dhāraṇī* in Buddhist practice, see Davidson 2009; and Copp 2008.

usual sense. The eight-syllable *dhāraṇī* featured in this text is to be enacted first of all through a meditative and ethical practice (best performed in secluded locales such as mountains and marshlands) centering on the contemplation of the coded meanings of *dhāraṇī* syllables, which are to be written out to facilitate the practice. This practice is closely related to one recommended in a widely-cited passage in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, which, while not contained within a *dhāraṇī* scripture, was clearly representative in its own way of this contemplative strand of early *dhāraṇī* practice. After a general discussion of the bodhisattva's skill in employing incantatory syllables (a skill it calls mantra-*dhāraṇī*), the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* gives a specific example of how this skill is employed. It discusses a practice called the “*dhāraṇī* in which one attains the patient acceptance of a bodhisattva” (*de pusa ren tuoluoni* 得菩薩忍陀羅尼), or *kṣānti-dhāraṇī*. In the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, *kṣānti-dhāraṇī* “consists,” as Jens Braarvig has explained, “in pondering a mantra until one understands its meaning, namely that it is without meaning, and accordingly understands all *dharma*s as being beyond expression.”<sup>5</sup> Attaining this understanding, the bodhisattva is able to abide without fear amid the “un arisen,” or empty-of-essence, phenomenal world, a fearlessness characteristic of one of the loftiest states of spiritual attainment in Buddhism, and one associated as well with the *dhāraṇī* practice of Zhi Qian's version of the *Anantamukha*.

Among the key differences between these early contemplative *dhāraṇīs* and their later incantatory cousins is that the “potency” of the earlier set lies entirely in the contemplative practices that center on them; the syllables themselves are said to be inert, except as codes or metaphors. Over time, these early forms of *dhāraṇīs*, or of mantras in *dhāraṇī* practices, seem to have fallen entirely out of use. Later translations of the *Anantamukha*, for example, feature, instead of syllables encoding doctrinal profundities, a *dhāraṇī* incantation of the kind familiar from later incantation scriptures, whose potency lies not in the contemplation of the *dhāraṇī* but rather is said to inhere in the syllables themselves.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Braarvig 1985.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Amoghavajra's (Bukong 不空, 705–774) rendering, the *Chusheng wubianmen tuoluoni jing* 出生無邊門陀羅尼經, T. 1009.

The impact of *dhāraṇī* scriptures on Buddhist practical traditions was profound. Most famously, and as explored by Ronald Davidson in his contribution to this volume, *dhāraṇī* literature was a strong contributing factor of and resource for the rise of Buddhist tantrism in India in the first half of the seventh century. In the brief flourishing of formal esoteric Buddhist lineages in Tang China, *dhāraṇī* scriptures were often rewritten and their ritual imperatives transformed from the relatively simple procedures of earlier *dhāraṇī* traditions into much more conceptually elaborate productions, complete with ancillary ritual manuals and commentaries. Within tantric schools, *dhāraṇī* texts such as the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā*, for example, were rewritten and reconstrued as the centers of elaborate ritual and commentarial practices, eventually becoming full-fledged tantric sub-traditions of their own.

More narrowly within China, however, it is crucial to understand that the practical traditions in part inspired by *dhāraṇī* scriptures were not limited to those absorbed within the high esoteric Buddhist dispensations—the older heritage of *dhāraṇī* techniques continued to be a resource in simpler and more widespread incantatory practices. This fact is perhaps most vividly illustrated by material *dhāraṇī* practices, such as those centering on incantation amulets worn on the bodies of the living and the dead, usually featuring the *Suiqiu dhāraṇī*, and those focused on the creation and placing of *dhāraṇī*-inscribed pillars, most famously the *Zunsheng dhāraṇī*. These inscribed realia of Buddhist spell practice have been discovered in practical contexts such as tombs and temple courtyards, where they clearly bore little if any relation to the high monastic traditions of Buddhist tantrism in medieval China.<sup>7</sup> Related to these practices, and perhaps even more prevalent, was the use of *dhāraṇīs* as “textual relics” of the Buddha within *stūpas*, images, and other reliquary contexts.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> On amulets of the Mahāpratisarā in medieval China, see Ma Shichang 2004. On “*dhāraṇī* pillars” in the same period, see Liu Shufen 2008.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Shen Hsueh-Man 2001.

## 13. THE APOCRYPHA AND ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN CHINA

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

The value and importance of apocryphal scriptures has long been recognized as a major feature of East Asian Buddhism as a whole, although the fact remains that most of these fabricated works originated in China.<sup>1</sup> Scriptures belonging to this class of Buddhist literature are normally understood as taking the form of pseudo-Indian *sūtras*, but a variety of other texts, including ritual works and commentaries attributed to Indian authors, may also be included. Incidentally, apocryphal scriptures are frequently encountered in the context of Esoteric Buddhism, although it is rightly a phenomena of the entire Buddhist tradition as it unfolded in China.<sup>2</sup> A large part of the apocryphal material in Esoteric Buddhism is not just fabricated texts or “false scriptures,” but appears in a variety of textual forms ranging from blatant forgeries to authentic Indian works that have been augmented with additional material composed in China (or the Chinese cultural sphere). Like much of the exoteric Chinese Buddhist apocrypha, such esoteric texts seek to establish spiritual legitimacy by postulating a spurious authorship, preferably an Indian one.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The primary scholarly work on Chinese Buddhist apocrypha is still Makita 1976. For an overview of the study on Chinese Buddhist apocrypha, see Buswell 1990. For an excellent study on how apocrypha was viewed by the Chinese Buddhist tradition, see Tokuno 1990.

<sup>2</sup> The various books and articles by the Taiwanese scholar Xiao Dengfu 蕭登福 have revealed that Esoteric Buddhist scriptures are more composite and textually complex than most other Chinese Buddhist works. Cf. Xiao 1994. According to him, a large portion of the Esoteric Buddhist material consists of apocryphal works or scriptures that have been strongly modified by Chinese cultural concerns. Most notably, the influence of Daoism on Esoteric Buddhism has captured his interest. Despite the usefulness of Xiao’s findings, he takes a completely non-historical approach to textual study and overevaluates the influence of Daoism, sometimes confusing it with what were common traditional Chinese beliefs and practices. Because of this, Xiao often fails to see the many cases where Esoteric Buddhism impacted Daoist practices, and not the other way around.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of these criteria, see Tokuno 1990.

*On the Characteristics of Esoteric Buddhist Apocrypha in China*

The detection and identification of apocryphal scriptures in the context of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism is complicated by the fact that much of this material is by its very nature already quite hybrid. This is both the case with *bona fide* Indian texts as well as with compositions made in China. Hence, a clear and well-defined demarcation between what constitutes an “authentic scripture,” in the sense of a “pure” text, and what is not is problematic for a number of reasons, which will become clear in the following discussion. Suffice to say that only some of the numerous Esoteric Buddhist scriptures from India existing in Chinese translation are free from what may be referred to as “cultural tampering.” It is in the nature of translations, especially if they attempt to bridge very different cultural boundaries (as was the case with medieval India and China), that certain modifications had to be made in order to get the message across. It is also obvious that some translators or teams took great liberties when translating texts containing complicated doctrinal or ritual aspects. In addition, some translators, such as the important *ācārya* and court monk Amoghavajra, simply added their own material to the texts they translated, or otherwise subjected the texts to considerable editorial restructuring to suit a given purpose.

The most common apocryphal type of Esoteric Buddhist scripture we encounter in the Chinese material is the kind that masquerades as a canonical sūtra or a treatise of Indian origin. Scriptures belonging to this more common category by and large follow the format and structure we find among exoteric apocryphal Buddhist scriptures. This means that they mimic an authentic Indian Esoteric Buddhist sūtra more or less faithfully. Even if misgivings as to the authenticity of such a work arose in Buddhist circles at some later point in time, often this type of apocrypha can be seen as having eventually attained canonical status and recognition as an authentic, or at least respectable, scripture.<sup>4</sup>

There is also a class of apocryphal texts that from the very inception of their obscure beginnings were recognized as such and categorized in the Buddhist catalogues as being either unauthentic, of dubious provenance, or even a forgery. In other words, apocrypha that did

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<sup>4</sup> Such as was the case with the *Shou lengyan jing* 首楞嚴經 (Pseudo-Sūraṅgama Sūtra). T. 945.

not pass the test of authenticity. Even so, a considerable number of these texts became both influential and culturally important in China, sometimes even surpassing authentic Indian scriptures in popularity. In this regard, it is important to remember that while the majority of the apocryphal Buddhist scriptures in China were composed by independent Buddhist groups and individuals to further particular agendas, the Chinese government was also in some cases behind the production of forgeries. As an example of this tendency, we see how Empress Wu (r. 685–704) tried to suppress apocryphal Buddhist texts, especially those containing spells and talismanic charts, while at the same time having monks tamper with authentic Buddhist translations in order to further her own political ambitions.<sup>5</sup>

Not all the Esoteric Buddhist apocryphal scriptures in China were disguised as Indian scriptures, i.e. *sūtras* or *śāstras*. Some forged texts that have been passed off as translations bear attributions to a famous monk-author without having actually been written by that person. The logic behind such attributions is essentially the same as when a given apocryphal scripture was being assigned to a fictitious translator of importance. It is all a matter of borrowing prominence and authenticity in order to provide textual and spiritual authority to one's forgery.

There is also a type of Esoteric Buddhist scripture that can best be termed borderline cases. These texts are neither complete forgeries nor fully authentic scriptures. Scriptures of this type often consist of a "core" or parts that are authentic, i.e., that may have an Indian (or at least a foreign) origin, embedded into an otherwise fabricated text, or vice versa. Through this process we have an apocryphal sūtra that is actually "molded" around authentic textual parts. In some cases a given scripture may consist of more or less authentic parts, sometimes even to the point of being a compendium of excerpted Esoteric Buddhist material lifted from a variety of original scriptures. In other cases, they barely transmit the imprint of an authentic text via a few lines or even through rewriting.

An example of this is the *Guanding jing* 灌頂經 (*Consecration Scripture*),<sup>6</sup> a composite text consisting of several, individual scriptures, that features many elements of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist prac-

<sup>5</sup> See Forte 1976.

<sup>6</sup> T. 1331. Cf. Strickmann 1990.

tice and at the same time contains large segments that could only have been written in the Chinese cultural context.

### *Apocryphal Dhāraṇī Literature*

It is no exaggeration to say that the *dhāraṇī* class of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures in China is where we find the highest concentration of indigenously fabricated texts. The obvious reason for this is that spells and magical incantations were immensely popular and widespread in medieval China and demand for this type of Esoteric Buddhist text superseded the availability and accessibility of original Indian works.<sup>7</sup> This is also the oldest type of Esoteric Buddhist literature to be translated into Chinese, whether in the form of a standard Mahāyāna sūtra, such as is found in the *dhāraṇī* chapter of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*,<sup>8</sup> in the *Mātāṅgī sūtra*,<sup>9</sup> or in a more developed Esoteric Buddhist scripture, such as the peculiar *Qifo bapusa suoshuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神咒經 (*Dhāraṇī* Spirit-Spell Sūtra preached by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas).<sup>10</sup>

Some of these scriptures would eventually lose their dubious auras as forgeries and eventually be canonized in later periods. This development is also reflected in the Esoteric Buddhist apocrypha. Among these are the *Guanding jing*, the *Fo shuo zhou shi qibing jing* 佛說咒時氣病經 (Buddha Speaks the Scripture on Using Spells When Qi [Causes] Sickness),<sup>11</sup> a short scripture representative of a whole class of minor spell texts of dubious provenance, which also includes the *Foshuo quewen huangshen zhou jing* 佛說卻溫黃神咒經 (Scripture Spoken by the Buddha on the Divine Spell for Driving Away Yellow Fever),<sup>12</sup> and a more prominent work such as the *Pseudo-Śūraṅgama Sūtra*, a later apocryphal scripture of considerable renown.<sup>13</sup> The first text

<sup>7</sup> For a highly useful discussion of the Buddhist spell literature in China, see Strickmann 2002, 89–122.

<sup>8</sup> T. 262.

<sup>9</sup> T. 1300.

<sup>10</sup> T. 1332.21:536b–61b. It was translated by an unknown person some time during the Eastern Jin (317–420). The colophon of this sūtra is contained in the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (Buddhist Catalogue of the Kaiyuan [Period]). Cf. T. 2154, 55:654c.

<sup>11</sup> As contained in the *Tuoluoni zaji* (Miscellaneous Collection of *Dhāraṇīs*). T. 1336.21:632bc. A shorter version may also be found in T. 1326.21:491a.

<sup>12</sup> ZZ. (1975–1989) 193,2:860c–61a.

<sup>13</sup> T. 945.

mentioned above is interesting for a variety of reasons, as documented by Michel Strickman.<sup>14</sup> However, it must not be overlooked that this apocryphal work in effect consists of several separate texts, some of which would appear to be if not authentic Indian works, at least based on or informed by such. This includes the scriptures constituting the eighth chapter, the *Mañiratna sūtra*,<sup>15</sup> and the twelfth chapter, which is closely modeled around the *Bhaiṣajyaguru sūtra*.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, virtually all the individual scriptures making up the *Guanding jing* are either hybrid or outright Chinese constructs one way or the other.

The *Zhou shi qibing jing*, as mentioned above, is a spell scripture, written in a mixture of pseudo-Sanskrit and proper Chinese in the form of an invocation to the Three Jewels and other buddhas as well as Buddhist followers. The spell is followed by a lengthy prayer in Chinese to the buddhas of the ten directions, which is not found in the shorter *Taishō* version. There is no obvious connection between the stated purpose of the spell—protection against the arising of unwholesome *qi* 氣, i.e. pneuma—and the adoration of the Three Jewels and the other buddhas.<sup>17</sup>

The *Foshuo quewen huangshen zhou jing*, though it is modeled after an Indian spell scripture, is obviously a Chinese composition. The spell it features is not of Indian origin and neither is a list of seven disease-causing demons it contains. Moreover it also refers to evil *qi*.

The *Pseudo-Śūraṅgama Sūtra* is another matter.<sup>18</sup> First, it was written to resemble an authentic Indian Buddhist scripture, i.e., the author(s) went to great pains to compose a text that followed rather faithfully the literary norms of a traditional Indian Mahāyāna sūtra. Second, a clear-cut discourse runs through it. Third, it features fairly uniform doctrinal positions that underlie the entire text.<sup>19</sup> Fourth, it teaches a series of well-defined practices, including the important spell, and instructions on setting up a ritual space. Although the *Pseudo-Śūraṅgama* has been

<sup>14</sup> Strickmann 1990, 75–118.

<sup>15</sup> *T.* 1331.21, pp. 517c–21a.

<sup>16</sup> *T.* 1331.21:532b–36b.

<sup>17</sup> The scripture mentioned in the Liang Catalogue under the title *Zhoushi qi* 咒時氣 (Spell [to be Used] at the Time of Qi) may in all likelihood have been identical with that found here. Cf. *Chu sanzang ji*, p. 179.

<sup>18</sup> *T.* 945. Controversy has surrounded this important apocryphal scripture since its creation during the mid-Tang. For a recent discussion with ample references, see Benn (forthcoming).

<sup>19</sup> It may be argued here that the special piety and stress on prohibitions featured in the scripture are somewhat excessive, indicating a cultural milieu closer to medieval China than India.



classified as an Esoteric Buddhist work since the late Tang, one cannot help noting that its only truly Esoteric Buddhist feature is the so-called *Śūraṅgama Spell*, which is central to the scripture. Recent studies have revealed that this spell has been assembled on the basis of authentic *dhāraṇī* material.<sup>20</sup> Even so, the spell, as well as the ritual chapter and the related practice, are detached from the scripture's overall discourse, which is by and large exoteric in nature. This indicates that the spell was grafted onto or inserted into the doctrinal message of the scripture as a sort of "transcendental syllabus," a magical condensation of its expressed meaning. Yet the text does not provide any clear directions as to the use of the spell in the ritual procedure—something that is normally not the case with mainstream ritual texts used in Esoteric Buddhist practice. Nevertheless, the *Pseudo-Śūraṅgama* became immensely popular in China during the late Tang, and by the time of the Northern Song it was one of the most widely studied Buddhist scriptures among intellectuals in China.<sup>21</sup> The *dhāraṇī* was even published separately for distribution among commoner Buddhists, and it would seem that it was essentially the scripture's spell that secured this apocrypha its enduring popularity up to the present.<sup>22</sup>

Apocryphal *dhāraṇīs* or spells deviate from *dhāraṇīs* in transcribed Sanskrit on a number of important points. First, they do not carry any meaning as Sanskrit text (although, of course, meaning was attributed to them). They tend to be made up of nonsensical words or are simply a string of phonetic characters meant to emulate the sound of the Sanskrit, much in the same way false *dhāraṇīs* were constructed by Chinese Daoists in order to compete with the spells used by Buddhists.<sup>23</sup> Second, they do occasionally contain Chinese names or whole text passages that reveal their true nature as indigenous Chinese creations.

<sup>20</sup> The *Śūraṅgama Spell*, including its text in Siddham, can be found in the important Esoteric Buddhist spell collection, the *Shijiao zuishang sheng bimi zang tuoluoni ji* 釋教最上乘祕密藏陀羅尼集 (Collection of the Secret Storehouse of *Dhāraṇīs* of the Highest Vehicle of Buddhism) included among the slabs of the stone-engraved Tripiṭaka at Fangshan 房山. Cf. *Zhonghua dazang jing* 中華大藏經, 1619.68:500–675.

<sup>21</sup> It is known that the important literati Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 (1037–1101) studied it. Cf. Grant 1994, 90–91, etc.

<sup>22</sup> Here it is interesting to note that both the *Guanding jing* and the *Pseudo-Śūraṅgama* became equally popular in Korea, whereas they seem to have enjoyed almost no importance in Japan.

<sup>23</sup> Spells of this type are commonly found in scriptures associated with the Lingbao 靈寶 tradition.

Third, some hybrid works (see below) may occasionally be found to contain authentic *dhāraṇīs*, or parts thereof, that have been incorporated into them, i.e., material lifted from authentic Indian scriptures and inserted into the apocryphal composition.

*On Hybrid Works and Transformed Scriptures*

Many of the Esoteric Buddhist scriptures in China that feature anomalies or traces of cultural tampering are not really apocryphal in the sense of being proper Chinese compositions or constructions, but neither are they purely Indian scriptures. They represent a sort of textual and cultural compromise: they may consist of translations of an original Indian text or contain passages or parts of Indian scriptures mixed together with material that is purely Chinese. Other works may be actual Chinese compositions that also include original Sanskrit material. It also appears that during the process of translation many Esoteric Buddhist scriptures underwent considerable editorial changes. These changes were undoubtedly deemed necessary by the translators in order to make a given teaching or ritual practice easier to adapt to the Chinese cultural milieu. However, the more a given text is adapted or modified, the greater the changes to its original intent and structure. Therefore, we see in these hybrid Esoteric Buddhist works a variety of changes—from simple adaptations such as changes of names and terms, to serious augmentation, major additions, rewriting, restructuring, and even excision of original material.

Illustrative examples of such textual transmutation and permutation can be seen in the earliest versions of the scriptures on *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī*, which was transmitted in China during the late fourth to mid-fifth centuries,<sup>24</sup> as well as in the textual history of the cycle of scriptures devoted to the demon-general Āṭavaka.<sup>25</sup> The early versions of the *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī* scriptures are not only truncated and strangely put together, they also feature considerable

<sup>24</sup> As represented by T. 986, T. 987, and T. 988. For a study of these early *Mahāmāyūrī* texts, see Sørensen 2006b.

<sup>25</sup> For a thorough and informative discussion of this divinity, including the related cult and scriptures, cf. Duquenne 1983b. See also Strickmann 2002, 143–51. Unfortunately Strickmann avoids discussing the history of the Āṭavaka scriptures and their rituals in the setting of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism; thus his study falls short of providing a solid treatment of this otherwise important and highly interesting material. For more on Āṭavaka see Sørensen, “Central Divinities in the Esoteric Buddhist Pantheon in China” in this volume.

structural inconsistencies. Moreover, they can hardly pass for sūtras in the usual sense of the word, even though they were clearly based on original Indian manuscripts in some form. Interestingly, the so-called “Kumārajīva translation,”<sup>26</sup> the latest of the three early versions, contains large portions of text that are obviously of purely Chinese origin. In contrast, the later, mature versions of this important Esoteric Buddhist sūtra, beginning with Saṅghabara’s translation from the mid-Liang dynasty (502–552),<sup>27</sup> has by and large eliminated the inconsistencies and textual peculiarities of the earlier versions. Especially the early eighth-century version by Yijing 義淨 (635–713) is a well-balanced translation that would appear to have been quite faithful to the Sanskrit manuscript on which it is based.<sup>28</sup> The latest translation of the *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī sūtra* is the greatly expanded, three-chapter version by Amoghavajra.<sup>29</sup> While it must not be forgotten that this latest version of the sūtra reflects textual, iconic, and ritual developments that took place in India after the earlier versions were translated into Chinese, there are indeed many instances in this version where the translator has augmented his translation with material that is purely Chinese in nature. This includes cultural aspects found in the listing of demons, astrological elements, reading of omens, and so on.

Another late text with obvious apocryphal features is the *Maming pusa da shenli wubi yanfa niansong guiyi* 馬鳴菩薩大神力無比驗法念誦軌儀 (Ritual Procedures of Aśvaghōṣa Bodhisattva’s Great Divine Powerful, Incomparable, and Fulfilling Method of Invocation),<sup>30</sup> the translation of which has been ascribed to Vajrabodhi, one of the “Three Great Ācāryas” of the Tang. A brief look at this ritual text reveals beyond any doubt that it is not an authentic translation from Sanskrit. In fact, the scripture is neither an ordinary ritual text (despite its title) nor a “pure” apocryphal sūtra either, although it clearly contains parts of both types of texts. Furthermore, the text is not a translation as claimed; in fact, it has nothing to do with Vajrabodhi. The section it contains that masquerades as a sūtra, or rather the excerpt of one, is obviously a fabrication. Second, and most important, the divinity around which the text’s discourse and ritual revolves, namely the astral

<sup>26</sup> T. 988.19:481c–4c.

<sup>27</sup> T. 984.19:446b–59a.

<sup>28</sup> T. 985.

<sup>29</sup> T. 982.

<sup>30</sup> T. 1166.20:674c–5a.

bodhisattva Maming/Aśvaghōṣa, is a Chinese construct—basically, an invented divinity with no traceable Indian history.<sup>31</sup>

*Intersectarian Apocrypha and Hybrid Texts*

Apocrypha that were composed in order to accommodate intersectarian borrowings between the different schools of Chinese Buddhism constitutes a category of their own. Such scriptures were produced as part of a strategy of appropriation. In other words, what had proven a popular practice or important political symbol in another sectarian context was taken over and utilized in a different religious context. There are many examples that illustrate this interesting feature of Esoteric Buddhist apocrypha in medieval China, but for the present purpose it will suffice to provide a few representative cases of this type of apocrypha.

During the late Tang, doctrinal and ritual rapprochement between Zhenyan Buddhism and Chan took place. One of the best and clearest examples of an apocryphal scripture reflecting this development is the *Jin'gang junjing jin'gang ding yijie rulai shenmiao bimi jin'gang jie da sanmeiye xiuxing sishier zhongtan fa jing zuoyong wei fayi ze*—*Da Piluzhena jin'gang xindi famen mi fajie tan fayi ze* 金剛峻經金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二種壇法經作用威法儀則大毘盧那金剛心地法門秘法戒壇法儀則 (The Lofty Vajra Scripture, Vajraoṣṇīṣa of All the Tathāgatas, the Deep and Wonderful, Secret Vajradhātu, Great *Samaya*, the Scripture for Cultivating the Forty-two Kinds of Methods [for Setting up] the Altar Employing the Awesome Methods of Ritual Proceedings, the Dharma Door of the Esoteric Dharma Precepts Altar's Methods of Ritual Proceedings of Mahāvairocana's Vajra Mind Ground; hereafter *Tanfā yice*), falsely attributed to Amoghavajra.<sup>32</sup> This scripture features Esoteric Buddhist practices and beliefs combined with a list of the Chan Buddhist 禪宗 patriarchal lineage, including authentic verses of transmission

<sup>31</sup> Some years ago Roger Goepfer, in his study of Aizen Myōō, also arrived at a similar conclusion with regard to the object of his work. Aizen, considered an important and orthodox divinity in Japanese Shingon, turned out not only to have no Indian past but no Chinese past, either. He is simply a Japanese Heian construct and the texts seeking to associate him with China are apocryphal. Cf. Goepfer 1993.

<sup>32</sup> P. 3913. Cf. Tanaka 1983, 135–66. For a résumé of this chapter in English, see Tanaka 1981. See also Sørensen, “The Presence of Esoteric Buddhist Elements in Chinese Buddhism during the Tang,” in this volume.

in a ritual setting. The Chan lineage of transmission it presents has been adapted from the orthodox patriarchal lineage as found in the *Shengzhou ji* 聖胄集 (Collection of the Holy Descendants), a work of Southern Chan provenance.<sup>33</sup>

Likewise, texts reflecting the synthesis between Esoteric Buddhism and the Pure Land tradition also appear in the form of apocryphal scriptures. A good example of this is the *Jiupin zhusheng Amituo sanmodi ji tuoluoni jing* 九品往生阿彌陀三摩地集陀羅尼經 (Scripture on the Collected Dhāraṇīs of Amitābha's Samādhi on the Nine Divisions of Rebirth),<sup>34</sup> which places Pure Land belief and doctrine in the context of Esoteric Buddhist ritual, including special mantras for rebirth in the Pure Land.<sup>35</sup> Another apocryphal text that combines Esoteric Buddhist spells with Pure Land beliefs is the *Foding xin Guanshiyin pusa da tuoluoni jing* 佛頂心觀世音菩薩大陀羅尼經 (Scripture on the Great Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa Heart of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva).<sup>36</sup>

The same tendency can also be observed in works such as the *Da fangguang fo huayan jing ru fajie pin sishier zi guanmen* 大方廣佛華嚴經入法界品四十二字觀門 (Method of Meditation on the Forty-two Letters of the *Gaṇḍhayūha* Chapter of the Avatamsaka Sūtra)<sup>37</sup> and the *Da fanguang fo huayan jing ru fajie pin dunzheng Piluzhe'na fashen zilun yuqie yigui* 大方廣佛花嚴經入法界品頓證毗盧遮那法身字輪瑜伽儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings of the *Gaṇḍhavyūha* Chapter of the Avatamsaka Sūtra Sudden Enlightenment of Vairocana's Dharmakāya Character-wheel Yoga),<sup>38</sup> both of which represent a synthesis of Huayan doctrine and Esoteric Buddhist beliefs. The first of these texts has coopted a section from the *Gaṇḍhavyūha* and added to

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Tanaka 2002.

<sup>34</sup> T. 934.19, pp. 79b–80a.

<sup>35</sup> Spells appear in texts relating to Pure Land belief relatively early in the history of Chinese Buddhism, and were originally part of the Indian tradition. Cf. *Amituo fo shuo zhou* 阿彌陀佛說咒 (Amitābha Buddha Utters a Mantra), T. 369.12, p. 352a. Exactly when Esoteric Buddhist elements were added to the Pure Land tradition is not clear, but it may very well have taken place during the third to fourth centuries. Interesting information can be found in the encyclopedic, *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林. T. 2122.53:735b–38b. However, only with the flowering of the Zhenyan tradition from the eighth century onward were Pure Land beliefs and Esoteric Buddhist doctrine brought into alignment and systematized.

<sup>36</sup> P. 3916 (5) etc. For additional information on this interesting scripture, see Yü 1995.

<sup>37</sup> T. 1019.19:707c–9a.

<sup>38</sup> T. 1019.20:709bc.

it a meditation practice consisting of visualizing the forty-two letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. The latter text, which is ideologically derived from the former, focuses its discourse on the instantaneous entrance into the One Vehicle of Vairocana by contemplating his dharma body. Moreover, it places the Sanskrit characters for visualization in a wheel shape. While the former work was most likely authored by Amoghavajra, the latter is of unknown but clearly Chinese authorship.

*Talismanic Charts, Seals, and Esoteric Buddhist Apocrypha*

It has now become generally acknowledged that Daoism played a considerable role in the process through which Buddhism became a truly Chinese religion. Incidentally, it is in connection with the formation and development of Esoteric Buddhism in China that the Daoist influence is most pronounced, and therefore easiest to discern.<sup>39</sup> Among the Daoist practices that Buddhist ritual specialists took over from early on was the lore of the “heavenly writ (*tianwen* 天文),” in particular the use of talismanic charts and talismanic seals in the form of amulets.<sup>40</sup> The use of protective amulets is also known from the context of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India, but in a markedly different manner from the developments that took place in China.<sup>41</sup>

The use of talismans, i.e., diagrams of power, by Buddhists in China may have begun as early as the beginning of the fourth century.<sup>42</sup> The Buddhists’ borrowing of this practice was probably stimulated by its popularity and widespread use among people from all walks of life in Chinese society, and its prevalence in China can unproblematically

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<sup>39</sup> For a number of studies on this influence, see the various books and articles by the Taiwanese scholar Xiao Dengfu 蕭登福 1991, 1992, 1994. For a review of the latter text, Xiao’s most important work, which by and large includes his earlier studies, see Sørensen 1995b. Although Xiao’s work is somewhat tendentious, in that he considers himself a sort of “defender” of Daoism against the prejudices of Buddhist scholars, his systematic “diggings” in the Esoteric Buddhist corpus of texts preserved in Chinese do yield a wealth of interesting insights and useful references.

<sup>40</sup> See Strickmann, 2002, pp. 123–93, and Robson, “Talismans in Chinese Esoteric Buddhism,” in this volume.

<sup>41</sup> As documented in various Esoteric Buddhist works of Indian origin, such as the *Mahāpratisarā-dhāraṇī sūtra* (T. 1154) etc., images and amulets were worn on the person as protection. However, the concept of ritual sealing with the concrete use of a seal have to my knowledge not been documented anywhere. The talismans used by Indian Buddhists were more in the form of a three-dimensional object, such as an image or holy symbol.

<sup>42</sup> Strickmann 2002, 140–43.

be traced back to the late Western Han (206 BCE–24 CE). The rise to prominence of the Lingbao 靈寶 tradition of Daoism during the fourth–fifth centuries may have served as a stimulating factor.<sup>43</sup>

Buddhist talismans and seals are not direct replicas of those used in Daoism, or at least are rarely so; they are more like copies, similar in form, concept, and mode of composition. Their ritual and medicinal uses were by and large identical with how they were used by Daoists, discounting the elements that hinge on points of doctrine (such as a talisman for rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land) and type of divinity (e.g., a talisman of Ucchuṣma, and so on).<sup>44</sup> Unless there are clear distinguishing factors, such as an iconic or identifying name accompanying a given talisman, the context in which they were used can primarily determine their actual religious affiliation.

Although Daoist influence on Esoteric Buddhist apocrypha constituted a persuasive current discernible throughout the medieval period, it is most pronounced in ritual texts, in particular works connected with the worship of the planets and constellations.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, it would appear that Daoist influence, in particular that pertaining to the use of talismans and talismanic seals, found its widest and most extensive expression in the popular cults that developed around the various forms of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.

Although the cult of more than one form of Avalokiteśvara became popular in connection with the use of talismans, it is Cintāmaṇicakra who most often appears in the apocrypha. Several manuscripts found at Dunhuang document this relationship, including the *Guanshiyin Ruyilun tuoluoni huaxiang fa bing biexing wen* 觀世音如意輪陀羅尼化相法並別行文 (Method of Avalokiteśvara Cintāmaṇicakra *Dhāraṇī* for Transforming Forms with the Text of Alternative Practice),<sup>46</sup> as well as similar texts devoted to this form of Avalokiteśvara that also contain talismans.<sup>47</sup>

Exactly when talismans first started to be linked with Cintāmaṇicakra is difficult to determine with any degree of precision. The extant man-

<sup>43</sup> This development is discussed in Ōfuchi 1997, 73–219. See also Kobayashi 1990, 95–185.

<sup>44</sup> For the seals of Ucchuṣma, see Strickmann 2002, 156–61.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Sørensen, "Astrology and the Worship of the Planets in Esoteric Buddhism during the Tang," in this volume.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *P.* 2153 (2).

<sup>47</sup> Important among these are *P.* 3835V° (11), which is largely analogous to *P.* 2153 (2), and the unidentified text of *P.* 3874 (1).

uscripts of the *Guanshiyin Ruyilun tuoluoni huaxiang fa bing biexing wen*, and other related texts, appear to date from the second half of the Tang dynasty, and none would seem to predate the ninth century.<sup>48</sup> This might be taken as an indication that the use of talismans within the Cintāmaṇicakra cult was a fairly late phenomena in Tang Buddhism. In another of the scriptures relating to the worship of this form of Avalokiteśvara, the *Qixing Ruyilun bimi yao jing* 七星如意輪祕密要經 (Scripture on the Secret Essentials of Cintāmaṇicakra and the Great Dipper),<sup>49</sup> the translation of which is also attributed to Amoghavajra, we find the mention of three talismans. However, the text, as we have it today, does not actually provide images of them. No matter the historical reality of the introduction of the talismanic material into the cult of Cintāmaṇicakra Avalokiteśvara, it is obvious that the later tradition tends to associate this development with the name of Amoghavajra.<sup>50</sup> It is interesting to note here that there was also a ritual tradition in medieval Japanese Shingon Buddhism 真言宗 in which talismans were used in connection with Cintāmaṇicakra worship.<sup>51</sup>

### *Esoteric Buddhist Apocrypha and the Japanese Question*

To conclude this brief survey, let us take a quick look at the Esoteric Buddhist apocrypha that have survived as manuscripts in Japan. Since a rather large amount of the extant Esoteric Buddhist material written in Chinese has been preserved only in the form of Japanese manuscripts, it is necessary to exercise a certain prudence in regard to the authenticity of some of these texts. This warning concerns both

<sup>48</sup> P. 2153 would appear to have been copied out sometime during the Tibetan occupation of Shazhou. This manuscript has obviously not been written with a brush but with a stylus, a common feature for texts dating between ca. 780–848 CE. See Fujieda 1966, 1970.

<sup>49</sup> T. 1091.

<sup>50</sup> This text is based on a Japanese edition from 1801, and although attributed to Amoghavajra, it is likely to be an apocryphal scripture of Japanese provenance. A central part of the scripture consists of the *Qixing Ruyi lun pusa ji* 七星如意輪菩薩偈 (Verses of the Seven Stars Cintāmaṇicakra Bodhisattva) T. 1091.20:224c–225a. In terms of contents or structure it bears little resemblance to the other material related to the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper. The Great Dipper occurs also in connection with a *homa* altar for a ritual. T. 1091.20:224b. The relationship between Cintāmaṇicakra and the Great Dipper, in connection with which there is a rich talismanic tradition in both Daoism and Buddhism, may give us a clue as to why we find so many talismans associated with the cult of this form of Avalokiteśvara.

<sup>51</sup> See Aptilon, “Goddess Genealogy: Nyoirin Kannon in the Ono Shingon Tradition,” in this volume.



those texts claiming Chinese authorship as well as scriptures said to be Chinese translations of Indian works. Much of this material has been published in the four volumes of Esoteric Buddhist texts in the *Taishō* Tripiṭaka, as well as some texts scattered in the *Dainihon zokuzōkyō*, in many cases without having undergone serious scholarly scrutiny into their authenticity. In short, is impossible to trace many of these scriptures back to a Chinese cultural context in a convincing manner. Either we have no information on them in the Chinese Buddhist catalogues (their titles are unknown in China), or they do not occur in the lists of Buddhist scriptures brought back to Japan by the important pilgrim-monks of the Heian period. Given that the supposed authors or translators of many of these unidentified texts are said to be famous monks active in Tang China or even earlier (including, of course, the *ācāryas* Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra), we have reason to suspect that many are later fabrications, and some may eventually turn out to be later *Japanese* fabrications.

Since both the *Taishō* and the *Zokuzōkyō* are standard compilations of primary material that enjoy a very wide readership, especially now that all the texts they include have been digitalized, it is extremely important that we are fully aware of the actual provenance of a given text and understand its history. The recent scholarship that has developed from the discovery of the hand-copied Nara-dated Tripiṭaka from Nanatsu-dera 七寺 in Nagoya underscores the relevance of this.<sup>52</sup>

The apocryphal Esoteric Buddhist scriptures of Japanese provenance can often be detected by using the same cultural comparison that we use to determine Chinese apocrypha from authentic Indian works. If a given text under scrutiny contains elements that have a distinct elements of Japanese culture, we may be fairly certain that such a scripture could not have been produced in China (or India). Such cases are the easiest to determine. These texts are often clumsily written and their discourses lack substance. Many ritual texts and minor tracts belong to this category. Often they were produced to answer immediate spiritual needs or for a special occasion, just as we have seen with the Chinese apocrypha.

One example of a dubious Esoteric Buddhist scripture transmitted only in Japan is the *Jiupin zhusheng Amituo sanmodi ji tuoluoni jing* mentioned above, the translation of which has been attributed

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<sup>52</sup> See Ochiai 1991.

to Amoghavajra. There are many reasons why we should suspect that this is not an authentic Indian or even Chinese scripture but in all likelihood a Japanese apocryphon. First, it is not found or mentioned in any of the standard Chinese Buddhist catalogues, including the library lists from Dunhuang. Second, it was not included in the Koryō Tripiṭaka. Third, the text is unique; it does not exist in any other version. Fourth, it is not mentioned in the catalogues brought back to Japan by the various pilgrim-monks. Fifth, it exists only in the form of a late print dating from Kyōwa 1st year (1801) and the accompanying colophon states that it is based on an early Kamakura manuscript from Kenkyū 4 (1193 CE).<sup>53</sup> Moreover, it is not written in the style or format characteristic of authentic works translated or written by Amoghavajra. Finally, it was obviously written to provide a doctrinal/ritual link between Shingon practices and those related to the Pure Land tradition, a common feature of late Heian and Kamakura Buddhism in Japan.

### *Conclusion*

The Esoteric Buddhist apocryphal texts we encounter in the Chinese Buddhist literature is as diverse as the more ordinary apocryphal Buddhist scriptures. Esoteric Buddhist apocrypha occur in growing number from the middle of the Nanbeichao period onward, and the production of these scriptures would appear to have reached their apex during the Tang. As we have seen, Esoteric Buddhist apocrypha come in a variety of forms, some more apocryphal than others, and some authentic scriptures that include additional inauthentic parts.

Although fairly strict standards were set up to prevent apocryphal scriptures from entering the official Buddhist canon, the task would appear to have been hopeless, and in the course of time numerous fabricated texts were eventually included in the canon as authentic Indian, or at least orthodox, scriptures. It should not be forgotten that the composition of apocrypha was not necessarily considered morally or doctrinally problematic at the time they were made, or even spiritually fraudulent, for that matter—at least, not as we generally understand it today. Undoubtedly, many authors of apocryphal tracts were devout Buddhists and sincere practitioners who somehow felt the

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. Ochiai 1991, 80a.

need to embellish on a given text or to create an even better one with a more clear-cut and distinct message. This would especially seem to have been the case when dealing with devotional material and cultic texts, such as scriptures expounding on the wonders of Avalokiteśvara (Kannon) or ritual tracts. However, we also encounter apocryphal scriptures that were made on demand, forgeries meant to address a specific situation of political or social power negotiation, and therefore had a predefined political agenda.

Apocrypha with Daoist elements are commonly found among the Esoteric Buddhist material from China, and the imprint of the practices associated with this religion in a given Buddhist scripture is a good sign that one is dealing with a fabricated text, or at least one that includes non-Indian material. Scriptures of this kind are often concerned with worship of the constellations and asterisms, or ritual texts involving the use of seals and talismans.

Many examples of Esoteric Buddhist apocrypha, hybrid works, and variant texts have been identified from among the hoard of manuscripts found at Dunhuang. This material is especially important as it constitutes a virtual time capsule of apocrypha and may well reflect, or partly reflect, a general scriptural situation prevailing in Buddhist communities in various parts of China toward the end of the Tang.

The study of Esoteric Buddhist apocrypha is a fairly recent addendum to the study of East Asian Buddhism, and much work still needs to be done. Among the important tasks is an extensive scrutiny of the many texts we find in the *Taishō* and *Zokuzōkyō*, especially those which exist in Japanese versions only, for the purpose of identifying possible apocryphal and hybrid works.

## 14. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM AND MAGIC IN CHINA

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Buddhism and the Production of Ritual Magic*

Displays of magic have played (and still play) important roles in Esoteric Buddhism in China and East Asia. This essay explores the role of magic in Esoteric Buddhism as well as relationships and distinctions between miracles caused by the practice of magic (*huanshu* 幻術) and spiritual attainment as such, provided such distinctions may be observed to prevail.

Although magic was present in the Buddhist religion from early on, the Buddha, at least in the early tradition, is often depicted as opposing its use and the use of spells.<sup>1</sup> Evidently there was a concern over the egotistically motivated lure of power associated with the use of magic. One example where we see the Buddha rejecting the use of magic practices including various forms of prognostication, the use of magic poison, and exorcism is in the *Brahmajāla sutta* (Rhys Davids 1899, 1–55). Here, although the injunctions of this scripture are part of a polemic against Hindus, the Buddha states clearly that such practices are unworthy and unsavory for a Buddhist monk to perform (Rhys Davids 1899, 16–20). Early Buddhist literature shows an undisguised ambivalence towards magic in such descriptions as the Buddha's performance of the miracles at Śrāvastī, in the positive way the achievement of supernatural powers by ascetic monks are referred to, as well as in the popular and widespread use of spells in Buddhism that occur in the main sources before the beginning of the Common Era.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to Esoteric Buddhism in China, a series of issues relating to magical lore needs to be considered. The first of these involves

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the *Ekottarāgama sūtra* (T. 2.2. 638c). See also the *Mahā-prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, which forbids the conjuring up of demons, the use of magic in prognostication, etc. (cf. T. 220.7:266a). The same warning is repeated in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* (T. 221.8:88b) and also in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* (T. 224.8:455c).

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of this, see Sørensen, "On Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition," in this volume.

the fundamental belief in magic: what makes it work and why? Such questions may be referred to as “the logic of magic.”

In both classical Hinduism and in the later Buddhist context of performative magic, the concept of the “word as power” is an all-pervading one. Although not always so, in the vast majority of accounts of magical performance, it is the “word” or verbal utterance that triggers the unfolding of a given form of magic. The idea of “word as power” is of course fairly common in the history of religions, but in the Buddhist context these features were developed and refined to such an extent that one may rightly use the term “science of language” to signify the lore surrounding its use. In the Esoteric Buddhist tradition the science of language was most fully unfolded in the performative and ritual uses of the Sanskrit language in the form of spells (*dhāraṇī*) and mantras.<sup>3</sup>

#### *The Science of Magic in Esoteric Buddhism in China*

The practice of magic, both in Buddhism as well as in other religious traditions, nearly always requires ritual performance or at least some form of regulated and formal behavior on the part of the practitioner. In Esoteric Buddhism the performative aspect is especially important. Although in theory at least, any sincere Buddhist believer could perform a rite aiming at a magical result, often described as “divine response” or “resonance” (*ganying* 感應),<sup>4</sup> in practice it required a professional performer to carry out most of the Esoteric Buddhist rites, especially the complex ones that required a high degree of specialized knowledge, personal charisma, and spiritual insight.

It is interesting to note that while Esoteric Buddhist texts are often keen to stress that ritual success depends on the observation of a number of taboos during the performance, in actual practice this seems to have been only rarely the case. Not only can a considerable divergence from the established (textual) norm be observed when comparing different recensions and translations of the same ritual text, it is also

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<sup>3</sup> For a recent view of *dhāraṇī* see Davidson 2009; and for a solid study on the use of spells in medieval Chinese Buddhism, including ample reference to the Indian tradition, see Copp 2005.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of this important belief in the context of Chinese Buddhism, see Kieschnick 1997, 97–101.

evident that the same spell or mantra appears in different versions,<sup>5</sup> sometimes in abbreviated or changed form.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, entire ritual procedures were rarely followed to the word, but were in many cases abbreviated, simplified, reformed, and even restructured. Hence, the hermeneutical logic governing the Esoteric Buddhist quest for magical success through ritual performance was constantly being subverted through ritual modifications by the practitioners themselves. There were a number of reasons for the existence of this relative “freedom” as regards the ritual process, including issues such as economy, locale, availability of prescribed ritual objects such as offerings, and whether a given ritual was a communal one or an individual matter. In fact, in many cases the Esoteric scriptures themselves contain statements to the effect that strict adherence to the ritual proceedings are not always necessary and may be dispensed with according to circumstances. The increasing individualization of Esoteric Buddhist ritual, or what may be termed the “occasionalistic” approach to ritual practice,<sup>7</sup> can best be observed in the relevant manuscripts from Dunhuang.<sup>8</sup> In this material we find many orthodox rituals (i.e., rites that occur in canonical texts) that have undergone substantial modification and alteration. Further, there are many variant texts of the “same” ritual, and these may represent different stages in the process of textual and ritual transformation within the context of Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>9</sup> This means that the laws governing the practice of magic in Esoteric Buddhism were rarely followed to the word. On the contrary, the lore surrounding the use of magic was rather loosely structured and clearly open to interpretation.

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<sup>5</sup> This can be readily observed when comparing the various versions of the *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī sūtra* and its derived texts. See Sørensen 2006b.

<sup>6</sup> Such as the important spell from the *Pseudo-Sūraṅgama Sūtra* (T. 945), which also occurs in abbreviated versions in later ritual texts. Cf. Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism under the Koryō (918–1392),” in this volume.

<sup>7</sup> It is an open question to what extent this seemingly loose or casual adherence to ritual protocol should be interpreted as an expression of the application of *upāya* (*fangbian* 方便), that is, favoring practicality over following the exact wording of a given ritual text. It would appear, however, that the practical aspect of ritual performance was a major factor in determining to what extent the official ritual procedure was performed.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Dunhuang mizong wenxian jicheng* Lin and Shen 2000a. Although far from complete, this excellent collection provides immediate access to the bulk of the relevant material.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Sørensen 1993b. This problem of variations in ritual texts from Dunhuang also involves a discussion of inter-textuality and textual identity, issues that are beyond the province of this brief essay.

While the idea that a given magical process would only be successful if followed to the word may have existed as a parameter of orthodoxy in certain canonical texts, in practice this was not so.

The increasing specialization in magic and ritual performance by Chinese Buddhists may also be observed as a historical phenomena. In the earliest accounts the practitioners are usually foreign monks (i.e., monks of Indian or Central Asian extraction), such as Śrīmitra (fl. first half of the fourth century), Fotudeng 佛圖澄 (fl. fourth century), Kumārajīva (344–413), and the early Bodhiruci (fl. first half of the sixth century), to mention a few of the most important ones.<sup>10</sup> However, gradually Chinese monks entered the ranks of the adepts of Esoteric Buddhism, a development that gained pace from the middle of the Nanbeizhao (386–581) onwards. By the mid-Tang (i.e., eighth century), the leading proponents of Esoteric Buddhist magic were still foreigners, but under them were numerous Chinese practitioners to whom the ritual techniques and arcana had been transmitted.

The complexity of magical production in Esoteric Buddhism required a virtual arsenal of ritual props and tools (*faqi* 法器). These secondary accessories consisted of altars, altar-platforms, a defined and sanctified ritual space, as well as ritual objects including the usual incense, flowers and fruits, thunderbolts (*vajra*), bells (*ghaṇṭā*), vases, banners, gates, braziers, religious images, votive paintings, etc. This “ritual furniture” was deemed necessary, actually vital, in order for the ritual process to achieve its desired result. With some modifications this fact may be observed both in the execution of more primitive and individual forms of Esoteric Buddhist magic in China as well as in the later, highly elaborate and grand-scale rituals performed on behalf of the Chinese empire during the Tang.

The attraction of supernatural powers, or *siddhi*, is a dominant theme in Esoteric Buddhist literature. While the achievement of supernatural power is indeed found in various forms in mainstream Mahāyāna literature, it is in most cases described as a by-product of the bodhisattva path and not as an end in itself. In the Esoteric Buddhist tradition spiritual awakening is expressed in the mastery of magic. Indeed, it would seem that it was exactly the worries about so-called worldly concerns, enunciated by Śākyamuni in early texts, that later became

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<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of spell masters and miracle-performing monks in China during the Nanbeichao period, see Kieschnick 1997, 67–111.

the driving force behind the interest in the mastery of *siddhis* in Esoteric Buddhism. This paradox never seems to have occurred to the Buddhist practitioners of magic themselves. Quite to the contrary, Esoteric Buddhist literature often depicts Śākyamuni, and especially Vairocana Buddha (the chief divinity *par excellence* of Esoteric Buddhism), as cosmic magicians who are not only in control of the forces of the universe, but also as entirely beyond the natural laws governing them.<sup>11</sup> This spiritual “upgrading” and focus on magical practices is a leading feature of Esoteric Buddhism and reflects both the ongoing process of changing religious values in Buddhism *per se* and at the same time a divergence from standard interpretations of the soteriological process in mainstream Mahāyāna.

*On the Use of Magic in Esoteric Buddhism in China*

While virtually all forms of magic encountered in Esoteric Buddhist texts deal with or touch upon the attainment of supernatural powers through ritual processes, they are nevertheless carried out for a variety of reasons and purposes. These include issues related to demonology, sexuality, treasure hunting, divine response, and supernatural powers.

Demonology is a sub-branch of Esoteric Buddhist magic, one that involves a thorough knowledge of spirits, demons, and ghosts and how to deal with them. In order to successfully counteract demonic infestation whether in the form of possession, as a direct manifestation, or in terms of contagion, the adept needs to know the offending spirit’s name. Because of this, entire Buddhist scriptures were developed, many originating in India, which contained literally hundreds of spirits’ names. In addition to possessing the register of names, the Esoteric Buddhist adept should hold the corresponding antidote to a given demon, usually in the form of a spell. Such a spell could be specific (i.e., especially geared to control a particular spirit), in which case it would normally include the name of the offending spirit; or it could be general, in the sense of having a multi-purpose effect to counteract various kinds of evil. Examples of such registers of demonic names can be found in Saṃghabhara’s 僧伽婆羅 (460–?) translation of the *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī* (cf. T. 984). Other scriptures, such as the early

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<sup>11</sup> This aspect of Vairocana is vividly described in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*. See Gebel 2005 and the entry on Vairocana in Sørensen, “Central Divinities in the Esoteric Buddhist Pantheon in China,” in this volume.



*dhāraṇī-sūtra* called the *Fo shuo hu zhu tongzi tuoluoni jing* 佛說護諸童子陀羅尼經 (Buddha Speaks the Scripture on the *Dhāraṇī* that Protects all Children), provide prayers in combination with spells and the names for a series of demonesses who are believed to feed on young children (cf. *T.* 1028A.19:741b–742c). For instance, different Esoteric Buddhist scriptures featured their own arsenal of spells that were in many cases meant to render protection against the same evil spirits or cure the same kinds of diseases.<sup>12</sup> The overlapping of spell-remedies was a major factor in greatly stimulating the production of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures dealing with healing and exorcism.<sup>13</sup>

Although ritualized sex forms an integral part of the higher forms of tantric Buddhist ritual, it was also present in the earlier phases of Esoteric Buddhism, albeit in a less explicit and well-defined form. In many texts, such as the *Amoghapāśa-kalparāja sūtra* (cf. *T.* 1097), there is a close relationship between sex and magic, almost as if the accomplishment of *siddhi* hinges on it (*T.* 1097.20:426a). In some cases, the ritual magic was even to be carried out with the expressed purpose of securing control of a desired sexual partner as described in the same scripture (*T.* 1097.20:425c426b).<sup>14</sup> Another text speaks of the adept taking an *asura*-woman as his consort in order to achieve *siddhi* (*T.* 953.19:296a). One also encounters the practice of necromancy and necrophilia in the context of sex and magic, such as we find in *Jin'gangsatuo shuo Pinnayejia tian chengjiu yigui jing* 金剛薩埵說頻那夜迦天成就儀軌經 (Vajrasattva Speaks the Scripture on the Ritual Procedures for Achieving the *Siddhis* of the God Vināyaka) (cf. *T.* 1272.21:307b, 317c, 318c etc.).<sup>15</sup>

A fairly large segment of the Esoteric Buddhist literature in Chinese contains methods by which the adept may engage in magical “treasure

<sup>12</sup> This is evident in many of the scriptures belonging to the cults of the various forms of Avalokiteśvara, most of which feature identical or very similar magical remedies and rituals. Compare, for example, the methods set forth in the *Nilakaṇṭhaka sūtra* with those found in the *Ekādaśamukha*.

<sup>13</sup> See Robson, “Mediums in Esoteric Buddhism,” and “Talismans in Chinese Esoteric Buddhism,” in this volume.

<sup>14</sup> For a survey of the various forms of ritual magic in this text, see Reis-Habito 1999.

<sup>15</sup> This sexual aspect of Vināyaka has received special attention in Strickmann 1996, 243–290. After the end of the Tang this dual image fell out of use, though it continued to be used in Japanese Shingon Buddhism. For a discussion of this, see Kabanoff 1994, 99–126. Here it should be noted that the dual form of Vināyaka has not been found in India proper, although there can be little doubt that it originated there.

hunting.” This arcane form of treasure hunting can be subdivided into two kinds. One is explicitly worldly in nature, i.e., the concrete purpose of the performance of magic is to get rich. The other may involve more lofty goals such as procuring a religious treasure or holy book. However, it should be noted that the tradition rarely if ever distinguishes between these two types, and it certainly does not place any moral value on either. Again the texts feature many different techniques, but among the more common ones is that which gives the practitioner control over an assisting spirit or demigod. These spirit-helpers are encountered in many Esoteric Buddhist scriptures such as the *Amoghapāśa-kalparāja sūtra* (cf. *T.* 1097.20:424c425a).<sup>16</sup> The *Uṣṇīṣacakravartī tantra* 一字奇特佛頂經 translated by Amoghavajra contains many methods for invoking the assistance of female demons as Esoteric Buddhist partners. One method describes how the practitioner invokes a *yakṣī* through a *homa* ritual and makes her do a variety of tasks according to his wishes (see *T.* 953.19:296c). Spells are a stable ingredient in the rites with which the adept makes the non-human assistant perform the task at hand, but in some cases, especially those from the later tantric phase, more arcane requirements are needed in order to achieve success. In extreme cases these may involve necromancy, sex, and even cannibalism on the part of the practitioner.<sup>17</sup>

Part of attaining ritual success or *siddhi* usually requires that the practitioner meet with buddhas, bodhisattvas, or other divine or semi-divine beings such as gods, ghosts, demons, etc. Although the intervention and appearance of buddhas and bodhisattvas form part and parcel of many of the prescriptions on how to perform Esoteric Buddhist magic, in most cases these divinities mainly function as messengers indicating that the magic works. In other works, meeting with these non-human beings is usually not the primary object of the magical process; what we may refer to as “divine communication” is often of secondary importance in the magical process in which the adept of Esoteric Buddhism engages. Hence, the time-honored concept of “divine

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<sup>16</sup> The spirit assistants mentioned here also include a resurrected corpse; cf. *T.* 1097.20:425b. For a translation of a treasure hunting rite and of a rite to acquire an *asura* consort from this text see Orzech 1994b, 116–120.

<sup>17</sup> James Sanford has eloquently discussed some of these strange practices in his stimulating research on the Tachikawa cult in late medieval Japan. Much of the textual material on which the Tachikawa cult developed its practices can be traced back to esoteric Buddhism in China (cf. Sanford 1991a, 1–20). See also Goepper 1993 and Iyanaga, “Tachikawa-ryū,” in this volume.

response” (*ganying* 感應) in the Esoteric Buddhist context means that the magic/rite is working, i.e., that the “gods have heard you.” In other words, there is a direct connection between the performance of a given rite, the divine response it elicits, and the attainment of *siddhi*, which is the fulfillment and apex of the adept’s (ritual) efforts and intent. In cultural terms this reflects the ancient Indian belief in divine boons that the *devas* are believed to bestow on those faithful ones who engage in acts of extreme asceticism and self-mortification.<sup>18</sup>

The Esoteric Buddhist scriptures contain a plethora of magical practices meant to enable the practitioner to attain supernatural powers, such as the ability to become invisible (*T.* 1972.21:311b), to levitate (*T.* 893.18:614a, etc.), to raise the dead (*vetāla-siddhi*; for this practice, see, for example, *T.* 1334.21:565b), to command ghosts (*T.* 1060.20:109c), to subjugate various human and non-human enemies (*T.* 1060.20:738b; see also *T.* 890.18:572b), to cause spirit possession,<sup>19</sup> etc. An important text from the mature phase of Esoteric Buddhism recently translated into English, the *Susiddhikara sūtra* (*T.* 893), describes a variety of magical feats ranging from invisibility to flying through the air. It even includes the discussion of a method of destructive magic whereby an adept of Esoteric Buddhism may use an effigy meant to represent the person against whom the rite is being directed, similar to a practice in Brazilian voodoo (see Giebel 2001, 113–331).

### *The Spell as “Magical Trigger”*

Although the Esoteric Buddhist literature abounds in directions for the use of virtually any form of magic and magical concerns per se, even to the point that we may understand it as constituting a discourse on magic in its own right, there is one all-dominating factor serving as the *primus motor* for virtually all the operating notions of the supernatural, and this is the divine spell or *dhāraṇī*.<sup>20</sup> In Esoteric

<sup>18</sup> Liu Benzun 柳本尊 (855–907), the celebrated lay-Buddhist thaumaturge, is a good example of this type of practice in the Chinese cultural context. See Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan during the Tang and Five Dynasties Period,” in this volume.

<sup>19</sup> See the excellent account of this practice in connection with divination in Strickmann 2002, 194–227. See also the review article by Sørensen 2004a, 319–332.

<sup>20</sup> For the use of spells in Chinese Buddhism, see Copp 2005, 1–38, 147–150. A thought-provoking discussion of the spell-literature in China can be found in Strickmann 2002, 89–122. Although Strickmann refers to magic and magical practices throughout this work, he has does not provide his readers with a useful work-

Buddhism—whether we talk about its earlier manifestations or the later tantric phase—it is principally the spell that serves as the “trigger” to set the magical process in motion. For this reason, knowledge of the relevant spell-literature was of paramount importance to the practitioner of magic. This concern with the technicalities of magic is reflected in scriptures such as the long version of the *Amoghapāśa-kalparāja* (T. 1092), the *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī sūtra* (see especially Amoghavajra’s version in three chapters, T. 982), and the *Susiddhikara sūtra*, all of which contain lists of spirits that may be commanded by the use of a given spell and detailed listings of magical pharmacopeia to be empowered. Moreover, it would appear that the development of spell manuals as a distinct type of Esoteric Buddhist literature specifically came about to address this concern.

### *Conclusion*

One of the primary features in the use of magic within the context of Esoteric Buddhism in China—and in the rest of East Asia as well—is that its use, at least on the higher level of practice, is equated with spiritual attainment. Ritual success through a rite based on belief in magic and wonderworking is considered on a par with doctrinal mastery, skill in meditation, and moral purity. Actually, it is not only identical with them, it is even considered superior in the hermeneutic parlance of Esoteric Buddhism. In practical terms this means that Esoteric Buddhism is essentially supplanting spiritual practice with magical power, or rather, the fine line dividing the deportment of the heroic bodhisattva and the dubious morality of the sorcerer is no longer there. This means that successful application of ritual magic is to a large extent being identified with enlightenment. Of course, practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism came from many different backgrounds and with different spiritual motives. Nevertheless, due to the potential transgressive nature of magic practices, it would appear that the customary bodhisattva ethics were often set aside in order to engage in the arcana of *siddhi*.

Many of the rituals involving magic feature practices that, at least on the surface, appear to conflict with standard Mahāyāna ethics. This

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ing definition of magic in the context of esoteric Buddhism. For further discussion, see Sørensen, “On Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition,” and Copp, “*Dhāraṇī* Scriptures,” in this volume.

includes mainly those rites believed to cause harm or those which involve some form of control over others. However, the distinction between so-called “white” and “black” magic” is essentially something that belongs to religious traditions upholding decidedly dualistic worldviews, such as Christianity or Islam, where notions of good and bad are set up as the two extremes of a distinct and absolute value system. While the distinction between wholesome and unwholesome activities (karma) are of course evident on the relative level in Esoteric Buddhism, as it is in most schools of Mahāyāna, it is not done so on the absolute level. Moreover, the distinction between good and bad can be seen to be entirely relative to the religious context in which the distinction is being defined. In other words, what was conceived of as good or bad karma depended entirely on the performer of a given activity. A good example of this ambivalence in regard to ethical values in Esoteric Buddhism, something that is normally understood as rather fixed, can be seen in the attacks leveled at the late Heian monk Ninkan 仁寛(1057–1123) and his Tachikawa sect by members of the Shingon school during thirteenth century in Japan (cf. Faure 1998, 126–129).<sup>21</sup> Ninkan and his followers were accused of spreading heresy through antinomian practices, although the Shingon school itself upheld similar and equally problematic forms of yoga. The main difference between the two groups was that one was considered orthodox, both in terms of its own hermeneutics as well as from the perspective of the government. Hence, antinomianism in the Shingon context was acceptable, whereas it was not so for the Tachikawa sect. As we have seen above, the officially supported Yoga (or Zhenyan) tradition of Tang China also taught the use of spells and mantras that enabled a practitioner to sneak into a woman’s bedroom undetected or to cause enemies to die, practices that would normally cause alarm to any follower of mainstream Mahāyāna. However, in the context of Zhenyan Esotericism, such practices were considered perfectly normal and in compliance with the Buddha’s teachings as laid down in a number of the most important Esoteric Buddhist scriptures. The use of violent magic is discussed in the later tantric Buddhist literature in India and Tibet, where it is clearly considered an orthodox and accepted practice for a *siddha* to engage himself or herself in.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See Iyanaga, “Tachikawa-ryū,” in this volume.

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of this issue, see Davidson 2002a, 236–292.

Although the Esoteric Buddhist literature in China abounds in prescriptions for the performance of sexually-related magic, it would be prudent not to take such data as evidence that such practices were popular or common. Incidentally, most of the material on sex and ritual sexuality that appears in the works of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism derives from the Indian cultural context. It remains an open question how much of this was actually being practiced within the confines of traditional Chinese society, which has always been prohibitive and moralistic in its outlook on what would have been perceived as perverse and deviant practices, at least in the public sphere, but probably also in the private sphere. This is not to say that sexual magic was not being practiced in medieval Chinese society, but that it was done privately and in any case not as openly as it is known to have been done in India where *yogīs* commonly frequented charnel grounds and other “power” places.

While there can be no doubt that the Esoteric Buddhist rituals were performed with the aim of securing spiritual insight and benefits for the practitioner, and by extension to his community including the ruler, the vast majority of the *siddhis* described in the literature were meant to bring super-powers, material wealth, and command over the beings of the unseen world. Under the umbrella of non-dualism, universal emptiness, and identification with the divinity, the well-defined line between mundane and the supra-mundane practices as found in traditional Mahāyāna Buddhism was consciously obfuscated if not obliterated. The adepts of Esoteric Buddhism, in particular the *tantrikas*, solved this inherent problem by creating their own code of conduct, in effect an “esoteric *vinaya*.” This extra- or supra-ethical doctrine was partly meant to justify the antinomian aspects of Esoteric Buddhist practice and belief, the use of the more bizarre forms of magic included, and partly to establish them as orthodox. Through this hermeneutical strategy the Esoteric Buddhists succeeded in upgrading the use of magic to a higher spiritual level.

## 15. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM AND ITS RELATION TO HEALING AND DEMONOLOGY

Richard D. McBride II

In medieval China, people generally understood sickness and malady to be the result of problematic connections and complex interrelationships with the shadowy world of spirits, the returning souls of the departed (*gui* 鬼). Long before the emergence of a distinctly esoteric Buddhist tradition in the Tang, monks specializing in therapeutic and thaumaturgic practices left an indelibly memorable mark on the mainstream Buddhist tradition. These monk thaumaturges from India and Central Asia introduced a host of ritual practices. These rituals, many of which depict procedures for the efficacious use of *dhāraṇī* to control demons associated with illnesses, were described in newly translated Buddhist scriptures. Some of these practices may be indicative of a distinctive esoteric Buddhist tradition, and some were classified by later practitioners as belonging to what scholars refer to as esoteric Buddhism. These ritual practices, closely associated with mainstream worship and the use of *dhāraṇī* in penance practices (*chanhui* 懺悔), were met with great enthusiasm by monks and laypeople in a religious milieu primed by preexisting ritual practices and popular theories about spirits, ghosts, and demons (Kuo 1994).

The *dhāraṇī* sūtras that were translated into Chinese prior to and during the early Tang period (618–712) primarily introduced ritual means by which noxious entities and demons were subordinated to the Buddha and whose powers may be used to heal Buddhists and protect the Buddhadharmā. Because non-Buddhist, Indian (including animistic, shamanic, Vedic, and Hindu) religious rituals and healing practices associated with the numerous gods and demons of the Hindu pantheon were gradually assimilated into Mahāyāna Buddhism, many scholars agree with the idea that “Buddhism was Hinduism for export.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The expressions “Buddhism is Hinduism for export” and “Buddhism was Hinduism for export” are, according to Robert E. Morrell, offhand remarks attributed to T. R. V. Murti, which are often cited as being found in Murti 1955. Neither expression, however, is found in either the original 1955 edition or the 1960 revised edition

Eventually, in ritual texts that were introduced during the High and Middle Tang periods (713–820), several aspects of the healing rituals used to extract demons were transformed into esoteric rituals by which adepts were sealed unto buddhahood. Finally, several texts translated during the eighth century and afterward described processes by which ritual specialists utilize spirits and “voluntary” spirit possession procedures to effect healing and to accomplish other desires.

Because disease and illness was understood as being caused by noxious and contagious denizens of the netherworld, the distinctions between healing, spell-chanting, and demon-quelling are completely blurred and indistinguishable. Furthermore, according to such normative texts as the *Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* (*Dazhidu lun* 大智度論), all ordained Buddhists monks were strongly encouraged to develop the skills of mixing herbs and medicines, planting cereals and trees, observing celestial phenomena, understanding all manner of earthly and celestial portents, as well as being students of spell techniques, divination practices, charms, and talismans (*T.* 1509.25: 79c–80a; Lamotte 1944–1981, 1:199–202). Fotudeng 佛圖澄 (or Fotucheng, d. 348), for instance, is remembered for miraculously healing people by enchanting objects with spells (Wright 1948). And Dharmakṣema (Tanwuchen 曇無讖, 385–433) was so famous for his knowledge of spells that he acquired the title “Great Spell Master” (*dazhou shi* 大呪師) and specialized in expelling ghosts and goblins responsible causing illness. Various individual scriptures and compendia of *dhāraṇī* and spells were compiled during the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries for use by monks and laypeople. Although many *dhāraṇī* sūtras were translated, the three great collections of the Northern and Southern dynasties period are the *Dhāraṇī Spirit-Spell Sūtra preached by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas* (*Qifo bapusa suoshuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神呪經, *T.* 1332), which was compiled in the late fourth to the early fifth century; the *Consecration Scripture* (*Guanding jing* 灌頂經, *T.* 1331), compiled about 457; and the *Dhāraṇī Miscellany* (*Tuoluoni zaji* 陀羅尼雜集, *T.* 1336), compiled in the first half of the sixth century. Later, in the early Tang period, Atikūṭa compiled the *Dhāraṇī Collection* (*Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經, *T.* 901) in 653–654 (Ōmura 1918, 2:212–255;

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of Murti’s work. Based on this, Alan Watts is reported to have said, “Buddhism is Hinduism stripped for export.”



Strickmann 1996, 73–87). All of these texts contain detailed procedures for using *dhāraṇī* to both prevent and treat sickness and other maladies. Excerpts from these and from other *dhāraṇī* scriptures, but especially the *Dhāraṇī Collection*, were compiled by Daoshi 道世 (ca. 596–683) in his immensely popular encyclopedia *A Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma* (*Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林, T. 2122, dated to 668, McBride 2005).

By the mid-fifth century, Chinese Buddhists appear to have adopted and adapted the Daoist practice of exorcism by means of impressing devil-subduing seals (*fumo fengyin* 伏魔封印)—a process that Strickmann termed “ensigillation.” The Buddhist version of the healing practice is first attested in the seventh roll of the apocryphal *Consecration Scripture*, which Strickmann dates to about 457 (Strickmann 2002: 132–178). Other spell scriptures describing this practice are also attested from the sixth century and seventh century, some versions surviving only in manuscript form and copied in medieval Japan (Strickmann 1993; 1995; 1996).

The supernatural entities that afflict humans and cause illness and disease in China comprise a complex Buddhist demonology that was indelibly influenced by traditional Indian conceptions of pathology (Filliozat 1934). Many of the various demonic beings of the Indo-Buddhist pantheon are the earliest members of what eventually develops into the tantric pantheon, with its domesticated wrathful deities and denizens (Tajima 1959, 132–141, 190–197). The most common and successful of harmful entities is the original Devil of the Buddhist pantheon, the god of temptation and illusion, Māra, “the evil one” (*pāpīyān*), and his followers, who were also called *māras*. Transcribed as *mo* 魔, this designation became a widely used collective term for deleterious devils: the demon-kings (*mowang* 魔王).

Next come the eight classes of supernatural beings (*babu* or *babu shen* 八部神). First among these are the *nāgas*, originally representative of the hooded cobra but by extension including all other ophidian creatures. The underlying idea associated with this class of beings was soon inextricably assimilated to the well-rooted mythology of the Chinese dragon (*long* 龍), including its various destructive forms. Many *nāgas* were domesticated as protectors of Buddhist texts and esoteric practices in ritual traditions. Next are the *rākṣasas*, “protectors,” who haunted caves and trees in India. They stalked their prey in animal, human, and purely monstrous forms. In Buddhist texts *rākṣasas* are often replaced with the ubiquitous *yakṣas*, “guardians,” who kept watch

over a host of locations from doorways and villages to entire kingdoms and regions. The females of this species, the *yakṣiṇīs*, remained undomesticated and preserved their demonic origins as devourers of children (Lévi 1915). The third class is the *gandharvas*, who often appear as magical apparitions that both aid and delude human beings. Because *gandharvas* were believed to be necessary in acts of human procreation, functioning as the “being from a previous existence that enters the womb at conception,” they were associated by extension with various forms of sexual pathology such as lust, guilt, and sex-induced dementia.

The remaining classes include the *asuras*, who, like the titans of Greco-Roman mythology, are the titanic enemies of the gods. *Garuḍas*, a bird-headed species, are the traditional enemies of the *nāgas*, and like them, some became the protectors of texts and practices. *Kimnaras*, who sported the heads of horses and human bodies, never appear to have been a threatening species, but nevertheless seem to have influenced one manifestation of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara as the horse-headed Hayagrīva (van Gulik 1935; Stein 1986). *Mahoragas* are another species of great serpents traditionally more spiteful toward humans than *nāgas*. The final class is the *bhūtas*, “beings,” a nondescript term for demonic spirits. In East Asia it was interchangeable with *pretas*, “hungry ghosts,” a variation of *pitara*, “fathers” or “ancestors,” the spirits of the unhappy dead. Buddhist *preta* lore is vast and complex, including as many as thirty-six forms, but essentially there are two types: hungry ghosts that slink around in the mortal realm, and those that suffer in their own realm of existence (*preta-loka*). Buddhist texts consistently warn readers against actions that will lead to rebirth in this benighted class of beings (Lin 1949; Strickmann 2002, 62–66).

Many other more vicious demonic beings appear in Buddhist texts: *piśācas*, eaters of raw flesh that hunt in packs, are sometimes grouped with the *yakṣas*, *asuras*, or *rākṣasas*; the vampiric *vetālas*; *kumbhāṇḍas*, swollen, pot-shaped denizens; *ḍākiṇīs*, carnivores that were sometimes equated to the ubiquitous and seductive fox-demons; *pūtanās*, shameless, foul-smelling bestial marauders; *grahīs*, “snatchers,” who possess and destroy children; and *māṭṛkās*, “little mothers,” who function similarly and no less dangerously than *grahīs*. There are also the sheep-shaped *apasmara*-demons, the shadow-demon *chāyās*, the horse-shaped *jāmkā* demons, the cat-shaped *māṭṛmandā* demons, and serpentine *ālambhā* demons (see *Śūraṅgama sūtra*, T. 945; Strickmann 2002, 66–67).

Among all these, the personal names of a few species of demons stand out from the foregoing laundry list for their savagery, which is ultimately transformed by the power of the Buddha to protect the Buddhist devout and faithful. These include the child-devouring demoness Hārītī, “The Thief,” who was converted into a Buddhist protector of children (Peri 1917; Murray 1981–1982); and the child-seizing *graha* (masculine form of *grahī*) Skanda, who now protects against the symptoms (trembling shoulders) that he once induced (Filiozat 1937, 218–24, 255–256). From the mid-sixth century onward various *dhāraṇī* scriptures translated into Buddhist Chinese describe the powerful spells and accompanying procedures for impressing seals taught by formerly demonic entities that may now be used to protect against infectious fiends. These include the seals of Āṭavaka, mighty General of Demons (*T.* 1238), Jāṅgulī, the Jungle Woman (*T.* 1265), and Ucchuṣma, Lord of Impurities (*T.* 1227).

In the case of Jāṅgulī, for instance, the gradual development of rituals associated with this wild woman of the forest may be seen as follows. The first major text associated with her, the *Book of Dhāraṇī and Spells of the Jāṅgulī Woman* (*Changjuli dunü tuoluoni zhou jing* 常瞿利毒女陀羅尼呪經, *T.* 1265) is said to have been translated in the 650s by a monk named Gupta. The text describes various spells that are useful against a variety of illnesses. It describes talismans for internal consumption (seals, *yin* 印) that are combined with various pressure points on the hands to cure the oppressed. A later ritual text translated or compiled by Amoghavajra in the eighth century, the *Sūtra on the Maiden Jāṅgulī* (*Changjuli tongnü jing* 穰囊梨童女經, *T.* 1264B), describes the use of seals made by the priestly adept’s fingers, which are more like standard Buddhist *mudrās*. The adept visualizes himself as the Jāṅgulī woman in front of the victim, enchants a bowl of water with the goddess’s spell, and throws water at the victim’s heart, which is supposed to cause the noxious influence to disappear (Strickmann 1995; 2002, 143–170).

As new ritual techniques described in *dhāraṇī* scriptures continued to arrive in China, these met with circumstances already prepared by the broad sweep of Buddhist demonology. Some of the new deities, scriptures, and techniques were probably understood as related to what came before. More important, however, was the shift in the use of seals and other healing procedures to effect enlightenment. For instance, although extant only in fragments, a text discovered at Dunhuang at the beginning of the twentieth century describes the existence of a spirit-

spell that “the earlier and later buddhas, more than thirty-thousand people, have all utilized... to attain unsurpassed ultimate, nirvāṇa” (T. 2906.85:1451a4–5; the text describes a procedure employing this seal that is intended for use by all both monks and laypeople to cause them to achieve the same level as *dhāraṇī*-bodhisattvas and receive prophecies of their future buddhahood (Strickmann 2002, 163–166). This kind of ritual, in my opinion, is an appropriately esoteric supplement to what I consider to be the premier practice of tantric/esoteric Buddhism: the ritual attainment of buddhahood by emulating the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha, employing graduated meditation and visualizations in a mandala under the direction of a guru.

Spirit possession by a religious specialist to treat someone afflicted by demons or possessed by spirits is typically considered by scholars to be properly within the realm of shamanism. Nevertheless, the contents of several tantric/esoteric scriptures, including the *Amoghapāśa sūtra* (*Bukong juansuo tuoluoni zizaiwang zhou jing* 不空羈索陀羅尼自在王呪經, T. 1097), which was translated by Baosiwei 寶思惟 (\*Manicintana, d. 721) in 693, the *Yogins' Book of All the Yogas* (*Jin'gangfeng louge yiqie yuzhi jing* 金剛峯樓閣一切瑜伽瑜祇經, T. 867), translated by Vajrabodhi (Jin'gangzhi 金剛智, 671–741), and the *Questions of Subāhu* (*Sobohu tongzi qingwen jing* 蘇婆呼童子請問經, T. 895), translated by Śubhākarasimha (Shanwuwei 善無畏, 637–735) in 726, contain detailed ritual instructions for inducing spirit possession in children (*āveśa*) and exorcising spirits from children.

For example, another text translated in the mid-eighth century by Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705–774), entitled the *Instantly Efficacious Āveśa Ritual Explained by Maheśvara* (*Suji liyan Moxishoule tian shuo aweishe fa* 速疾立驗魔醯首羅天說阿尾奢法, T. 1277), describes rituals that can be performed in the four basic processes of tantric ritual performance: cessation of ills, increase of benefits, subjugation of enemies, and conciliation of friends. The *sūtra* begins with Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) paying a visit to Maheśvara (Śiva), the chief god of the Indian pantheon. Nārāyaṇa explains that the great bird Garuḍa, his own personal mount, is a heavenly messenger who able to respond to and fulfill all the requests that human beings make of him; however, Nārāyaṇa is not able to accomplish these quickly. Thereupon, Nārāyaṇa has Maheśvara describe a ritual procedure titled “the *āveśa* ritual of swift and instant accomplishment” for the benefit of all people in the future. By means of this procedure, which uses four or five virgin girls or boys of about seven or eight years of age, the adept turns himself into the

god Maheśvara and summons spirits from the heavenly realm to carry out his will (Strickmann 2002, 204–238).

To summarize, the relationship between esoteric Buddhism, healing, and demonology may be described as the gradual subjugation and incorporation into Mahāyāna Buddhist ritual of several classes of vexing spirits and noxious influences that flourished in the Indian cultural sphere. Several of the texts that describe spells to subdue long lists of toxic and debilitating entities and procedures for efficaciously employing them were continually revised and expanded over time, such as the various recensions of the *Book of the Peacock Spell* (*Mahāmāyūrī*, T. nos. 982–988) that were translated into Chinese from the mid-fourth to mid-eighth centuries. These kinds of spell texts probably helped set the stage for newer ritual texts. Many of these later ritual texts not only unabashedly integrated the major gods and supernatural entities of mainstream religion in India, but they also translated ritual procedures initially used for healing into practices effecting enlightenment as well as into procedures for achieving success in worldly pursuits.

## 16. POPULAR ESOTERIC DEITIES AND THE SPREAD OF THEIR CULTS

Richard D. McBride II

Differentiating esoteric Buddhist deities from the mainstream Mahāyāna Buddhist pantheon is a difficult task. Scholars have classified as “esoteric” many of the most popular Buddhist deities. This is the result of presuming that any figure (represented in an icon or image form) that was either held in high esteem by later self-styled esoteric Buddhists, or was the primary figure in prescriptive ritual texts presently classified as tantric or esoteric, or that appears in a mandala, is “esoteric.” The basis of classification should instead be the direct link of a deity to a particular practice or set of practices that are distinctly and undisputedly esoteric in nature. In other words, all the popular buddhas and bodhisattvas, and many of the gods of the Mahāyāna pantheon, are potentially esoteric or possess esoteric attributes in some contexts, such as the buddhas of the four directions and the eight great bodhisattvas that appear in a variety of contexts and were later absorbed into the tantric or esoteric pantheon (Getty 1928; Banerjee 1994).

The most popular and well attested of all so-called esoteric deities are several manifestations of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin 觀音, Guanshiyin 觀世音): the eleven-headed form (Ekādaśamukha, Shiyimian 十一面), the white-clad or white-robed form (Pāṇḍaravāsīnī, Baiyi 白衣), the lasso-wielding form (Amoghapāśa, Bukong jiansuo 不空羂索), the thousand-armed or thousand-handed form (Sahasrabhuja, Qianshou 千手), and the thousand-eyed and thousand-armed form (Qianyan qianbei 千眼千臂) (Wong 2007a; 2007b; 2008). Stated simply, most scriptures containing *dhāraṇīs* and procedures for their ritual use taught by Avalokiteśvara or one of the deity’s manifestations listed above, with the exception of the *Heart Sūtra* and its famous *dhāraṇī*, but including indigenous Chinese Buddhist scriptures (a.k.a. Chinese Buddhist apocrypha), such as *King Gao’s Sūtra of Avalokiteśvara* (*Gaowang Guanshiyin jing* 高王觀世音經, T. 2895), are believed to be representative of popular esoteric forms of Avalokiteśvara (Mallmann

1948; Yü 2001). All are closely associated to the cultic practices of making images, sūtra-chanting, and *dhāraṇīs*. Many of these forms appear earliest in the art and texts of Dunhuang.

Because Arthur Waley held the view that the *dhāraṇī* did not become associated with tantric or esoteric Buddhism until the eighth century, he preferred to categorize the imagery, texts, and cults associated with Avalokiteśvara and other bodhisattvas represented in the caves from the fifth to eighth centuries as “Dhāraṇī Buddhism” (1931, xiii–xiv). Waley’s view represents a minority opinion, however, and much further research is required on the topic. And while modern scholars classify these forms of Avalokiteśvara as “esoteric” or “tantric” Buddhist, Chinese Buddhists who invoked the bodhisattva in these forms prior to the late eighth or ninth centuries did not think of themselves as necessarily participating in a separate tradition of “esoteric” Buddhism, even when modern commentators classify them as such (Abé 1999, 157–163). Strickmann, following the Shingon sectarian Ōmura Seigai, considered the ritual procedures dealing with several forms of Avalokiteśvara as indicative of proto-tantra or esoteric Buddhism. More research needs to be done on such texts as the *Dhāraṇī Collection* (*Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經, T. 901; Ōmura 1918, 2:212–255; Strickmann 1996, 73–87). While it provides an early Indian approach to forms of Avalokiteśvara, the work is only found in Chinese.

Furthermore, the cult of Avalokiteśvara as it developed in China does not mirror the texts and is not at all clear in its development. Calling upon Avalokiteśvara, intoning or chanting his name, became one of the most powerful and widespread *dhāraṇīs* in medieval Sinitic Buddhism. Avalokiteśvara, in the bodhisattva’s various forms, was propitiated and invoked for protection, wish-fulfillment, and absolution of sins in non-esoteric and nontantric Buddhism rituals long before putatively “orthodox” tantric Buddhism entered China during the eighth century (*Fayuan zhulin* 60, T. 2122.53:736c10–737c10; Rhi 1982; Kamata 1986; McBride 2005; Shioiri 2007). Regardless, the worship of Avalokiteśvara began to accelerate and blossom during the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, probably because these forms were linked to increasingly popular *dhāraṇī* ritual procedures that invoked the bodhisattva for protection and blessings (Stein 1986; von Glahn 2004, 130–179; McBride 2008, 62–85). The most relevant studies in Western languages on the individual cults of so-called esoteric forms of Avalokiteśvara include significant research on the horse-headed Hayagrīva (Matou 馬頭; van Gulik 1935, Strickmann

1996), and translations of *dhāraṇī* sūtras associated with Amoghapaśa (Meisezahl 1962), and Ekādaśamukha (Reis-Habito 1993; 1994).

Mañjuśrī (Wenshushili 文殊師利), “the bodhisattva of wisdom,” is usually remembered for his role in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa sūtra* as the only one of Śākyamuni’s followers not afraid to visit the lay bodhisattva Vimalakīrti; as Sudhana’s primary spiritual mentor in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* portion of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*; and, in that connection, the bodhisattva who makes his home on Mount Wutai in Northern China (Hibino and Ono 1995). As a result of new translations of ritual texts and new iconographic forms that entered China in the eighth and ninth centuries, however, the parameters of Mañjuśrī’s cult began to expand to include that of a mountain god, the personal guardian of the emperor and his family and the spiritual protector of the state, and a cosmic overlord in the esoteric pantheon, where he is revered as a buddha (Lamotte 1960; Mallmann 1964; Birnbaum 1983; 1984; 1986; 1989–1990; Gimello 1994).

The tantric manifestation of the mainstream Bodhisattva Samantabhadra (Puxian 普賢) is Vajrasattva (Jin’gangsadio 金剛薩埵). Samantabhadra is the consummate bodhisattva, representative of practice in the mainstream context. In the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* and *Vajraśekhara sūtra*, Vajrasattva plays the role of the interested student who requests the Dharma from Mahāvairocana. Vajrasattva’s interlocutions result in the explanations of the procedures for performing esoteric rituals to help aspirants actualize the Buddhadharmā and achieve buddhahood quickly. For this reason, veneration of Vajrasattva spread among monks interested in the tantric approach to practice, and depictions of Vajrasattva multiplied in the areas where the tantric/esoteric teaching held sway.

The premier buddha of the esoteric pantheon is Mahāvairocana (Dari rulai 大日如來), who typically presides over the center direction in mandalas. Although the Japanese esoteric Buddhist traditions distinguish between the mainstream Mahāyāna Vairocana (Lushena 盧舍那, Piluzhena 毘盧遮那, Guangming bianzhao 光明遍照, Dari bianzhao 大日遍照), the *dharmakāya* buddha who figures prominently in the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*, and the tantric/esoteric Mahāvairocana of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (T. 848), it is unclear whether the same distinction was made in medieval China (Watanabe 1965). The images of Vairocana that appear in the caves at Dunhuang, Yungang, and Longmen from the fifth century through the end of the seventh century, such as the Fengxian Monastery 鳳先寺 at the Longmen caves between 655 and 675, depict the mainstream Mahāyāna Vairocana, as do many



of the images from the eighth and ninth centuries (Wong 2007c); from the eighth century onward, after the translation of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, the tantric version became widespread as well (Tajima 1936). The two forms are not always easily distinguishable. Both forms typically present Vairocana performing the “wisdom-fist *mudrā*” (*zhiquan yin* 智拳印), although several other *mudrās* are also depicted in extant iconography. Because Mahāvairocana is found in the center of both the Vajradhātu and Garbhadhātu mandalas, iconic representations of these mandalas in two- or three-dimensional forms are indicative of esoteric Buddhism. Also, the esoteric Mahāvairocana is depicted in cases where the setting of surrounding buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other deities corresponds to other ritual descriptions and mandalas found in esoteric sūtras.

Amitābha (Amituo 阿彌陀), or Amitāyus (Wuliangshou 無量壽), the Buddha of Sukhāvātī, the *buddhakṣetra* in the western region, is the subject of several recensions of the *Anatamukhasādhāka-dhāraṇī* (a.k.a. *Anantamukhanirhāra-dhāraṇī*, T. nos. 1009–1018). The earliest translations were executed during the first quarter of the third century, and new translations appeared regularly over the next several centuries, culminating with the ultimately authoritative version done by Amoghavajra in the eighth century. These *dhāraṇī* sūtras contain procedures for purifying bodhisattva practices and a *dhāraṇī* producing what is popularly called “the *samādhi* of buddha recollection” (*nianfo sanmei* 念佛三昧). Although there is no mandala or empowerment ritual, some scholars feel certain of its esoteric content because it contains *dhāraṇīs* (Inagaki 1999). Other translated works by Amoghavajra, such as *Ritual Procedures for Contemplation of and Offerings to the Tathāgata Amitāyus* (Wuliangshou rulai guanxing gongyang yigui 無量壽如來觀行供養儀軌, T. 930), more explicitly ritualize the process of visualizing the Pure Land of Amitāyus by describing the procedures for establishing a ritual area.

Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yaoshi 藥師), or Bhaiṣajyarāja (Yaowang 藥王), the Buddha of Healing and Medicine, presides over a Pure Land in the east, the Lapis Lazuli Realm (*liuli shijie* 琉璃世界), in early Indian Mahāyāna. He replaced Akṣobhya (Achu 阿閼, Achupo 阿菟婆) as the buddha of the eastern direction (Nattier 2000). Merely hearing his name was said to engender a visit from the eight great bodhisattvas and rebirth in the Western Paradise. Although the major sūtras on Bhaiṣajyaguru were not translated into Chinese until the seventh century, 616 and 650 respectively (Birnbbaum 1979), an early version

of this bodhisattva, as “Medicine Master Crystal Light Tathāgata” (Yaoshi liuliguang rulai 藥師琉璃光如來), is described as residing in the remote eastern regions in the twelfth and final roll of the *Consecration Scripture* (*Guanding jing* 灌頂經, T. 1331), a Sinitic Buddhist apocryphon dated by Michel Strickmann to 457 C.E. Strickmann classifies the text as proto-tantric and because it is linked to demonology (1990).

Although no physical evidence of the Medicine Buddha’s cult remains from pre-Tang China, there is some evidence from early Japan. An image of Bhaiṣajyaguru was possibly made as early as 587 as part of a vow to erect a sixteen-foot image of a buddha flanked by attendant bodhisattvas for the benefit of an ill Japanese ruler. Also, a seated image of Bhaiṣajyaguru was created for Hōryūji 法隆寺 when the monastery was initially completed in 607 and the image was saved during the fire that destroyed the original monastery in 670, which suggests that this buddha’s cult existed to some extent in China and Korea during the sixth century. Scholars think they have identified mid-Tang-period paintings of Bhaiṣajyaguru (accompanied by Dizang) in the Dunhuang caves and in the Dazu caves in Sichuan, but these remain tentative due to the lack of corroborating inscriptions (Zhiru 2007, 142-150). In none of the above examples does Bhaiṣajyaguru function as an esoteric deity. In post-Tang times, Bhaiṣajyaguru appears in triads with Amitābha and Śākyamuni and in directional mandalas with Vairocana in the center. Donors evoked him for health and protection. In the eighth century, however, Vajrabodhi translated the *Ritual Procedures for Visualizing the Medicine Buddha* (*Yaoshi rulai guanxing yigui* 藥師如來觀行儀軌, T. 923); Strickmann classifies this text as tantric although penance and devotion are its central themes (2002, 210).

During the late seventh century, the cult of the goddess Cundī (Zhunti 准提), a.k.a. Saptakoṭi Buddhābhagavatī, “the Buddhist goddess of the Seventy Million” (Qijudi fomu 七俱胝佛母), which is commonly mistranslated as “Mother of Seventy Million Buddhas,” was introduced to China. Translations of *dhāraṇī* sūtras concerning this figure were executed by Divākara (613–688) in 685 or 686 (T. 1077), by Vajrabodhi in 723 (T. 1075), and by Amoghavajra between 742 and 774 (T. 1076). Śubhākarasiṃha also produced a few Cundī *sādhana* (T. 1078, T. 1079). The cult of Cundī continued in North China on Mount Wutai through the Liao period and beyond (T. 1955, Gimello 2004).

## 17. ESOTERIC SCRIPTURES IN THE CONTEXT OF CHINESE BUDDHIST TRANSLATION PRACTICE

Richard D. McBride II

There are several fundamental problems in any attempt to describe the place of esoteric scriptures in the context of the translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese in the period prior to 700 C.E. On one hand, scriptures dealing with thaumaturgy date back to the beginning of Buddhism in China and are not necessarily esoteric. The early and purportedly Hīnayāna translator An Shigao 安世高 (fl. 148), for example, translated the *Sūtra on the Brahmans' Avoiding Death* (*Poluomen bisi jing* 婆羅門避死經, T. 131), which tells how four brahman ṛṣis (*xianren* 仙人), cultivated various wholesome dharmas and the five spiritual penetrations or supernormal powers (*shentong* 神通) and were able to allay death; thus demonstrating to the Chinese audience of this sūtra that physical immortality is possible (Maspero 1971, 446; 1981, 411). On the other hand, the Mahāyāna approach to the Buddhadharmas is consistently described polemically as the esoteric tradition (*mijiao* 密教) in several seminal sūtras of the mainstream Mahāyāna tradition, such as the *Avatamsaka sūtra*, and by medieval Chinese exegetes in their commentarial expositions (McBride 2004). Another problem is that all Buddhist sūtras were probably edited during the early Song period, when the first official woodblock edition of the Buddhist canon was carved between 972 and 983 in Chengdu (and perhaps in later editions as well). This being the case, how does one define what is esoteric and can one systematically categorize translated sūtras as esoteric?

Those adhering to the scholarly opinions of L. Austine Waddell and Guiseppe Tucci, who hold the teleological position that “dhāraṇī represent the kernel from which the first Tantras developed,” define early esoteric scriptures as *dhāraṇī* collections and spirit-spell sūtras (*shenzhou jing* 神呪經). More recently, Michel Strickmann classified *dhāraṇī* sūtras as “proto-tantric” and proposed that the *Dhāraṇī Spirit-Spell Sūtra preached by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas* (*Qifo bapusa suoshuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神呪經, T. 1332) is the first major anthology of Buddhist spells. He suggests this sūtra is a late fourth-century or early fifth-

century work that outlines the features of the future tantric pantheon and tantric rituals. Strickmann locates the creation of the *Consecration Scripture* (*Guanding jing* 灌頂經, T. 1331), a sinitic Buddhist apocryphon containing the procedures for an early initiatory ritual (*abhiṣeka*) and demon-subduing spells, in about 457 C.E. between Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra* in 286, which contains a famous chapter on *dhāraṇī*, and the Atikūṭa's translation of the *Dhāraṇī Collection* (*Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經, T. 901), which was executed in 653–654. He also proposed that there was development, differentiation, and specialization of the *dhāraṇī* genre over time (1990; 1996, 52–53, 428n70). Some scholars are concerned that an approach that classifies all *dhāraṇī* as proto-tantric or esoteric Buddhism is tainted by teleology, the analytical faux pas of adopting a grand narrative that projects the characteristics of a later development into the past, obscuring more nuanced and problematical origins.

*Dhāraṇī* were indisputably important in medieval Chinese Buddhism and many such texts were translated; but the extent to which *dhāraṇī* sūtras are “esoteric” is debatable. Are they intrinsically esoteric or only esoteric if used in an esoteric manner? In early medieval China, mantras were generally understood as one type of *dhāraṇī*. Although Śubhākarasiṃha (Shanwuwei 善無畏, 637–735) seems to have held the position that *dhāraṇī* were actually a subset of mantra, this approach was never adopted by Chinese Buddhists. All translators, even such figures as the early esoteric masters Vajrabodhi (Jin'gangzhi 金剛智, 671–741) and Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705–774), made no clear distinction between *dhāraṇī*, mantra, and *vidyā*—and used the various terms interchangeably—in their translations of ritual materials through the eighth century (Takubo 1967, 29, 36–37; McBride 2005).

The vast majority of translations of *dhāraṇī*, appearing either as parts of sūtras or in collections, were executed by mainstream monks, such as Xuanzang 玄奘 (ca. 600–664), who apparently had no sense that they were translating anything but ordinary Mahāyāna ritual material or, perhaps, works in the bodhisattva's *dhāraṇī piṭaka* (see *The Development of the Esoteric Buddhist Canon*). If they were “esoteric,” they were no more esoteric than the Mahāyāna was an esoteric teaching understood only by bodhisattvas.

The *Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* (*Dazhidu lun* 大智度論, T. 1509), attributed to Nāgārjuna (ca. 50–150 C.E.) and translated into Chinese between 402 and 406 by Kumārajīva (Jiumoluoshi 鳩摩羅什, 344–413), describes the everyday Mahāyāna

monk as a student of astrology, portents, and all spell techniques (*zhoushu* 呪術), divination practices, charms, and talismans. The text also describes the acquisition of *dhāraṇī* as one of the most prominent qualities of a bodhisattva (*T.* 1509.25:79c–80a, 95c–96c; Lamotte 1944–81, 1:199–202, 316–321). This is probably because, up through the early Tang period, *dhāraṇī* and the procedures and rituals for their use are presented unmistakably as ordinary practices appropriate for all monks and as highly beneficial to laypeople (McBride 2005). Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顛 (538–597) featured them prominently in his fourfold *samādhi* (Stevenson 1986, Swanson 2000). There is also evidence that the preponderance of translated sūtras encouraging people to chant *dhāraṇī* or to use *dhāraṇī* as protective spells was seen as related to and which influenced the practice of *\*buddhānusmṛti* (*nianfo* 念佛), causing it to change from a primarily meditative activity to a verbal practice (Ujike 1987, 3–68).

Although not differentiated from other Mahāyāna texts by catalogues during the Tang period, a catalogue of the Northern Song period, the *Catalogue of the Dharma Treasure Compiled in the Dazhong Xiangfu Reign Period* (*Dazhong xiangfu fabao lu* 大中祥符法寶錄), which was compiled under the guidance of Zhao Anren 趙安仁 (958–1018) and issued in 1013, placed Buddhist sūtras in three categories: the storehouse of Hīnayāna sūtras, the storehouse of Mahāyāna sūtras, and the esoteric portion of the storehouse of Mahāyāna sūtras. This last category subsumed everything from basic *dhāraṇī* texts to the *Guhyasamāja tantra* (*T.* 885; Orzech 2006). Hence, the threefold classification of translated sūtras, into the categories of Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, and tantric or esoteric, that emerged in the Northern Song period was useful to some Chinese and later Japanese thinkers before the modern period. In the early twentieth century, Japanese sectarian writers and scholars influenced by them classified all *dhāraṇī* scriptures and tantras as esoteric and conceptualized an “Esoteric Section” (Mikkyōbu 密教部) of the Buddhist canon of scriptures (Sharf 2002b; Ōmura 1918; Togano 1933).

CONVERGENCES, ESOTERIC BUDDHISM, DAOISM,  
AND POPULAR RELIGION



## 18. TALISMANS IN CHINESE ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

James Robson

Talismans, which are generally understood to be powerful objects that include esoteric diagrams or forms of writing emblazoned on paper, wood, clay, metal, or cloth, are found in many of the world's religious traditions. These objects are usually ingested, worn or impressed on the body, buried, or hung up in a home, monastery, or burial chamber. Talismans are perceived to have powers to impel what is desired and expel anything that is malicious or dangerous, including disease-causing demons or other harmful specters.<sup>1</sup>

There is an extensive body of literature on the history and function of talismans in China (and Chinese diaspora communities), though until recently the bulk of that research has focused on pre-Daoist and Daoist talismans, and there has remained a paucity of detailed research on Buddhist talismans (Despeux 2000; Drexler 1994; Mollier 2004; Robinet 1993; Ledderose 1984; Chaves 1977; Ōgata Tōru et al. 2005; Sawada Mizuho 1984; Wang Yucheng 1991a, 1991b, 1998). Recent research has demonstrated that although talismans are found with less frequency in the Buddhist canon (*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, hereafter *Taishō*) than in the Daoist canon (*Zheng-tong Daozang* 正統道藏, hereafter *Daozang*), one place where they do appear with some regularity is in Buddhist texts that have been conventionally associated with esoteric Buddhism (Strickmann 2002; Robson 2008).<sup>2</sup>

The Chinese term for “talisman” (*fu* 符) can be traced back to its original use in the context of Han dynasty imperial treasure objects, where the term referred to two halves of an object, usually in the shape of a dragon, fish, or tiger that was split down the middle and inscribed on the back. Two parties entering into a contract would each keep a

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on a longer treatment of the subject of talismanic writing within Chinese Buddhism in Robson 2008.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the large number of entries in Giles 1957 that either mention talismans (*fu*) in the title or are described as being magical charms (by which Giles usually refers to talismans). See also the charm and references to other recently discovered charms in Atkinson 1994, 296–298.



half of the *fu* as a guarantee of their agreement (Kaltenmark 1960; des Rotours 1952; Lagerwey 1987). One of the early uses of a talisman was for a ruler to authorize the conduct and scope of authority of a general (i.e., how many troops he could command; Lewis 1999; Seidel 1983). The military context of talismans was later carried over into the spiritual realm and permitted their possessors to summon and control a variety of deities that could be drawn on in battles with malicious spirits (Seidel 1983). Talismans written in an esoteric script are found on Han tomb objects where, as Anna Seidel has noted (1987b, 27), they “figure at the end of several ordinance and contract texts. They also occur separately or combined with short demon-subduing spells on wooden tablets or on jars.” Based on the available evidence, the earliest uses of these talismans were for healing, exorcism, and protection.

One of the distinctive features of esoteric Chinese talismans is the uncanny resemblance they have to writing. Some talismans are illegible to the human eye, while others have discernible graphic elements, what I refer to as imbricated graphs. Scholars of Chinese script have long noted how the earliest forms of writing in China were essentially signs that reflected the hidden powers of the universe and were used to “communicate with the spirits” (Lagerwey 1987; Vandermeersch 1980; Schipper 1974).<sup>3</sup> Written traces were essentially “patterns” (*wen* 文) originating in nature and were originally considered to have a spiritual or divine power that could be harnessed to control or influence that which was represented in writing (Kern 2001; Chaves 1977). Given their unique position between the “legible” and “illegible,” written talismans have been perceived to be capable of serving as mediums for communication with (or control of) the realm of demons and deities.

There are many Buddhist texts found in standard collections, such as the *Taishō* canon and the *Dai Nippon zokuzōkyō* 大日本續藏經 (Nakano and Maeda, 1902–1905), and in extracanonical sources—such as Dunhuang manuscript collections—that incorporate talismans, talismanic writing, or talismans on seals (see figure 1).

The applications of Buddhist talismans are quite varied, but they generally include those that are to be ingested; those to be burned and the ashes used to empower water for washing the eyes or for drinking;

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<sup>3</sup> This view of the origins of Chinese script as preceding the oral is not a return to the fallacious view of early Chinese script as ideographic. See Boltz 2003.

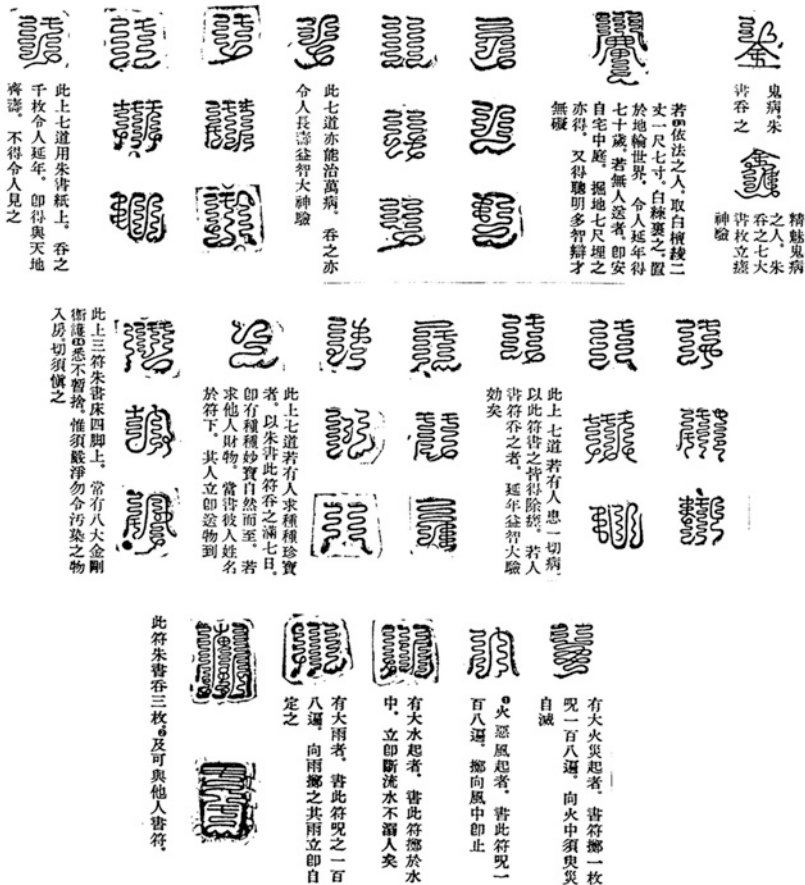


Figure 1. Talismans from *Rites of the Vajra-Being of Impure Traces* [Ucchuṣma] for Exorcising the Hundred Weirds (T. 1229.21:160–161).

those to be hung up to garrison a home; those to be applied to a bed; those to be put on a tree or to garrison a tomb; and those to be worn to become invisible (Gao Guofan 1989; Drège 1999). Buddhist texts that contain talismans tend to be closely related to spell-texts that are concerned with the attainment of supranormal powers, protection, or a variety of this-worldly benefits (Copp 2005; McBride 2005).

The majority of texts that contain talismans are clustered together in the “Esoteric” (“Mikkyō”) section of the *Taishō* canon (especially vol. 21), though the tendency to classify the texts with talismans as proto-tantric or as solely a part of esoteric Buddhism is a matter of scholarly debate. The *Taishō* is replete with talismans. For example,

*Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Ātavaka, General of Demons* (A *zhapoju guishen dajiang shangfo tuolouni jing* 阿吒婆旬鬼神大將上佛陀羅尼經, T. 1238) includes a talisman (*fu*) to be used against disease demons. *Dhāraṇī Spell Sūtra of Jāṅgulī, the Poison Woman, Spoken by the Buddha* (*Foshuo Changjuli dunu tuoluoni zhoujing* 佛說常瞿利毒女陀羅尼咒經, T. 1265) has talismans for dealing with toxic envenomation and can be used to repel demonic pneumas (*guiqi* 鬼氣) and cure stomach ailments. *Nāgārjuna's Treatise on the Five Sciences* (*Lungshu wuming lun* 龍樹五明論, T. 1420) is rich in talismans to be worn (*pei* 佩) or ingested (*fu* 服) to repel demons or secure safe childbirth or numerous this-worldly benefits. *The Secret Magical Techniques of the Ten-thousand Loves of Mañjuśrī and Yamāntaka* (*Manshushili yanmandejia wanai mishu ruyi fa* 曼殊室利焰曼德迦萬愛祕術如意法, T. 1219) is a text attributed to Yixing 一行 (683–727), the Chan monk who later became Śubhākarasiṃha's disciple, and contains two talismans (Xiao Dengfu 1994; Osabe Kazuo 1963). *The Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on Prolonging Life by Worship of the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper* (*Foshuo beidou qixing yanming jing* 佛說北斗七星延命經, T. 1307) includes talismans that draw extra potency from their correlation with specific stars to ensure protection against malevolent demons, secure official promotions, attain wealth and prosperity, and ease childbirth (Orzech and Sanford 2000; Xiao 1994). *The Scripture on the Rites of the Vajra-Being of Impure Traces [Ucchuṣma] for Exorcising the Hundred [Demonic] Transformations* (*Huiji jin'gang jin bai-bianhua fa jing* 穢跡金剛禁百變化法經, T. 1229) has four talismanic seals (*yin*) that confer immense powers, such as the ability to attract the love of others, to fly, and to alleviate pain and suffering. The text also depicts forty-two talismans that are to be written on paper, on the body, or on paper and swallowed in order to ensure that one prolongs one's life and increases one's knowledge (*yannian yizhi* 延年益智; see figure 1) (Strickmann 2002; Davis 2001). Another short text in the *Taishō* canon that combines text and talismans is the *Rules for the Diviner's Board of the Holy Deity of Mirth* (*Sheng huanxitian shifa* 聖歡喜天式法, T. 1275.21:324b12). This hybrid text is an amalgamation of Chinese and Indian astral images, Hindu deities, Sanskrit "seed syllables" (*bīja*), *mudrās*, and talismans, and it ends with the familiar injunction "quickly, quickly in accordance with the statutes and ordinances." *The Sūtra of the Seven Thousand Buddhas Spirit Talismans Spoken by the Buddha* (*Foshuo qiqian fo shenfu jing* 佛說七千佛神符經; hereafter *Seven Thousand Buddhas Spirit Talismans*) is a fragmentary

text included in the *Taishō* Buddhist canon (T. 2904), but many manuscripts are found among the Dunhuang collections.<sup>4</sup>

Numerous extra-canonical Buddhist texts preserved in Dunhuang collections contain talismans. There are too many texts to list in full here, but in addition to the various extant versions of *Seven Thousand Buddhas Spirit Talismans* just mentioned, we should also mention P. 3835, *Fuzhou zhenyan* 符咒真言; P. 4825, *Dabei jing baxing* 大悲經八行; and P. 3835v, *Foshuo dalun jin'gang zongchi tuoluoni fa* 佛說大輪金剛總持陀羅尼法—all of which have a number of talismans with Guanyin or the Buddha's name on them—and a series of texts related to the Bodhisattva Guanyin, including P. 3874, *Guanshiyin ji shizun fuyin shi'er tong ji shenzhou* 觀世音及世尊符印十二通及神咒 (a text with a rich collection of talismans that includes one with Bukong's name as part of the imbricated graphs); P. 2153, *Guanshiyin pusa ruyilun tuoluoni bing biexing fa* 觀世音菩薩如意輪陀羅尼並別行法; and P. 2602v, *Guanshiyin pusa fuyin* 觀世音菩薩符印, all of which contain many talismans and seals that are to be carried—or worn—for good fortune, attracting the love and respect of others, longevity, and the expulsion of demons.

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<sup>4</sup> T. 2904. This text and its variants are found in a number of Dunhuang manuscripts including Stein 2708, Pelliot 2723, Pelliot 3022r, and Pelliot 4667v. Other variants include Pelliot 2558r (which in fact has a Daoist scripture on the reverse side) and Stein 4524. Christine Mollier notes that a fragment of this text was also found at Turfan (Ch 2190r). See Mollier 2004, 410. Masuo 1996, 78–104 also lists P. 2153, which is presently in the *Tōyō bunko* 東洋文庫, as a related text. The most detailed study of this text is now Mollier, “Les talismans du Buddha et de Laozi,” which is available in English as “Augmenting the Life Account” Mollier 2008, 100–133. See also Robson 2008 for a slightly different view of the text.

## 19. ASTROLOGY AND THE WORSHIP OF THE PLANETS IN ESOTERIC BUDDHISM OF THE TANG

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

To the medieval Chinese, the orbits and passages of the celestial bodies by and large followed a fixed and repeating pattern, although some heavenly “movements” such as comets were conceived of as random, but nevertheless significant, portents outside the fixed celestial program. The five planets—Mars, Venus, Saturn, Jupiter and Mercury—and the sun and moon were the cosmic constants and thus represented the large “movements” that made up the overall heavenly pattern. In contrast to these were the twenty-eight constellations, i.e., the sectors in space through which the moon moved in the course of a month. These twenty-eight constellations were conceived of as the “smaller” movements whose influences forces were much more clearly felt in the world of humans.

The fact that influence from the asterisms and planets was a serious concern in the lives of the medieval Chinese also meant that concepts of longevity, prosperity, and good health in general were closely bound up with worship of the heavenly bodies. From this perspective, the importance placed on the seven stars of the Great Dipper is especially significant. Because the Great Dipper was believed to house the heavenly office in which the destinies of humans was determined, the worship of this constellation was extremely important. Worship of the Great Dipper can be documented quite early in Chinese history, and a prospering cult already existed before the advent of Buddhism.<sup>1</sup>

Here we must also distinguish between astronomy and astrology as understood in modern Western terms, though the Chinese themselves rarely made such a distinction. Astronomy is the scientific (or pseudo-scientific) observation of the movement and positions of the heavenly

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<sup>1</sup> *Hanshu* 漢書 (*Book of the Han*), ch. 99, p. 4190b. For a discussion of the Great Dipper in relation to the Daoist practice of *bugang* 步綱, cf. Andersen 1989–1990, 15–53, esp. 18–19.

bodies and it included the establishment of calendars, i.e., temporal devices. Astrology, simply stated, is the calculation and prediction of heavenly bodies in regard to their imagined influence on the human world.<sup>2</sup>

The view that astrological practices in ancient China were ultimately derived from Mesopotamia is now historically unsustainable, and belongs to a period in Western scholarship when everything related to scientific development in human history was thought to have originated in the Mediterranean region or the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> It is not unlikely that astrological and astronomical ideas and concepts originating in the Euphrates and Tigris valley may have influenced the Indus cultures at some point, and perhaps help lay the foundation for later astrological systems of belief on the Indian Subcontinent. However, there is no reason why the ancient Chinese should not have been able to develop their own astrological systems based on their own astronomical observations. Certainly, there is very little in terms of concrete evidence to connect the Western Zhou (1111–760 B.C.E.) with contemporary ideas and intellectual currents in Babylon, including its astrology.

When Buddhism arrived in China during the first to second centuries C.E., bringing with it Indian astrology and astronomical observations (*hora*, *huoluo* 火羅), the Chinese already had a well-functioning and complex astrological system of their own in place.<sup>4</sup> This native system not only encompassed extensive parts of China's traditional sciences but also included significant aspects of its philosophical systems, including the tradition of *yin-yang* 陰陽 and the five elements (*wuxing* 五行). From the very beginning of this cultural meeting, Buddhism

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<sup>2</sup> A highly useful and perceptive study is Deng and Liu 2003. Most of the data is based on new research on relevant manuscripts from Dunhuang. For the impact of Indian astronomy on that of China, see Yabūti 1979.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Schaefer 1977. A similar attitude may also be seen to have prevailed when the bronze culture of the Shang was first taken up in earnest in Western scholarship during the early part of the twentieth century. At that time it was simply inconceivable to the majority of researchers in Europe and the U.S. that the ancient Chinese had been able to develop such a sophisticated and high-level casting technique on their own. According to their Eurocentric and culturally inward-looking perspective, the Chinese must obviously have learned it from the West! Since then, Western scholarship has fortunately become more openminded and mature, and is now able to accept that cultural and scientific advances in human history have also happened, and continues to happen, outside the sphere of Western culture.

<sup>4</sup> For a survey of traditional Chinese astrology, see Needham 1959.

encountered a civilization that was in many ways as sophisticated as Indian culture, and which was in a number of ways—especially in terms of technology—even more advanced.

### *Early Buddhist Astrology in China*

Although references to astrology occur sporadically in earlier translations, Dharmarakṣa's third century translation of the *Mātāṅgī sūtra*<sup>5</sup> is the first work to feature a more comprehensive astrological system, including instructions on how to control the twenty-eight constellations. Another important early work is the *Shetoujian taizi ershiba su jing* 舍頭諫太子八宿經 (*Prince Ānanda and the Twenty-eight Constellations Sūtra*), also known as the *Huer jing* 虎耳經 (*Tiger's Ear Sūtra*).<sup>6</sup> In the course of the Nanbeichao (386–581), Chinese and Indian astrological systems greatly influenced each other, with the result that a new hybrid system came about.

At some point during the Nanbeichao, the Indian zodiac was introduced to China.<sup>7</sup> This tradition can be seen as having supplanted the traditional Chinese zodiac during the middle of the Tang, at least in the context of Zhenyan Buddhism as taught by the Three Ācāryas, Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra, and their followers. However, the new zodiac never became sufficiently important to supplant the traditional one, and both systems coexisted through out the Tang dynasty.<sup>8</sup> In the post-Tang period, it appears that the use of the Western zodiac only took place in the limited context of Esoteric Buddhism, as evidenced in various representations of Tejaprabha and his retinue of astral deities.<sup>9</sup>

It was also at this time the Chinese Buddhists took up the use of talismans and talismanic seals, practices they borrowed wholesale from Daoism. A good portion of all written talismans make use of astral

<sup>5</sup> T. 1300. This text is said to have been translated by Zhu Luyan 竺律炎 and Zhiqian 支謙 in 230 C.E., but there are problems with such an early dating, given its contents as well as other features.

<sup>6</sup> T. 1301. Largely similar to the text of T. 1300 and it would appear to belong to the same stage in the development of Buddhist astrology.

<sup>7</sup> As reflected in the famous hand scroll, *The Five Planets and the Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions* attributed to Zhang Sengyou 張僧繇 (fl. early sixth century), now in the Osaka Municipal Museum of Art.

<sup>8</sup> A survey can be found in Birnbaum 1980. For a study that is more clearly focused on the Esoteric Buddhist context, see Howard 1983. Incidentally, Howard in this article discusses the same astral chart as that studied by Birnbaum, cited above.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Hayashi 1997, 33–37.

symbols to indicate the constellation or heavenly body against which it is thought to render protection. The manner in which the Daoist talismanic tradition found its way into Chinese Buddhism therefore reflects an ancient human need for supernatural protection against negative influences believed to emanate from the asterisms. Seen from this perspective, the talismans are astral charts or astral “passports” with which the believer may navigate a perilous world replete with cosmic dangers.<sup>10</sup>

The manner in which the medieval Chinese envisaged the sky and the asterisms, including planets and constellations, is partly revealed in the significant astral maps recovered from Dunhuang.<sup>11</sup> Although not linked to any particular religious context, these maps or astral charts nevertheless represent the methods whereby the medieval Chinese navigated the heavens; as such, they also inform us about the way Buddhists conceptualized it. Since astrology and worship of the planets practiced in order to avoid various calamities and troubles essentially transcends religious distinctions, however, it is difficult to clearly distinguish Buddhist and Daoist beliefs and practices in this regard. In fact, when looking at the iconography, including various graphic representations of talismanic charts, it is abundantly clear that most pictorial representations reflect a rather balanced integration of Buddhist and Daoist imagery and ideas. Indeed, Chinese Buddhists, in particular those involved in Esoteric Buddhism, where astrological concerns occupied a prominent place, borrowed freely and seemingly without abandon from the Daoist tradition in regard to worship of the planets.<sup>12</sup> While this trend is evident in many translations of Indian Esoteric Buddhist works, it is most clearly seen in the apocryphal scriptures, in which original Indian Buddhist beliefs and practices have been seamlessly merged with indigenous traditions.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The use of talismans in Esoteric Buddhism in China is discussed in by Robson, “Talismans in Chinese Esoteric Buddhism,” in this volume.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Xi 1966. See also Little, Eichman, et al. 2000, 142–43.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Xiao 1991, 1994. Xiao’s works, although tendentious in the sense that the author wishes to prove the indebtedness of Esoteric Buddhism to Daoism, are nevertheless highly useful in their detailed discussion of Daoist elements in the Esoteric Buddhist scriptures in Chinese. His research is also valuable for revealing the large amount of apocrypha or hybrid works contained in this material.

<sup>13</sup> See Morita 1946. Although still the most comprehensive work to deal with the worship of the planets and astrology in Esoteric Buddhism, the fact that the author does not clearly distinguish between Chinese and Japanese practices and traditions but presents them together in a blur of undifferentiated details, necessitates that this work be approached with some caution.



*The Asterisms Personified: The Role of Astral Divinities in Esoteric Buddhism*

At some point in the history of Buddhism, the heavenly bodies, including the twenty-eight constellations and so on, became personified, i.e., deified. The exact process that led to this development is not clear, but it may have been a case of direct borrowing from Hinduism, or simply acceptance of a tradition already common to Indian culture. In any case, in the course of Buddhism's enculturation in China, the planets and asterisms appear as astral divinities. We do not know precisely when this happened, but it most probably occurred some time during the latter half of the Nanbeichao (386–581).

Texts such as the *Mātāṅgī sūtra* mentioned above feature astral deities, but no buddhas or bodhisattvas occur as astral deities at this early stage. By the time of the Tang, this had changed, however. Several bodhisattvas, many of them prominent in their own right, now also appeared in the roles as astral deities. These include Mañjuśrī, Cintāmanīcakra-Avalokiteśvara, and a strange new divinity, the bodhisattva Maming 馬鳴.

The planets or luminaries of our solar system as recognized by the medieval Chinese appear in groups of five, seven, and nine, depending on how they are counted. The basic group of five includes Mars, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and Mercury, which correspond to the five elements in classical Chinese thought. The largest group of nine includes the sun, moon, and the two lunar nodes, Ketu and Rāhu, which are purely Indian constructs, in addition to the five major planets. It is not known exactly when the luminaries were elevated to the status of divinities in China, but given the personification of the asterisms in traditional Indian thought and belief, this may have taken place at an early stage in the history of Buddhism. By the Tang dynasty, the Nine Luminaries were conceived of as proper gods: Mars was depicted as a many-armed, red demon; Venus as an empress holding a *pipa*; Jupiter, the Year Planet, as a bearded dignitary; Saturn as an old Indian man riding a bull; and Mercury as a female official dressed as a palace attendant with the head of a monkey in the crown.

The sun and moon are variously envisaged as Chinese-style divinities, either dressed in the garb of officials or in an Indian manner as proper bodhisattvas, such as Sūryagarbha and Candragarbha. As bodhisattvas, these deities were associated with the cult of Bhaiṣajyaguru together

with the twelve demon generals thought to control the zodiac.<sup>14</sup> The lunar nodes Ketu and Rāhu were depicted as many-armed demonic figures with three heads, much like the *vidyārājas* in Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>15</sup> Some variations in the applied iconography of the luminaries may be observed depending on the period and on differences between Indian and Chinese imagery.<sup>16</sup>

As was the case with the Nine Luminaries, the gods representing the twenty-eight constellations, or the phases through which the moon passes on its monthly journey through the sky, were each depicted as an astral official. In the Chinese cultural context these deities are, with a few notable exceptions, rendered as members in the heavenly bureaucracy in accordance with Daoist tradition, rather than with that of Indian Buddhism.

The cultural meeting between Indian and Western depictions of the twelve months is also evident in Zhenyan iconography from the second part of the Tang. Here, again, it was the local, Chinese tradition that eventually prevailed, resulting in the iconography we have today of the twelve animals of the zodiac.

### *Divination and Calendrical Science in the Context of Esoteric Buddhism*

Although divination and the calendrical sciences by no means belong to Esoteric Buddhism in China alone, it was within this Buddhist tradition that some of the most important developments took place during the medieval period.<sup>17</sup> The primary role of Yixing, the paragon of Zhenyan Buddhism and chief disciple of Śubhākarasiṃha, has long been acknowledged in these fields of traditional Chinese science.<sup>18</sup> However, the developments that took place during the mid- and late

<sup>14</sup> For a preliminary study of this cult, see Birnbaum 1985–1986.

<sup>15</sup> Nojiri 1971.

<sup>16</sup> See the hand scroll attributed to Zhang Sengyou, *The Five Planets and the Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions*, in Little, Eichmann, et al. 2000, 132–37. A detailed description of these divinities based on the *Fantian huoluo jiuyao* (T. 1311) can be found in Howard 1983.

<sup>17</sup> See the important study by Arrauy and Martzloff 2003. As is the case with most of the material contained in this impressive work, it is based on Dunhuang manuscripts.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Ōsabe 1963, 285–96.

Tang dynasty within the context of Esoteric Buddhism of course built on long and time-honored traditions from both China and India.<sup>19</sup> Yixing's contribution is foremostly revealed in his *Suyao yigui* 宿曜儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings [for Worshipping] the Asterisms)<sup>20</sup> and the *Qiyao xingchen biexing fa* 七曜星辰別行法 (Alternative Method of Practice [in regard to the] Seven Luminaries and Asterisms).<sup>21</sup> The *Fantian huoluo jiuyao* 梵天火羅九曜 (Indian Astrology of the Nine Luminaries)<sup>22</sup> has exercised considerable influence on Esoteric Buddhist astrology in Japan. The *Suyao yigui* is a text for appropriating the constellations and the *Qiyao xingchen biexing fa* is a text for divining influences from the asterisms, including the use of mantras.

After Yixing, but clearly in the same tradition, we have the *Wen-shushili pusa ji zhu xian suo shuo ji xing shiri shan e suyao jing* 文殊師利菩薩及諸仙所說吉凶時日善惡宿曜經 (Scripture on Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva and all the Rṣi Discourses on the Auspicious and Inauspicious Days [Caused by Influence from] the Constellations and Luminaries),<sup>23</sup> the translation of which has been attributed to Amoghavajra. This work of course reflects Amoghavajra's own personal interest in the cult of Mañjuśrī and Mt. Wutai 五台山 as his holy abode.<sup>24</sup> There is also the *Qiyao rangzai jue* 七曜攘災決 (Cutting Off and Removing Evil [Caused by] the Seven Planets),<sup>25</sup> a text for divining when the cosmic influences from the Luminaries are dangerous. It contains a complete calendrical system with which to identify inauspicious days. Both of these texts testify to the fact that Amoghavajra's achievements in

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of divination and calendrical science in medieval India, see Basham 1988, 489–93; and for China, Wolfram Eberhard's classic study, "Untersuchungen an Astronomischen Texten des Chinesischen Tripitaka," in Eberhard 1970. See also the important collection of articles in Kalinowski 2003.

<sup>20</sup> T. 1304.

<sup>21</sup> T. 1309.

<sup>22</sup> T. 1311. Strictly speaking, this text cannot be considered to have been authored by Yixing but rather recapitulates instructions said to have come from him.

<sup>23</sup> T. 1299.

<sup>24</sup> Both the structure, style, and overall appearance of this text, together with the fact that no similar work exists in either Sanskrit or Tibetan, strongly suggests that this scripture is in fact not a translation from an Indian original but an original composition from Amoghavajra's own hand. It is interesting to note that Howard 1983, 113–14 makes a similar connection between Mañjuśrī, Mt. Wutai, and the worship of the planets.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. T. 1308.

the field were the result of a highly functional cross-breeding between Chinese and Indian scientific traditions.<sup>26</sup>

*The Cult of the Great Dipper in Esoteric Buddhism*

Great Dipper worship in the Buddhist context would appear to date from the early Tang dynasty, and the practices, as seen in the earliest related texts, bear witness to considerable influence from Daoism.<sup>27</sup> The earliest Buddhist source is the *Beidou qixing yanming jing* 北斗七星延命經 (Scripture on the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper Extending Life).<sup>28</sup> As far as we can tell, both the names and iconography of the gods of the Great Dipper, as well as the ritual associated with their worship, were borrowed more or less directly from Daoism.<sup>29</sup> Only later, during the Tang, did the Esoteric Buddhist tradition modify Great Dipper worship to make it conform with its overall practices and doctrines. At that time a series of seven buddhas was placed in charge of each of the gods of the Great Dipper. In other words, Buddhist divinities were grafted on top of the old Daoist gods, and Buddhist ritual behavior supplanted the original Daoist forms. Nevertheless, the core of the ritual remained the same. We may even observe how in time the *Taishang xuanling beidou benming yansheng zhen jing* 太上玄靈北斗本命延生真經 (True Scripture on the Highest, Abstruse Spiritual, Northern Dipper's Fundamental Extension of Life),<sup>30</sup> a purely Daoist text, reappeared in the Buddhist context as an authoritative text on Great Dipper worship.<sup>31</sup>

While the cult of the Great Dipper existed in its own right as an aspect of Tang Buddhism, in the same period it was absorbed into the Esoteric Buddhist cults of Tejaprabha, Sudṛṣṭi, Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī (see below).

<sup>26</sup> Most of this material is discussed at length in Xiao 1991.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Xiao 1994, 347–51. See also Sørensen 1995c, 72–79.

<sup>28</sup> T. 1307.

<sup>29</sup> Incidentally, this Daoist prototype has not been located, which makes the Buddhist *Great Dipper Scripture* the oldest. However, given its many and unambiguously Daoist features, it is clear that an original Daoist composition served as its template. The fact that no early Daoist work has been found has led to some confusion and misunderstanding in regard to its dating and origin. As an example of this, see Franke 1990. A refutation of his views can be found in Sørensen 1995c, 72–74.

<sup>30</sup> DZ 622.

<sup>31</sup> This development may be observed in popular Buddhist materials from the Ming where the *Taishang xuanling beidou benming yansheng zhen jing* often replaced the *Beidou qixing yanming jing*.

*The Cult of Sudṛṣṭi*

An early tradition in Chinese Buddhism—undoubtedly of Indian origin—has the bodhisattva Sudṛṣṭi (Ch. Miaojian 妙見, Jpn. Myōken) as the personification of Ursa Major, the Great Dipper. In later Esoteric Buddhism he becomes an important astral divinity believed to control the destinies of sentient beings.<sup>32</sup> The earliest source on Sudṛṣṭi in China is the *Qifo bapusa suoshuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神咒經 (*Dhāraṇī* Spirit-Spell Sūtra preached by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas),<sup>33</sup> which was translated by an unknown person some time during the Eastern Jin (317–420).<sup>34</sup> Although this scripture contains a number of Daoist elements, by and large it appears to be of Indian origin.

During the Tang the cult of Sudṛṣṭi was greatly developed and was integrated into the Zhenyan complex of rituals. The scriptures representative of this development are the *Miaojian pusa shenzhou jing* 妙見菩薩神咒經 (Scripture on the Divine Spell of Sudṛṣṭi Bodhisattva),<sup>35</sup> the *Miaojian pusa tuoluoni jing* 妙見菩薩陀羅尼經 (Scripture on the Divine Spell of Sudṛṣṭi Bodhisattva),<sup>36</sup> *Beichen pusa shenzhou biexingfa* 北辰菩薩神咒別行法 (Separate Method of Practicing the Divine Spell of the Bodhisattva of the Northern Pole Star), *Beichen, beidou chao* 北辰北斗抄 (Document on Northern Polestar and the Northern Dipper).<sup>37</sup> A number of astral *maṇḍalas* with Sudṛṣṭi as the primary divinity has been preserved in Japan.<sup>38</sup> Most of these draw directly

<sup>32</sup> For additional information, see Hayashi on Sudṛṣṭi 1997, 47–57.

<sup>33</sup> T. 1332.21:536b–61b.

<sup>34</sup> The colophone of this sūtra is contained in the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (Buddhist Catalogue of the Kaiyuan [Period]), T. 2154.55:654c.

<sup>35</sup> A note states that this scripture features the “Method of *Homa* Offering to the Seven Planets” (*qi-xing humo fa* 七星護摩法). TZ, Vol. 5, p. 397a. Could this be the *Beidou qixing humo fa* 北斗七星護摩法 (Method of Performing the *Homa* [Ritual] for the Seven Stars of the Great Dipper) attributed to Yixing? Cf. T. 1310.21:457b–9a.

<sup>36</sup> A note states that this scripture has actually been lifted from the *Qifo zhuzun shenzhou jing* 七佛諸尊神咒經 (Scripture on the Divine Spells of the Seven Buddhas and All the Worthies). TZ, Vol. 5, p. 397a.

<sup>37</sup> A note states that this material consists of comprehensive information on all the constellations, planets, and polestars. TZ, Vol. 5, p. 397a.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Hayashi 1997. The Japanese iconographical and ritual compendium, the *Kakuzen shō* 覺禪鈔 (Book of Kakuzen), written and compiled by the Shingon monk Kakuzen 覺禪 (1143–ca. 1213), is one of our most important sources on the cult of Sudṛṣṭi. Cf. TZ, Vols. 4–5. The section on Sudṛṣṭi can be found in Vol. 5, p. 397a. In this work the deity is also referred to as Sonsei / Zunxing Wang 尊星王, i.e., Honored Ruler of the Stars.

on the Tang texts. Ennin reports on the Sudṛṣṭi cult in his celebrated *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記 (Record of A Trip to Tang in Search of the Law) from the year 838, which indicates that the cult was still flourishing during the late Tang.<sup>39</sup>

### *Mañjuśrī and the Worship of the Constellations*

Like Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva personifying wisdom, is a many-faceted divinity who also makes his presence known in the worship of the constellations. One work especially places Mañjuśrī centrally among the astral divinities: the *Wenshushili pusa ji zhu xian suo shuo ji xing shiri shan e suyao jing* 文殊師利菩薩及諸仙所說吉凶時日善惡宿曜經 (Scripture on Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva and all the Ṛṣi Discourses on the Auspicious and Inauspicious Days [Caused by Influence from] the Constellations and Luminaries),<sup>40</sup> the translation of which has been attributed to Amoghavajra. A central part of the text consists of the *Qiyao zhan* 七曜占 (Seven Planets Divination).<sup>41</sup> Both the structure, style, and overall appearance of this text, together with the fact that no similar work exists in either Sanskrit or Tibetan, strongly suggests that this text is in fact not a translation from an Indian original but an original composition that may have come from Amoghavajra's own hand. As such, this work of course reflects Amoghavajra's personal interest in the cult of Mañjuśrī.<sup>42</sup>

### *The Cult of Tejaprabha*

Tejaprabha, the Lord of the Constellations, is undoubtedly the single most important Esoteric Buddhist divinity in the context of planetary worship designed to avert cosmic calamities. A latecomer to the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon, Tejaprabha first makes an appearance in China during the middle of the Tang. He occurs in a number of scriptures, such as the the *Beidou qixing humo fa* 北斗七星護摩法 (Method of Performing the *Homa* [Ritual] for the Seven Stars of the Great Dipper),<sup>43</sup> the compilation of which is attributed to Yixing 一行

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Li Dingxia, et. al. 1992, 80, 83, 86, 126, etc. Ennin's observations include both worship of Sudṛṣṭi as well as votive paintings depicting the astral bodhisattva.

<sup>40</sup> T. 1299.

<sup>41</sup> T. 1299.21:398c-399b.

<sup>42</sup> See Orzech 1998, 200-201.

<sup>43</sup> T. 1310.21:457b-9a.

(683–723).<sup>44</sup> Embedded in this ritual work is another text, the *Chishengguang yaofa* 熾盛光要法 (Essential Method of Tejaprabha),<sup>45</sup> and the *Da weide Chishengguang rulai jixiang tuoluoni jing* 大威德熾盛光如來吉祥陀羅尼經 (Great Majestic and Virtuous Tejaprabha Tathāgata Good Fortune *Dhāraṇī* Sūtra)<sup>46</sup> translated by Amoghavajra. The latter would appear to have been the main scripture of the Tejaprabha cult.

The sources present Tejaprabha as a cosmic manifestation of Śākyamuni and, in terms of iconography, the most important source on the iconography of Tejaprabha is the *Da sheng Miaojixiang pusa shuo chuzai jiaoling falun* 大聖妙吉菩薩說除災教令法輪 (Great Holy Wonderful Luck Bodhisattva Discourses on the Removal of Calamities Causing the Dharma Wheel [to Turn]).<sup>47</sup> Despite its title, in this text Tejaprabha is actually described as a buddha, not a bodhisattva. In the biography of Amoghavajra as retold in the SGSZ, we find one instance in which the Ācārya was called upon by the Chinese emperor to worship Tejaprabha and the astral gods on Mt. Wutai 五台山 in order to dispel the evil omen caused by a comet.<sup>48</sup> After the fall of the Tang, the Tejaprabha cult continued to thrive in different parts of China, including Sichuan. Another piece of evidence drawn from the SGSZ mentions that a monk by the name of Wuji 無跡 (d. 925), who hailed from Guangfu Temple 廣福寺 in Lingzhou 靈州, was a specialist in the performance of Tejaprabha rituals during the beginning of the Later Tang (923–935).<sup>49</sup>

Standard representations of Tejaprabha from the Tang exist in the form of paintings and sketches drawn on paper. Although minor differences can be observed, both iconographically and structurally the surviving examples are largely similar in terms of iconography and they show a compositional uniformity. All depict Tejaprabha seated in a carriage drawn by an ox. He is clad in the garb of a buddha, and his chief distinguishing attribute is the golden wheel he holds in one hand, or in some cases with both hands. Surrounding Tejaprabha's carriage are the divinities representing the seven (or nine) planets.

<sup>44</sup> For a detailed study of the life of this important monk, see Osabe 1963.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. T. 1310.21:458c–9a.

<sup>46</sup> T. 963. Analogous to T. 964. Manuscript versions from Dunhuang are P. 2194, P. 2382 etc.

<sup>47</sup> T. 966.

<sup>48</sup> T. 2061.50:713a.

<sup>49</sup> T. 2061.50:898a.

The Tejaprabha cult enjoyed considerable popularity and was fairly widespread throughout the Tang empire. Related icons have been found as far apart as Chang'an<sup>50</sup> in Shazhou 沙州 (Dunhuang)<sup>51</sup> and in Sichuan, where the only extant examples in stone have been found (figure 1).<sup>52</sup> At some point, evidently toward the end of the Tang, there is an indication that the iconography relating to Bhaiṣajyaguru, especially in its astral aspect, was amalgamated with that of Tejaprabha.<sup>53</sup>

The cult of Tejaprabha was of enduring importance up to the end of the Yuan dynasty in China. It quickly spread beyond China's borders throughout East Asia and by the beginning of the eleventh century it was equally present in the Liao and Koryō kingdoms as well as in Heian Japan.<sup>54</sup> In both Korean and Japanese culture, the Tejaprabha cult has continued well into the premodern period as documented in votive paintings dating from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

### *Astral Mandalas*

The worship of the astral deities eventually found its way into the heart of the ritual complex of Tang Esoteric Buddhism, in which the use of mandalas is a central feature. Hence, a number of astral charts or "astral mandalas,"<sup>55</sup> thought to have originated in the context of Esoteric Buddhism of the second half of the Tang, have been preserved in Japan.

Among these are mandalas depicting the divinities of the Great Dipper, the twenty-eight constellations, and the Western zodiac

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<sup>50</sup> Now in the collection of Geijutsu University in Tokyo. This sketch is dated 1148 C.E. and is considered a copy of an original from the Tang. Whatever the actual date, the iconography is consistent with the Tejaprabha paintings from the Tang as found in Dunhuang. Cf. Takeda 1995, 9–11. The author refers to this sketch as a "Great Dipper Maṇḍala," but this is of course incorrect. The Tang depictions of Tejaprabha and his astral retinue have nothing to do, textually or ritually, with a mandala per se.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Meng 1996. A good example dated from 897 C.E. is presently in the collection of the British Museum. Cf. Whitfield 1982–1983, 323–24, pl. 27.

<sup>52</sup> See Segalen, de Voisins, and Lartigue 1924, pl. CXXX.

<sup>53</sup> Line drawings and sketches from the late Heian period provide us with evidence of this. Cf. Hayashi 1997, 37–40.

<sup>54</sup> For the cult of Tejaprabha under the Koryō, see Sørensen 1995c.

<sup>55</sup> The designation "mandala" to these charts is due to the fact that they resemble traditional Zhenyan/Shingon mandalas in their arrangement. However, in ritual terms the use of these items do not quite follow the same procedure. A term such as "chart" or "diagram" is probably more appropriate for these tableaux of astral divinities. This problem was first pointed out by Howard 1983, 6–8, n. 8.





Figure 1. Tejaprabha and his retinue. Ninth century. Zhongyan Temple 中岩寺, Jiangzhou 江州, Jiangbei county, Sichuan (Segalen 1924, *Mission*, Thome II, pl. 130).

surrounding Tejaprabha from Kumedera 久米田寺 and Hōryūji 法隆寺, both dating from the twelfth century.<sup>56</sup> A mandala chart featuring Mañjuśrī as its main deity is kept in Tōji 東寺 in Kyoto. This painting is directly related to the text of the *Fantian huoluo jiuyao* 梵天火羅九曜 (Indian Astrology of the Nine Luminaries),<sup>57</sup> and includes passages lifted directly from it.<sup>58</sup>

Another type of astral chart relates to the cult of Sudṛṣṭi. As we saw above, this cult is well documented in the Zhenyan material connected with the the *Beidou qixing humo fa* and other texts, but exactly how the later Japanese paintings and line drawings are linked to this text is an open question. Nevertheless, these charts show a four- or six-armed Sudṛṣṭi standing on one foot on the back of a dragon (or a turtle) inside a triple circle. Inside these, we find images of the lunar and solar disks in the process of being devoured by Ketu and eclipses, together with the astral forms of the twenty-eight constellations. For each of the major constellations talismans are provided. This particular form of Sudṛṣṭi indicates that it was primarily worshipped in connection with eclipses.

Another chart depicting an astral divinity is the Liuzi Tianwang 六字天王 (Six-character Heavenly King). In iconographical terms this divinity is an almost exact replica of Sudṛṣṭi: the figure is in the same one-footed pose and is holding of sun and moon disks. In this case, however, the god has six arms and is depicted as a controller of the animals of the Oriental Zodiac, for each of which talismans are given.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> A survey of these astral mandalas can be found in ten Grotenhuis 1999, 116–21. While slightly different in terms of composition, these mandalas are identical in overall conception and iconography. For details of these and related mandala charts see, Hayashi 1997, 57–70, pls. 8–13.

<sup>57</sup> T. 1311. Strictly speaking, this text is not by Yixing but recapitulates instructions said to have come from him. For a study of this important text, see Niu 2005.

<sup>58</sup> Discussed with translation in Howard 1983. See also Birnbaum 1980, 12–15.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Manabe 1971. Since we do not have any original paintings or drawings of these charts that are of Chinese origin, it is an open question whether or not these astral divinities and their iconography should be seen as reflecting Tang originals. It is actually highly likely that they reflect Japanese iconographical development from the late Heian, rather than from the Tang. Further research is needed in order to clarify this interesting question.

*Conclusion*

The worship of the asterisms and heavenly bodies played an important role in Esoteric Buddhism in China, and the rest of East Asian cultures. Although many of the cults may have originated in China, it would appear that the strong identification between certain Buddhist divinities and the worship of the planets was a Chinese phenomenon. In any case, the forms that have come down to us reveal beyond any doubt that the cultic worship of the planets and constellations in Esoteric Buddhism was strongly informed and influenced by contemporary Daoist practices.

Planetary worship in the context of East Asian Esoteric Buddhism was never a uniform tradition but one that was constantly changing. Moreover, there were many overlaps, both as regards function and in terms of variations in ritual practices and the related iconography. Hence, we see that rituals performed to address similar astral beliefs were directed at different divinities depending on a given context. It seems to be the case, therefore, that the worship of Tejaprabha, Mañjuśrī, Sudṛṣṭi and the gods of the Great Dipper, for example, could very well have been carried out for exactly the same purpose: to avert danger and to seek blessings. Moreover, the sources indicate that several of these astral cults coexisted and were promoted within the same Esoteric Buddhist context.

## 20. CONCEPTS OF THE NETHERWORLD AND MODIFICATIONS IN THE CHINESE ARTICULATION OF KARMA

Neil Schmid

### *Introduction*

Scholars have typically characterized the historical development of the Chinese netherworld as bifurcated by the arrival of Buddhism in China. Previous to Buddhism, notions of the Chinese afterlife were vaguely articulated and confused, and Buddhism's arrival provided the sophisticated ideas to order a variety of beliefs and practices into a more structured unity. This narrative, however, prioritizes changes in doctrines and their textual articulations while deemphasizing how practices, Buddhist or otherwise, served ongoing social and familial needs. The introduction of Buddhism did indeed furnish new ideas of the death, postmortem destinations, and the body, but these concepts largely took on their significance insofar as they dealt with the concerns of the living.<sup>1</sup> What follows is a brief survey of the afterlife in ancient China illustrating the concerns of the living, which in turn allows us to chart how Buddhism furnished additional strategies to navigate indigenous social and conceptual anxieties of death and the beyond.

### *Concepts of the Netherworld in Early China*

What is striking about early notions of the afterlife in ancient China is that the sources of information—material, textual, and ritual—are consistently vague. Detailed articulations of what death is, what happens to the body, and where the deceased go are not clearly elaborated. Rather, the import of death, mortuary rituals, and the afterlife lies, above all, in the maintenance of kinship relations while ensuring that

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of encounter paradigms and how they shape academic understanding of Buddhism, see Sharf 2002a, Orzech 2006b, and Bokenkamp 2007, among others.

the living and the dead inhabit separate realms.<sup>2</sup> The “great boundary” *daxian* 大限 between this world and beyond demarcates the afterlife, which consisted of multiple options, none of which were mutually exclusive.<sup>3</sup> Concerns about how that boundary was negotiated were of paramount interest.<sup>4</sup>

Our earliest written sources of information, inscriptions from Yellow River valley oracle bone and bronzes, offer few specifics in the postmortem lives of the departed.<sup>5</sup> Within each realm and across their divide, hierarchies of status and kinship configured power. Changes in mortuary practices reflect changes in social structures.<sup>6</sup> Scholars once held that the Shang-period organization of ancestral hierarchical power was a result of mapping the models of this world onto that of the dead. However, it is now generally accepted that the early Chinese polity found organization and legitimacy in the contractual and bureaucratic dynamics of the depersonalized yet generationally based hierarchy of the afterlife.<sup>7</sup> Kinship concerns in early in Chinese religious beliefs and the power of the dead would remain a common determinative thread shaping the adaptation of Buddhist concepts of the afterlife.

The earliest written reference to a “netherworld” is of the Yellow Springs, Huangquan 黃泉, the watery underworld of the dead, in a story recorded under the year 722 B.C.E. in the *Zuozhuan*. In the story, Duke Zhuang of Qing, betrayed by his mother, swore at her and said they would not meet until after death in the Yellow Springs.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A fundamental idea, codified in Confucius’ *Lunyu* (6:20) 敬鬼神而遠之. On the separation of the living and the dead in early China, see Lewis 2006, 125 and 370, n. 213, for a full bibliography.

<sup>3</sup> Wu Hung 1994. On the nonexclusivity of afterlife options, see Loewe 1982, 114.

<sup>4</sup> Nickerson 2006 surveys how mortuary rites in the late Warring States, Han, and early medieval period increasingly formulated these concerns through bureaucratic means.

<sup>5</sup> For a survey of materials related to ancestor worship in the Neolithic period, see Li 2000.

<sup>6</sup> For Neolithic developments in mortuary practices reflecting social changes, see Li 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Keightley 1998.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of the Yellow Springs and its place in early mythology, see Allan 1991, 29–30, who also identifies it with the Ruo 若 River found in earlier Shang myth, 64–67. The Yellow Emperor, Huangdi 黃帝, was originally the stygian equivalent of his celestial counterpart, Shangdi 上帝. Huangdi’s later associations both with the cult of immortality and with Mt. Kunlun 崑崙山 in the west, the abode of the Queen Mother of West 西王母, possessor of the elixir of immortality, point to growing concerns about the body and corporeal soteriologies.

During the late Warring States period, Mount Tai 泰山 in Shandong, ruled over by the Lord of Mount Tai, increasingly became the pre-eminent destination for the dead. An alternate netherworld mentioned in the poem “Recalling the Soul” Zhaohun 招魂, in the *Chuci* 楚辭 (Songs of the South), is the Dark City 黑城, which is controlled by Tubo 土伯 or the Earl of the Earth.<sup>9</sup> Another location developed during the Han and post-Han era is Fengdu 酆都 (or Mount Luofeng 羅酆山), which offered another realm in the south.<sup>10</sup> While Mount Tai and Mount Luofeng were both entries for the deceased into the afterlife with record-keeping facilities, all these realms are characterized by their subterranean location, bureaucratic government, and their rather neutral moral stance—they were not specifically places of punishment.

The understanding of the afterlife as realms dominated by government officials and bureaucratic control developed from the late Warring States period onward.<sup>11</sup> These changes were most clearly manifest in the transformation of tombs from the fifth century B.C.E. on to resemble the household, complete with real and mock household goods, partitioned domestic spaces, and attendants.<sup>12</sup> The dead were no longer encountered in the ritual commensality, as in the early Zhou, but instead shunned and segregated. This change may well reflect the profound political changes occurring as the Zhou ruling families lost control, diverse centers of power came to the fore, and the state became increasingly organized through bureaucratic measures.<sup>13</sup> Thus, underground tombs became primarily abodes of the dead, where they were to remain confined by the trappings of domesticity and bureaucratic imperatives.

Textual evidence of the netherworld as a bureaucratic realm appears anecdotally in the resurrection narrative of a man named Dan 丹, dating from the late third century B.C.E., found in tomb 1 at Fangmatan

<sup>9</sup> Hawkes 1986, 225–226. Yü 1987, 369–78, examines this poem at length. See the discussion below.

<sup>10</sup> For studies of Mount Tai, see Chavannes 1910, Sakai 1937, and Ono Shihei 1963. Fengdu is examined by Nickerson 1996, Chenivresse 1995, 1997, Mollier 1997 and Matsumura 1999.

<sup>11</sup> On the otherworldly bureaucracy in the Warring States, see Riegel 1989–1990.

<sup>12</sup> Wu 1988, 1995 argues that a significant shift away from the lineage temple to family tomb occurred during the late Warring States period and the Han period.

<sup>13</sup> See Poo 1989 and von Falkenhausen 1994.

放馬灘.<sup>14</sup> This man, not yet fated to die, is allowed to return due to a declaration filed on his behalf and submitted to the Director of Fate *siming* 司命, which secures his release. However Dan returns not with detailed accounts of the netherworld realm but rather with information on how the living were to interact morally with the dead. Grave-securing writs *zhenmuwen* 鎮墓文, along with tomb contracts *maidiquan* 買地券 and talismans *fu* 符, increasingly common from the Han period onward, are another illustration of how bureaucratic means maintained a distinction between the living and the dead. Placed in the tombs, these documents had a twofold purpose: to exorcize malevolent spirits of the earth during construction of the tomb so the corpse would not be harmed once in the grave, and to ensure that the underworld authorities received the proper documentation to maintain control over the deceased when segregated below ground.<sup>15</sup> These texts demonstrate how earlier mantic and exorcism practices of the late Warring States period were reconfigured through the bureaucratic model.<sup>16</sup>

Discussion of the deceased in early China often refer to a distinction between the different types of “souls” that constituted the individual, the earthly *yin* soul, *po* 魄, and the celestial *yang* soul, *hun* 魂.<sup>17</sup> Both types of souls were required to descend into the earth and remain in the grave.<sup>18</sup> The grave, however, increasingly came to represent a variety of afterlife possibilities. For example, research on the Mawangdui 馬王堆 banner and the multiple coffins has elaborated a variety of afterlife scenarios contained within one tomb. The inner coffin *guo* 槨 represents the complete household with its goods, entertainers, and personal attendants. The banner, like the four coffins, represents the range of possible afterlives in a singular material assemblage: underground abode, the netherworld, the immortal realm, and the universe (elsewhere illustrated with the celestial deities Fuxi 伏羲 and Nuwa 女媧, the sun and moon, and the geographical directions).<sup>19</sup> Descendents

<sup>14</sup> Harper 1994. The story of Dan is the earliest version of a genre that proliferates during the Six Dynasties period. See Company 1990.

<sup>15</sup> Nickerson 1996, Seidel 1987b.

<sup>16</sup> Nickerson 2006.

<sup>17</sup> For a discussion of *hun* and *po* souls, see Yü 1987.

<sup>18</sup> Poo 1997, 62–66. Conceptualizations of the *hun* and *po* necessarily changed over time and location. See Brashier 1996 and also Seidel 1987a.

<sup>19</sup> Wu 1992, 140–42. Rawson 1999 argues that the conceptual coherence and uniformity of Qin and Han tombs is a result of political unification.

thus allowed for a variety of possible worlds for the deceased—except that of the living. Nonetheless, on arrival in the underworld all the newly dead were held in “earth prisons” *diyu* 地獄 for an assessment of their lives aboveground.

Deliverance from the corpse *shijie* 屍解, however, provided an alternative to the certainty of grim subterranean judicial proceedings with unknown outcomes. The story of Dan, above, has been cited as an early instance of *shijie*, where the deceased was “absolved from guilt,” avoided the punishments of the underworld, and obtained an incorruptible body.<sup>20</sup> Although tomb documents sought to preserve the body from demonic harm legalistically, arduous attempts were made to maintain the integrity of the body through preservation from decay and putrefaction.<sup>21</sup> The distinction between a *xian* 仙 immortal and one who achieves deathlessness through sloughing off the corpse *shijie* is that the latter goes through the process of death.<sup>22</sup> In both cases, however, the body is the vector through which transformation (*bian* 變, *bianhua* 變化, *huaqu* 化去) occurs, allowing for the creation of a perfected body of an immortal *chengxian* 成仙 necessary for the continued existence of the individual.<sup>23</sup> A final defining characteristic of all immortals is their ability to ascend into the heavens *shengtian* 升天.<sup>24</sup>

### *Postmortem Possibilities in Early Medieval China*

Specific concerns about the afterlife and their conceptual, material, and ritual expression in late Warring States, Qin, and Han eras provided fertile ground for particular Buddhist doctrines and praxis to take root—yet only insofar as they could adapt to address those concerns. The collective and social nature of the afterlife found its moral expression in the Han period doctrine of *chengfu* 承負, “inherited burden,” mentioned in the “Scripture of Great Peace” *Taiping jing* 太平經.<sup>25</sup> This idea held that individuals were liable for and affected by the acts

<sup>20</sup> Harper 1994, 23–24; Seidel 1987b, 45.

<sup>21</sup> Seidel 1987a. For an overview of immortality in Daoism, see Penny 2000.

<sup>22</sup> Harper 1994, 26. See Seidel 1987a, 258–62, on Daoist longevity practices and the difficulty of defining physical immortality in Western terms.

<sup>23</sup> Cedzich 2001, 4; Robinet 1979; Cedzich 2001. For a discussion of “becoming an immortal” *chengxian* 成仙, see Yu 1964.

<sup>24</sup> For distinctions of immortals related to their ascents, see Kohn 1990.

<sup>25</sup> Hendrichke 1991; Tsuchiya 2002; Strickmann and Faure 2002, 39–50; and Yamada 2008.



of their forebears. Although *chengfu* differed from Buddhist karma in the scope of its responsibility, the profound persistence of a deeply ingrained concern for family, community, and state transfigured the discourses of karma in Chinese Buddhism into beliefs and cultic practices of karma that brought to the forefront the creation and transference of merit. Postmortem judgment in underworld realms provided the scaffolding on which an elaborate bureaucratic system of karmic assessment and punishment, integrating Buddhist notions of hell, was built in the medieval period.<sup>26</sup>

The keen interest in the body and maintaining its integrity, which permeated Chinese mortuary rites and cultic practices and which provided an alternative postmortem existence to the bleak netherworld, would inform Buddhist understanding of the afterlife in radical ways. In stark contradiction to canonical Buddhist doctrines, the possibility of a permanent self or soul *shen* 神 was fundamental to Buddhism in China.<sup>27</sup> Shangqing Daoism appealed to Buddhist ideas of rebirth to support the notion of death as reincarnation consonant with deliverance from the corpse *shijie*.<sup>28</sup> Drawing on previous Chinese concepts of immortality, Shangqing in this sense offers a specialized mode of rebirth, while Lingbao, adapting Buddhist notions of samsaric reincarnations, presents a generalized system of rebirth.<sup>29</sup> Buddhism in China readapts the cosmological model of the six paths of rebirth *liudao* 六道 along this fundamental divide. By the Tang period, the sixth path of heavenly rebirth *tiandao* 天道 becomes commonly conflated with rebirth into paradisiacal realms (inclusive of Pure Lands), central to which is the possibility of the transformation of the adept into a buddha *chengfo* 成佛 with an incorruptible body.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See the extensive work of Stephen Teiser 1986, 1988a, 1988b, 1994, 1996 on the evolution of Buddhist netherworlds and their implications for the development of Chinese religions.

<sup>27</sup> For a philosophical articulation, see Huiyuan's "On the Indestructibility of the Soul" *Shen bu mie lun* 神不滅論 discussed in Liebenthal (1952). For early Chinese conceptualizations of the Buddha in terms of longevity and the afterlife, see Wu 1986.

<sup>28</sup> Cedzich 2001, 54–55.

<sup>29</sup> Bokenkamp 2007, 163, distinguishes two basic modes of rebirth in medieval Daoism. "What I am characterizing here as 'generalized rebirth' supposes an unchanging system in which all individual deeds are directly and causally linked to future states of being.... What I characterize as 'specialized rebirth' lacks such a system for all beings. Instead, it is a sort of rebirth into heavens or other future states of being that is granted, usually by deities, as a special reward for select individuals who earn it."

<sup>30</sup> Schmid 2008. For examples in Dunhuang Buddhist literature where lay practitioners are granted buddha bodies by deities, see Schmid Draft manuscript.

## 21. MEDIUMS IN ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

James Robson

The term “medium” or “spirit-medium” translates (or approximates) the Chinese term (*wu* 巫), which has often been—problematically, in most cases—rendered as “shaman.” Mediums are those who served as intermediaries between living humans and dead ancestors or deities. They can be men or women and adults or children. While spirit-mediums are best known for their role within what has come to be called China’s “common religion,” they have also played a role in Daoist and Buddhist history, and they continue to function up to the present day in China, Taiwan, and Chinese diaspora communities. Spirit-mediums can be associated with urban or rural temples or they may work out of their own homes, particularly those practicing at the village level, where they maintain their own altars (*tan* 壇).

Anthropologists have tried to provide some analytic clarity to a cluster of terms used to label similar phenomena involving the descent of a spirit or deity into a host. Raymond Firth, for example, has attempted to draw a line of demarcation between “spirit possession,” “spirit-mediumship,” and “shamanism.” Firth understands “spirit possession” as designating “phenomena of abnormal behavior which are interpreted by other members of the society as evidence that a spirit is controlling the person’s actions and probably inhabiting his body.” “Spirit-mediumship” for him is the

use of such behavior by members of the society as a means of communication with what they understand to be entities in the spirit world... the behaviour of the person possessed by the spirit must be intelligible or able to be interpreted; this implies that it must follow some fairly regular, predictable pattern, usually of speech. (Firth 1967, 296)

Firth applies the term “shamanism” “to those phenomena where a person, either a spirit-medium or not, is regarded as controlling spirits [and] exercising his mastery over them in socially recognized ways.” As potentially useful as these distinctions might be, they do not capture well the diversity of phenomena encountered in the Chinese religious context—where there is slippage between these categories—and anthropologists researching the religious practices found in other cultures have noted similar limitations.

There is evidence of mediumistic practices found in Chinese antiquity, though its complicated history—and the appropriate choice of terminology to describe it—is still a much-debated topic (Puett 2004, von Falkenhausen 1995). There has been a general tendency, perhaps following the pejorative view of Confucians, to treat spirit-mediumship as a debased form of religious practice, in opposition to what are perceived to be the refined traditions of Daoism and Buddhism (Sutton 2000). Yet when we turn to pre-modern Chinese Buddhist materials, we find some rather systematic treatments of spirit-mediums. Michel Strickmann, for instance, has proposed that one of the earliest Buddhist texts describing the use of a medium in the context of spirit-possession is the *Amoghapāśa sūtra* (*Bukong juansuo tuoluoni zizaiwang zhou jing* 不空羼索陀羅尼自在王呪經, T. 1097) translated in the late seventh or early eighth century (Strickmann 2002). The relevant portion of that text says:

If it is desired to enchant a person, the spell possessor should bathe himself and put on fresh garments. Next he should recite the spirit-spell to protect his own person. Then he is to construct a ritual area using cow dung, making it square and painting it in the appropriate colors, strewing assorted flowers, and setting out various white-colored food offerings. Next he should take a virgin boy or girl, bathe the child, and imbue its body with fine fragrances. He should clothe it in a pure white garment and adorn it with all manner of ornaments. He should then have the child sit cross-legged in the ritual area; he recites the spell *bandha* (“bind”) and he plaits the child’s hair. When he is done reciting the spell and plaiting the hair, he takes more flowers and fills the child’s hands with them. In addition, he takes fine quality incense, crushes and scatters it. Then, additionally, he recites a spell over uncooked rice, which he sprinkles, together with flowers and water, within the ritual area. Next he should burn sandalwood incense and recite Guanyin’s spirit-spell; he should recite it three times over the flowers and then cast them in the child’s face. Then the child’s body will begin to tremble. If you wish it to speak, pronounce another spell [given in the text] over pure water and sprinkle it in its face. As you recite the spell, be sure that your hand does not touch the child. When you have recited in this manner, the child will speak. If you ask about good or evil things in the past, future, or present, it will be able to answer all your questions. If the spell holder wishes to send away the spirit who has lodged in the child, there is another spell given which he should recite. (Strickmann 2002, 204–205).

This passage serves well as a paradigmatic example of spirit-mediumship, involving an elaborate ritual context, the use of a child as the host, and the ability to make the host issue an oral prognostication. During the Tang dynasty, especially during the seventh and eighth

centuries, numerous esoteric Buddhist texts related to spirit-mediumship and possession—particularly regarding the role of children—began to circulate. In those texts, which were translated by or affiliated with esoteric Buddhist masters, the ritual use of mediums is found in connection with possession rites that are referred to in Chinese as *aweishe* 阿尾奢. *Aweishe* is a transliteration of the Sanskrit term *āveśa* (lit., “to take hold of” or “to possess”), and was used to “designate possession rites in which a spirit was invoked into the living body of a medium” (Strickmann 2002, 207–208). That we find this Sanskrit term transliterated into Chinese and also find the presence of Indian deities, such as Maheśvara, in these Buddhist texts has led scholars to posit a connection back to practices already found in the Indian religious context (Smith 2006).

Child mediums are also found in an account in Vajrabodhi’s biography in the *Gaoseng zhuan*, in the context of a tantric master performing an exorcism for the Tang emperor Xuanzong’s daughter using two female child mediums (Davis 2001, 123; Strickmann 1996, 213–14). Summing up the Tang dynasty trajectory in the development of esoteric Buddhist spirit-mediumship, Edward Davis provides the following cogent comments:

Basically, the tantric master recites various incantations to summon one or more Buddhist deities, sometimes identified, sometimes not, into either a luminous, reflective object (water, mirror, jewel, pearl), the image or icon of the divinity, or the body of a child. In the case of children, considerable attention is given to their number (anywhere from two to ten boys or girls, in some cases) and to their age (between eight and fourteen). The texts describe an elaborate process of purification and the physical appearance of the children both before and during the trance. It is said that when the divinity has descended into the children, they will speak of “all matters past, present, and future,” of “things yet to come,” or of “good or evil fortune,” or that they will be able to answer any questions asked of the god (Davis 2001, 123–124).

What seems to have distinguished esoteric Buddhist mediumship from spirit-mediumship more generally, however, is the “fact that the spirit-medium’s trance was officiated by a tantric master and resulted from the power conferred on the master by his own identification with a Buddhist deity,” such as is described in the *Rites of Āveśa as Explained by the Deva Maheśvara* (T. 1277) (Davis 2001, 123–25).

Practices involving the use of spirit-mediums developed and expanded noticeably through the Song dynasty, when they are also found in Daoist practices, and continue to be practiced up to the

present day (Davis 2001). Spirit-mediumship spread geographically to Chinese diaspora communities in Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan and is found rather early in Japan (Debernardi 2006; Marshall 2000; Sutton 2000; Elliot 1955; Tsai 2004; Jordan 1972; Kleinman 1980; Blacker 1975; Borgen 1997; Komatsu 2000). A rich body of literature has also developed on the intersection of anthropological theories regarding spirit-mediumship and Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia (Tambiah 1970; Spiro 1982; Mumford 1989).

## 22. ESOTERIC BUDDHIST ART UP TO THE TANG

Henrik H. Sørensen

Although we are here primarily concerned with Buddhist art in China from the perspective of Esoteric Buddhism, it is necessary to understand the cultural context from which it grew. Strictly speaking, there are almost no Buddhist images in China that may unerringly be identified as belonging to Esoteric Buddhism before the mid-seventh century. Nevertheless, it must be understood that Esoteric Buddhist art in China as a cultural and religious phenomena did not happen suddenly, but that it came about as part of a longer and more complex process that not only involved imports from India and Central Asia, but also involved interaction with the local culture.

A large army of protectors, demon-generals, and ghostly beings inhabit the pantheon of mature Esoteric Buddhism in East Asia. Their presence in Chinese Buddhist iconography began to be felt during the sixth to seventh centuries, but how was the situation prior to that time? Various protectors including the celebrated *lokapālas* (the Four Heavenly Kings of the cardinal directions) and a motley assortment of door gods (*dvārapālas*), in Chinese often referred to as “strong vajra-beings” (*jin’gang lishi* 金剛力士), occur very early in the history of Buddhism and were part of the Indian tradition the Chinese inherited.

The pre-Buddhist Chinese were significantly engaged in speculations about demonology and exorcism, although the roles and exact function of spirits were not always very clearly defined. In any case, a certain ambivalence as regards their exact nature would appear to have been the norm. In other words, these non-human beings were sometimes imagined as working for the protection and well being of humans, but in most cases not. They were generally feared, and protection against perceived depredations was diligently sought.

Since its early history, Buddhism had actively been dealing with spirits, demons, and ghosts, and had worked out a compromise to the effect that it encompassed and accommodated the non-human beings in its growing pantheon of benevolent, lesser beings. Usually these adopted spirits, including the domesticated Hindu gods that appear

in Buddhism, were given protective roles, roles decidedly secondary in nature from the perspective of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

The growing presence of these demigods, spirits, and lesser beings begins to crop up in the sculptural material in China as early as the fourth century, although they already figure in the Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures much earlier.<sup>1</sup> It would appear that in the beginning these spirits and demonic personages, which also include a host of nature spirits, were conceived of as a generic group of protective beings, but gradually they began to take on more concrete forms and roles in the Chinese Buddhist pantheon. This development is evident in Buddhist steles from the sixth century, where they are both grouped and identified by actual name or at least according to category. Examples of these spirits can be found on steles as secondary protectors, a good example being the image-stele with the front-side image of Śākyamuni Buddha from 543 C.E. during the Eastern Wei. The panels on the bottom of the back and two sides feature the images of ten spirits, and cartouches identify them as “mountain spirit, tree spirit, wind spirit, dragon spirit, bird spirit,” and so on.<sup>2</sup> A group of *yakṣas* can also be found below the Buddha niche in cave no. 288 in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang (cf. Dunhuang wenwu yanjiu 1987, pls. 108, 111). Interestingly, this process whereby the spirits and demon protectors are gradually named and contextualized is also reflected in the Buddhist literature that became available in China during the Nanbeichao. In this sense the *rapprochement* between shared or similar practices of the Daoist and Buddhist traditions manifested in the development of a comprehensive and rapidly expanding spirit world. Hence, we find many examples of lists and registers of demons and demigods in the ritual literature of both traditions from this period, a material that evidently formed the basis of the rise of a corresponding iconography.<sup>3</sup> An interesting, small votive *stūpa* from the Cleveland

<sup>1</sup> A group of four spirits can be found at the bottom backside of the celebrated 471 C.E. stone image of Maitreya Buddha found in Xingping, now at the Peilin Museum in Xi'an. See, for example, Li Jingjie 1995, 80, pl. 60.

<sup>2</sup> These adorn the sides and backside of the base of the stele Li 1995, 100, pl. 80. See also Jin 1994, 234–235, pl. 169 [1–3].

<sup>3</sup> A Daoist example of this type of scripture is the *Dongyuan shenzhou jing* 洞淵神咒經 (Scripture on the Divine Spells of the Grotto of Profundity). See Mollier 1990. Comparable Buddhist scriptures include the different versions of the *Mahāmāyūrividyaājñi* and the apocryphal *Mouniluotan jing* 摩尼羅賣經 (Maṇiratna Scripture), T. 1393. Cf. Sørensen 2006b.

Museum shows how the indigenous tradition interacted with the spirit world of Buddhism and assigned a trigram from the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes) to each of the eight protecting spirits carved at its base (figure 1).<sup>4</sup>

Hindu divinities were imported into China together with Buddhism, although for a long time they were mainly relegated to play minor (or at least secondary) roles in the various Buddhist narratives and the various attempts at portraying them. However, in the course of the fourth to fifth centuries, these “buddhified” Hindu gods began to live lives of their own. This does not mean that they were divorced from their original Buddhist context, but rather that within it they attained a certain functional and cultic autonomy. Exactly how this came about is not clear, but in terms of art, we see Hindu gods appear with increasing regularity in the sculptural material, just as was the case with the spirits and demons discussed above. And not only that, where they previously were represented as minor and small-sized images, they now begin to attain more well-defined and personal characteristics in accordance with the written tradition. The important encyclopedia of spells, the *Tuoluoni zaji* (陀羅尼雜集; T. 1336), dating from the first half of the Liang dynasty (502–552), gives us a good idea of this development.

At the Yungang Caves 雲崗窟 outside Datong in northern Shanxi,<sup>5</sup> several early examples of Hindu gods can be found as part of the Buddhist pantheon that was carved in the cliff during the second half of the fifth century.<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, the roles the Hindu gods are assigned to here reflect their function as protectors in the traditional sense, and on the other hand they presage their later upgraded roles as primary Esoteric Buddhist divinities of the wrathful class. Significant among these images are the reliefs of Maheśvara and Kārttikeya/Kumāra, depicted as multi-headed and many-armed divinities riding

<sup>4</sup> Yin 1997, 42–45. Comparable examples can be found in the Central Asian collection in the Dalem Museum in Berlin and at the local Dunhuang museum in Gansu. See also Durt, Riboud, and Lai 1985; and Yin 1991. This material adds important information to our knowledge of the cult of the *stūpa* and early Esoteric Buddhism.

<sup>5</sup> For an up-to-date study of this site and its history, see Caswell 1988.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Li Zaiqian 1998, 69–71. See *Shanxi sheng wenwu gongzuo weiyuanhui and Shanxi Yungang shiku wenwu baoguan* 1977, pls. 39–41, 52. Caswell 1988, 72, figures 52–53 expresses doubts as regards the identification and iconography of both images.





Figure 1. Rubbing from a votive *stūpa* with images of spirits. Northern Liang, fifth century C.E. Dunhuang Museum.

their respective mounts, the bull and the peacock.<sup>7</sup> The entrance of cave no. 8 features Maheśvara on the east wall, and on the west wall, that of Kārttikeya. Smaller images of these two protecting *devas*, but otherwise displaying identical iconographical features, can be found above the entrance to the northern antechamber in cave no. 10 (figure 2).

During the sixth century we also find images of Vināyaka (Gaṇeśa) in the role of guardian or protector among the wall paintings of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang. These images also appear on Buddhist steles and as part of a secondary group of protecting spirits on thrones for Buddha images.<sup>8</sup>

The earliest pre-Tang images that may be considered clear-cut examples of Esoteric Buddhist iconography (and practice?) are the reliefs of *vidyārājas* found at the entrance of the Bingyang Cave 賓陽窟 and at other locations within the Longmen grotto complex (Gong 1980a, pl. 1 [1–2]). These images reflect the beginnings of the iconographical tradition of depicting the *vidyārājas* as many-armed, demon-looking protectors that normally characterize mature Esoteric Buddhist iconography associated with the Zhenyan tradition of the mid- to late Tang. The dating of these high reliefs is uncertain, but they would appear to date from before 530 C.E., more or less contemporaneous with the date of the cave itself.

It is important to note, however, that none of these images appear as primary divinities in their respective sculptural or pictorial contexts. They were secondary, often generic figures and would seem to have remained so until they became the foci of attention with their own cults in the later development of Esoteric Buddhism in China.

<sup>7</sup> For further information on Kārttikeya, see Mukherjee 1987.

<sup>8</sup> See *Dunhuang wenwu yanjiu* 1987, pls. 114, 119. Note that both Maheśvara and Kārttikeya occur in the same mural as well. See also *Henan sheng gudai jianzhu baohu yanjiu* 1987, 1–6, pl. 1 [5]. The images at this site date from the Sui dynasty. The rise of Vināyaka as an important Buddhist protector with whom magical arts and spells were associated is discussed by Smet 1989.

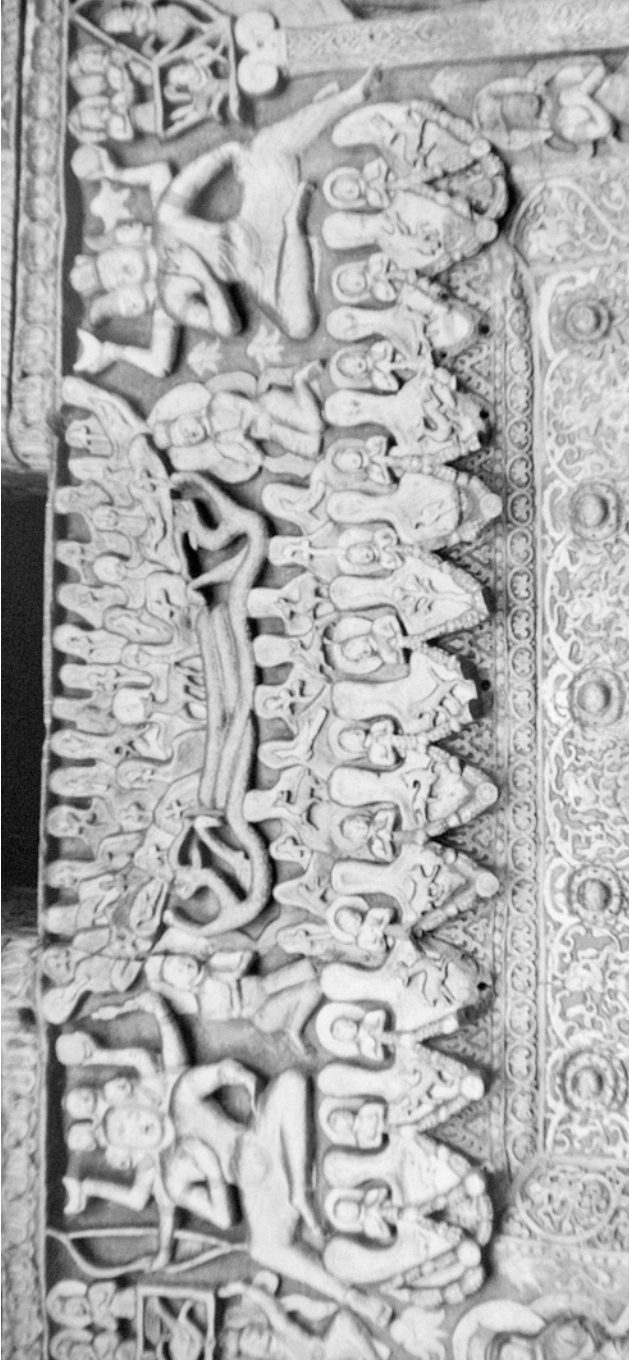


Figure 2. Images of Maheśvara and Kārttikeya, Northern Wei, fifth century C.E. Yungang Caves, Shanxi. Photo by author.

ESOTERIC BUDDHISM DURING THE TANG



## 23. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN THE TANG: FROM ATIKŪṬA TO AMOGHA VAJRA (651–780)

Charles D. Orzech

### *Introduction*

Between the fifth century and the early eighth century, South and Central Asian Buddhist texts, focused on ritual and studded with mantras and *dhāraṇīs* (tuoluoni 陀羅尼), began to seep and then pour into China.<sup>1</sup> This trend was a direct consequence of developments in South Asia that would lead eventually to the production of the tantras.<sup>2</sup> This heterogeneous assortment of texts came in three varieties: as individual *dhāraṇī* texts that promulgated a spell and its attendant ritual for protection or some other end; as collections of *dhāraṇī* texts that brought together a variety of ritual practices with aims ranging from the repulsion of demons to enlightenment; and as texts reflective of comprehensive ritual systems.

The wealth of translations into Chinese during the last half of the seventh century gives us a sense of important new Buddhist developments in South Asia. From this material we can see the growing interest in mantric ritual and a gradual drive toward comprehensive systems that emerged in the last half of the seventh century, exemplified by the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra* (MVS)<sup>3</sup> and the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* (STTS).<sup>4</sup> The new texts reflected both growing fascination with and specialization in spells as a distinct strand of Buddhist lore and practice, as well as a profound and relatively rapid change in some Indian Buddhist communities, attributable to loss of patronage and to competition with Śaivism (Davidson 2002a, 90, 111–112). Davidson has argued that the emergence of esoteric Buddhism is

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<sup>1</sup> See Copp, “*Dhāraṇī*,” in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> See Davidson, “Sources and Inspirations: Esoteric Buddhism in South Asia,” in this volume. Although compromised by a naïve textual methodology and taxonomy, Ōmura’s attempt to write a history of the development of esoteric Buddhism by examining the chronology of translations remains the classic. See Ōmura 1972.

<sup>3</sup> Labeled a “sūtra” or “classic” *jīng* 經 in its Chinese translation, it is elsewhere referred to as a “tantra.”

<sup>4</sup> Its full Sanskrit title is usually reconstructed as *Vajraśekhara-sarvatathāgata-satyā-saṃgraha-mahāyāna-pratyutpannābhisaṃbuddhamahātāntrarāja-sūtra*.

intimately connected with Buddhism's adaptation to medieval *sāmanta* feudalism. The emerging Mantrayāna was “simultaneously the most politically involved of Buddhist forms and the variety of Buddhism most acculturated to the medieval Indian landscape” (Davidson 2002a, 114). It is notable, however, that many of the themes found in seventh-century texts, including the use of spells for both “worldly” and soteriological ends, for subjugating demons, for *homa* oblations, the appearance of Vajrapaṇi, and so on, had appeared in earlier texts still preserved in the Chinese canon.<sup>5</sup>

In its “mature” or classical form that appears in the seventh century, esoteric rites are structured around the metaphor of the overlord (*rājādhirāja*), and this new “vehicle” is saturated with sovereign imagery.<sup>6</sup> The disciple enters the mandala and assumes command of it through *abhiṣeka* (*guanding* 灌頂, consecration) and the use of mantra and is thereafter sworn to secrecy.<sup>7</sup> The ultimate goal of this ritual is the realization of one's identity with the enlightened lord of the universe. The ritual “coronation” of the disciple as an enlightened buddha is embedded in a program through which the disciple is instructed in the command of various “subordinate” deities. The worldly utility of these lords of mantra—their ability to predict or influence battles and even to assassinate through ritual means—was an attraction for high-placed patrons. Mantrins could serve as enforcers, and their utility was quickly recognized and even articulated as a distinctive function within Chinese Buddhism.<sup>8</sup> While contrary to much of earlier Buddhist teaching on violence, the new developments certainly built

<sup>5</sup> Examples include the *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī* by Saṅghabara (*Kongqiuwang zhou jing* 孔雀王咒經 T. 984), *Mahāmanivipulavimāna-viśvasupratīṣṭhita-guhyaparamarahasya-kalparāja-dhāraṇī* (牟梨曼陀羅呪經 T. 1007), the *Azhaḥpoju guishen dajiang shang fo tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 阿吒婆拘鬼神大將上佛陀羅尼神咒經 (Scripture on the Supreme Buddha, Divine Spell Dhāraṇī of the Great Demon General Ātavaka T. 1237), the *Amoghapāśa sūtra* (*Bukong juan suo zhou jing* 不空羂索咒經 T. 1093) and the *Ekādaśamukha sūtra* (*Fo shuo shiyi mian Guanshiyin shenzhou jing* 佛說十一面觀世音神咒經 T. 1070). For a full treatment of these developments see Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition,” in this volume.

<sup>6</sup> The use of royal metaphors is intentional and systematic. See for instance, Davidson 2002, 121–122.

<sup>7</sup> As, for example, in the *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 or *Collection of Coded Instructions* (*Dhāraṇīsamgraha sūtra*, T. 901.18:795a2–14. Also see Davidson, “*Abhiṣeka*,” in this volume.

<sup>8</sup> Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001) makes such an argument in *Lives of Eminent Monks Composed in the Song* (*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳), T. 2061.50:724b16–726. See the discussion in Orzech 2006b, 65–68.

on trends already present in the Mahāyāna and on much of South Asian mantric lore.<sup>9</sup>

The broad sweep of esoteric Buddhism during the Tang can be characterized in a straightforward manner. We first see the translation of a variety of texts representative of the growing interest in mantra and *dhāraṇī*. Many of these texts promote a particular *dhāraṇī*, ritual, and deity.<sup>10</sup> Second, we see the advent of texts representing distinct and comprehensive systems that are meant to codify the swelling tide of mantric texts, deities, and techniques. Full entry into these systems was accessed only through *abhiṣeka*, effecting the ritual transformation of a disciple into a cosmic overlord. Third, these overarching systems were given what amounts to imperial imprimatur during the twenty-year period from the 760s into the 780s. During this period, particularly during the period of Daizong's 代宗 (r. 762–779) support of Amoghavajra (Bukong jin'gang 不空金剛 704–774), significant religious and institutional infrastructure was put in place, including imperially sanctioned altars for *abhiṣeka* in certain monasteries and imperial palaces for the performance of rituals to benefit the state; construction projects, including the renovation of Jin'ge Monastery 金閣寺 on Mount Wutai 五台山; and the installation of Mañjuśrī as the patron in official government monasteries.<sup>11</sup>

State support and attendant prestige created a de facto orthodoxy, which was enshrined in a list of seventy-two translations presented by Amoghavajra to the throne in 771 that functioned as a codicil to the canon (*T.* 2120.50:839a–840a). The prestige generated by this period of support, coupled with continued lines of initiation, had a profound effect on Buddhism for the remainder of the Tang.<sup>12</sup> While lineages stemming from teachers performing *abhiṣeka* who had received imperial sanction continued, the teachings were modified in new ways. Further, many individual techniques and deities were transmitted

<sup>9</sup> This concern about violence is addressed explicitly in the *Susiddhikāramahātantra-saddhanopāyikā-ṭāṭala* (*Suxidi jieluo jing* 蘇悉地揭羅經, *T.* 893). See Giebel 2001, 188. The original is *T.* 893.18:614a4–617.

<sup>10</sup> Early versions of the *Mahāmāyūrividyārājñī sūtra* might fit in this category. For a study see Sørensen 2006c, 89–123.

<sup>11</sup> See Martin Lehnert, “Amoghavajra: His Role in and Influence on the Development of Buddhism,” and Chen Jinhua, “Esoteric Buddhism and Monastic Institutions,” in this volume. Toganoo Shōun's account of Amoghavajra stands up remarkably well. Toganoo 1933, 101–11.

<sup>12</sup> See Orzech, “After Amoghavajra: Esoteric Buddhism in the Late Tang,” in this volume.



and adopted *outside* of these lines and this is an important dimension of ninth-century Chinese Buddhism. Finally, from the end of the eighth century through the ninth century the prestige of institutionally sanctioned esoteric Buddhism drew pilgrims from across East Asia to the Qinglong 青龍寺, Xingshan 興善寺, and other monastic centers where initiation was available.

Under the influence of Japanese concerns, most modern and traditional scholars have drawn a clear distinction between the work of early Tang translators of esoteric texts, that of the “three great masters” (*san dashi* 三大師) who followed them—Subhakarasiṃha (Shanwuwei 善無畏 637–735), Vajrabodhi (Jin’gang zhi 金剛智 671–741), and Amoghavajra—and those working in the ninth century.<sup>13</sup> While there are some differences, viewing these masters in the context of earlier efforts and of the work of Indian, Central Asian, and Chinese masters through the ninth century underscores continuities as well as differences.

It is also helpful to make clear the different institutional circumstances and expectations in India and China. The pattern of a lord and his mantrin did not “translate” smoothly to the Chinese court, where Buddhism had long been an arm of the state. Prominent monk-translators were more likely to end up in translation bureaus, or as official government overseers of such efforts as the formation of the Tripiṭaka, than as powerful pundit advisors. Further, some of these monks seem to have focused solely on translation work, while others are known for their ritual services, magical prowess, teaching, and mobilization of Buddhism on behalf of the state. Whether these different roles reflect reality or are the result of other factors, such as a lack of highly placed patrons, disciples’ accounts, and so on, is difficult to fully ascertain.

Overall, the translations of the early Tang were overlaid with the major systems surrounding the *MVS* and the *STTS* promoted under government sponsorship in Daizong’s reign. After the death of Amoghavajra (774) and Daizong (779), transmissions focused on the “Yoga” of the *STTS*, the *MVS*, and the *Susiddhimahākara-tantra* (T. 893) continued and evolved, while a variety of adaptations—cults

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<sup>13</sup> The distinction is usually cast in terms of emerging sectarian identity with the “three great masters.” See, for example, Chou 1945, 245; Lü 1995, 201.

of individual deities and specialized ritual practices—were adopted in settings outside of the totalistic structure of *abhiṣeka*.

### *Early Tang Translators*

Quite a number of translators cum missionaries working in the seventh century rendered *dhāraṇī* texts, ritual manuals, and collections that have been characterized variously as “miscellaneous [esotericism]” (Ōmura 1972, 373–375), “proto-esoteric” or “proto-tantra” (Strickmann 1996, 129–130), or as “early Esoteric Buddhism.”<sup>14</sup> Viewed synoptically, these translations indicate a flourishing of esoteric practices in Indian Mahāyāna circles in the seventh century. Among the works translated are *dhāraṇī* texts;<sup>15</sup> versions of more complex *vidhi* (ritual manuals, *yigui* 儀軌) centering around a particular divinity, such as *Mahāmāyūrī*; and texts indicative of growing systematization of the body of esoteric lore and practice around “families” (*kula*; *bu* 部), such as the Buddha, Lotus, Vajra, and so on.

Most notable among these translators were Atikūṭa 阿地瞿多 (fl. 650s), Buddhapālita (?) 佛陀波利 (fl. late seventh century), Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664), Puṇyodaya 那提 (dates unknown but arrived in 655), Divākara 地婆訶羅 (613–687), Śikṣānanda 實叉難陀 (652–710), Manicintana 寶思惟(?–721), Yijing 義淨 (635–713), and Bodhiruci 菩提流支 (?–727).<sup>16</sup> A brief look at the work of four of these translators, Atikūṭa, Bodhiruci, Yijing, and Manicintana, gives us a sense of the range of esoteric teachings and practices current in the second half of the seventh century. Further, Bodhiruci, Yijing, and Manicintana at times worked together and their work reflects both the ascendancy of

<sup>14</sup> For a trenchant critique of “miscellaneous esotericism” as a category, see Abé 1999, 152–158, and Sharf 2002a, 265–267. For “early esoteric Buddhism,” see Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition,” in this volume.

<sup>15</sup> The archetypal and most influential of these is Buddhapālī’s *Uṣṇīṣāvijāyā-dhāraṇī sūtra* (T. 967). The text was repeatedly translated—by Divākara, Yijing, Śubhākarasiṃha, and Amoghavajra respectively—and gained virtually universal popularity. See Copp 2005, 171–192.

<sup>16</sup> Lü 1995, 162–88, presents an excellent discussion of these and other figures. Lin 1935, 83–100, is the most thorough study of Puṇyodaya. Antonino Forte has produced essays on Divākara, Manicintana, and Bodhiruci; see Forte 1974, 1984, 2002.

new esoteric developments in South Asia, and the political realities of working for the court.<sup>17</sup>

### *Atikūṭa*

Atikūṭa, a native of central India, first arrived in the Tang capital Chang'an in 652, where he resided at Ci'en Monastery 慈恩寺. Shortly after he established an altar for esoteric practices at the Fotu court 浮圖院 of Huiji Monastery 慧日寺, which became a center for esoteric teaching.<sup>18</sup> It was there, during the next year, that he translated the *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 or *Collection of Coded Instructions* (*Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha sūtra*, T. 901) with his disciple Xuankai 玄楷 acting as scribe (*bishou* 筆受).<sup>19</sup> Purportedly a portion of a larger "Vajramahāmaṇḍa Scripture, a small portion of the great *Dhāraṇī-piṭaka*," this voluminous work contains *vidhis* for worship of a variety of deities.<sup>20</sup> The *Tuoluoni ji jing* had wide influence. Indeed, according to reports by the Japanese pilgrim Shūei 宗叡 (809–884), a number of its spells were being transmitted in the Zhejiang area during the late eighth and early ninth centuries.<sup>21</sup>

The *Tuoluoni ji jing* is divided into seventeen chapters in twelve fascicles. The work appears to be a collection of South Asian parts assembled in China. As a composite, it gives us a look at a range of esoteric practices at the moment of the emergence of comprehensive

<sup>17</sup> Manicintana and Bodhiruci both arrived in 693, and both spent time working on projects at Da Fuxian Monastery 大福先寺, which Forte characterized as a part of the propaganda apparatus of Empress Wu's regime (Forte 2002, 89–90). Bodhiruci and Yijing worked together on the translation of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* (*Da fanguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T. 279) led by Śikṣānanda in 695–699. From 700, Yijing headed the translation office at Da Fuxian Monastery, where he collaborated with Manicintana in 700–701 and 703, and probably with Bodhiruci on the *Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra* (*Da Bao Ji Jing* 大寶積經, T. 310), but Forte concludes this last association was erased in Zhisheng's catalogue (*Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄, T. 2154) of 730. See Forte 1984, 311, 317–318. In his brief study of esoteric Buddhism under Empress Wu, Osabe highlights the way these translators incorporated notions derived from Daoism and other Chinese traditions. See Osabe 1982, 1–33.

<sup>18</sup> Both the *Song Gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (T. 2061.50:718b24–25) and the *Xu gujin yijing tu* 續古今譯經圖 (T. 2152.55:368a23–24) report the event.

<sup>19</sup> The Sanskrit title of the text is sometimes reconstructed as *Dhāraṇīsaṃmucaya*.

<sup>20</sup> T. 901.18:785b3: 此經出金剛大道場經 大明咒藏分之少分也。

<sup>21</sup> Shūei was in China from 862 through about 866. His catalogue is preserved in T. 2174A. See Lü 1995, 172. There are reports of a second translation of the *Tuoluoni ji jing* by Shimanyue 釋滿月 in the *Song Gaoseng zhuan* (T. 2061.50:723a1), but no such scripture is extant and the reports are likely spurious. See Lü Jianfu 1995, 171.

systems of esoteric Buddhism. The scripture delineates four “families”: “Buddha,” in which the dominant place goes to the Buddhōṣṇīṣa; “Bodhisattva,” dominated by forms of Avalokiteśvara; “Vajra,” focusing on Vajragarbha, Vajrāmṛtakunḍali, and Ucchuṣma; and “Devas,” whose number includes Mārīcī as well as astral and meteorological deities. It is interesting to note that each category includes female deities.

Perhaps most significant is the presentation of a coherent system of practice surrounding the Ekākṣara-uṣṇīṣa-cakravartin (Yizi Foding lun wang 一字佛頂輪王) in the first three and the last chapters.<sup>22</sup> Although the text is clearly based in the *dhāraṇī* genre, these chapters present a full esoteric system integrating *abhiṣeka*, *homa*, mantra, and so on in the creation of a mandala/altar and the investiture of a disciple with royal symbols. In contrast to typical *dhāraṇī* texts, the disciple is enjoined here to utmost secrecy (*T.* 901.18:795a2–14). Davidson has argued that the *Tuoluoni ji jing* is thus the earliest surviving work with all of the characteristics of mature esoteric Buddhism.<sup>23</sup> It was eclipsed by the development of the Vajraśekhara/Vajroṣṇīṣa tradition (Jin’gang ding 金剛頂) that was imported to China early in the next century by Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra.<sup>24</sup>

### *Manicintana*

Manicintana, Bodhiruci, and Yijing were active in decidedly different circumstances from those of Atikūṭa. Arriving at the height of Empress Wu’s 則天武后 power, they played a significant role in the legitimization of her regime.<sup>25</sup> Manicintana arrived in Loyang in 693 and

<sup>22</sup> Also designated Uṣṇīṣa, Buddhōṣṇīṣa, or Tathāgatauṣṇīṣa. See Davidson forthcoming b, 5–6. Davidson presents a list of the chapters with hypothetical Sanskrit reconstruction on pp. 16–17, though, as he notes, the list is less helpful than it might seem, as some sections of the scripture have contents not obvious from the chapter titles (p. 4). It is worth noting however, that we do find rites to Hayagrīva, Ucchuṣma, Vajrāmṛtakunḍali, and others. Among other texts connected with this tradition are *T.* 951 and *T.* 952 by Bodhiruci.

<sup>23</sup> Davidson forthcoming b, 5, 11. As Davidson notes, the only possible competitor to this early system is that of the Amoghapāśa system. See below.

<sup>24</sup> The name of this system is commonly rendered as Vajraśekhara, though there is indication that it might be better understood as Vajroṣṇīṣa. See Davidson forthcoming b, 6, n. 14; and Giebel 1995, 109.

<sup>25</sup> Empress Wu abolished the Tang dynasty and set up her own Zhou dynasty between 690 and 705. She legitimated her rule by claiming to be the “Golden-wheel Cakravartin” and through prophecies of a female incarnation of Bodhisattva Maitreya

lodged at Tiangong Monastery 天宮寺 (Bodhiruci arrived the same year). That same year he translated the *Scripture of the Amoghapāsa Dhāraṇī, The Sovereign Lord of Spells* (*Amoghapāsa kalparāja sūtra; Bukong juansuo tuoluoni zizai wang zhou jing* 不空罽索陀羅尼自在王咒經, T. 1097) as well as the *Mahāpratisarā dhāraṇī; Foshuo suiqiu jide dazizai tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 佛說隨求即得大自在陀羅尼神咒經, T. 1154).<sup>26</sup> He was actively engaged in translation work (carried out primarily at Da Fuxian Monastery 大福先寺) until 706; he then retired to the “Indian monastery” 天竺寺 established for him at Xiangshan 香山 at Longmen. The monastery became famous for its Indian style.

We have some indication that late in life Manicintana met Śubhākarasimha, who treated him as his elder.<sup>27</sup> Zhisheng’s *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* of 730 lists him as the translator of seven texts, though, as Forte has shown, Zhisheng’s list is only of texts accepted into the canon of which Manicintana was directly in charge and that had not fallen afoul of censorship after the Tang restoration.<sup>28</sup> He was involved in the production of several other texts, including the *Da baoji jing* 大寶積經 (*Mahāratnakūt sūtra*), T. 310, under the direction of Bodhiruci; and the *Yuqie fajing jing* 瑜伽法鏡經, T. 2895, which was banned under the suppression of the Three Stages movement from 725 onward.<sup>29</sup>

Most significant, from the point of view of esoteric Buddhism’s role in the political economy, was Manicintana’s rendering of the *Amoghapāsa kalparāja sūtra* (T. 1097).<sup>30</sup> Amoghapāsa, “Unfailing Lasso,” is a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara whose devices—including the lasso or lifeline—save those in danger. The translation was readied around the time of Empress Wu’s assumption of the title “Cakravartin of the Golden Wheel,” and the text would appear to bolster her claims

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contained in the *Mahāmegha sūtra*. For an overview of the empress, see Guisso 1979, 306–21. For an analysis of the role of Bodhiruci and others in the Buddhist establishment who enabled this process, see Forte 1976.

<sup>26</sup> Reis-Habito 1999.

<sup>27</sup> The “meeting” is mentioned in an inscription by Li Hua 李華 in the *Xuanzong chao fan jing sanzang Shanwuwei zheng Honglu qing xingzhuang* 玄宗朝翻經三藏善無畏贈鴻臚卿行狀, T. 2055.50:291b16–17, but see the caveats by Forte 1984, 314.

<sup>28</sup> Forte 1984, 315–22.

<sup>29</sup> Forte 2002, 91, 94, 104; 1984, 318–20. See also Lewis 1990, 207–38.

<sup>30</sup> There are several other versions of this popular scripture, including ones by Xuanzang (T. 1094), Manicintana’s colleague Bodhiruci (T. 1092, 1095), Li Wuchan (T. 1096), Amoghavajra (T. 1002, 1098), and Dānapāla (T. 1099). For a study of some of these texts see Wong 2007a, 151–158.

and interests.<sup>31</sup> This text, consisting of three fascicles and sixteen chapters, is obviously different from and much shorter than the version translated seven years later by Bodhiruci (see below).

The first fascicle sets out the benefits of the text—including that mastery of the *dhāraṇī* will result in mastery of the world—as well as instructions for painting the main image.<sup>32</sup> The second fascicle details rites for various mundane achievements, such as using corpses to find buried treasure, entering harems, and expelling demons that cause disease.<sup>33</sup> The third fascicle attends to more noble ends. It describes three altars—for kings, for ministers, and for commoners—and spends the most time on the procedures for bringing a king into the mandala.<sup>34</sup> This includes a rite of *abhiṣeka* (T. 1097.20:428b), albeit one centered on purifying imagery; subduing dragon kings with the aim of overlordship and relieving drought; and, finally, seeing the Buddha. A key element of all these rites is the repetition of various short mantras. However, more comprehensive details about mandalas, mantras, and their internalization and visual manipulation are lacking. Strangely, this text was not officially entered into the canon until 712.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, it seems likely that the text was crafted to meet the political needs of Manicintana's main patron.

### *Bodhiruci*<sup>36</sup>

Even more peculiar is the fact that Manicintana's colleague Bodhiruci rendered a different version of the *Amoghapāśa* only seven years after Manicintana's translation. Bodhiruci was from South India and

<sup>31</sup> As Reis-Habito points out, the empress assumed the title of *cakravartin* one month after the translation of this text, which says that one who masters the *dhāraṇī* “will rule the world... [and] be called a cakravartin.” See Reis-Habito 1999, 49–50.

<sup>32</sup> T. 1097.20:421b28–421c26; 422b15–423b22.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, T. 1097.20:425b22–425c23 and the translations in Orzech 1994b, 116–20.

<sup>34</sup> T. 1097.20:427b20–429a14; 429a15–429c3.

<sup>35</sup> It is missing from the *Da Zhou kanding zhongjing mulu* 大周刊定眾經目錄 (T. 2153) of 695, despite the fact that some of the translation team worked on the catalogue. Forte 1984, 309, suggests that its political sensitivity and perhaps its esoteric contents mitigated against inclusion.

<sup>36</sup> This Bodhiruci, sometimes designated by scholars as Bodhiruci II, was originally named Dharmaruci 達摩流支, but his name was changed by Empress Wu. See Forte 2002, 92. He is not to be confused with the earlier monk of this name (?–527) who translated many important Mahāyāna works, including the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* (*Rulengqie jing* 楞伽經, T. 671) and the *Diamond sūtra* (*Jin'gang bore jing* 金剛般若經, T. 236A).

converted late in life to Buddhism. He rapidly gained a reputation as learned and was invited by Emperor Gaozong 高宗 to come to Chang'an.<sup>37</sup> Gaozong died before his wish was realized, but apparently Empress Wu persisted. Bodhiruci arrived in 693 and Empress Wu had him lodged at Da Fuxian Monastery 大福先寺, the premier government establishment in Loyang. He also did some work at Foshouji Monastery 佛授記寺 in Luoyang 洛陽.

Bodhiruci's early years in China were productive, with no fewer than eleven sūtras appearing in the first years.<sup>38</sup> By 706 he shifted to Chongfu Monastery 崇福寺 in Chang'an, where he translated scriptures on a variety of esoteric deities, including Amoghapāśa (*Bukong juansuo shenbian zhenyan jing* 不空絹索神變真言經, T. 1092), Cintāmanicakra (*Ruilun tuoluoni jing* 如意輪陀羅尼經, T. 1080), and the *Ekākṣara-uṣṇīṣa-cakravartin Scripture* (*Yizi foding lunwang jing* 一字佛頂輪王經, T. 951), among others. Bodhiruci's Amoghapāśa text is strikingly different from the text rendered by Manicintana. First, it is much larger, occupying one hundred and seventy-one *Taishō* pages. Second, in contrast to Manicintana's text, it includes systematic and integrated use of mandalas, *abhiṣeka*, *homa*, *vidyārājas*, and *bijas* (seed syllables) in complex visualizations.<sup>39</sup> It thus has more in common with texts such as the *MVS* and the *STTS* than it does with earlier *dhāraṇī* scriptures.

### Yijing

Yijing, inspired by the travels of Faxian and Xuanzang 玄奘, set out for India in 671 and returned in 695, bringing with him hundreds of Sanskrit texts and a large number of relics.<sup>40</sup> He initially settled at Foshouji Monastery, where he translated the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* with Śikṣānanda.<sup>41</sup> He was a prolific translator whose output focused on

<sup>37</sup> See Forte 2002, 83–85.

<sup>38</sup> The details are drawn from Zanning's biography of Bodhiruci in the *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061.50:720b4–12. See also Yoritomi 1990, 46–47, 89–94.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, T. 1097.20:260b5, 293a1ff., 259c28 (*homa*), 264a22 (*abhiṣeka*). The extensive use of the imperial metaphor is notably absent.

<sup>40</sup> Yijing's biography is found in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061.50:710b8–711b4, where Zanning places him at the head of the first fascicle. The other two figures in the first fascicle are Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra. The comments on the texts and relics are at 710b19–20. His travels are chronicled in *Da Tang xiyu qifafa gaoseng zhuan* 大唐西域求法高僧傳, T. 2066, and *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan* 南海寄歸內法傳, T. 2125, translated by Takakusu (1896).

<sup>41</sup> T. 279.

Sarvāstivāda and Vinaya works. Yijing apparently was interested in the new esoteric teachings and had studied them at Nālandā.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, aside from his translation of the *Mahāmāyūrī* (*Kongque zhou wang jing* 孔雀咒王經, T. 985) most of his esoteric work consisted of shorter *dhāraṇī* scriptures, such as the ever popular “Scripture of the Superlative Spell of the Buddha’s Crown” (*Foshuo Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛說佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經, T. 971), a text on Cintāmaṇicakra Avalokiteśvara (*Foshuo Guanzizai pusa ruyi xin tuoluoni zhou jing* 佛說觀自在菩薩如意心陀羅尼咒經, T. 1081), and a text on eliminating karmic obstructions, *Foshuo bachu zuizhang zhou wang jing* 佛說拔除罪障咒王經, T. 1396.

It is clear that by the beginning of the eighth century the emerging systematic forms of esoteric Buddhism had not lessened the demand for simpler *dhāraṇī* scriptures. Indeed, the production of short “spell texts” continued to flourish, and such texts continued to be translated through the Tang and into the Song dynasty, often by monks such as Amoghavajra and Dānapāla who were promulgating more advanced systems for their patrons and elite disciples. In other words, from the time of Atikūta onward there was a market for both sorts of texts and it would be a fundamental misunderstanding to see the more complex systems replacing simpler usage. The audience for simpler *dhāraṇī* scriptures was broad and such texts were openly disseminated. The audience for the more complex systems—which aimed at creating “lords of mantra” through *abhiṣeka*—was very narrow, and their techniques were carefully guarded.

### *The “Three Great Ācāryas” of the Mid-Tang*

By the time Yijing left India in 695, the new ritual systems of the *MVS* and the *STTS* had appeared and were beginning to circulate. They reached China through the efforts of three eighth-century missionaries.<sup>43</sup> The first, Śubhākarasiṃha, arrived in Ch’ang-an in 716,<sup>44</sup> soon

<sup>42</sup> See his remarks concerning the master Daolin 道琳 and the *Dhāraṇīpīṭaka* (Zhouzang 咒藏; Mingzang 明藏) T. 2066.51:6c6–7a18; and Zanning’s comments in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061. 50:710b8–711b4.

<sup>43</sup> The Chan monk Wuxing 無行 was reputedly bringing the *MVS* back to China from India, but died on the way. According to Zanning, the Sanskrit manuscripts Wuxing was transporting somehow made their way to China, and Śubhākarasiṃha and Yixing availed themselves of them some years later. See *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061.50:715b13–18.

<sup>44</sup> See Pinte, “Śubhākarasiṃha,” in this volume. Stephen Hodge makes an intriguing



followed by Vajrabodhi and his disciple, Amoghavajra, who arrived in the Tang capital in 721.<sup>45</sup> Often treated together as constituting a “school,” Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra introduced not only the *MVS* and the *STTS* but also a broad range of mantric texts, deities, and practices, the most advanced of which were accessed through *abhiṣeka* that ritually constituted disciples as the cosmic Buddha Mahāvairocana.<sup>46</sup>

We must be aware that the teachings available to us through documents and images do not provide an unmediated view of South Asian esoteric Buddhism. Moreover, the teachings and practices brought by the “three great *ācāryas*” underwent further development in the process of their propagation in China. In the course of the eighth century mantric practices gained currency and patronage, and under Emperor Daizong (r. 762–779) Vajrabodhi’s and Amoghavajra’s “Yoga” 瑜伽 or “Mantra Buddhism” (*zhenyan jiao* 真言教) became state-sanctioned teaching (Strickmann 1996; Orzech 1998, 2006b). Further, these teachings became the foundation of the various lineages of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese esoteric Buddhism.<sup>47</sup>

The most significant impact of the work of Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra in the mid-Tang court was twofold. First, they translated a large body of recently circulated South Asian texts representing the latest developments in Indian Buddhism. With these texts came commentaries, ritual manuals, and, *ipso facto*, the introduction of numerous divinities and their associated practices.<sup>48</sup> Second, the activities of Amoghavajra under the patronage of Daizong resulted not only in institutional and programmatic development (altars for *abhiṣeka* in the palace and at Daxingshan 大興善寺 and Qinglong

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argument that Śubhākarasiṃha was in fact Mādhyavarāja III of the Śailodbhava dynasty. See Hodge 2003, 19–20.

<sup>45</sup> See Orzech, “Vajrabodhi,” and Lehnert, “Amoghavajra: His Role in and Influence on the Development of Buddhism,” in this volume. For the biographies of the three teachers, see Chou Yi-liang 1945, 241–332 (reprinted in Payne 2006, 33–60, without its detailed appendices). Osabe’s text-critical treatment of Amoghavajra is still the most comprehensive. See Osabe 1971b.

<sup>46</sup> Texts involving *abhiṣeka* were not new to China; what *was* new were the particular genealogical and soteriological claims of some of the new imports. See below.

<sup>47</sup> For Japan, see Tinsley, “Kūkai and the Development of Shingon Buddhism”; Dolce, “Taimitsu, the Esoteric Buddhism of the Tendai School”; and Drummond, “Looking Back and Leaping Forward: Constructing Lineage in the Shingi Shingon Tradition of Japan” in this volume. For Korea, see Sørensen, “Early Esoteric Buddhism in Korea: Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla (c. 600–918),” in this volume.

<sup>48</sup> See Sørensen, “Central Divinities in the Esoteric Buddhist Pantheon in China,” in this volume.

青龍寺 Monasteries, and the development of the Jin'ge Monastery complex on Mount Wutai) but also in national and international prestige.<sup>49</sup> These monasteries quickly became centers for the training of pilgrims from Korea, Japan, and elsewhere.

Despite glowing reports of the reception of Śubhākarasīṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra in Buddhist sources, imperial patronage was cautious, restrained, and occasionally hostile, especially under the Daoist-leaning Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756).<sup>50</sup> This was not new. Indeed, at least since the time of Tanyao 曇曜 (active mid-fifth century) highly educated monks quickly became *servants* of the state, and their movements and activities were surveyed and controlled for its own purposes.<sup>51</sup> On arrival at court, foreign monks were interviewed and placed as “guests” in government monasteries where they could be debriefed about their travels and put to work in the service of the state. They rendered texts with teams of translators, and also performed rituals to augment state policy, insure seasonable rain, repel invasion and put down uprisings, and help promote the well-being of the imperial family and its ancestors.

Thus, what was propagated was to a considerable degree shaped not only by religious ideology but also by imperial needs and ambitions. Recent research by Antonino Forte has underscored the degree to which this was true under the regime of Empress Wu, as monks like Bodhiruci and Manicintana authorized translations favorable to Wu Zhao's political and religious agendas.<sup>52</sup> As Osabe (1971b), Orzech (1998) and Lehnert have noted, while Amoghavajra privileged the *STTS*, his translation and ritual activity were shaped in large part by state interests.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> For the role of these monasteries see Chen, “Esoteric Buddhism and Monastic Institutions,” in this volume.

<sup>50</sup> Zanning's account of Xuanzong's reception of Śubhākarasīṃha is a good example of this. See the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061. 50:715b7–13. A translation is available in Chou 1945, 263–65. A more restrained and formal picture of the reception is found in Zhisheng's *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, T. 2154.55:572a5–26.

<sup>51</sup> Tanyao was appointed the official government leader of the sangha under Emperor Wencheng (r. 452–456) during the Northern Wei dynasty (424–533). For Tanyao, see Sargent 1957.

<sup>52</sup> Forte 1976, 1984, 2002.

<sup>53</sup> See Lehnert, “Amoghavajra: His Role in and Influence on the Development of Buddhism,” in this volume.

*Śubhākarasiṃha and the Mahāvairocana sūtra*

Śubhākarasiṃha's single most important accomplishment is certainly his work, in conjunction with Yixing 一行 (683–727),<sup>54</sup> to produce the translation of the *MVS*<sup>55</sup> and the massive *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana sūtra* (*Da Piluzhe'na chengfo jing shu* 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏, *T.* 1796) in 724.<sup>56</sup> Unlike most previous esoteric texts, the *MVS* and its *Commentary* constitute a ritual hermeneutic encompassing *all* of mantric practice and indeed all of the Mahāyāna. The scripture was apparently composed late in the first half of the seventh century, perhaps in northeast India.<sup>57</sup> In its current form it consists of thirty-six chapters in seven fascicles, but the five final chapters on ritual performance were not originally part of the text.<sup>58</sup>

The system of the *MVS* is organized around three “families” 部 (*kula*): the Buddha (*fo* 佛), Lotus (*lianhua* 蓮華), and Vajra (*jin'gang* 金剛) families, and it gives detailed instructions for the ritual transformation of initiates into cosmic buddhas. Indeed, the detail and coherence of the ritual program surpassed those found in esoteric scriptures that had appeared previously in China. Here we find instructions on the creation of the *Garbha* or “Womb” mandala<sup>59</sup> (*T.* 848.18:6b–9b; *T.* 1796.39:630c–642c) and thus the organization and relationships among of the panoply of deities, from the cosmic overlord Mahāvairocana to

<sup>54</sup> See Keyworth, “Yixing,” in this volume.

<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately no Sanskrit original of the *MVS* has been found, though a Tibetan version does exist. Tajima Ryūjun 1936, 141–48, provides a bibliography on the text and covers the Tibetan translations. A more recent bibliography may be found in Shuchi-in Daigaku Mikkyō-gakki, ed. 1986, section IV.2.b. The English translation in Hodge 2003 is a good place to start in the study of the text.

<sup>56</sup> The *Commentary* was composed by Yixing on the basis of Śubhākarasiṃha's oral teachings.

<sup>57</sup> Hodge guesses around 640 as a date of composition. He leans toward the northeast as the site of composition, but admits this is far from certain. See Hodge 2003, 17–18.

<sup>58</sup> These five chapters appear to have constituted a separate manual that was appended to the sutra. They do not exist in the Tibetan version.

<sup>59</sup> Because of their importance in Shingon Buddhism, the “Womb” and “Diamond” mandalas—drawn from the *MVS* and the *STTS* respectively—have received extensive treatment. Despite the wealth of material from Japan, relatively little evidence of the two major mandalas remains extant in China, though some recent finds at Famen Monastery have added to what we have. See Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Tang,” in this volume. For Japan, ten Grotenhuis (1999) provides a convenient entrée and bibliography. See especially “The Womb World Mandala,” 58–77, and “The Diamond World Mandala,” 33–57. In Japanese the classic is still Toganoo 1927 (1982 reprint).

the great bodhisattvas and the various *devas* who controlled the wind, rain, and other natural forces; *abhiṣeka* and its levels (T. 848.18:11b–12b; T. 1796.39:613a–c, 617a, 625a, 674c–675a); the performance of *homa* (T. 848.18:42c25–44a8; T. 1796.39:779a–782c21); and the meaning of mantra.<sup>60</sup>

Broadly speaking, the *MVS* can be divided into an introductory chapter and the remaining chapters. The narrative core of the scripture is the discourse between Mahāvairocana and Vajrapāṇi, and, as Hodge (2003) observes, this discourse revolves around answers to two questions: What is perfect enlightenment, and how is it achieved?<sup>61</sup> The first chapter presents three approaches to these questions that originate in the Mahāyāna: meditation to see the mind as it really is, to eliminate the epistemological mistake of identifying reality with phenomena, and techniques for understanding types of delusion. From chapter two onward the *MVS* provides ritual answers to these questions. These take the form of preliminary practices (both inner and outer) ranging from the purification of the practitioner and site to practicing various types of “visualization,” the application of those practices that result in the attainment of union, and then the use of various attainments for a variety of communal and personal needs.<sup>62</sup> Following the prescriptions of the text, the discourse between Mahāvairocana and Vajrapāṇi is enacted ritually by master and disciple.

In short, the *MVS* codifies the cosmic order, and lays out the ritual technology to become its lord. The path detailed here also asserts a genealogy and process different from the one mediated through the teaching of Śākyamuni and handed down through his discourses and disciples. Rather, through the use of the “three mysteries” (三蜜), or “secrets,” of body (*mudrā*; *shen* 身), speech (mantra; *kou* 口), and mind (*samādhi*; *yi* 意) the initiate ritually replicates Mahāvairocana’s body, speech, and mind; and through the ritual of *abhiṣeka* one becomes a living icon, Buddha Mahāvairocana.<sup>63</sup> In other words, the disciple does

<sup>60</sup> The introduction in Hodge 2003 to his translation of the *The Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra* is useful, as is Abé 1999, 131–41.

<sup>61</sup> Hodge 2003, 30.

<sup>62</sup> For a discussion helpful in understanding the coherence of these ritual elements see Hodge 2003, 29–40.

<sup>63</sup> This is especially clear in the *Commentary (Darijing shu 大日經疏)*, T. 1796.39:607c10–12. On the “three secrets” or “three mysteries” (*san mi* 三密) see Lü Jianfu 1995, 97–99, 242–44; *Mikkyōdaijiten*, 839b–840b; and Amoghavajra’s *Putixin lun* (金剛頂瑜伽中發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心論), T. 1665.32:574b13–16. Esoteric

not “learn” or “practice” a teaching first expounded by Śākyamuni, transmitted through his disciples and sutras; during ritual practice the disciple *becomes* Mahāvairocana.

Śubhākarasimha’s disciple and collaborator Yixing was instrumental in this effort (the *Commentary* was Yixing’s composition based on Śubhākarasimha’s teaching). Along the way Yixing absorbed esoteric techniques and South Asian scientific and mathematical knowledge to be applied to everything from the calendar to rainmaking.<sup>64</sup> Other notable translations by Śubhākarasimha include the *Subhāhu-paripṛcchā* (*Supohu tongzi jing* 蘇婆呼童子經, T. 895; “Questions of Subhāhu”), which includes references to various magical and “cemetery” rites;<sup>65</sup> and the *Susiddhikāramahātantra-saddhanopāyikā-ṣaṭpāla* (*Suxidi jieluo jing* 蘇悉地揭羅經, T. 893; “Section on Expedient Means for Rites of Accomplishment”), a ritual compendium that had significant impact in the later Tang and in Japanese Tendai (Giebel 2001),<sup>66</sup> translated in 726. Like the *MVS*, the *Susiddhikara* has three families (Buddha, Lotus, Vajra), and extends the ternary taxonomy to include three types of *homa* rites: *śāntika* (*shandi jiafa* 扇底迦法) for pacification, *pauṣṭika* (*busezhi jiafa* 補瑟徵迦法) for prosperity, and *abhicāraka* (*apizhelu jiafa* 阿毘遮嚕迦法) for subjugation; it also outlines three levels of accomplishment (*siddhi*).<sup>67</sup> Unlike the *MVS*, the text does not present a cohesive program; rather, it is more a ritual encyclopedia or handbook to be consulted in the performance of ritual.<sup>68</sup>

### Vajrabodhi

Vajrabodhi and his young disciple Amoghavajra arrived in the Tang capital approximately four years after the elder Śubhākarasimha, and

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usage in China builds upon earlier Mahāyāna usage of the term *san mi*, referring to the attributes of the Buddha, as found for example in the discussion in the *Dazhi du lun* 大智度論, T. 1509.25:127c12ff. For a thorough exploration of this see McBride 2006, 305–55, and his “Esoteric Scriptures in the context of Chinese Buddhist Translation Practice,” in this volume.

<sup>64</sup> See Osabe1963 (1990 reprint); and Keyworth, “Yixing,” in this volume.

<sup>65</sup> For the *Subhāhu-paripṛcchā*, see Strickmann 1996, 221–29.

<sup>66</sup> For the importance of the *Susiddhikara* in Tendai, see Dolce, “Taimitsu: The Esoteric Buddhism of the Tendai School,” in this volume.

<sup>67</sup> See Giebel 2001, 181–82, 183–84, 185–89, respectively, for the three rites. The *abhicāraka* rites are particularly gruesome and involve much of the standard cremation ground imagery. For the originals see T. 893.18:612b23–612c24; 612c25–613a29; 613b1–614a20.

<sup>68</sup> Giebel’s “Introduction” to his translation of the *Susiddhikara* provides an outline and overview. See Giebel 2001, 113–22.

they must have been apprised of the translation efforts underway. They had come by sea, apparently on a trading vessel from Śrīvijaya, a Malay kingdom on the island of Sumatra where the new Buddhist teachings were in vogue. Ensnared in Jianfu Monastery 薦福寺, Vajrabodhi spent much of the next twenty years training disciples, translating, and performing ritual services for the court. Yixing gravitated to him quickly and his signal importance was to begin to render a portion of the *STTS* into Chinese and to propagate the teachings of the scripture and its ritual cycle. This text, the *Scripture Outlining Recitations and Contemplations of the Yoga of the Peak of the Vajra* (*Jin'gangding yuqie zhong lue chu niansong jing* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經, T. 866), though only a sketch of the larger Sanskrit corpus, marked the introduction of what became referred to throughout East Asia as the “Yoga.”<sup>69</sup>

Like the *MVS* (but developed separately), the *STTS* presents a total system accessed by *abhiṣeka*. In contrast to the system of the *MVS*, the *STTS* is organized around five families: Tathāgata, Lotus, Vajra, Ratna, and Karma, corresponding to the five central buddhas of the great mandala: Mahāvairocana, Amitābha, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, and Amoghasiddhi.<sup>70</sup> Thus the system is often referred to as the “five families” or the “fivefold wisdom.” Although Vajrabodhi’s translation was the first, it was Amoghavajra’s translation completed in 754 that became the standard for much of East Asian esoteric Buddhism.<sup>71</sup> Amoghavajra says it is only the first “assembly” (*hui* 會) of a great scripture consisting of eighteen assemblies, and his translation covers only the first chapter of the first assembly.<sup>72</sup>

Amoghavajra’s text (which I follow here) consists of four parts: an introduction; a discourse on *abhiṣeka*; a discussion of various types of *siddhi* and types of *mudrā*; and finally a section on various regulations.

<sup>69</sup> There are two other Chinese translations: T. 865 by Amoghavajra and T. 882, a full Song dynasty translation produced by Dānapāla in 1015, which agrees with the Tibetan translation of Śraddhākara-varma and Rin-chen bzang-po (To. 479). A Sanskrit original is also extant.

<sup>70</sup> For mandalas, see note 59 above.

<sup>71</sup> Giebel renders the title: *The Adamantine Pinnacle, the Compendium of Truth of all the Tathāgatas and the Realization of the Great Vehicle, Being the Scripture of the Great King of Teachings* 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經, T. 865. For a discussion of the title, see Giebel 2001, 8–9. For a recent discussion of the sources and manuscripts, see Weinberger 2003, esp. 6–12. A facsimile edition with extensive introduction can be found in Chandra and Snellgrove 1981. There are critical editions by Yamada, ed. 1981 and Horiuchi 1983.

<sup>72</sup> For a translation of Amoghavajra’s discourse on these eighteen assemblies see Giebel 1995, 107–201.

The narrative arch of the scripture is set in the introduction and begins with the manifestation of Mahāvairocana in the Akaniṣṭha heaven, the highest heaven of the triple world, at precisely the moment when Siddhārtha (here called Sarvārthasiddhi) enters his final trance. This trance, which would be fruitless, is interrupted by the cosmic buddhas, who grant him *abhiṣeka* into the “fivefold wisdom” to realize his identity as the Tathāgata Vajradhātu.<sup>73</sup>

Vajradhātu then proceeds to construct the great Vajradhātu Mandala, transforming himself into Mahāvairocana and emanating the other four buddhas of the central assembly. He then constitutes the rest of the mandala through a series of *abhiṣekas* that transform the assembled bodhisattvas—beginning with Samantabhadra—into the deities of the mandala. Thereafter, Vajrasattva describes the process of *abhiṣeka* to be replicated by others. As Abé (1999) has pointed out, this process constitutes a radically different genealogy of Buddhist wisdom from the widely accepted one, and the lineage claims made by Amoghavajra and his disciples reflect this.<sup>74</sup>

Some twenty-five works are associated with Vajrabodhi’s name in the canon and Japanese sources attribute several more. Vajrabodhi, like other monks who possessed mantric knowledge before him, gained a reputation as a thaumaturge, and Xuanzong called on him to produce rain, apparently with some success. Despite two decades of service, Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra left Chang’an in 741, likely in response to an imperial order expelling foreign monks.<sup>75</sup> Vajrabodhi died in Loyang and shortly thereafter Amoghavajra set out for South Asia to seek further teachings.

### *Amoghavajra*

After a sojourn of more than five years in India and Sri Lanka, Amoghavajra returned to the Tang capital in 747. Lodged at Jingying Temple

<sup>73</sup> Abé 1999, 144–46, presents an excellent description of this sequence. The original is *T. 865.18:208a–b*.

<sup>74</sup> Abé’s analysis of the genealogical implications is as relevant for the Tang as it is for Kūkai. See Abé 1999, 127–41, 146. For the lineage claims of Amoghavajra’s disciples, see Orzech, “After Amoghavajra,” in this volume.

<sup>75</sup> Zanning’s account obscures the issue by presenting Vajrabodhi saying that he does not have to leave because the order applies to “barbarian” monks *huseng* 胡僧, not to “Indian” monks *fanseng* 梵僧, and it also portrays Xuanzong as personally ordering Vajrabodhi to stay. See *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T. 2061.50:711c2–6*, and Chou Yi-liang 1945, 277–78 for a translation.

淨影寺, he was summoned to perform an *abhiṣeka* in the palace and also to demonstrate his prowess at weather control.<sup>76</sup> Xuanzong also requested that he lecture on the *Scripture for Humane Kings* (*Renwang jing* 仁王經, *T.* 245), a Chinese apocryphon aimed at protection of the state (Orzech 1998; Osabe Kazuo 1971b).<sup>77</sup> But just two years after he had returned to China, Amoghavajra apparently departed again “to return to his native country.”<sup>78</sup> According to one source he fell ill on the way and until 753–754 stayed in Shaozhou 韶州, from where he was summoned to Gansu to join the entourage of General Geshu Han 哥舒翰. It appears that his value was apparent to the general, if not to Xuanzong, and he was received with requests for *abhiṣeka* and the wherewithal to resume translating. In a short span, Amoghavajra translated the first chapter of the *STTS* (*T.* 865, see above), and three texts associated with the Ekākṣara-uṣṇīṣa-cakravartin system. Recalled to the capital, he was ensconced in Daxingshan Monastery 大興善寺, where he remained during the rebellion of An Lushan 安祿山 (703–757 C.E.).<sup>79</sup>

The new Emperor Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756–762 C.E.), like Geshu Han, gravitated toward Amoghavajra as a sorely needed source of legitimacy and also, it seems, as a source of military and protective assistance through supernormal ritual means. Indeed, the metaphors of sovereignty at the heart of the “Yoga” and the ritual knowledge to invoke divine protection in the form of wrathful *vidyārājas* would characterize Amoghavajra’s activities under Suzong and his successor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779 C.E.). Over the next eighteen years until his death in 774, Amoghavajra translated numerous scriptures and ritual manuals (becoming the second most prolific translator after Xuanzang); performed rituals for the royal family and many high court figures; taught disciples from China, Korea, and Japan; and became, in many ways, the most powerful monk in Chinese history. The prestige garnered by his high position, coupled with his prolific translation and the teaching of his disciples, made the “Yoga” and esoteric Buddhism a continent-wide phenomenon.

<sup>76</sup> Chou 1945, 293. The original is *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 2061.50:712c10–21.

<sup>77</sup> Amoghavajra’s recension of this text (*T.* 246) became a centerpiece of his state-oriented esoteric Buddhism and became important for state cults in Korea and Japan as well. See Osabe 1971b, 89–94, and Orzech 1998, Chapters Five and Six.

<sup>78</sup> *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 2061.50:712c21.

<sup>79</sup> For the An Lushan rebellion, see Dalby 1979, esp. 561–85.



Mijiao, Zhenyan, Yuqie (“Yoga”): *Rectification of Names*

Scholars in Japan, China, and the West commonly refer to the teachings of the three Tang *ācāryas* as *mikkyō*, *mijiao*, or esoteric Buddhism. None of these is without problems (Sharf 2002a; McBride 2004; Orzech 2006b). The teachers in question made distinctions both among their teachings and the abilities of their disciples. The innermost teachings were reserved for the very few, and those associated with the *MVS* and the *STTS* were transmitted through progressively restricted rituals of consecration. Any disciple progressing beyond the first *abhiṣeka* (which was widely accessible and could even be performed en masse) was instructed about the distinctiveness of this ritual program.<sup>80</sup> For Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, the ultimate attainment was full consecration into the teachings of the *STTS*. Amoghavajra’s valorizing of the *STTS* is clearly articulated in his will (T. 2120.52:844a29–b2):

At present I have been offering *abhiṣeka* for more than thirty years. Those who have entered the altar to receive the Dharma are many, but only eight have been established in the Five Families [of the *STTS*], and two have died—thus there are only six. Those who have attained it are Hanguang of Jinko [Monastery], Hyech’o of Silla, Huiguo of Qinglong [Monastery], Huilang of Chongfu [Monastery], Yuanzhao and Quezhao of Baoshou [Monastery].

He also states (T. 2120.52:840b1–5):

Of those [works I have] translated, the *Yoga of the Summit of the Vajra* (*Jin’gangding yuqie famen* 金剛頂瑜伽法門) is the teaching for swiftly becoming a buddha. Those who cultivate it will perforce suddenly transcend (*dunchao* 頓超) all limitations and reach the other shore.

As for the remaining classes of mantra and all the Buddha’s skillful means—their disciples are legion. All these translations are canonical scriptures of the Mahāyāna. I present [them] to the state for the pacification of disasters, to keep the stars on their regular courses, and to insure that the wind and rain are timely.

The taxonomic logic of this statement is based on two broad categories: the “Yoga” of the *STTS* and “the Buddha’s skillful means.” The “Yoga” also belongs to the category “mantra,” which has “classes,” but it is distinct from other classes of mantra “and all skillful means.” The other “classes of mantra” and “all the Buddha’s skillful means” are Mahāyāna. This statement clearly distinguishes the differing genea-

<sup>80</sup> See esp. the *Commentary*, T. 1796.39:613a–c, 617a, 674c–675a.

logical assumptions and ritual techniques of the *STTS*. But Amoghavajra's distinction—one based on distinctive genealogy realized only through *abhiṣeka*—never rose to sectarian status during the Tang. Understanding the nuances of the Tang situation has been hampered by the almost unavoidable reading of the Tang data through the works of Kūkai and later Japanese exegetes.

For instance, it is notable that in Amoghavajra's works the term "esoteric teaching" (*mijiao* 密教) appears repeatedly, but it seldom appears in sharp contrast with "exoteric teaching" (*xianjiao* 顯教) as part of a polarized hermeneutic found in Song or Japanese works. Only one text attributed to the master, the *Zongshi tuoluoni yi zan* 總釋陀羅尼義讚 (T. 902) uses both the term "esoteric teaching" and the term "exoteric teaching."<sup>81</sup> It is perhaps significant that no distinction is made in Tang catalogues between "esoteric" and "Mahāyāna" texts. The earliest such distinction appears only in the Northern Song *Catalogue of the Dharma Treasure Compiled in the Dazhong Xiangfu Period* (*Dazhong xiangfu fabao lu* 大中祥符法寶錄).<sup>82</sup>

Further, while scholars have come to use the term "Zhenyan" to designate a school or lineage (*zong* 宗) on the model of the Japanese Shingon, the term "mantra school" (*zhenyan zong* 真言宗 Japanese *Shingonshū*) is not found in medieval Chinese texts.<sup>83</sup> However, the term "mantra" (*zhenyan* 真言) is ubiquitous in Tang and Song scriptures in a variety of locutions, including *Zhenyan sheng* 真言乘 (Mantrayāna) and *Zhenyan zang* 真言藏 (Mantrapīṭaka).<sup>84</sup> Works attributed to

<sup>81</sup> T. 901.18:898b21–23. Although accepted as authentic, the text does not appear in Amoghavajra's list of scriptures submitted to the throne in 771, is not attested in contemporary catalogues, and first appears as a text retrieved by the Japanese pilgrim Engyō, a disciple of Kūkai.

<sup>82</sup> This catalogue is an essential resource for the study of the period. Issued in 1013, the *Catalogue* was compiled under the leadership of Zhao Anren 趙安仁 (958–1018). It is found in *Zhonghua da zang jing* 中華大藏經 vol. 73, pp. 414–523. It is now available in electronic facsimile at <http://www.fjdh.com/booklib/Index.html>. For a discussion see Orzech, "Esoteric Buddhism in the Song Dynasty," in this volume.

<sup>83</sup> Much of contemporary Chinese scholarship uses this term. See, for instance, Xia 2008, 25, 38, etc.; Lü 1995, 201, 311. The term *zong* 宗 in its strongest sense indicates a lineage with a founding ancestor and series of patriarchs, while in its weaker sense can simply mean a common doctrinal theme or position. See Weinstein 1987a, 482–87.

<sup>84</sup> *Zhenyan sheng* appears in several places in the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* and in its *Commentary*. See, for instance, T. 848.18:5c08, c09, 51a29, 54c19; T. 860.18:188a04; T. 1796.39:625c25, c27, 671a12. *Zhenyan zang* is used by Śubhākarasimha and Yixing in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, T. 848.18:14a4; and its *Commentary*, T. 1796.39:680b1, 688a19.

Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra employ the latter two expressions sparingly, but “mantra teaching” (*zhenyan jiao* 真言教) appears frequently in the works of Amoghavajra and in Śubhākarasiṃha and Yixing’s *Commentary*.<sup>85</sup> It also appears in the biography of Amoghavajra in Zhao Qian’s 趙遷 *Xingzhuang* 行狀 (T. 2056).<sup>86</sup> So it is not too much of a distortion to use the terms Zhenyan or Mantra Buddhism or even Mantrayāna as shorthand to refer to the proliferation of and deep interest in the broad range of mantric technology of the Tang *ācāryas* and their disciples. We need to keep in mind, however, that it was never referred to as a school or sect, and its texts were not recognized by a separate bibliographical designation.<sup>87</sup>

We find a yet another term in the works of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, which was used to designate the teachings associated with the *STTS*: “yoga” (*yuqie* 瑜伽). Amoghavajra repeatedly refers to the special qualities of the *STTS*, using several descriptions, including “the yoga of the eighteen assemblies (*shiba hui yuqie* 十八會瑜伽)” or the “yoga of the five families” (*wubu yuqie* 五部瑜伽).<sup>88</sup> The term yoga is also used to designate specific portions of the *STTS*. For instance, throughout his *Indications of the Goals of the Eighteen Assemblies*, Amoghavajra discusses various yogas, such as the “yoga of Trailokyavijayavajra” (降三世金剛瑜伽) and the “yoga of the Guhyasamāja” (祕密集會瑜伽).<sup>89</sup> Over time, however, “yoga” finds its way into the titles of a host of texts and manuals—some more and some less connected with the *STTS*—in the Tang, Five Dynasties, and Song periods.

One other term appears that gives us some purchase on how the Tang *ācāryas* thought of what they taught: *Jin’gangsheng* 金剛乘 or “Vajrayāna,” which appears in works by Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, and in those of Song translators such as \*Dānapāla 施護 (fl. 970s), and Dharmabhadra 法賢 (d. 1001). But this term is not confined to refer-

<sup>85</sup> It is also found in Song dynasty translations, such as \*Devaśāntika’s 天息災 translation of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (*Dafanguang pusa zang Wenshushili genben yigui jing* 大方廣菩薩藏文殊師利根本儀軌經, T. 1191.20:903b05), and even in a few early translations, including one by Chu Fahu, (*Dang zhichi cizhi zhenyan jiao* 當執持此至真言教, T. 310.11:48a09).

<sup>86</sup> Zhao Qian’s comment is found at T. 2056.50:293a10: 自爾覺無常師遍更討尋諸真言教。

<sup>87</sup> See Orzech, “After Amoghavajra,” in this volume.

<sup>88</sup> T. 2120.52:844a25, 52:844b17, etc.; T. 869.18:287b22. The *wubu* refers to the five buddha families and the five chief buddhas of the mandala.

<sup>89</sup> T. 869.18:287a28.

ences to the *STTS*. Yixing uses it in the great *Commentary*.<sup>90</sup> Amoghavajra uses it pointedly in the very last passage of his *Indications of the Goals of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Summit Scripture* (*Jin'gangding jing yuqie shiba hui zhigui* 金剛頂經瑜伽十八會之歸): “These are called the teachings of the Adamantine Vehicle of Yoga 名瑜伽金剛乘教法.”<sup>91</sup> Huiguo and other disciples of Amoghavajra also employ the term.<sup>92</sup> Clearly the term Vajrayāna was known and used to designate an approach distinct from common Mahāyāna or even common “Mantra Buddhism.” Indeed, Amoghavajra *qualifies* Vajrayāna to specify what kind of Vajrayāna he is referring to (i.e., that of the Yoga).

In sum, “esoteric Buddhism”/*mijiao* has been used as a high-order classifier by various Buddhist figures and scholars alike to cover a broad array of mantric lore. The Tang *ācāryas* referred broadly to “Mantra” or “Mantra Buddhism” (*Zhenyan jiao*), but the term “Zhenyan school,” commonly used to refer to the “three great *ācāryas*” and their disciples, is anachronistic and misleading. We see two uses of “Yoga,” the first referring specifically to the *STTS* and the second referring by extension to teachings and lineages that claimed to teach it. “Vajrayāna” is applied to those teachings accessed through *abhiṣeka*, with their distinctive genealogical, ritual, and soteriological assumptions.

<sup>90</sup> I can find only one example in the *Commentary*, T. 1796.39:629a11.

<sup>91</sup> T. 869.18:287c12. I follow Giebel’s translation here. See Giebel 1995, 200. One could also translate the final *fa* as “methods” to produce: “These are called the methods of the Adamantine Vehicle of Yoga,” though “teachings” seems the better choice given the context of a list of scriptures.

<sup>92</sup> See Orzech, “After Amoghavajra,” in this volume.

## 24. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM AND MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS<sup>1</sup>

Jinhua Chen

What in eighth- or ninth-century China (as in some other periods) some modern scholars perceive to be esoteric Buddhism probably should not be regarded as an independent school; rather, esoteric Buddhism refers to a rather loose tradition and its associated soteriological system. This fact should not, however, prevent us from recognizing and properly appraising the infiltration of esoteric Buddhist ideas and practices into various layers of the contemporary Buddhist monastic institution and its extraordinary position within Tang Buddhism as a whole.

The three major centers for esoteric Buddhism in Tang China were Daxingshansi 大興善寺 and Qinglongsi 青龍寺, both in Chang'an, and Jin'gesi 金閣寺 on Mt. Wutai 五台. Jin'gesi was built between 766 and 767 at the recommendation of Bukong, one of whose major disciples, Hanguang 含光 (?–774+), was very likely appointed as its first abbot.<sup>2</sup> The Japanese monk and pilgrim Ennin 圓仁 (793/794–864), who was in China from 838 to 847, reports in his famous travelogue that the temple was home to a “ritual arena for mandala visualization and mantra-chanting” (Jpn. *jinen mandara dōjō*; Ch. *chinian mantuluo daochang* 持念曼荼羅道場), where Hanguang regularly performed esoteric rituals for the purpose of extending the state fortune of the Li family (為令李家昌運長遠) (*Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記; BZ (1912–1922) 72: 3.236). Bukong spent a major part of his eventful life in Daxingshansi, while Qinglongsi was the headquarters for several lines of esoteric tradition deriving from Huiguo. Other monasteries with a significant esoteric presence included Jingzhusi 淨住寺, Baoshousi 保壽寺, Xingtangsi 興唐寺, Xuanfasi 玄法寺, Chongfusi 崇福寺 and Liquansi 醴泉寺 in Chang'an; and Shengshansi 聖善寺 and Tiangongsi 天宮寺 in Luoyang.

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<sup>1</sup> This essay partly summarizes Chapter Six of Chen 2010.

<sup>2</sup> The evidence for the date of the construction of this important temple is reviewed in Chen 1999, 27–28.

According to the ninth-century Chinese esoteric master Haiyun 海雲 (active 822–874), a fourth- and fifth-generation disciple of Bukong and Śubhākarasimha, respectively,<sup>3</sup> consecration arenas (*guanding daochang* 灌頂道場; *abhiṣeka bodhimaṇḍa* [?]; i.e., ritual arenas for esoteric initiation) were erected on an annual basis at different temples, including six of the abovementioned monasteries in Chang'an.<sup>4</sup> Nothing specific is known about these consecration arenas, most of which seemed to be no more than ad hoc structures set up for certain ritual occasions. However, the consecration arenas at two of these temples, Daxingshansi and Qinglongsi, must be considered as formal esoteric institutions.

Although only one consecration arena was constructed at Qinglongsi (within one of its cloisters, called Dongtayuan 東塔院 or Cloister of the Eastern Pagoda), Daxingshansi alone housed two such arenas, one at its Translation Cloister (Fanjingyuan 翻經院) and the other either beside or within its Mañjuśrī Pavilion (Dasheng Wenshugue 大聖文殊閣) (*Daizong chao zeng sikong dabian zhengguang zhi sanzangheshang biaozi ji* 代宗朝贈司空大辯正廣智三藏和上表制集 also referred to as the *Bukong biaozi ji* 2120.52:845b27–c22). The two arenas within Daxingshansi were erected in 763 and 774 (the year Bukong died),

<sup>3</sup> A short esoteric manual, *Xifang tuoluoni zang zhong jin'gangzu amiliduo junzhali fa* 西方陀羅尼藏中金剛族阿蜜哩多軍吒利法 (T. 1212), was also attributed to this obscure monk. Dated January 26, 822, it was dictated by an unnamed *ācārya* who was very likely Haiyun's teacher Yicao 義操 (?–822+; a foreign monk with the Sanskrit name Aluota'nailitu 阿囉他捺哩茶, which could be reconstructed as Arthadr̥ḍha), a major disciple of Huiguo 惠果 (746–806) and a mentor to several Japanese pilgrim-monks, two of the best known being Ennin and Engyō 圓行 (799–852). Haiyun seems to have been versed in Sanskrit and was successively affiliated with several cosmopolitan monasteries in Chang'an, including Jingzhusi 淨住寺 and Qinglongsi. He was very likely the monk whose name was carved on a monk's staff (*xizhang* 錫杖; *khakharak*) that was cast in 873 as a monastic artifact dedicated to the event—occurring at the beginning of the following year—of re-enshrining what was believed to be a piece of the Buddha's finger bone within the underground chamber of the renowned Famen Pagoda (see below). He, however, should not be confused with a homonymous monk residing on Mt. Wutai 五台 who is accorded a short biographical note in *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (T. 50: 27.882c3–20), which turns out to be a truncated and distorted version of a biography about a Sui-dynasty monk that finds its way into several earlier hagiographical collections (*Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳, T. 51: 2.1097a27–b29; quoted in *Hongzan Fahua zhuan* 弘贊法華傳, T. 2067.51:34c29–35b2; and *Fahua zhuanji* 法華傳記, T. 2067.51: 71a26–b27). For a more detailed discussion of this monk and his lineage accounts, see Chen (2010, 85–87).

<sup>4</sup> They are Baoshousi, Xingtangsi, Xuanfasi, Chongfusi, and Liquansi, in addition to Daxingshansi and Qinglongsi. See *Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi fufa ji* 兩部大法相承師資付法記, T. 2081.51:785b23–26.

respectively; the Qinglongsi arena was built a year later in 775 at the order of Emperor Daizong (762–779).<sup>5</sup> The Qinglongsi arena was superintended by seven monks, while the two arenas within Daxingshansi were looked after by twenty-one monks: seven for the arena within the Translation Cloister and fourteen for the arena associated with the Mañjuśrī Pavilion (*Bukong biaozi ji*, T. 2120.52:845b27–c22; *Da Tang Qinglongsi sanchao gongfeng dade xingzhuang* 大唐青龍寺三朝供奉大德行狀, T. 2057.50:295a20–22). It seems that these three consecration arenas were named for the Buddha Vairocana (*Piluzhe'na guanding daochang* 毘盧遮那灌頂道場) (*Bukong biaozi ji*, T. 2120.52:830a12–27; *Da Tang Qinglongsi sanchao gongfeng dade xingzhuang*, T. 2057.50:295a20–22). Regarding the functions of a consecration arena, the court official who in 760 proposed the erection of such an arena within Daxingshansi observed that it was capable of averting calamities, increasing benefits, subduing demons, and gratifying and delighting people (to be more specific, eliminating archenemies of the state, prolonging the emperor's lifespan, and bringing peace and stability to the country) (*Bukong biaozi ji*, T. 2120.52: 829b22–c5).

The influence of esoteric Buddhism on Tang monastic institutions was by no means limited to those monasteries with a strong esoteric background. The extent to which esoteric practices were involved in the Tang palace chapels (*neidaochang* 內道場) also warrants particular attention. In the catalogue he sent to the Japanese imperial court shortly after his return from China in 806, Kūkai 空海 (774–835) reports that under the reign of Suzong (r. 756–762) and Daizong (r. 762–779), a new palace chapel, the Shenlong jingshe 神龍精舍 (that is, Shenlongsi 神龍寺)<sup>6</sup> was erected within the imperial palace compound. Various

<sup>5</sup> For the construction dates of these three consecration arenas, see, respectively, *Bukong biaozi ji*, T. 2120.52:830a12–27, 845b27–c22; and *Da Tang Qinglongsi sanchao gongfeng dade xingzhuang* 大唐青龍寺三朝供奉大德行狀, T. 2057.50:295a20–22. The erection of a consecration arena within the Translation Cloister was first proposed in 760 by a court official whose memorial is preserved in *Bukong biaozi ji*, T. 2120.52:829b22–c5. It is not clear if the proposal was adopted. Even if it was, the arena did not become a permanent one judging by the fact that three years later (in 763) Bukong made a similar proposal to the court (his memorial in *Bukong biaozi ji*, T. 52: 1.830a12–27). The arena built at Bukong's recommendation seems to have become a permanent one as is confirmed by Ennin, who, more than seventy years later, reported the existence of a "consecration arena built at imperial orders" 敕置灌頂道場 within Daxingshansi's Translation Cloister (*Nittō guhō junrei gyōki*, BZ 72: 3:263).

<sup>6</sup> The history and functions of this important institution is reviewed in Chen, 2004, 136–137.

consecration arenas were opened throughout the capital city, in which the emperors and their court officials received consecrations, and commoners “walked on knees to learn the esoteric treasure,” resulting in the unprecedented popularity of esotericism.<sup>7</sup> In addition to demonstrating the popularity of esotericism and the support of the Tang rulers, this remark by Kūkai carries one more noteworthy message. By paralleling a typical palace chapel in the imperial palace complex with the burgeoning of consecration arenas in the capital city, Kūkai in fact highlights the close interplay between these two institutions.

It is now difficult to gauge the exact role esotericism played in the transformation of this unique monastic institution—especially during the reigns of Xuanzong (712–756) and Suzong (756–762) and during the post-rebellion period (763–907). Fortunately, a sketchy report by Ennin still provides some valuable clues. Ennin tells us that the chapel located within the Longevity Basilica (Chang sheng dian 長生殿) was decorated with Buddhist images and sūtras and was supervised by twenty-one “monks versed in chanting sūtras and dhāraṇīs” (*jie chinian seng* 解持念僧, esoteric masters) who were selected from different monasteries in Chang’an to serve terms there. These palace chaplains constantly chanted dhāraṇīs and sūtras, continually performing services through the day and night (*Nittō guhō junrei gyōki*, in *BZ* 72: 1.263b).<sup>8</sup>

Partly due to the apparent similarities of its ideas and practices with Daoism, esoteric Buddhism was able to help overcome the challenge encountered by Buddhism as Xuanzong ascended the throne. Buddhism was so deeply involved in Empress Wu’s (r. 690–705) usurpation and the political infighting between Xuanzong and his aunt, Princess Taiping 太平 (?–713), that Xuanzong, with full control of supreme power following his successful coup d’état on the night of July 29, 713, began adopting a series of harsh policies aimed at reducing the sangha’s power. In particular, the scandalous relationship a “barbarian” monk allegedly maintained with the princess had distressed (and perhaps also embarrassed) the young monarch so much that he showed

<sup>7</sup> *Gōshorai mokuroku* 御請來目錄, T. 2161.55:1062c16–20. Kūkai’s memorial accompanying the catalogue is dated December 5, 806 (*Gōshorai mokuroku*, T. 2161.55:1060c19).

<sup>8</sup> One might wonder whether or not it is a pure coincidence that the number of these palace chaplains matches exactly the total number of the supervisors of the two consecration arenas within Daxingshansi (see above).



as little lenience to the foreign monks as to their Chinese Dharma brothers (see *Zizhi tongjian* 211.6695, 6703).<sup>9</sup> However, most of these anti-Buddhism policies were soon either halted or significantly modified, partly due to Xuanzong's attitude toward esoteric Buddhism.

Esoteric Buddhism also proved instrumental in maintaining the status of establishment Buddhism in the subsequent post-rebellion period due to its strong presence in palace chapels. Although the Tang rulers succeeded in cracking down on the An Lushan and Shi Siming rebellions, they could do little to reverse the decentralizing tendency in the political realm. Another type of decentralization was also concurrently underway within the sangha, as various Buddhist centers emerged thanks to the patronage of regional warlords. Under such circumstances, the central government cooperated with the mainstream sangha in strengthening its legitimacy through various measures, including reinforcement of the politico-religious institution of the palace chapel, which was portrayed as the ultimate source for both political and religious power (Chen 2004, 154). Under the reigns of most post-rebellion emperors, esoteric Buddhism functioned as a pillar for the palace chapels.

Parallel to the central importance esoteric Buddhism attained in the palace chapels is, quite unexpectedly, the key role it exerted in another even more unique Buddhist institution, the renowned "subterranean reliquary crypt" (*digong* 地宮) of Famensi 法門寺. Occasionally opened during the Yuan (1271–1368) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties, this underground reliquary crypt, which garnered worldwide attention when it was brought to light in 1987, was primarily derived from a series of high-profile activities that climaxed in the re-enshrinement of the Buddha's relics officially enacted on January 25, 874 (Xiantong 15.1.4). Ample archaeological evidence reveals that it was built on the model of imperial palaces, with the implication

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<sup>9</sup> The Indian or Central Asian monk who is known to us only by his Chinese name, Huifan 惠範 (?–713), was not merely a reputed lover of Taiping, but also a chief political and financial advisor to her. Huifan was executed in 713 as a consequence of the famous coup in the summer. This obscure but obviously quite important monk and a couple of significant politico-religious projects instigated by him are studied in Chen (2006). Additionally, I am in the course of preparing a monograph on him and several related Buddhist monks and Daoist priests active in the political and religious worlds at the turn of the eighth century. Further, according to Zanning 贊寧 (919?–1001?), sometime after Vajrabodhi's arrival in Luoyang in 720, Xuanzong decreed a sweeping deportation of "barbarian monks" from his emporium. See *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061.50:711b17–c6, translated and discussed in Chou (1945, 275–278).

that while its secular counterpart was for a mundane sovereign, this subterranean reliquary crypt was reserved for the Dharma King, the Buddha—or, more accurately, his relics.

Evidence also indicates, at least as construed by some scholars, the intriguing possibility that it was, as a whole, designed as an enormous mandala or mandala complex, in which a series of esoteric rituals were performed before it was sealed and the relics were enshrined (Han Jinke 1995, 133–135; Wu and Han, 1998).<sup>10</sup> The esoteric structure and nature of the whole subterranean crypt are corroborated by the hundreds of utensils and artifacts excavated there—particularly the reliquary caskets for the four relics with various images carved on their surfaces—as well as by the religious backgrounds of the three major architects of this reliquary palace. These included two major representatives of the Daxingshansi and Qinglongsi traditions, respectively: Zhihuilun 智慧輪 (also Borezhuoja 般若斫迦; Prajñācakra; ?–875/876), probably a third-generation disciple of Bukong,<sup>11</sup> and Yizhen 義真 (active 790–860).<sup>12</sup> The third was, quite significantly, Haiyun, who left us the most meticulous account of the two major esoteric traditions of the Tang that were later elaborated into two competing traditions in Japan, Shingon and Taimitsu.

The key role played by Zhihuilun in the Famensi relic veneration is particularly noteworthy and telling. As a third-generation disciple of Bukong (i.e., a disciple of Bukong's disciple, probably Huiying 惠應, ?–792+),<sup>13</sup> Zhihuilun was not only a major advocate of esoteric Buddhism in the ninth century but also played a crucial role in transmitting esoteric Buddhism to Japan. He served as mentor to both Enchin 圓珍 (814–891) and Shūei 宗叡 (809–884), who traveled to Tang China

<sup>10</sup> There are scholars who have different interpretations of the structure of this “subterranean palace.”

<sup>11</sup> This relationship between Zhihuilun and Bukong is suggested by Kōda 2002, 46–49.

<sup>12</sup> Yizhen belonged to the cloister of Qinglongsi in which the consecration arena was situated: the Dongta Cloister. Formerly a disciple of Huiguo, he also received transmission from Haiyun's teacher Yicao, who had been his fellow disciple (under Huiguo).

<sup>13</sup> That Zhihuilun was a third generation disciple of Bukong (that is, a disciple of Bukong's disciple) is asserted by Enchin in one of his memorials submitted to the court, “Shō kōden Shingon Shikan ryōshū kanchō kanjō” 請弘傳真言止觀兩宗官牒款狀 (BZ 28: 1311c). The master-disciple relationship between Huiying and Zhihuilun is suggested by Kōda, 2002, 46–49.

as the representatives of Taimitsu and Shingon, respectively.<sup>14</sup> The Famensi evidence brought to light Zhihuilun's status as a mastermind behind a series of activities surrounding the veneration of the Famensi relic that were jointly orchestrated by the monastic and political elites from 871 to the very beginning of 874, with Daxingshansi, currently heavily under the influence of Zhihuilun, as the likely headquarters for all these complex religious and political maneuvers.<sup>15</sup>

Esoteric Buddhism revealed two different faces in these two politico-religious institutions: in contrast to its "sacralizing" power of turning the imperial palace complex into a source of political legitimacy and religious sanctity, esoteric Buddhism "secularized" the Buddha by "appropriating" for him an imperial residence, even if underground and of miniature scale. If it can be said that the Tang rulers shrewdly pressed Buddhism into service by installing a Buddhist chapel at a location so close to the political center and the most intimate part of their personal lives, the tables were turned when an "underground palace" (the literal meaning of the term *digong* 地宮) was dug for the Dharma King. Here the eminence and centrality were reserved for the

<sup>14</sup> The major part of the scant information available on this important but obscure figure is derived from Zanning's short biographical note (*Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061.50:723a4–12), according to which Zhihuilun, born in Central or South Asia, was quite a linguist and a promoter of esotericism who probably died some time between 860 and 874. However, evidence provided by one of Zhihuilun's contemporaries and two Song-dynasty authors argues against the validity of almost all the remarks Zanning makes on Zhihuilun. These sources prove, first, that Zhihuilun was a native of Chang'an with a Chinese surname (i.e. Ding 丁), although he might have had some roots in Central or South Asia, which probably derived from his maternal side; and second, that he died either in 876 or slightly earlier—in 875. All this new evidence, neglected by modern scholars so far, is discussed in my forthcoming article on Zhihuilun (Chen, forthcoming).

<sup>15</sup> The relevant Famensi evidence is recorded in the following two documents: "Da Tang Xiantong qisong Qiyang zhenshen zhiwen" 大唐咸通啟送岐陽真身志文 ("Zhiwen"), a memorial inscription that features this series of relic veneration under the reigns of Yizong (r. 859–873) and Xizong (r. 873–888); and a meticulous inventory (currently known under such an abbreviated title, "Yiwu zhang" 衣物賬) of the gifts, which includes six from Zhihuilun, showered on the Famensi relic while it was venerated in the capital. The two documents are presented in different sources, the best of which is, in my opinion, Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan, 2007, 229–230 ("Zhiwen")/227–229 ("Yiwuzhang"). It was a Daxingshansi monk (Juezhi 覺支 [?–874+]) who elaborately prepared the comprehensive inventory. The separate list of Zhihuilun's gifts was added after all the gifts were counted and recorded. This, coupled with Zhihuilun's central position at Daxingshansi, suggests that all the gifts donated to the relic were collected and registered at Daxingshansi. This emphatically points to Zhihuilun's status as a mastermind behind this series of activities surrounding the Famensi relic.

Buddha; the relic bones were flanked by items and icons belonging to the monarchs and their loved ones, utensils so magnificent that they can only be associated with those used by the royalty, and bundles of hair from the heads of the emperor, his consorts, and other imperial relatives.

The Famensi underground crypt was thus envisioned as a reversion of (if not vengeance on) the paramount monarchist authority vis-à-vis the law of the Dharma as symbolized by the institution of palace chapels. Had it not been built underground and in miniature, compared with the imperial palace complex, such a piece of architecture so symbolic of the dominion of theological power over the secular world would have been totally unimaginable in a society where the sangha had never achieved independence from, let alone superiority over, secular authority. At any rate, esoteric Buddhism's conspicuous position in these two supreme politico-religious symbols, both above and beneath the ground, emphatically points to its unusual importance for contemporary monastic institutions.

Last, we should bear in mind that from the ninth century onward, esoteric Buddhism was rarely paralleled by other Buddhist traditions in transmitting Tang Buddhist institutions to other parts of East Asia, where esoteric Buddhism steadily began to gain increasing popularity. In view of verifiable evidence, Haiyun seems to be on firm ground with his claim that more than ten thousand Buddhist practitioners flocked to the Tang capitals from Korea, Japan, and some Southeast Asian regions, such as Java, in pursuit of esoteric teachings and practices under the supervision of Bukong and his numerous first- and second-generation disciples (*Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi fufa ji*, T. 2081.51:785b23–26).

## 25. THE PRESENCE OF ESOTERIC BUDDHIST ELEMENTS IN CHINESE BUDDHISM DURING THE TANG

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

Elements of Esoteric Buddhist practice and belief had entered mainstream Buddhism in China as early as the early fourth century, and found ready and wide acceptance long before the rise of the Tang. Nevertheless, the great importance of and influence wielded by the Zhenyan 真言 tradition of the Tang, in religious as well as political terms, left a lasting imprint on Chinese Buddhism well beyond the Tang.

It is important to make a distinction here between those forms of Esoteric Buddhism introduced to China as part of Indian mainstream Mahāyāna, and those that developed in China, in particular those that spread with the advent of the “Three Great Ācāryas” (*san dashi* 三大師), Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra and their successors.

### *Jingtu and Esoteric Buddhism*

During the Tang dynasty the Jingtu 淨土, or Pure Land, tradition continued as one of the most popular expressions of Chinese Buddhism.<sup>1</sup> Esoteric Buddhist elements in the context of Pure Land practice occur already during the Nanbeichao (381–589). Providing that its provenance can be trusted, the *Ba yiqie yezhang genben desheng jingtu shenzhou* 拔一切業障根本得生淨土神咒 (Divine Spell for Weeding Out all Obstructive Karmic Roots for Obtaining Rebirth in the Pure Land),<sup>2</sup> translated during the Liu Song (420–478), would appear to be one of the earliest texts in Chinese in which a spell for obtaining rebirth in Amitābha’s paradise can be found. Essentially this spell

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview of the history of the Pure Land tradition in China, see Kamata 1999, vol. 6, 778–92. See also Chappell 1988, esp. 184–90.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *T.* 368.12:351c–352a.

supplants devotion, the primary, spiritual force in Pure Land practice, with magic in order for the practitioner to reach the cherished goal.

By the time of the early Tang, an assortment of Pure Land spells had come in vogue, as seen in the *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 (Collected *Dhāraṇī* Scriptures).<sup>3</sup> Also the encyclopedic *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (Pearly Trees in the Park of the Dharma),<sup>4</sup> by Daoshi 道世 (d. 681), contains a section on Esoteric Buddhist practices relating to the cult of Amitābha Buddha and his Pure Land.<sup>5</sup>

After—or concurrent with—the rise of the Zhenyan tradition during the Kaiyuan period, elements of Esoteric Buddhism began to appear with increasing regularity in the normative Pure Land scriptures, including the *Sukhāvativyūha*,<sup>6</sup> the *Guan wuliang shoufo jing* 觀無量壽佛經 (Amitāyus-dhyāna Sūtra)<sup>7</sup> and the *Amituo jing* 阿彌陀經 (Amitābha Sūtra).<sup>8</sup> While spells and mantras for rebirth in the Pure Land can be found as appendices to these sūtras, Pure Land talismans also occur in the Tang Buddhist material from Dunhuang.

Because the Pure Land tradition was not organized as a school similar to the Tiantai or Chan lineages of the mid-Tang dynasty, there was evidently never any attempt by its practitioners to integrate traditional Pure Land beliefs with Esoteric Buddhist doctrine. It would appear that such attempts primarily took place within the context of the Zhenyan tradition itself.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> T. 901. For this material, cf. T. 901.18:800b, 801abc, 802c, 864c, etc.

<sup>4</sup> T. 2122.53:269a–1030a.

<sup>5</sup> T. 2122.53:735b–738b.

<sup>6</sup> T. 360. See also Gómez 1996. Unfortunately Gómez completely ignores the spells and the Esoteric Buddhist dimension in this otherwise highly competent study.

<sup>7</sup> T. 365.

<sup>8</sup> T. 366. The presence of Esoteric Buddhist elements in these canonical scriptures is especially evident in the Pure Land material found among the manuscripts from Dunhuang. Cf., e.g., S. 317, S. 2107, S. 4930, etc. P. 2226.2 features the *dhāraṇī* from T. 369, i.e., the *Amituo fo shuo zhou* 阿彌陀佛說咒 (Spell Spoken by Amitābha Buddha). This underlines the fact that these spells were not originally part of the Pure Land scriptures but were added at a later date.

<sup>9</sup> Cf., e.g., *Da foding guangji tuoluoni jing* 大佛頂廣聚陀羅尼經 (Scripture on the Great Budoṣṇisa Extensive Collection of *Dhāraṇīs*), T. 946.18:166a; *Miao jixiang pingdeng bimi zuishang guanmen dajiao wang jing* 妙吉祥平等秘密最上觀門大教王經 (Wonderful, Universal, Secret and Highest Method for Meditation, Great Teaching King of Sūtras), T. 1192.20:922b; *Wenshushili fa baozang tuoluoni jing* 佛說文殊師利法寶藏炕羅尼經 (Mañjuśrī Dharma Treasury *Dhāraṇī* Sūtra), T. 1185A.20:792a, etc. Also see Orzech 2009.

### *Tiantai*

Esoteric Buddhist elements in the practices and doctrines of the Tiantai school can be traced back to the time of its de-facto founder, Zhiyi (538–597). This influence can be found in works such as the *Qing Guanyin chan fa* 請觀音懺法 (Method for Repentance Through Invoking Avalokiteśvara)<sup>10</sup> and the *Fangdeng sanmei xingfa* 方等三昧行法 (Method for Practicing the Vaipulya *Samādhi*).<sup>11</sup> It would appear that the primary scriptures that influenced Zhiyi (and his successors) in regard to ritual practices were the *Mahāvaiṣṭya-dhāraṇī sūtra*<sup>12</sup> and the *Qing Guanshiyin pusa xiaofudu hai tuoluoni zhou jing* 請觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼咒經 (Spell Scripture of the *Dhāraṇī* for Invoking Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva in Order to Get Rid of Poisonous Vexations).<sup>13</sup> The nature of the Esoteric Buddhist elements in Tiantai Buddhism is by and large limited to the use of spells and the construction of special altars.<sup>14</sup> However, there is no reference to the use of *mudrās* or mandalas in the pre-Tang and Tang material. This is also borne out in the account of Tiantai Buddhism in late Tang China by the Japanese pilgrim-monk Ennin 圓仁 (794–864).<sup>15</sup>

Saichō 最澄 (767–822), the Japanese founder of the Tendai school, has traditionally been credited with having brought Esoteric Buddhist teachings back with him from Tang China. However, the actual nature of this purported transmission is both unclear and suspect. In any case, it appears that the type of Esoteric Buddhism Saichō was exposed to in China was primarily of the Zhenyan variety, possibly linked with the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, and not some form of esoteric Tiantai.<sup>16</sup> That being said, Esoteric Buddhist practices do not appear to have been of real importance in Chinese Tiantai Buddhism until after the Tang.

### *The Faxiang School and Esoteric Buddhism*

Although the Faxiang school 法相宗, which originated with Xuanzang 玄奘 (600–664) and was continued by his disciple Guiji 窺基 (632–

<sup>10</sup> As contained in the *Guoqing pailu* 國清百錄 (Hundred Records of Guoqing Temple), T. 1934.46:795b–96a.

<sup>11</sup> T. 1940.

<sup>12</sup> T. 1339.21:641a–61a. See also Donner and Stevenson 1993, 253–56.

<sup>13</sup> T. 1043.20:34b–38a.

<sup>14</sup> See the excellent study by Stevenson 1986.

<sup>15</sup> See Reischauer 1955a, and the companion volume, Reischauer 1955b.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Chen 1998, 2009.

682), was essentially exoteric in nature and preoccupied with various forms of *yogācāra*-related philosophy and Buddhist doctrinal questions in general, Esoteric Buddhist practices were nevertheless an integral part of its teachings.<sup>17</sup> Xuanzang is known to have translated several important *sūtras* of the *dhāraṇī* class, including the *Sheng-chuang bei-yin tuoluoni jing* 勝幢臂印陀羅尼經 (*Dhāraṇī* Scripture on the Spell of the Superlative *Mudrā*),<sup>18</sup> the *Amoghapāśāhṛdaya sūtra*<sup>19</sup> the *Zhou wu shou* 咒五首 (Spells under Five Headings)<sup>20</sup> and the *Ekādaśamukha*.<sup>21</sup> The latter is a mature Esoteric Buddhist scripture containing a full ritual program involving spells, *mudrās*, a special altar, and the use of process magic.<sup>22</sup> It is also interesting to note that Xuanzang was a master of spells, and at least one incident in the *Tang Da cien si sanzang zhuan* 唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳 (History of the Dharma Master Tripiṭaka of the Da cien Temple of the Tang)<sup>23</sup> documents this.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, Xuanzang's Korean disciple Wōnch'uk 圓測 (613–696), the author of a lengthy commentary on the *Sandhīnirmocana sūtra*, also wrote a piece on the *Renwang jing*.<sup>25</sup> Taken together, this material reveals that the use of spells and Esoteric Buddhist ritual constituted an important and integral part of Faxiang school praxis, and it may not be wrong to consider this a forerunner of the cultic and ritual developments that took place in Chinese Buddhism towards the end of the seventh century and the early part of the eighth century.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>17</sup> For an interesting and illuminating discussion of meditation in the context of Faxiang Buddhism, see Sponberg 1986. Unfortunately this otherwise excellent study completely ignores the Esoteric Buddhist elements in the teaching and practices of the Faxiang school.

<sup>18</sup> T. 1363.

<sup>19</sup> T. 1094. In the decades following Xuanzang's translation of this scripture, it was retranslated and recompiled a number of times, and in the process developed into a full-blown Esoteric Buddhist scripture with a ritual program in which mantras, *mudrās*, mandala, and *homa* occur. For these elements see Orzech and Payne, "Homa," and Orzech and Sørensen, "Mudrā, Mantra, and Mandala," both in this volume.

<sup>20</sup> T. 1034.

<sup>21</sup> T. 1071.

<sup>22</sup> See Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhism and Magic in China," in this volume. Mention should also be made here of the important commentary on this scripture attributed to Xuanzang's disciple Huizhao 慧沼 (651–714). Cf. T. 1802.39:1004b–1011c. For additional bibliographical information, cf. FDC vol. 7, 6034ab.

<sup>23</sup> T. 2053.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. T. 2053.50:223a.

<sup>25</sup> HPC 1, 15b–123c. See also Sørensen, "Early Esoteric Buddhism in Korea: Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla (c. 600–918)," in this volume.

<sup>26</sup> For these developments see Orzech, "Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra (651–780)," in this volume.



*Chan*

Shortly after Śubhākarasimha's arrival in Chang'an, the Western Capital, in 716 C.E. Tang, a number of Buddhist monks, mostly hailing from one of the branches of Northern Chan, came into contact with mature Esoteric Buddhism.

Among these Northern Chan monks was Jingxian 敬賢 (660–723),<sup>27</sup> originally among the disciples of Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706), the primary patriarch of Northern Chan. Jingxian resided at Huishan Temple 惠善寺 on Mt. Song and first came in contact with Zhenyan Buddhism in the last years of his life when he met Śubhākarasimha at Ximing Temple 西明寺 in Chang'an.<sup>28</sup> During this meeting, Jingxian is said to have engaged the Indian *ācārya* in a discussion on various points of Buddhist doctrine and practice. Śubhākarasimha's answers were recorded by another Chan monk, Huiqing 慧警 (n.d.),<sup>29</sup> who later revised them and compiled them into the *Wuwei sanzang chanyao* 無畏三藏禪要 (Tripiṭaka Master Śubhākarasimha's Essential [Instructions] for Meditation).<sup>30</sup> This text is a ritual guide for repentance, receiving *abhiṣeka*, and taking the bodhisattva precepts in accordance with the Zhenyan tradition.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, Jingxian's questions to Śubhākarasimha were not recorded.

The most famous of the Northern Chan monks to become involved in the Esoteric Buddhist lore introduced by Śubhākarasimha, and later by Vajrabodhi, was the celebrated Yixing 一行 (673–727).<sup>32</sup> Originally a disciple of Puji 普寂 (651–739), the successor of Shenxiu, Yixing evidently shifted his Buddhist interests after meeting Śubhākarasimha, whom he assisted in the grand-scale translation project involving a number of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures, the most important of which was the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*.<sup>33</sup> Yixing's involvement with Esoteric Buddhism can safely be said to have been a major interest for him

<sup>27</sup> T. 917.18:942a.

<sup>28</sup> T. 917.18:942a.

<sup>29</sup> T. 917.18:946a.

<sup>30</sup> T. 917.18:942b–946a.

<sup>31</sup> See Pinte, "Śubhākarasimha," in this volume.

<sup>32</sup> Biography in T. 2061.50:732c–733c. Yixing also figures prominently in the late Tang work on Esoteric Buddhist history, the *Liangbu Dafa xiang chengzi fu fa ji* (Record of Successive Masters Transmitting the Methods of the Great Dharma Characteristics of the Two Classes [of Mandalas]). Cf. T. 2081.50:785c and 586c. Note that Yixing's name, which means "Single Practice," evokes Chan Buddhist thought.

<sup>33</sup> T. 848.

toward the end of his life, as it has been relatively well documented.<sup>34</sup> In addition to the translations he participated in, Yixing authored a number of Buddhist works, including the *Da Piluzhe'na foyan xiuxing yigui* (Procedures for the Practice of the Mahāvairocana Buddha Locana),<sup>35</sup> the *Yaoshi liuliguang rulai xiaozai chunan niansong yigui* 藥師琉璃光如來消災除難念誦儀軌 (Ritual Procedures and Recitations for [Invoking] Bhaiṣaja Tathāgata for the Elimination of Disasters and Difficulties),<sup>36</sup> the *Beidou qixing humo fa* 北斗七星護摩法 (Method for *Homa* to the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper)<sup>37</sup> and the *Fantian huoluo jiuyao* 梵天火羅九曜 (The Nine Luminaries of the Indian *Hora* [System]),<sup>38</sup> all of which deal with Esoteric Buddhism in some form.

Yifu 義福 (d. 732),<sup>39</sup> another of the great disciples of Shenxiu, is also known to have taken some interest in Esoteric Buddhism. Vajrabodhi's biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* mentions that Yifu received *abhīṣeka* together with Yixing from the Indian *ācārya*, an event that probably took place around 720 C.E.<sup>40</sup> From the little we know of Yifu's teachings, however, there is practically nothing that points at influence from Esoteric Buddhism. Although this does not necessarily mean that he did not entertain some devotion toward the new Zhenyan teachings, Yifu was probably mainly concerned with the new ritual for the bestowal of the bodhisattva precepts. This also appears to have been the case with Shouzhen 守真 (700–770),<sup>41</sup> a direct disciple of Puji, whose stele inscription mentions that he had also received the bodhisattva precepts from Śubhākarasiṃha.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>34</sup> For a solid monograph on him, see Osabe 1963. See also Lü 1995, 224–45.

<sup>35</sup> T. 981.

<sup>36</sup> T. 922.

<sup>37</sup> T. 1310.

<sup>38</sup> T. 1311.

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of his importance, see McRae 1986, 64–65.

<sup>40</sup> For the traditional view of Yixing's study of astronomy and mathematics, see Kenneth Ch'en 1964, 481–82. See Sørensen, "Astrology and the Worship of the Planets in Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang," in this volume. In Korea Yixing has long been venerated as a principal exponent of the five elements, and the originator of the *fengshui* 風水 (Kor. *p'ungsu*) system, said to have been introduced in the peninsula by the Sōn monk Tosōn 道誥 (827–897), a master in the Mt. Tongni line of transmission. Cf. Sørensen, "Early Esoteric Buddhism in Korea," in this volume.

<sup>41</sup> Biography in QTW, ch. 918, 4291bc.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. QTW, ch. 918, 4291bc. The *Qixin zonglun* referred to in this passage is the *Dacheng qixin lun* 大乘起心論 (Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna). T. 1666.

Finally, a Dunhuang manuscript entitled *Foshuo Lengqie jing chanmen xitan zhang* 佛說楞伽經禪門悉談章 (Gate of Chan with Siddham [According to] the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*),<sup>43</sup> contains evidence of the use of spell sentences in combination with classical Northern Chan doctrine.<sup>44</sup> It was reputedly composed by a certain Dinghui 定惠 (n.d.), a Chan monk said to have hailed from Da Xingshan Temple 大興善寺 in Luoyang.

The followers of Northern Chan were not alone in being influenced by Esoteric Buddhist practices and adapting them to their own system of meditation and other sectarian concerns. In the biography of the monk Wuzhu 無住 (714–774),<sup>45</sup> the founder of the Baotang school 保唐宗 based in Yizhou 益州 (modern-day Chengdu, Sichuan province), we find repeated references and citations from the *Sarvadurgatiparisōdhana-uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī sūtra*,<sup>46</sup> one of the most important and influential Esoteric Buddhist scriptures in the history of Chinese Buddhism.<sup>47</sup>

Toward the end of the Tang dynasty the sources reveal a certain degree of rapprochement between Chan and Esoteric Buddhism that went beyond the simple use of spells or ritual practices. A manuscript from Dunhuang, the *Fu fazang pin* 35 付法藏品三十五 (35th Section of the Transference of the Dharma Treasury),<sup>48</sup> is said to form part of the *Jin'gang junjing jin'gangding yijie rulai shenmiao bimi jin'gang jie da sanmeiye xiuxing sishier zhongtan fa jing zuoyong wei fayi ze—Da Piluzhe'na jin'gang xindi famen mi fajie tan fayi ze* 金剛峻經金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶 修行四十二種壇法經作用威法

<sup>43</sup> It has been critically edited in *T.* 2779.85:536ac. This edition is based on *P.* 2204 and *P.* 2212. See also *P.* 3082 and *P.* 3099. The latter two manuscripts are either partly mutilated or incomplete. *P.* 3082 has been reproduced in Jao and Demieville (1971), pls. 92–99.

<sup>44</sup> There is another poetic text ascribed to this monk, the *Da Xingshan si chanshi shamen Dinghui shi can* 大興山寺禪師沙門定慧詩贊 (Poetic Verse by the Chan Master, the Monk Dinghui of Da Xingshan Temple). Cf. S. 5809. It is described briefly in Jao and Demieville 1971, 86–87 and 330–31.

<sup>45</sup> For biographical information on Wuzhu, cf. *Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記 (Records of the History of the Dharma Treasury), *T.* 2075. 51:186a–196b. See also Ma 1991, 11–16.

<sup>46</sup> *T.* 967–971.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *T.* 2075.51:187a and 189b. For a lengthy discussion of the *Sarvadurgatiparisōdhana-uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī sūtra* in the context of Chinese Buddhism, see Copp (2005).

<sup>48</sup> This intriguing work can be found in the following Dunhuang manuscripts: *P.* 3913, 2791, 3212; *S.* 5981; and *Beijing* 29.

儀則大毘盧那金剛心地法門秘法戒壇法儀則 (Scripture of the Vajra Pinnacle, Vajraśekhara, All Tathāgatas' Deep and Wonderful, Secret Vajradhātu, Great *Samaya*, Scripture for Cultivating the Forty-two Kinds of Altar Methods, Employing the Awesome Methods of Ritual Proceedings, the Mahāvairocana Vajra Mind Ground Dharma Door, Esoteric Dharma Precepts Altar Methods of Ritual Proceedings),<sup>49</sup> an apocryphal work attributed to Amoghavajra. This Esoteric Buddhist work was originally used by Chan Buddhists affiliated with the Baotang school to combine their own teachings, and the history of their patriarchal lineage in particular, with the doctrines of the Zhenyan tradition.<sup>50</sup>

Following its list of Chan patriarchs ending with Huineng, the *Fu fazang* features two short Esoteric Buddhist texts. Both deal with the proceedings of ritualized meditation, including *bīja* visualization much like that found in S. 6958, discussed above. The first text, which lacks a title, deals with the liberation of suffering beings in the three impure *gatis*, i.e., the realms of animals, *pretas*, and the hells. It is important for its description of how the practitioner achieves identification with the buddhas. The second text bears much resemblance to the well-known text on meditation of the *bīja Ā* ascribed to Śubhākarasiṃha.<sup>51</sup> The attribution of the *Fu fazang* to Amoghavajra is of course a clever trick used by the compilers of the text, with the purpose of providing a degree of official sanction to their transmission. Whatever the inner logic behind the text, it is obvious that we are here dealing with a ritual *cum* meditation text combining the invocation of the patriarchal lineage of Southern Chan Buddhism with an Esoteric Buddhist *sādhana*.

At least one early Korean source indicates that Esoteric Buddhist teachings were transmitted within Southern Chan during the first

<sup>49</sup> P. 3913.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Tanaka 1983, 135–66. For a résumé of this chapter in English, see Tanaka 1981. The sectarian affiliation of the *Fu fazang pin* 35 is not immediately clear, however, although it clearly reflects an attempt to integrate Southern Chan with Esoteric Buddhism of the Zhenyan sectarian variety. However, it is also important not to overlook the fact that the text in question dates from 899 C.E. At that time, the Baotang school had long since ceased to play any role in Sichuan, which at the end of the Tang was dominated by Chan lineages tracing themselves back to the immediate followers of Huineng 慧能 (638–713), the Sixth Patriarch of Southern Chan.

<sup>51</sup> As taught in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, T. 848. See also the *Da Piluzhe'na jing achali zhenshi zhi pin zhong achali zhu azi guanmen* 大毘盧遮那經阿闍梨真實智品中阿闍梨住阿字觀門 (The Ācārya's Method of Contemplating the Letter Ā), T. 863.

half of the ninth century. A stele inscription dedicated to the monk Hyesō 慧昭 (774–850),<sup>52</sup> an important Sōn master associated with the founding of Ssange 雙溪寺 Temple on Mt. Chiri 智理山, refers to his use of Esoteric Buddhist practices based on teachings ascribed to Śubhākarasimha.<sup>53</sup> Hyesō had evidently picked up these methods while staying in Tang, where he trained under the Chan master Yunxiu Shenjian 雲秀神鑑 (d. 844),<sup>54</sup> a first-generation disciple of Mazu 馬祖 (709–788), the founder of the Hongzhou branch 洪州 of Southern Chan. Since Mazu originally hailed from Sichuan, where he is known to have had some connection to the Baotang school 保唐宗, a dominant force in that region during the second half of the eighth century, it is not unlikely that there may have been a connection between Esoteric Buddhist practices transmitted in this tradition and that of the Mazu branch of Southern Chan.<sup>55</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Esoteric Buddhist elements in the form of spells occur relatively early in scriptures related to Pure Land Buddhism. However, in the early material there is no doctrinal harmonization between the devotional practice and use of the spells. Only later, with the rise of the Zhenyan tradition during the eighth century, do we see Esoteric Buddhist rituals for rebirth in Sukāvātī being created. This trend is also reflected in the talismans to assist in rebirth in the Pure Land.

While certain Esoteric Buddhist elements can be found in the founder Zhiyi's writings on repentance and meditation, the Tiantai school was never seriously influenced by Esoteric Buddhism during its early and middle phases. Only after the Tang do comprehensive Esoteric Buddhist teachings and ritual practices find their way into the Tiantai school, culminating in the comprehensive and large-scale Shuilu 水陸 rituals of the Southern Song.

<sup>52</sup> CKS, 66–72. This inscription was composed by Ch'oe Chiwōn 崔致遠 (857–?), the famous Silla scholar and poet, who had studied for several years in Tang.

<sup>53</sup> CKS, 69. Cf. Sørensen, "Early Esoteric Buddhism in Korea," in this volume.

<sup>54</sup> Biography in *T.* 2060.50:842a.

<sup>55</sup> Representatives from the Baotang school are known to have entered Tibet during the second half of the eighth century, where their brand of Chinese Chan was spread with some success. It is highly probable that the inevitable encounter with Indo-Tibetan tantrism might have left its traces on the teachings of the Baotang school as well. Cf. Broughton 1983.

And though they never central to the Faxiang school, Esoteric Buddhist practices were present in its teachings and rituals from the very outset, as documented in Xuanzang's many translations. The Esoteric Buddhist element in Faxiang would appear to have increased after Xuanzang's death.

Both Śubhākarasīṃha and Vajrabodhi are known to have taught their brand of Esoteric Buddhism to monks from the Northern School of Chan. Moreover, Esoteric Buddhist beliefs and practices were not limited to the Northern School but also thrived within the Southern School of Chan. At least one late manuscript from Dunhuang shows evidence of harmonization between Chan and Zhenyan Buddhism as transmitted via Amoghavajra.

It is interesting to observe that while Esoteric Buddhist influence on Chinese Buddhism in general was extensive, in particular during the mid- and late Tang, it became even more so during the following dynasties. At that time, however, the orthodox lineages of the Zhenyan school had been broken, resulting in an unsystematic and bifurcated transmission of Esoteric Buddhist doctrines, rituals, and general lore. Hence, Esoteric Buddhism current under the Liao, Song, and Jin dynasties was historically divorced from the "golden age" of Esoteric Buddhism of the mid-Tang, even though most of its literature was still in circulation.

## 26. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ESOTERIC BUDDHIST CANON

Richard D. McBride II

Until recently, most scholarly views of the development of the esoteric Buddhist canon have followed the late medieval Japanese rhetorical classification of pure (*seijun mikkyō* 正純密教 or *junmitsu* 純密) and mixed or diffuse (*zōbu mikkyō* 雜部密教 or *zōmitsu* 雜密) esotericism, by which scholars sought to both incorporate and distinguish between early *dhāraṇī* material and later sūtras, such as those translated by the so-called pure esoteric masters Śubhakarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, and others, into an esoteric canon (see, for instance, Ōmura 1918; Takai 1955; Takubo 1967). Abé Ryūichi recently argued against such differentiation because a close reading of Kūkai's material demonstrates that he never made such distinctions (Abé 1999, 165, 152–154), which are evidently the product of Japanese sectarian discourse from no earlier than the sixteenth century (Sharf 2002b), although at least one cataloguer of the Northern Song period conceptualized an “esoteric section of the Mahāyāna canon” (Orzech 2006b).

Writing in the early fifth century, Kumārajīva (343–413) referred to twelve divisions (*shierbu jing* 十二部經, also *shierfen jing* 十二分經) of the canon (*T.* 1509.25:306c16–20). Later writers alluded variously to a *dhāraṇī piṭaka* (*tuoluoni zhouzang* 陀羅尼呪藏, *zhouzang* 呪藏, *chiming zhouzang* 持明呪藏) and a *mahāvīdyā piṭaka* (*daming zhouzang* 大明呪藏) (*T.* 1870.45:554a3–4; *T.* 901.18:85b2–3, *T.* 945.19:134c14, *T.* 1201.21:16b13–14, *T.* 2154.55:599a25, *T.* 2157.55:929b16). The *dhāraṇī piṭaka* is typically viewed as one part of a Mahāyāna conceptualization of the Buddhist canon in five *piṭakas* (*wuzang* 五藏). The first three are the usual tripiṭaka (sūtra, *vinaya*, and *abhidharma*), the fourth is the *dhāraṇī piṭaka*, and the fifth is the bodhisattva *piṭaka* (*T.* 2087.51:923a8, *T.* 1852.45:9c23–24). Several modern writers have imagined the genealogy of Buddhist esotericism as originating in the *dhāraṇī* sūtras and, hence, would include all such spell scriptures—as well as sūtras on astrology, astronomy, phrenology, and other such thaumaturgic practices—in a loosely defined proto-esoteric canon

(Chou 1945, 241–48; Kiyota 1978, 6–7, 13–18; Matsunaga 1980, 83–114). Strickmann proposes that the *Dhāraṇī Spirit-Spell Sūtra Preached by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas* (*Qifo bapusa suoshuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神呪經, T. 1332), which he dates to the late fourth or early fifth century, contains the earliest outlines of the future tantric pantheon; and that the *Consecration Scripture* (*Guanding jing* 灌頂經, T. 1331), which he dates to about 457, preserves the earliest details of a consecration ritual (Strickmann 1990; 1996, 52–53, 72–73, 428, n. 70). There is much evidence, however, that medieval Chinese Buddhists understood *dhāraṇī* and *dhāraṇī* procedures to be well within the Buddhist mainstream (McBride 2005).

Medieval Sinitic Buddhist cataloguers as well considered the entire Mahāyāna canon of scripture to be the “esoteric teaching” (*mijiao* 密教). That this is the case is found in the very classification of Buddhist scriptures. In the *Catalogue of Śākyamuni’s Teachings Compiled During the Kaiyuan Period* (*Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄, T. 2154, comp. 730), Zhisheng 智昇 (ca. 700–740) divided Mahāyāna sūtras into six categories: 1) the Prajñāpāramitā class; 2) the Mahāratnakūṭa or Jewel Heap class (following the *Mahāratnakūṭa; Dabaoji jing* 大寶積經); 3) the Mahāvaipulya-mahāsaṃnipāta or Great Collection class (following the *Mahāvaipulya-mahāsaṃnipāta sūtra; Daji jing* 大集經); 4) the Avataṃsaka or Flower Garland class (following the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*); (5) the Nirvāṇa class (following the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*); and (6) the Miscellaneous class, which includes the *Lotus*, *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, and *Laṅkāvatāra sūtras* (T. 2154.55:594a–610b). Here, the first category would be exoteric teachings and all the rest would either comprise or at least contain esoteric teachings. Most of the texts presumed to be part of the “esoteric Buddhist” canon, such as the *Sūtra on Vairocana’s Attaining Buddhahood* (*Da Piluzhena chengfo jing* 大毘盧遮那成佛經 or *Dari jing* 大日經, T. 848) and many *dhāraṇī* texts are contained in this last miscellaneous class (Abé 1999, 156; T. 2154.55:603a.). This is fitting, nevertheless, because Chinese exegetes, such as Zhiyi, Jizang, and so forth, believed that the *Lotus* and *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtras* presented the Mahāyāna’s “esoteric teaching” (McBride 2004).

Later cataloguers and compilers of Buddhist canons in the Sinitic cultural sphere during the Tang period did not conceptualize a distinct esoteric canon and generally followed the officially sanctioned classification scheme employed by Zhisheng. This includes Yuanzhao 圓照



(fl. 794), who even worked closely with Amoghavajra on several translation projects, and Heng'an 恒安 (fl. 945) of the Southern Tang 南唐 (T. 2157.55:910a–940a; T. 2158.55:1048a–1053b). The Koryō 高麗 monk Sugi 守其 (fl. 1214–1259), who compiled and edited the *Koryō taejanggyōng* 高麗大藏經 (Korean Buddhist Canon) between 1237 and 1251, purposely followed the organization of the Sichuan Edition of the Song Canon (*Shuben* 蜀本), which was organized following Zhisheng's catalogue (Lancaster 1979, xv.). The texts of the Korean canon served as the basis for the *Taishō* but their order was rearranged to accord with the sectarian and scholastic milieu of its creation in the first half of the twentieth century.

The *Indications of the Goals of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Pinnacle Sūtra* (*Jin'gangding jing yuqie shibahui zhigui* 金剛頂經瑜伽十八會指歸, T. 1869, Giebel 1995), composed by Amoghavajra, provides a list of eighteen scriptures that many modern scholars have accepted as the earliest conceptualization of an esoteric Buddhist canon (Matsunaga 1980, 39, 187–88; Yoritomo 1990, 172–79; Lü 1995, 265–74). However, because many of the titles and contents of works remain unknown or unclear and were never translated into Chinese, the relationship between these eighteen titles and the later esoteric tantras is difficult to establish (Eastman 1981; Davidson 2002a, 145–46).

For the case of medieval China, the safest course is to suggest that the earliest texts that might be included in an esoteric Buddhist canon would be the *Sūtra on Vairocana's Attaining Buddhahood* (*Mahavairocana sūtra*, T. 848), the *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha* (T. 865, T. 866), and the *Susiddhikara* (T. 893), which were all translated in the early eighth century, as well as all of the associated ritual guidebooks (*yigui* 儀軌). Some scholars would include various *dhāraṇī* sūtras associated with Avalokiteśvara (Yoritomi 1999b, 19–23) and also imagine a Vajraśekhara (*Jin'gangding jing* 金剛頂經) family of scriptures (Misaki 1977, such as T. 865–892). Scholars from Japanese esoteric traditions also emphasize the *Liqu jing* 理趣經 (T. 1004), but its importance outside of Japan is difficult to demonstrate (Matsunaga 1980, 198–231).

## 27. THE IMPACT OF TRANSLATED ESOTERIC BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES ON CHINESE BUDDHISM

Richard D. McBride II

The influence of esoteric Buddhist scriptures on Chinese Buddhism is a matter of considerable opinion and debate. Although scholarly writings on esoteric Buddhism in East Asia have appeared for nearly a century, there has been no true consensus among scholars about what constitutes “Esoteric Buddhism.” Some classifications have been ahistorical and sectarian classifications and, despite their inherent problems, have dominated the field of inquiry until the end of the twentieth century (e.g., Ōmura Segai 1918, Lü Jianfu 1995). The fundamental divide is between what scholars mistakenly assume and what they can safely assume about the influence of tantric or esoteric Buddhism in China. In other words, the scholarly community has not yet adequately dealt with such seminal questions as: Should the modern scholarly classification “esoteric scriptures” include the vast collection of *dhāraṇī* sūtras translated prior to the eighth century? And was the impact of these new sūtras felt empire-wide, or was it primarily centered on the imperial court? Because scholars working in the field are divided over the answers to fundamental questions such as these, many of the influences I describe below need to be reviewed with a more clearly defined and critical apparatus that is devoid of problematic teleologies.

The primary problem facing researchers is the general lack of conclusive evidence on how Chinese monks, exegetes, and laypeople responded to these new scriptures from India that outlined the procedures for powerful rituals. Simply stated, the literary and art-historical materials that allow such a rich picture to be drawn of earlier and later periods of Chinese Buddhism do not exist in the same abundance for the eighth and ninth centuries (Berger 1994). Nevertheless, evidence suggests that these scriptures stimulated innovations in Buddhist doctrine, contributed to the already widespread Chinese interest in ritual practices, reemphasized the relationship between the state and the Buddhist church, promoted worship of new forms of Avalokiteśvara, and contributed to rapprochement between Buddhism, Daoism, and

popular religions. Before I briefly assess the impact of this new strand of Mahāyāna literature and practice in China, I must present something of the historical context.

The destructive An Lushan 安祿山-Shi Siming 史思明 rebellion (755–763) severely weakened Tang imperial power and prestige. Previously, the Sui and early Tang governments had patronized several large monastic complexes in Chang'an and Luoyang, many other monasteries empire-wide, and, of course, sponsored the Sūtra-Translation Bureau that executed the translations of these new sūtras under the direction of émigré monks. During the seventh and eighth centuries, scholarly monks installed in government-sponsored monasteries produced a wealth of commentarial and other literature that provide scholars with a relatively clear picture of the range of intellectual positions supported by the Chinese court. Practical applications of the doctrine of *tathāgatagarbha* successfully penetrated Buddhist intellectual spheres as a result of the success of the Huayan master Fazang 法藏 (643–712) and the Chan master Shenxiu 神秀 (606–706), both of whom were supported by Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690–705). There was a preexisting tendency among Chinese Buddhist monastics toward ritual—for penance, protection, and wish-fulfillment—and increasing popularity in the devotional practices of the Pure Land cult of Amitābha, which gradually transformed the hitherto popular cult of Maitreya; as well, there was universal interest in Avalokiteśvara. After the destructive and divisive rebellion, there is little evidence of interest in esoteric Buddhist scriptures outside of the court and the ritual center of Mt. Wutai 五臺山 (Birnbau 1983, Gimello 1994), although there is also evidence that the preexisting conventional tradition of iconographic worship also continued (Wong 1993).

### *Doctrinal Innovations*

There are essentially three areas in which this mass of newly translated material either influenced or was influenced by doctrinal concerns in medieval East Asian Buddhism: first, subitism; second, the theory of buddha bodies; and third, dualism. In the late seventh and eighth centuries, the soteriological question of subitism—in other words, the question of whether enlightenment can be attained suddenly or is a gradual process accomplished over eons of lifetimes—was a concern addressed in some translations of *dhāraṇī* procedures and tantric ritual manuals, and among Chan practitioners and Huayan proponents. For

instance, the *Samukhanāma-dhāraṇī* (*Huming famen shenzhou jing* 護命法門神咒經), translated by Bodhiruci (fl. 693–727) in 693, provides a list of twenty benefits and by-products of utilizing the *dhāraṇī*; twentieth on the list is that one will attain complete enlightenment quickly (T. 1139.20:585b25–26). The *Ritual Procedures for the Practices and Chants of the Five Esoterica of Vajrasattva of the Yoga of the Adamantine Pinnacle* (*Jin'gangding yuqie Jin'gangsadio wumimi xiuxing niansong yigui* 金剛頂瑜伽金剛薩埵五祕密修行念誦儀軌), reportedly translated by Amoghavajra and one of the Vajraśekhara/Vajra-usṇīṣa (*Jin'gangding jing* 金剛頂經) family of scriptures, describes the benefits of entering the mandala. A passage at the beginning of the manual explains that those who practice according to the exoteric teaching take three great immeasurable *kalpas* to evince unsurpassed *bodhi*. The text also states, however, that

if you rely on the dharma of the sacred knowledge of self-awakening, which was preached by the self-produced *saṃbhogakāya* of Vairocana and the knowledge of the externally manifested *saṃbhogakāya* of the Vajrasattva Mahāsantabhadra, in this present life you will meet an *ācārya* of a mandala and be able to enter the mandala... and by means of the power of *adhiṣṭhāna*, in that very moment you will evince limitless *samaya* and limitless approaches to *dhāraṇī* (T. 1125.20:535b26–29, c1–3).

The *Collected Documents Related to the Monk Amoghavajra of Daizong's Reign* (*Daizong chao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集), by contrast, contains a passage that more directly suggests that receiving *abhiṣeka* into a consecrated altar engenders the speedy attainment of buddhahood (T. 2120.52:860b1–3).

The passage quoted above from the *Ritual Procedures for the Practices and Chants of the Five Esoterica of Vajrasattva* illustrates how some of the new tantric literature varied significantly from the developing exegetical consensus on the doctrine of buddha bodies. Instead of the Buddha Vairocana (or Mahāvairocana) being representative of the *dharmakāya*, reality as it is, thusness (*tathatā*), and so forth, he is presented as an interiorly realized, self-produced, literally “self”-*saṃbhogakāya* (*zi shouyongshen* 自受用身); and Mahāsantabhadra is presented as externally manifested, literally “other”-*saṃbhogakāya* (*ta shouyongshen* 他受用身) (T. 1125.20:535b26–28). Another work by or attributed to Amoghavajra, the *Lüeshu jin'gangding yuqie fenbie shengwei xiuzheng famen* 略述金剛頂瑜伽分別聖位修證法門, defines

these two reward bodies in more detail. The self-*saṃbhogakāya*, in the inner mind (*neishen* 內心), is what evinces the attainment of the four wisdoms (*sizhi* 四智) and the other-*saṃbhogakāya* is what externally causes (*wailing* 外令) the completion of the ten bodhisattva stages (T. 870.18:288b9–23). This essay lists the same four wisdoms described greater detail in the *Vijñāpatimātratāsiddhi-śāstra* (*Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論): perfect achievement wisdom (*chengsuozuo zhi* 成所作智, *krtyānuṣṭhāna-jñāna*), sublime contemplation wisdom (*miaoguan zhi* 妙觀察智, *pratyavekṣana-jñāna*), universal equality wisdom (*pingdengxing zhi* 平等性智, *samatā-jñāna*), and great perfect mirror wisdom (*dayuanjing zhi* 大圓鏡智, *mahādarśanā-jñāna*) (T. 1585.31:56a12–29; Ochi 1988; Hasegawa 1993, 1999a, 1999; Yoritomi 1999b).

Despite the religious rhetoric of transcending dualism, dualism has long played an important role in Indian and Buddhist philosophy—from the ancient Indian dualistic concepts of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* to the dualistic goals of the bodhisattva's practice as described in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*: wisdom (*prajñā*) and compassion (*upāya*). The *Sanzhong xidi po diyu zhuan yezhang chu sanjie bimi tuoluoni fa* 三種悉地破地獄轉業障出三界祕密陀羅尼法 (Ritual of the Secret *Dhāraṇīs* of the Three *Siddhis* for the Destruction of Hell, the Transformation of Karmic Hindrances, and the Liberation from the Three Conditioned Worlds, T. 905), a text belonging to the *Susiddhi* family of texts and attributed to Śubhakarasiṃha (Shanwuwei 善無畏, 637–735), but actually dating to the mid-ninth century,<sup>1</sup> introduces the dualistic concepts of *zhi* 智 (wisdom) and *li* 理 (principle) by pronouncing that the Buddha Mahāvairocana displays two kinds of *dharmakāyas* to lead beings to enlightenment: a dharma body of wisdom (*zhi fashen* 智法身) and a dharma body of principle (*li fashen* 理法身).

The Tathāgata Mahāvairocana, in order to cause one to know this way, displays two kinds of dharma bodies. In the dharma body of wisdom, the Buddha dwells in the principle of reality and by means of his self-reward body he manifests the thirty-seven worthies (viz., the deities of the mandala) and causes all to enter the way of nonduality. In the dharma body of principle, the Buddha dwells in thusness and quiescence. The Dharma, nevertheless, constantly dwells in immovability and manifests

<sup>1</sup> Chen 1998, 2009 argues that T. 905 was instead composed in Japan between 902 and 1047 in order to legitimate the esoteric lineage and practices of the Tendai tradition because the text, along with T. 906 and T. 907, is not mentioned in Chinese catalogs of the eighth and ninth century, it copies or emends lines from Yixing's commentary on the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (T. 1796), and incorporates all of T. 907. See also Orzech, "After Amoghavajra: Esoteric Buddhism in the late Tang," in this volume.

the eight-leaved [lotus flower] (of the *Dari jing* 大日經; another name for the Mt. Sumeru world-system). By means of the other-reward [body] he manifests the three kinds of mandalas and causes the ten world-systems to evince great emptiness (T. 905:18:912a21–25).

The concepts of “wisdom” and “principle” are utilized repeatedly in other later writings putatively associated with the Chinese esoteric tradition, such as Kūkai’s 空海 (774–835) *Hizōki* 秘藏記, in which one of the predominant theories is that the text represents Huiguo’s 惠果 (746–805) instructions to Kūkai (Katsumata 1981, 186–210; Osawa 1999). The record reports that the Sanskrit letter *A* is the seed syllable of the *dharmakāya* of principle of Vairocana and *Vaṃ* is the seed syllable of the *dharmakāya* of wisdom. It also says about the east 東 that it is the cause of principle, the Lotus section (*lianhuabu* 蓮華部); and about the west entrance 西口 that it is the result of wisdom, the Vajra section (*jin’gangbu* 金剛部) (see Matsunaga Yūkei 1977; Osawa 1999).

The mysteries of body, speech, and mind, the three esoterica (*sanmi* 三密, \**triguhya*), straddle the borders between tantric doctrine and ritual. The term was employed frequently in mainstream Mahāyāna Buddhist literature to refer to the three types of karma produced by, as well as the advanced spiritual attainments and supernatural powers of, buddhas and bodhisattvas, and the special characteristics of enlightened bodies long before the concept was alluded to in the advanced ritual practices of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (T. 848). Despite Amoghavajra’s straightforward definition of the three actions of body, speech, and mind as referring to making mudrā, chanting mantra, and abiding in yogic meditative trance (T. 1665.32:574b11–16), which encapsulates appropriately the fundamental tantric practices producing immediate enlightenment as a result of rituals of consecration and initiation that take place in mandalas under the auspices of gurus, the lion’s share of translated materials, including many putatively tantric texts, continue the already complex mainstream Chinese Mahāyāna interpretations of this important doctrinal concept, particularly the concepts of universality (*pingdeng* 平等) and interfusion (*yuanrong* 圓融) promoted in Huayan materials (McBride 2006).

### *Ritual Innovations*

Although state-sponsored Buddhist rituals, such as assemblies or fasts of the eight prohibitions (*baguan zhai* 八關齋) and convocations for the recitation of the *Sūtra on Humane Kings* (*Renwang jing* 仁王經), had been held by Chinese rulers of the Northern and Southern dynasties period in the late fifth and sixth centuries, revised and expanded

translations of ritual texts, such as Amoghavajra's revised translation of the *Sūtra on Humane Kings*, promoted a renewed relationship between the Buddhist church and the state (Matsunaga Yūkei 1966; Orzech 1995, 1998). Although Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779) sponsored the retranslation of this ritual text, there is little conclusive evidence that succeeding Tang rulers sponsored state-protection rituals (Weinstein 1987b, 79). Japanese monk-pilgrims report that monks performed rituals on Mount Wutai in the late Tang period, but the extent to which these rituals were sponsored by the state is unclear.

Innovations in ritual procedures were perhaps more pronounced than the doctrinal innovations introduced in the translated literature. *Dhāraṇī*, and the literature describing procedures for their efficacious use, had been a popular and important part of mainstream Chinese Buddhism for centuries (Stevenson 1986; Ujike 1987; Swanson 2000; Strickmann 2002; McBride 2005; Davidson 2009). Of the many works in the *dhāraṇī* genre that were translated, texts introducing feminine forms of Avalokiteśvara and rituals for the invocation of this powerful deity were probably the most influential. Although the “esoteric” status attributed to these texts and forms of the bodhisattva is debatable, female forms of Avalokiteśvara appear frequently in later art (see Stein 1986; Strickmann 1996, 127–163; Yoritomi 1999b, 19–23).<sup>2</sup> In the early eighth century, although works in the *dhāraṇī* genre continued to be translated, a new genre of *siddhi* (*xidi* 悉地, lit., “success” or, more broadly, “accomplishment” or “attainment,” *chengjiu* 成就) literature appeared that described how to use powerful mantras in various rites of accomplishment, including procedures for empowering deities, fire rituals (*homa*), cleansing articles, taking possession of things, constructing and consecrating mandalas, and so forth (Misaki 1965, 1977; Osabe Kazuo 1966; Strickmann 1983). Some texts of the *siddhi* genre translated later, during the late eighth or ninth centuries, but ascribed to Śubhākarasiṃha or attributed to Amoghavajra, describe detailed rituals for breaking open hell and saving hungry ghosts. Some of these texts were probably composed in China for a Chinese audience because they combine Buddhist doctrines with native Chinese beliefs and promote practices similar to Daoist ritual performances (Matsunaga Yūken 1929; Orzech 1989, 1994; Rambelli 2000).

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<sup>2</sup> See Keyworth, “Avalokiteśvara,” and Sørensen, “Central Divinities in the Esoteric Buddhist Pantheon in China,” in this volume.

*Rapprochement with Daoism and Popular Religion*

A few scholars have emphasized the connections between Buddhist and Daoist rituals in medieval China (Morita 1941; Nasu 1958; Strickmann 1996, 2002); however, the full complexity of these connections has been obscured by the classifications of Buddhist ritual literature. Japanese sectarian scholars have typically classified these materials as either “pure” or “mixed” esoteric literature, depending on when and by whom it was translated; Western scholars have merely exchanged these for “proto-tantric” and tantric to buttress theories of the development of tantric Buddhism in China from “proto-tantric” Buddhist and Daoist strands that eventually were preserved by Daoism in China (Misaki 1967; Takubo 1967). Strickmann posits that anything ritualistic in Buddhism is “proto-Tantra” or “Tantra,” and he favors the view that Buddhists mimicked Daoist ritual creativity (1996, 49; 2002, 188, 229, 260–261). However, the Buddhist literature that scholars label as “proto-Tantra” was never classified as such by Chinese Buddhists. They categorized these instructions on spells, rituals for repentance, healing, protection, pursuit of worldly benefits, and so forth, including certain types of consecrations, as “miscellaneous sūtras.”

The contents of some tantric/esoteric scriptures, such as the *Amoghapāśa sūtra* (*Bukong juansuo tuoluoni zizaiwang zhou jing* 不空罽索陀羅尼自在王呪經, T. 1097), *Yogins Book of All the Yogas* (*Jin'gangfeng louge yiqie yuzhi jing* 金剛峯樓閣一切瑜伽瑜祇經, T. 867), and *Questions of Subāhu* (*Sobohu tongzi qingwen jing* 蘇婆呼童子請問經, T. 895), contain detailed ritual instructions for inducing spirit-possession in children (*āveśa*) and exorcising spirits from children (Strickmann 2002, 204–238). Since spirit-possession and exorcism are usually regarded as the primary domain of shamanism, these texts rightly problematize the term “shamanism” and hint at the complex relationship between Buddhism and the practices of spirit mediums in local or popular religion (See Robson, “Mediums in Esoteric Buddhism,” in this volume.). The existence of such scriptures has caused modern scholars to reconsider the probable linguistic connection between the word “shaman” and the Buddhist term *śramaṇa* (“one who strives”), as well as the characteristics of the archetypal shaman. tantric Buddhist influences and practices may have informed or even transformed the role of the shaman in East Asia. Strickman goes so far as to suggest that tantricism and Daoism influenced all religions in Asia, and he promotes the idea that there is a tantric



substrate instead of a shamanic substrate in Chinese religion, drama, and so forth (2002, 278–281). However, in Buddhist literature non-tantric Buddhist monks had long been encouraged to become specialists in a variety of spells and efficacious procedures (Lamotte 1944–1981, 4: 1809–1838; McBride 2005; Davidson 2009).

Although the connections between Daoism, popular religion, and esoteric/tantric Buddhism are compelling, there is little firm evidence that shamans and practitioners read or knew of these translated Buddhist materials. In the end, more important than the contributions of the esoteric tradition to the doctrinal issues of sutism, the theory of buddha bodies, and dualism, or even rituals for the protection of the state, the most far-reaching influence of translated esoteric scriptures in medieval China was the introduction of ritual practices that invoke various forms of Avalokiteśvara using *dhāraṇī* and mantra. These practices transformed and recombined, and although much of their esoteric character was lost, the mantra and *dhāraṇī* rituals greatly influenced the cult of Guanyin in China in the late imperial period.

28. AFTER AMOGHAVAJRA:  
ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN THE LATE TANG

Charles D. Orzech

*Introduction*

Late Tang esoteric Buddhism, relative to its Japanese offspring, has been neglected.<sup>1</sup> In part this has to do with the sources. In contrast to the rich documentation on Amoghavajra (Bukong jin'gang 不空金剛 704–774),<sup>2</sup> we know little directly about his descendants, and most of the information we do have stems from accounts of Japanese pilgrims. We also have texts and ritual manuals, though their provenance is seldom clear. Furthermore, with a few exceptions, studies have been hampered by agendas originating in Japan rather than in China. These have included taxonomic schemes (*seijun mikkyō* 正純密教/*zōbu mikkyō* 雜部密教, for instance)<sup>3</sup> designed to segregate the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra* (MVS) and the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* (STTS) from the larger mantric and Mahāyāna context for purposes of sectarian legitimization.<sup>4</sup> The most obvious of these agendas—the “holy grail” of Mikkyō scholarship concerning China—has been repeated attempts to locate the origin of Japan’s “dual mandala” tradition either in the work of Amoghavajra or Huiguo 惠果 (746–806), his disciple and the teacher of Kūkai 空海 (779–835).<sup>5</sup> Such

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<sup>1</sup> Among the few studies with detailed treatments of the late Tang are Ōmura 1918; Osabe 1971b, 1982; Yoritomi 1979; and Misaki 1988. Chen 2009, 2010 brings together the relevant material in English and breaks significant new ground.

<sup>2</sup> See Lenhart, “Amoghavajra,” in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> The terms do not appear as paired doctrinal or textual classifiers in the Chinese canon and may be as late as the Edo period. For an analysis see Abé 1999.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the two scriptures see Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra (651–780),” in this volume.

<sup>5</sup> For Kūkai see Tinsley, “Kūkai and the Development of Shingon Buddhism,” in this volume. Perhaps no better illustration of the problem of seeking the dual mandala in China are evaluations of the finds in the crypt of the pagoda that collapsed at the Famen temple in 1987. As reported in a beautifully illustrated volume by Wu and Han 1998, 278, the crypt, sealed in 874 and containing four versions of the famous relic of the Buddha’s finger bone, was adorned with numerous esoteric artifacts.

“pre-interpretative decisions” have resulted in a relatively paucity of in-depth studies of ninth-century “Tangmi” 唐密.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Genealogy of Yoga*

The genealogical claims of the Yoga (*yuqie* 瑜伽) grounded in the *STTS* and taught by Vajrabodhi (Jin’gang zhi 金剛智 671–741)<sup>7</sup> and Amoghavajra are distinct from typical Buddhist claims of a teaching propounded by Śākyamuni transcribed in texts and transmitted through generations of disciples. Indeed, through the ritual of *abhiṣeka* (*guanding* 灌頂) disciples directly recapitulate initiation and instruction by Mahāvairocana Buddha and Vajrasattva, effectively rewriting the genealogy of Buddhism.<sup>8</sup> The mythic counterpart to this ritual genealogy is the tale of a devout disciple who long ago journeyed to an “iron *stūpa*” (*tieta* 鐵塔) where he performed *homa* 護摩 (fire oblation) and circumambulation, and, when the *stūpa* miraculously opened, he entered. Once inside, the disciple was instructed and he exited with the *STTS* (Orzech 1995, 314–17; 1998, 149–50).<sup>9</sup> The story was recounted variously by Amoghavajra and his disciples, Kūkai, and in numerous retellings thereafter. Amoghavajra’s version of the story is supposedly based on the oral teaching of his master, Vajrabodhi. Each disciple undergoing *abhiṣeka* and instruction ritually recapitulates this event.

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The authors argue that an “offering” bodhisattva on a pedestal was proof of the Tang provenance of the dual mandala configuration. Other scholars hotly contested this, and on examination it is apparent that the claim is a bit of a stretch. See, for instance, Eugene Y. Wang 2005. This is not to say that elements from both the *MVS* and *STTS* cycles are not present; indeed, they are. But their presence is no more than proof that late Tang Buddhism—especially imperially sponsored Buddhism—incorporated esoteric elements drawn from both ritual cycles, just as did that of Amoghavajra, Huiguo, and Faquan. The assumption of a “dual mandala” à la certain strands of the Shingon tradition is an unnecessary imposition on the data and obscures the range of developments in the ninth century.

<sup>6</sup> Smith 1988, 66.

<sup>7</sup> See Orzech, “Vajrabodhi,” in this volume.

<sup>8</sup> See the discussion of this distinction in Abé 1999, 127–49.

<sup>9</sup> The account is found in “Instructions on the Gate to the Teaching of the Secret Heart of the Great Yoga of the Scripture of the Diamond Crown” (*Jin’gangding jing da yuqie bimi shin di famen yigui*), T. 1798.39:808a19–b28.

Shortly after his death, Amoghavajra's lay disciples Yan Ying 嚴郢<sup>10</sup> and Zhao Qian 趙遷<sup>11</sup> recounted the transmission of the *STTS* in a lineage encompassing Mahāvairocana, Vajrasattva, Nāgārjuna, Nāgābodhi, and Vajrabodhi (Orzech 2006).<sup>12</sup> Lu Xiang 呂向, a lay disciple of Vajrabodhi, had already recounted a similar though somewhat truncated lineage (*T.* 2157.55:875b9–14).<sup>13</sup> Zhao Qian's account is as follows:

Long ago Bhagavān Vairocana bestowed the mantras, methods, and *mudrās* of the *Jin'gangding yuqie bimi jiaowang* upon Vajrapāṇi Bodhisattva. These were handed down for nearly a thousand years and were transmitted to Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva. After a further several hundred years Nāgārjuna transmitted them to Nāgābodhi Ācārya. After a further several hundred years Nāgābodhi transmitted them to Vajrabodhi Ācārya, and Vajrabodhi transmitted them to the present great teacher (Amoghavajra). Consequently, from the source flows a single stream (*sui yuan yiliu pai* 雖源一流派) perhaps comprised of only some ten persons and that is it! As if a single house 家, the legitimate disciples continued in succession with my master as the sixth to receive it. (*T.* 2056.50:292b16–21)

The language of Zhao Qian's lineage is striking in its similarity to other lineage formations in the late Tang, particularly those being created by proponents of Chan (Orzech 2006, 53).<sup>14</sup> But it is also notable for

<sup>10</sup> Yan Ying was very well connected. At the time of Amoghavajra's death he held the post of Censor General (*yushi daifu* 御史大夫). He is mentioned in the *Xin Tang shu*, "Yan Ying zhuan," (Liezhuan 70) 145.17a–19b.

<sup>11</sup> Zhao Qian mentions in his *Xingzhuang* that he was Amoghavajra's disciple for nine years (*T.* 2056.50:294c4) and that he was a literary advisor to the emperor (Hanlin daizhao 翰林待詔). Amoghavajra mentions him as an assistant in translation work in his testamentary epistle (*T.* 2120.52:844b24).

<sup>12</sup> Yan Ying's account is at *T.* 2120.52:860b4–10. Zhao Qian's account is at *T.* 2056.50:292b20–25.

<sup>13</sup> Another version of this lineage was written by Kūkai 空海, the Japanese pilgrim-monk regarded as the founder of the Shingon school 真言宗 (see Tinsley, "Kūkai," in this volume). This account claims to be based on the oral transmission of Kūkai's master, Huiguo 惠果, who was a disciple of Amoghavajra. Kūkai's account adds further details, including the notion that Nāgārjuna sought out the iron stūpa because of the "heresies" that had arisen during the age of the decline of the Dharma. For a discussion and translation of Kūkai's account see Abé 1999, 223–26.

<sup>14</sup> Yan Ying's stele biography, dated 781, proclaims in language commonly associated with Chan that "from Vairocana to the monk [Amoghavajra] are a total of six 'petals'" (*fan liuye yi* 凡六葉矣, *T.* 2120.52:860b10), and declares that Huilang succeeded his master and "attained the decree to transmit the lamp" (*de chuan deng zhi zhi* 得傳燈之旨, 860b21).

its brevity and exclusivity. Other lineages were concerned to fill in the gaps in transmission back to Śākyamuni, and were therefore necessarily long. In this case, the accessibility of the teaching through initiation by an *ācārya* who plays the role of Mahāvairocana appears to have circumvented such pseudohistorical concerns.<sup>15</sup>

### *Amoghavajra's Descendants*

Japanese scholars have long argued that the teachings of the “three great *ācāryas*” (*san dashi* 三大師) were distinctive.<sup>16</sup> Some have seized on their overt soteriological dimensions in drawing a contrast with the more “worldly” aims of other esoteric teachings, but this does not hold up.<sup>17</sup> Further, the assumptions and needs of Shingon and Tendai have led to an overstatement of the influence of Śubhākarasiṃha (Shanwuwei 善無畏 637–735),<sup>18</sup> Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra during Xuanzong's 玄宗 reign (685–756). It is not the soteriology that is decisive but rather the sociology, technology, and access to knowledge.

First, access to advanced ritual technology was restricted through closely controlled *abhiseka* and years or decades of intensive training. Second, systems connected with the *MVS* and the *STTS* came to dominate the scene. Third, and more significantly, Amoghavajra achieved an unparalleled level of institutional patronage under Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756–762) and Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779). This, coupled with Amoghavajra's strong emphasis on the *STTS*, produced conditions that allowed for the development of something approaching an “orthodoxy” which commanded tremendous prestige, both within China and beyond.<sup>19</sup> Institutional support did not altogether wither after Daizong's death—

<sup>15</sup> In an interesting twist, the two types of genealogy are combined in a text attributed to Amoghavajra, the *Jin'gangjun jing jin'gangding yiqie rulai shenmiao bimi jin'gangjie dasanmeiye xiuxing sishierzhong tanfa jing zuoyong weiyi faze*, *Dapiluzhe'nafu jin'gang xindi famen mifa jietanfa yize* 金剛峻經金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二種壇法經作用威儀法則大毘盧遮那佛金剛心地法門 秘法戒壇法儀則 found in Dunhuang (P. 3913, 2791, S. 5981, etc.). In this instance, each member of the long line of Chan patriarchs ascends to the palace of Mahāvairocana to receive *abhiseka*. Tanaka 1983, 135–66, provides a discussion and critical edition. For an English summary, see Tanaka 1981.

<sup>16</sup> The classic version of this argument was made in 1933 by Togano 1982 reprint, esp. 16–27.

<sup>17</sup> For an example of a critique see Strickmann 1996, 13, 96, 127–33.

<sup>18</sup> See Pinte, “Śubhākarasiṃha,” in this volume.

<sup>19</sup> This is often designated Zhenyan 真言, but see the discussion in Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang,” in this volume.

the Qinglong temple, the Xingshan temple, and others drew disciples from all over East Asia in the following century—and a good deal of what we know about late Tang esoteric Buddhism has been gleaned from the reports and inventories of pilgrims from Japan who were drawn to these institutions.<sup>20</sup>

Amoghavajra privileged the teachings of the *STTS*, as he makes this clear in his will and elsewhere. But most disciples were initiated into other esoteric cycles, predominantly but not exclusively those associated with the *MVS*. Although some scholars have tried to trace the “dual mandala” system propounded by Kūkai to Amoghavajra, his own pronouncements make that very unlikely (Orzech 2006, 48–50). Accounts by Amoghavajra’s disciples do not contradict the supremacy of the *STTS*, but they do underline Amoghavajra’s own remarks of a more ecumenical sort. For instance, Zhao Qian, a lay disciple and the author of Amoghavajra’s “Account of Conduct,” relates the story of Vajrabodhi’s cognition of Amoghavajra’s worthiness in a dream, after he had *denied* Amoghavajra’s request for the Dharma. On awakening, he sent for Amoghavajra, who was preparing to depart for India to find a teacher. The patriarch (*zushi* 祖師) was delighted:

“I will completely transmit my Dharma treasury to you.” Then, on another morning on his behalf he transmitted to Amoghavajra the methods of the Five Families, the *abhiṣeka*, the *homa*—the teachings an *ācārya* should know. [He also transmitted] the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* and the manuals of *Susiddhi*, all of the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa* divisions, and all of the mantra practices. (*T.* 2056.50:292c8–11)

Thus, one tradition dominates, but not exclusively. As far as can be ascertained, the *STTS* is the dominant structural template in the teaching of Amoghavajra’s disciple Huiguo as well.<sup>21</sup> This is apparent from examination of the “Womb” or Garbhakośa manuals in the Huiguo-Kūkai lineage. Despite their Garbhakośa trappings, the underlying structure of these manuals is based on *mudrā*-mantra pairs originating

<sup>20</sup> It has often been asserted that patronage for esoteric masters and rites was curtailed after the death of Emperor Daizong in 779. This is not correct, and there is evidence of considerable patronage and imperially sponsored *abhiṣeka* into the late ninth century. See the discussion below.

<sup>21</sup> We must exercise caution in assigning this preference any semblance of “orthodoxy.” Despite the remarkable patronage and institutional imprimatur of Daizong and despite the preference of the Huiguo-Kūkai lineage, teachings associated with the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, the *Susiddhikara*, and other ritual cycles were widespread and took on new dimensions in the decades following Amoghavajra’s death.

in the *STTS* cycle.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the mixing of elements from both transmissions appears to be a characteristic of ninth-century practice.

Despite never again having quite the vast patronage and prestige enjoyed under Emperor Daizong (r. 762–779), there is evidence that the teachings and practices connected with the *MVS* and the *STTS* and accessed by *abhiṣeka* continued to be part of a flourishing Chinese Buddhist world throughout the ninth century.<sup>23</sup> Evidence in a variety of sources, including documents from Chinese masters, diaries and inventories of Japanese pilgrims, and comments made by Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001)<sup>24</sup> in the early Song present a picture of continuing transmission and articulation of the “Yoga” and *STTS*-dominated practice, practices connected with the *MVS*, and practices drawing on the transmissions stemming from Śubhākarasiṃha and the *Susiddhikāramahātantra-saddhanopāyikā-ṣaṭpāla* (*Suxidi jieluo jing* 蘇悉地揭羅經, T. 893).<sup>25</sup>

Three major Chinese sources concerning ninth-century lineages that supplement Japanese records are Haiyun’s (fl. 822–874) *Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi fufa ji* 兩部大法相承師資付法記 (T. 2081) composed in 834; Zaoxuan’s 造玄 (?–865+) *Tai Jin liangjie xuemai* 胎金兩界血脈 (X. 1074) of 865; and an anonymous text, the *Jin Tai liangjie shi[zi] xiangcheng* 金胎兩界師[資]相承 (X. 1073).<sup>26</sup> Shingon and

<sup>22</sup> See Hunter 2001.

<sup>23</sup> For Daizong see Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang,” in this volume.

<sup>24</sup> He comments in his *Lives of Eminent Monks Composed in the Song* (*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳): “Among those who transmitted the Wheel of Instruction and Command (*jiaoling lun* 教令輪) in China, Vajrabodhi is regarded as the first patriarch, Amoghavajra the second, and Huilang 慧朗 the third. From him on the succession of patriarchs (*zongcheng* 宗承) is [well] known. Thereafter the lineage divided into many sects (*chi fen paibie* 岐分派別) and [they] all claim to teach the Great Teaching of Yoga (*yuqie dajiao* 瑜伽大教)” (T. 2061: 50.714a15–18).

<sup>25</sup> The textual record of esoteric Buddhism in the provinces is sparse, though some connections with Sichuan are recorded. An early follower of Amoghavajra’s Yoga and a contemporary of Huiguo was Weishang 惟上. He journeyed to Chang’an to receive the teaching, and returned to Chengdu to propagate it. So, too, Hongzhao 洪照 made a similar journey, traveling to Wutaishan and to the Xingshan temple in Chang’an in the first third of the ninth century before returning to Sichuan to propagate esoteric practices. See Huang 2008. Some Japanese pilgrims also report provincial activity. Thus, Saichō 最澄 tells of his esoteric initiation in Yuezhou 越府 in the *Esshu rokū* 傳教大師將來越州錄, T. 2160.55:1059c10–15, in which Shunxiao 順曉 led him “into the *abhiṣeka* mandala of the Five Families” (T. 2160.55:1059c13). Chen 2010, 19–41, discusses the difficulties concerning the content of this initiation and Saichō’s conflicting accounts of it.

<sup>26</sup> For a critical discussion of these three texts see Chen 2010, 83–96. In the *Taishō* canon the anonymous text is incorrectly attributed to Haiyun.

Tendai scholars and clerics have been assiduous in tracing the lineages important to them throughout the ninth century, and name no fewer than fifty individuals in the three generations between Huiguo and Faquan 法全 (fl. 800–870).<sup>27</sup> Further, monks from South Asia continued to come to China, though the monk Prajña (Bore 般若 744–ca. 810) would be the last imperially sponsored translator of note before the resumption of the large-scale translation projects of the Northern Song.<sup>28</sup>

In the following discussion I first examine some key figures in Amoghavajra's lineage as a way of giving the reader a sense of what we know of these monks. I then examine the record of foreign monks propagating esoteric teachings and practices in the ninth century.<sup>29</sup> Finally, I turn to the textual record for what it can tell us of the wider impact of esoteric Buddhism in the late Tang.

### Huilang 慧朗 (?–781)

Our most substantive information concerns lineages involving Amoghavajra's prominent disciples Huilang and Huiguo. Yuanzhao's 照圓 *Biaozhi ji*,<sup>30</sup> compiled sometime between 781 and his death in 800, contains correspondence not only between Amoghavajra, court officials, and the emperor on a wide variety of topics, but also between Amoghavajra's disciples, the emperor, and other court figures (Orlando 1981; Orzech 1998). There are ten letters and edicts to or from Huilang in Yuanzhao's collection. We read there that Huilang succeeded Amoghavajra as master of *abhiṣeka* and was appointed abbot (*shangzuo* 上座) of the Xingshan monastery. (T. 2120.50:850c12–15; 853c20–854a1) Despite Yen Ying's 781 description of him as “seventh patriarch,” little more is heard of Huilang (T. 2120.50:860b20–21).<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Lineage charts are available in the *Mikkyo daijiten* 6: 1–3. The charts are organized according to the textual and ritual transmissions of the *STTS* and the *MVS*. A comprehensive and critical discussion of all known lineage holders is available in Chen 2010, 111–165.

<sup>28</sup> See Copp, “Prajña,” in this volume.

<sup>29</sup> I will not replicate here extensive coverage of all of the known lineage-holders in the ninth century, as this information is available elsewhere. Rather, I look briefly at a few to indicate what we do and do not know.

<sup>30</sup> *Daizong chao zeng sikong dabianzheng guangzhi sanzang heshang biaozhi ji* 宗代集制表上和藏三智廣正辨大空司贈朝, T. 2120.

<sup>31</sup> Huilang did not completely disappear, as we do have record of some of his spiritual heirs, including an “Indian *ācārya*” (Tianzhu acheli 天竺阿闍梨), Demei 德美, Huijin 惠謹, and the layman Chao Mei 超梅 (alt. 趙玖). See Haiyun, T. 2081.51:784a17.



*Huiguo* 惠果 (746–806)

There is a good deal more data on Huiguo than on Huilang, in part due to his many spiritual descendants and the prominence of Japanese pilgrims among them. Some correspondence by Huiguo is extant in Yuanzhao's *Biaozhi ji*.<sup>32</sup> Kūkai's memorial *pei* to his master, *Huiguo heshang bei* 惠果和向碑,<sup>33</sup> is extant, and a second account, the *Huiguo asheli xingzhuang* 惠果阿闍梨行狀 by Huiguo's lay disciple Wu Yin 吳殷, is dated to 806.<sup>34</sup> An anonymous "Account of Conduct," *Da Tang Qinglongsi san chao gongfeng dade xingzhuang* 大唐青龍寺三朝供奉大德行狀 (T. 2057.50:294c–296a) is dated to 826 (around the time Huiguo's remains were re-interred in a new *stūpa*).<sup>35</sup>

Huiguo entered the Qinglong monastery 青龍寺 at the age of nine and was placed under the supervision of Amoghavajra's disciple Tanzhen 曇貞.<sup>36</sup> He later studied directly under Amoghavajra and was first given *abhiṣeka* and entered the mandala in association with Dharmacakra Bodhisattva (*falun pusa* 法輪菩薩) at nineteen (T. 2057.50:294c24–25), and took full ordination at twenty (295a01).<sup>37</sup> At age twenty-two he received transmission of the *MVS*, the *Susiddhikara*, and "the methods of all the worthies of the Yoga" (*zhu zun yuqie deng fa* 諸尊瑜伽等法) from Śubhākarasiṃha's disciple Hyōnch'o 玄超 of the Baoshou monastery in 767 (295a10–11).<sup>38</sup> According to the "Account of Conduct," Amoghavajra initiated Huiguo into the *STTS* cycle and personally instructed him concerning the secret *mudrās* of all the Yoga deities (0295a13), though no date is given. By twenty-five he was serving in the palace chapel.

Huiguo received substantial patronage from Daizong after Amoghavajra's death in 774; in 776 the emperor established the Eastern Pagoda

<sup>32</sup> There are two letters available, T. 2120.52:844b13–14, 852b22–c8, and 875b25–c23.

<sup>33</sup> It is found in the *Henjō kongō hakki seireishū* 遍照金剛癸揮性靈集 2; KZ (1923) 3: 2.420–425.

<sup>34</sup> Preserved in the *Himitsu mandarakyō fuhōden*, KZ 1: 42–45.

<sup>35</sup> Huiguo is treated in Chen 2010, 114–18; and Abé 1999, 120–27 *passim*.

<sup>36</sup> Tanzhen appears several times in the *Biaozhiji*, including in Amoghavajra's will, and in individual correspondence. See T. 2120.52:847b12–24, 854a2–15, 855b4–18. Chen 2010, 148–52, treats Tanzhen.

<sup>37</sup> There are discrepancies in the dating of some of these events in the three main sources. For a brief discussion see Lü 1995, 294.

<sup>38</sup> Here and below my locution "received the *MVS*" (or the *STTS*, etc.) indicates initiation into the practices connected with the scripture in question. For the famous Sillan monk Hyōnch'o see Chen 2010, 160–61.

Hall (*Dong ta yuan* 東塔院) with an altar for *abhiṣeka* in the Qinglong monastery and appointed Huiguo its abbot (295a20–21). He was summoned to attend the emperor shortly before his death in 779. The new Emperor Dezong continued support for Huiguo, who was summoned for the welcoming to the inner palace of the relic of the Famen temple, and also to the inner chapel in 791 to pray for the state (295c3–4). During the last decade of the eighth century he is said to have taught some fifty students (295c11) and along with Tanzhen's Jingfo yuan 徑佛院 the Qinglong monastery had become a major center for esoteric Buddhism. Like his predecessors, his ritual services were called for in times of drought (295c12–15). Huiguo died in 806. As was the case with Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, his relics were enshrined in a *stūpa*, though his disciples shifted and re-interred them in a newly constructed *stūpa* twenty years later in 826 (Lü Jianfu 1995, 297).

Most of Huiguo's many disciples were initiated into either the *STTS* or the *MVS*. Only Yiming and Kūkai were instructed in both. A few ritual manuals ascribed to Huiguo circulated in Japan, but they are not attested in Tang sources or the records of Japanese pilgrims (Lü Jianfu 1995, 297).<sup>39</sup> Our more complete knowledge of this line is a result of the reports of Ennin 圓仁 (794–864), Enchin 圓珍 (814–891), and other ninth-century Japanese pilgrims who studied with Huiguo's descendants. A look at three of Huiguo's important descendants illustrates the difficulty faced by researchers of late Tang esoteric lineages.

*Yicao* 義操 (*Aluota'nailitu* 阿囉他捺哩茶, ?–830)

A student of Huiguo, friend of Kūkai,<sup>40</sup> and apparently of non-Chinese origin, Yicao mastered the *MVS*, the *STTS*, and the *Susiddhi*, and also studied and was proficient in Siddham.<sup>41</sup> Following Huiguo, he resided at the Eastern Pagoda court of the Qinglong monastery. Also like his master, he served under several emperors, received the title Guoshi 國師 (National Master), and served in the inner palace chapel. A prominent teacher, Yicao is credited with compiling in 812 the *Jintai jin'gang*

<sup>39</sup> These include *Dari rulai jian yin* 大日如來劍印, T. 864A; *Shiba chi yin* 十八契印, T. 900.

<sup>40</sup> The poem “Betsu Seiryūji Gisō ajari shi” 別青龍寺義操阿闍梨詩 was given by Kūkai before he returned to Japan. *Shūi zashū*, KZ 3: 615.

<sup>41</sup> This is the Brāhmī-derived script used throughout East Asia to transcribe mantras.

*minghao* 胎藏金剛名號, T. 864B.<sup>42</sup> A brief Sanskrit text comprising a *dhāraṇī* to the thousand-armed Kuṇḍali is also credited to him (*Qian bei Juntuli fanzi zhen* 千臂軍荼利梵字真, T. 1213). Another text, the *fang tuoluoni zang zhong jin'gang qi amiliduojunjali fa* 西方陀羅尼藏中金剛旗阿蜜哩多軍吒哩法 (T. 1212) is sometimes attributed to him on the basis of a note stating that Haiyun had transcribed it from his master (i.e., Yicao).

*Haiyun* 海雲 (fl. 822–874)

A disciple of Yicao, Haiyun received from him the *STTS*, the *MVS*, and the *Susiddhi*. Little is known about him independently from his works, except that he resided at the Jingzhu 淨土寺 and Qinglong monasteries and he may be the monk whose name was inscribed on a staff recovered from the crypt of the Famen pagoda (Wu and Han 1998, 428–29). In 834 he produced two genealogical works. The first, “Outline Record of the Order by which *Jin'gangjie dajiaowang jing* [*STTS*] was Transmitted between Masters and Disciples” (*Lüexu jin'gangjie da jiaowang jing shizi xiangcheng fufa cidì ji* 略敘金剛界大教王經師資相承付法次第記) was written at the Jingzhu monastery. Two months later he produced “Outline Record the Order by which the Great Teaching of *Da Piluzhe'na chengfo shenbian jiachi jing* [*MVS*] was Transmitted between Masters and Disciples” (*Luexu chuan Da Piluzhe'na chengfo shenbian jiachi jing dajiao xiangcheng fufa cidì ji* 略敘傳大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經大教相承付法次第記).

The two works circulated independently for a time and then jointly under the title “A Record of Master-to-Disciple Dharma Transmissions of the Major Rituals of the Two Divisions” (*Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi fufa ji* 兩部大法相承師資付法記, T. 51.2081). The first text begins with a narration of ten generations transmitting the teachings of the *STTS* beginning with *Mahāvairocana*. It then presents an overview of the *STTS* and its transmission and translations in China. The second text presents an overview of the *MVS* and its transmission and translation in China, and then recounts eight generations of lineage-holders. Given the importance of the rhetoric of the “Two Divisions” (*liangbu* 兩部) for Japanese Shingon, and of the rhetoric of “Three Divisions” (*sanbu* 三部), which also appears here, for Tendai, and the

<sup>42</sup> The text is a simple listing of divinities in the Garbha Mandala and their “vajra” designations. Three Japanese catalogues record it, those of Eun, Engyō, and Annen.

fact that the texts seem to have had little circulation in China, one cannot but harbor a suspicion that these texts might have a Japanese provenance.<sup>43</sup> Nonetheless, the scholarly community has long accepted their authenticity.<sup>44</sup>

Haiyun's text, the Haiyun/Yicao text mentioned above (T. 1212), and a text attributed to Zhihuilun 智慧輪 (the *Prajñacakra*, T. 1246), appear to be the earliest canonical uses of the term "Two Divisions."<sup>45</sup> If the provenance is indeed Chinese, it indicates either a Chinese provenance for the idea, or the influence of Shingon (and Tendai) on the Chinese scene in the mid-ninth century.<sup>46</sup>

### *Faquan* 法全 (fl. 800–870)

Active in the mid-ninth century, Faquan is known to have received initiation into the *MVS* and *Susiddhi* from Farun 法潤 (768–840?) and into the *STTS* from Yicao.<sup>47</sup> He resided first at the Xuanfa monastery 玄法寺, where he was abbot, then at the Qinglong monastery. Ennin received initiations from him in 840, covering the *MVS* and various individual divinities.<sup>48</sup> The ritual manual involved—the "*Garbhakośa* Great *Kalpa*"—is usually identified as the "Xuanfa monastery *kalpa*" 玄法儀軌.<sup>49</sup> Sometime in the late 840s or early 850s, Faquan moved to the Qinglong monastery where, in 855, Enchin studied with him. Ten years later, near the end of his journey, Shūei 宗叡 (809–884) also studied with him. During this time Faquan produced another *Garbhakośa*

<sup>43</sup> The importance of a tripartite division, including the *Susiddhikara* as a synthesizing link between the *STTS* and the *MVS*, is a key element of Tendai teaching. According to Haiyun's text, "the *Susiddhi*, taken together with the Two Divisions of the Great Teaching which the Tripiṭaka Śubhākarasimha translated previously, constitutes the Great Teaching of Three Divisions" 三藏善無畏所譯兼前二部大教及蘇悉地共成三部大教, T. 2081 51.786c14.

<sup>44</sup> The text is attested in several Japanese catalogues, both separately and in joint form. Jinhua Chen has recently revisited this issue and strongly concludes that the texts are authentic. I would not, however, rule out the joint title as a Japanese innovation, or even other modifications. See Chen 2010, 94–95.

<sup>45</sup> T. 1246 is taken up in the discussion of Zhihuilun below.

<sup>46</sup> While I know of no evidence for the second possibility, it is not out of the question.

<sup>47</sup> This according to Haiyun's *Liangbu da fa*, T. 2081 51.784b4–10, 787a8–10.

<sup>48</sup> See Chen 2010, 134. The original is in *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 入唐求法巡礼行記, BZ (1912–1922) 72: 3.122a16–17, 122b22–c6.

<sup>49</sup> T. 852A. The full title is *Da Piluzhe'na chengfo shenbian jiachi jing lianhua tai-zang bei sheng mantuluo guang da chengjiu yigui gongyang fangbian hui* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經蓮華胎藏悲生曼荼羅廣大成就儀軌供養方便會。

manual, apparently a revision of the first, usually called the “Qinglong monastery *kalpa*” 青龍儀軌<sup>50</sup> This manual gives detailed instructions concerning ritual procedure and iconography.<sup>51</sup>

Recent studies of Faquan’s *Garbhakośa* manuals shows the structural dominance of the *MVS* but the selective use of certain *mudrā*-mantra pairs from the *STTS*, reaffirming the tendency to mix elements from the *STTS* and the *MVS* in the ninth century.<sup>52</sup> Also attributed to him is the *Jianli mantuluo humo yigui* 建立曼荼羅護摩儀軌, T. 912, a *homa* text mostly in *gāthā* form invoking Acala or Trailokyavijaya for the ridding of various obstacles; and the *Nianduli hao nian ge gong-yang hu shi batian fa* 年度里毫年個供養護世八天法, T. 1295, on the worship of protective *devas*, the nine planets, the lunar lodges, etc.

### Susiddhi: An Alternative Current?

Japanese scholars who have studied the development of lineages from Huiguo onward point to a mixing of ritual elements from the *MVS* and the *STTS* in ritual manuals as a signal characteristic of late eighth- and ninth-century transmissions, and that traditional Chinese religious ideologies and practices strongly informed the esoteric practice of the late Tang.<sup>53</sup> For instance, Osabe Kazuo has argued that a major alternative to the authorized transmission of the *MVS* cycle through Huiguo/Faquan is the “heterodox” current related to the *Susiddhikara*.<sup>54</sup> Four late Tang texts—three ascribed (spuriously) to Śubhākarasimha, one anonymous—are illustrative of the outlines of this current: the *Sanzhong xidi po diyu zhuan yezhang chu sanjie bimi tuoluoni fa* 三種悉地破地獄轉業障出三界祕密陀羅尼法 (T. 905), the *Foding zunshengxin podiyu zhuan yezhang chusanjie bimi san shen foguo san xidi chenyao yigui* 佛頂尊勝心破地獄轉業障出三界祕密三身佛果三種悉地真言儀軌 (T. 906), the *Foding zunshengxin podiyu zhuan yezhang chusanjie bimi tuoluoni* 佛頂尊勝心破地獄轉業障出三界祕密陀羅尼 (T. 907), and the *Qingjing fashen Piluzhe’na xindi fa men chengjiu*

<sup>50</sup> T. 853. The full title is *Dabilushena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing lianhua taizang puti chuangbiao zhi putong zhenyanzang guang da chengjiu yuqie* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經蓮華胎藏菩提幢標幟普通真言藏廣大成就瑜伽。

<sup>51</sup> See Hunter 2001, 8–11.

<sup>52</sup> See Hunter 2001, 19–22.

<sup>53</sup> See for example Ōmura 1918, 432–36; Osabe 1971b, 209–52; Matsunaga 1976; Misaki 1988, 499–508.

<sup>54</sup> Osabe 1971b, 209; 1982, 131.

*yiqietuoluoni sanzong xidi* 清淨法身毘盧遮那心地法門成就一切陀羅尼三種悉地 (T. 899).<sup>55</sup>

All four texts proclaim a method of “three types of *siddhi*” and are structured around the three “families” of the *MVS* and the *Susiddhikara*, i.e., Buddha, Lotus, and Vajra. All draw upon and echo the Fodingzun sheng fa 佛頂尊勝法 and all draw elaborate classificatory homologies between three levels of the body, three types of *siddhi*, the three families, and three levels of accomplishment within each *siddhi*. All are concerned with “busting karmic obstructions” that will lead to rebirth in hell, and all present *dhāraṇī* practices with rudimentary ritual instructions. They also present elaborate fivefold homologies based on distinctly Sinitic taxonomies surrounding the “five activities” and the “five viscera.” Further, T. 905, 906, and 907 also provide the textual basis for a correlation between the three *siddhis* and three sets of five-syllable mantras that play a key role in Japanese Tendai esoteric Buddhism.<sup>56</sup>

This received picture, however, has been challenged by recent research. Chen Jinhua has presented considerable evidence that all three “Podiyu” 破地獄 texts are Japanese fabrications written to legitimate the mantra practice used in Saichō’s lineage in the ninth century.<sup>57</sup> On hindsight, one can see several warning signs, including a lack of any trace of such texts in Chinese catalogues or in the Dunhuang documents. While it is clear that interest in the *Susiddhi* was growing in the ninth century, and that the “three *siddhis*” taxonomy is found in the *Susiddhikara*, the production of texts based on Sinitic taxonomies is not the sole province of the Chinese.<sup>58</sup> Chen’s work opens the possibility that other works attested first in Japanese pilgrim’s inventories may have a Japanese rather than a Chinese provenance.

### *Other Masters in the Late Tang*

Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra were not the last monks to come to the Tang to propagate esoteric teachings and practices. Prajña Bore 般若

<sup>55</sup> Also known by the alternative title *Piluzhe’nafo biexing jing* 毘盧遮那佛別行經.

<sup>56</sup> These are *A-ra-pa-ca-na*, *A-vi-ra-hūm-kham*, and *A-vaṃ-ram-ham-kham*. The inclusion of Sinitic taxonomic categories and concerns has prompted Osabe 1971b, 209, and others to posit a “heterodox” late Tang esoteric current.

<sup>57</sup> First put forward in Chen 1998.

<sup>58</sup> See Hunter 2004, 65, 84-93; *Suxidi jieluo jing* 蘇悉地揭羅經, T. 893 18.685b1ff; and Giebel 2001, 191-94.

(alt. Bolare 般刺若, 744–ca. 810) arrived in 781 and received substantial patronage from Dezong, and worked closely with Amoghavajra's disciple, Yuanzhao. He is responsible for several important translations, including the massive *Gaṇḍavyūha sūtra*, the *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經 (T. 293), and the *Shouhu guojiezhu tuoluoni jing* 守護國界主陀羅尼經 (T. 997) on which he worked closely with Muniśrī (Munishili 牟尼室利).<sup>59</sup> He reputedly helped Kūkai with his Sanskrit studies and various sources recount his training in esoteric matters.<sup>60</sup>

In the course of the ninth century several other Indian monks came to the Tang and settled, taught, and translated texts. During the forty-year period from 806–846, Shi Manyue 釋滿月, Bodhivajra (Putijin'gang 菩提金剛), Vajrasiddhi (Jin'gangxidi 金剛悉地), and Bodhiṛṣi (Putixian 菩提仙) all propagated esoteric texts and practices.<sup>61</sup> According to Zanning's *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography, Manyue was proficient in the "Yoga" and Siddham and had retranslated a "*Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahasūtra*" in four fascicles (T. 2061 50.722c–723a).<sup>62</sup> Enchin reports that another Indian monk, Boredaluo 般若怛羅 (Prajñatāra?), who resided at the Kaiyuan monastery 開元寺 in Fuzhou 福州, taught him Siddham and various esoteric transmissions in the early 850s.<sup>63</sup>

The most notable "foreign" monk active in the thirty-five years following the Huichang persecution of Buddhism (842–845) was Zhihuilun 智慧輪 (Prajñacakra ?–875/876).<sup>64</sup> Zanning's *Song gaoseng zhuan* contains a brief biography and both Ennin and Shūei studied with him.<sup>65</sup> Enchin studied with him in 855 or early 856, and in 861 Zhihuilun sent Enchin eight new scriptures. A letter to Zhihuilun written

<sup>59</sup> For Muniśrī see Lü 1995, 322–23.

<sup>60</sup> See Copp, "Prajña," in this volume; and Lü 1995, 319–22. The best study of Prajña remains that of Yoritomi 1979, 1–109; see 54–62 for his treatment of the *Shouhu jing*.

<sup>61</sup> See Lü 1995, 322–24.

<sup>62</sup> This would appear to be a retranslation of the work translated by Atikūṭa, T. 901. However, no trace of the text can be found. See Lü 1995, 323.

<sup>63</sup> Enchin 圓珍 (814–891), *Nihon biku Enchin nittō guhō mokuroku* 日本比丘圓珍入唐求法目錄, T. 2172.55:1101c7–13; *Chishō daishi shōrai mokuroku* 智證大師請來目錄, T. 2173.55:1107b26–28.

<sup>64</sup> Also rendered as Borezhejieluo 般若斫羯囉 and Borejejieluo 般若惹羯囉.

<sup>65</sup> T. 2061.50:723a5–12. Enchin mentions a *Da bianjue fashi shuzan* 大遍覺法師書贊 in one fascicle in the *Nihon biku Enchin nittō guhō mokuroku*, T. 2172.55:1101b29. Lü 1995, 324–27, has a discussion of him.

by Enchin in 882 provides further biographical information.<sup>66</sup> According to Zanning, he was from the “Western Regions” and appears to have resided at the Xingshan monastery from the 850s through the 870s. He held official position as “Registrar of the Sangha for the Left Street of the Capital,” received the title Guoshi under Xizong 僖宗 (r. 874–889) and was granted the title Bianjue dashi 遍覺大師. Zanning says he practiced the method of the Mahāmaṇḍala. It is notable that he fabricated a number of ornate offerings, gold and silver boxes, an *arghya* ewer, etc., which were found in the crypt of the Famen pagoda when it was excavated in 1987.<sup>67</sup> There he is described as an “Ācārya [who gives] consecration into the Great Teaching.”

Jinhua Chen has uncovered another source for Zhihuilun. An inscription by Zhang Tong 張同 (?–877+) and Cui Hou 崔厚 (?–877+) is dedicated to the “Great Master Puzhao of the Tang Xingshan monastery.”<sup>68</sup> According to the inscription, Zhihuilun was from Chang’an, had the Chinese surname Ding 丁, and resided in the Great Teaching *Abhiṣeka* Cloister, where he specialized in *dhāraṇī* transmitted from the western regions. He was granted the posthumous title Puzhao Dashi, and his *stūpa* was titled Zhanghua. The stele was erected sometime in 877 or early 878.<sup>69</sup> The inventory of the items submitted to be re-interred with the relic in the Famen pagoda list Zhihuilun’s gifts separately and there is strong evidence that he was a key architect of the relic translation and re-internment.<sup>70</sup> Zhihuilun’s translation of the “Heart Sūtra” is still extant (*Boreboluomiduo xin jing* 般若波羅蜜多心經, T. 254) as well as the *Ming fofa genben (bei)* 明佛法根本(碑) (T. 1954).<sup>71</sup> Two ritual manuals are ascribed to him: the first, *Mohe feishiluomonaye tipo heluoshe tuoluoni yigui* 摩訶吠室囉末那野提婆喝囉闍陀羅尼儀軌

<sup>66</sup> The letter, “Jō Chierin sanzō sho” 上智慧輪三藏書, can be found in BZ 72: 218a–219b.

<sup>67</sup> See Han and Wu 1998, 255–56, 432–36.

<sup>68</sup> *Tang Xingshansi Puzhao dashi bei* 唐興善寺普照大師碑. For a discussion see Chen forthcoming, 5. My citations to Chen’s essay correspond to the electronic copy available at <http://philosophy.susu.edu.cn/buddhist/showPaper.asp?id=33>, quoted by permission of the author.

<sup>69</sup> Chen forthcoming, 5.

<sup>70</sup> Chen forthcoming, 8–10.

<sup>71</sup> Shūei mentions another text, the *Zui shangsheng yujia mimi sanmodi xiu benzun xidi jianli mantuluo yigui* 最上乘瑜伽秘密三摩地修本尊悉地建立曼荼羅儀軌, which is known through surviving quotations in another Japanese text, *Dainichi kyō sho en’ō shō* 大日經疏演奧鈔, T. 2216 59: 45a28–c3, 65a14–66b17, 66b18–67b15, 68a7–70a13, 90b9–90c20, 91a9–91b29. See Chen forthcoming, 3.



(T. 1246) concerns Vaiśravaṇa; the second, *Sheng huanxitian shi fa* 聖歡喜天式法 (T. 1275) focuses on Gaṇeśa. I discuss these below.

A few other practitioners appear fleetingly in the historical record. At the end of the Tang a certain Yanmi *ācārya* 演密闍梨 was teaching the “Yoga” in Chengdu. His disciple Shouzhen 守真 followed in his footsteps, bridging the Tang and Five Dynasties periods (Lü 1995, 436). Certainly the best known proponent of the Yoga in the late Tang was Liu Benzun 柳本尊, whose ascetic exploits were later rendered in stone as a centerpiece of the Southern Song grotto at Baodingshan 寶頂山 (Howard 2001; Lü 1995, 437–39; Sørensen 2001, 57–100). However, accounts of Liu date from two centuries after his activities and do not recount a direct lineage link between him and Amoghavajra. There is also some notice of proponents of the “Yoga” active in the Five Dynasties in the tenth century. These include Daoxian 道賢, the Vajra Tripiṭaka 金剛三藏 in Loyang, his disciple Zhitong 志通, and others (Lü 1995, 432–34).

*Penumbra: Esoteric Buddhism’s Wider Impact as Reflected in Late Tang Texts*

The production of an institutionally favored elite under Daizong was controlled and perpetuated through *abhiṣeka* and administered through an infrastructure of government *abhiṣeka* altars and imperially sanctioned translation projects. This was nothing less than an effort to winnow and canonize preexisting streams of ritual practice through the imposition of the new systems represented by the *MVS*, the *STTS*, and the *Susiddhikara*. It is clear that esoteric transmissions based on *abhiṣeka* continued through the ninth century, and Haiyun mentions the yearly construction of government *abhiṣeka* altars.<sup>72</sup> Though they wielded considerable influence, these *ācāryas* accounted for a small number of disciples compared to the number of Chinese Buddhists using and promulgating *dhāraṇī* texts.

Despite lingering patronage and the prestige of the “Yoga,” an important but understudied dimension of late-Tang Buddhism involved the wider circulation of deities and practices the “yoga” helped to popu-

<sup>72</sup> Contrary to commonly repeated comments that government patronage was withdrawn in the ninth century, there is evidence that not only did the government continue to support the *abhiṣeka* altars at the Xingshan and Qinglong monasteries, but also erected temporary altars for *abhiṣeka* at these and other monasteries on a yearly basis. See Haiyun, *Liangbu dafa*, T. 2081 51.785b23–26.

larize. Indeed, these deities and practices were drawn back into the currents of *dhāraṇī* and mantra practice that predated the *MVS* and the *STTS*—concerns with demons, with illness, and with protection of various sorts. When we shift our focus from persons to texts and images preserved and circulated from the late eighth century onward, we come upon a world of considerably more depth and diversity. The body of evidence includes both works now included in the canon and works from Dunhuang and Sichuan, including sūtras, ritual manuals, murals, banners, cave sculpture, and drawings.<sup>73</sup>

A recent survey of esoteric texts from Dunhuang presents a striking picture.<sup>74</sup> While there are some present, texts of the *MVS* and *STTS* cycles are not plentiful, and no version of the *Susiddhikara* has been found. Far more prevalent are *dhāraṇī* texts and ritual manuals first introduced in the early Tang, and texts devoted to individual deities.<sup>75</sup> For instance, many copies of the *Foding zunsheng dhāraṇī*<sup>76</sup> have been found, as have copies of the *Mahāpratisarā dhāraṇī*<sup>77</sup> and the *Amoghapāśa dhāraṇī*.<sup>78</sup> Texts devoted to Avalokiteśvara<sup>79</sup> in his various forms abound, including those on Ekādaśamukha,<sup>80</sup> Sahasrabhuja-sahasranetra,<sup>81</sup> and Cintāmaṇicakra.<sup>82</sup> There are also texts devoted to Bhaiṣajyarāja,<sup>83</sup> Cundī,<sup>84</sup> Mārīcī,<sup>85</sup> Vaiśravaṇa,<sup>86</sup> and Mahāmāyūrī.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>73</sup> For a detailed discussion of esoteric art see Sørensen, “Esoteric Art under the Tang,” in this volume.

<sup>74</sup> Lin and Shen 2000a, 2000b. These volumes cover just the texts held in Beijing, London, and Paris.

<sup>75</sup> For more on these deities see Sørensen, “Central Divinities and the Pantheon,” in this volume.

<sup>76</sup> For example, *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni zhou* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼咒, S. 6113, 5914, 5249, etc. For a study of this important text see Copp 2005.

<sup>77</sup> For example, *Fo shuo suiqiu ji de dazizai tuoluoni shenzhou* 佛說隨求即得大自在陀羅尼神咒, S. 403, P. 3920.

<sup>78</sup> *Bukongjuansou zhou jing* 不空罽索咒經, P. 4534, 3916, etc.

<sup>79</sup> See Keyworth, “Avalokiteśvara,” in this volume.

<sup>80</sup> *Shiyi mian shenzhou xin jing* 十一面神咒心經, P. 3538, S. 3007, etc.

<sup>81</sup> For example, *Qianbei qianyan Guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 千臂千眼觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神咒經 and its variants, S. 3534, S. 231, etc.

<sup>82</sup> For example, *Guanshiyin pusa bimizang ruyulun tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 觀世音菩薩秘密藏如意輪陀羅尼神咒經, Beijing 7467, P. 2799, etc.

<sup>83</sup> For example, *Yaoshi liuliguang rulai benyuan gongde jing* 藥師琉璃光如來本願功德經, S. 135, 1299, etc.

<sup>84</sup> For example, *Qizhudi fomu xin da Zhunti tuoluonin jing* 七助胎佛母心大准提陀羅尼經, S. 83, P. 3916. For the Cundi cult see Gimello 2004.

<sup>85</sup> *Foshuo Malizhi tian jing* 佛說摩利支天經, P. 3136, S. 5618, etc.

<sup>86</sup> *Fo shuo beifang dasheng Bishamen tianwang qiqing jing* 佛說北方大聖毗沙門天王啓請經, S. 5576.

<sup>87</sup> *Fomu da kongque mingwang jing* 佛母大孔雀明王經, P. 2368.

Many of these texts are variants of those ascribed to Amoghavajra. A sizable body of texts involves the use of “*abhiṣeka*” to ease the karmic burden and eliminate transgressions.<sup>88</sup> Texts to prolong life and to distribute food to beings in hell are also present.<sup>89</sup> A few mandalas are found, mostly as sketches in manuscripts (Sørensen 1991–1992b, 291) and even one possible late-Tang Garbha Mandala (Sørensen 1991–1992b, 294).

There are numerous esoteric ritual manuals among the Dunhuang documents (儀軌 *yigui*, *vidhi*, *kalpa*), some of them compilations of local provenance, some canonical, such as Atikūṭa’s *Tuoluoni ji jing* (T. 901, Beijing 7456). Like Atikūṭa’s collection, many of these manuals bring together a variety of esoteric texts and trappings. A prominent concern is repentance and one’s fate in the afterlife, and not surprisingly ghost-feeding rituals, which were growing in popularity in the late Tang and early Song dynasties.<sup>90</sup> For instance, the *Qianyuan si qiqing wen* 乾元寺啓請文 (S. 2685) from the ninth or tenth centuries contains the *Shi egui shibing shui zhenyan yin fa* 施餓鬼食并水真言印法, and the hybrid Sino-Tibetan manual (P. 3861) dating to the end of the eighth century during the period of Tibetan occupation (780–848), has embedded in it a *Sanshi fa* 散食法; both are closely related to the *Shi zhu egui yinshi ji shui fa* 施諸餓鬼飲食及水法 (T. 1315) attributed to Amoghavajra.<sup>91</sup> It is unlikely that these manuals are the product of the lineage heirs of Huiguo.

The *Qianyuan si qiqing wen* is the most tightly focused on repentance and ghost feeding, and includes the invocation of a series of deities, including the four Celestial Kings, Lord Yama, the Great Spirits of the Five Paths, and the Lord of Mt. Tai, and ends with an invocation of Vairocana. The Sino-Tibetan manual is more overtly esoteric. It includes the mantras and *mudrās* drawn from the Great Compassion *dhāraṇī* (T. 1060), as well as a ritual program involving the invocation

<sup>88</sup> *Fo shuo guanding bachu guozui shengsi de du jing* 佛說灌頂拔除過罪生死得度經, Beijing 7470, S. 2515, etc. This usage is distinct from forms of *abhiṣeka* used to transmit the teaching and create cosmic overlords. For a discussion, see Davidson, “*Abhiṣeka*,” in this volume.

<sup>89</sup> *Foshuo jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* 佛說救拔焰口俄鬼陀羅尼經, P. 3920.

<sup>90</sup> For a discussion of these rites and their role in the broader world of Chinese religion, see Lye, “Song Tiantai Ghost-feeding Rituals,” and “*Yuqie Yankou* in the Ming-Qing,” in this volume; and Orzech 2002.

<sup>91</sup> Henrik H. Sørensen discusses these manuals in, “On the Esoteric Buddhist Manuals from Dunhuang,” unpublished paper presented at the 34th ICANAS Conference in Hong Kong, 1993b.

of wrathful protectors (*vidyārājas* or *mingwang* 明王), the receipt of twenty-eight “Vajra Precepts,” and so on.<sup>92</sup> Another manual, S. 5589, dating from the early Northern Song, includes yet another ghost-feeding text (labeled *Yankou egui tuoluoni jing* 焰口餓鬼陀羅尼經 on the cover but *Sanshi wen* 散食文 inside), a series of mantras that appear to be related to the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara of the *Nīlakaṇṭhaka sūtra*,<sup>93</sup> and invocations of almost every common Buddhist divinity and gods of natural forces.

There are numerous murals and banners involving esoteric forms of Avalokiteśvara (Ekādaśamukha, Sahasrabhuja-sahasranetra) and even Vajrapāṇi and Mahāmāyūrī dating from the seventh and eighth centuries.<sup>94</sup> Esoteric materials proliferate after the return of the Dunhuang area to Chinese control in 848. Some twenty-two late Tang caves have major esoteric images, but there are only a few in which esoteric images dominate.<sup>95</sup> The picture is similar for Sichuan, the other locale where a large number of esoteric images is still preserved.<sup>96</sup>

The overall impression—garnered from both texts and images—is that by the ninth century the cults of certain deities with strong esoteric affinities had become the focus of wider devotion. This is not unlike the process of “esotericization” that transformed Japanese religion (*mikkyōka* 密教化).

Aside from the growing popularity of deities originally belonging to the esoteric orbit, texts with broadly apotropaic and prognosticatory aims proliferated in the eighth and ninth centuries, and many of them appropriated ritual elements originating in the institutionally supported elite lineages. Works such as the two manuals mentioned above and ascribed to Zhihuilun give us a window onto this flourishing world of mantric practice. Unlike manuals connected to the

<sup>92</sup> For this text see the study by Reis-Habito 1994.

<sup>93</sup> *Qian yan qian bei Guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神咒經, T. 1057b; *Qian shou qian yan Guanshiyin pusa mu tuoluoni shen jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩姥陀羅尼身經, T. 1058; and *Qian shou qian yan Guanshiyin pusa guangda yuanman wuai dabeixin tuoluoni jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼經, T. 1060.

<sup>94</sup> On esoteric art at Dunhuang see Schmid, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Provinces: Dunhuang and Central Asia,” in this volume.

<sup>95</sup> For a well-illustrated overview see Peng 2008. It should be noted, however, that Peng uses the late Shingon-derived taxonomy of Pure/Miscellaneous esotericism in his discussions.

<sup>96</sup> For a discussion and analysis see Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Tang,” in this volume.

“Zhenyan” lineages, such as the *Rites for Contemplation of and Offerings to Amitāyus Tathāgata* (*Wuliangshou rulai guanxing gongyang yigui* 無量壽如來觀行供養儀軌, *T.* 930),<sup>97</sup> with its highly structured ritual choreography of entry, encounter, and exit rites, the *Mohe feishi-luomonaye tipo heluoshe tuoluoni yigui* (*T.* 1246) commences abruptly with the painting of an image and the construction of an altar. It then moves on to bodily protection and invocation of Vaiśravaṇa and his retinue. But this is followed by a “Chapter on Requesting Messengers” (*jiu shizhe pin* 求使者品), a list of twenty-eight applications taking the form of “if you want to know whether a person is dead or not then summon the messenger of the Lord of Destiny of the Left” (若欲知人死不死者 即喚左司命使者, *T.* 1246 21.221a22) or “if you wish to prolong life and not die then call the messenger of Taishan” (若求長生不死者 即呼太山使者, *T.* 1246 21.221a26). The manual then prescribes the spell (*zhou* 咒) to use. A manual with this title appears in Kūkai’s inventory *Gō shorai mokuroku* credited to a “Prajñacakra” (Borelun 般若輪).<sup>98</sup> Since Kūkai had returned to Japan long before Zhihuilun was active, this is either another Prajñacakra or an interpolation into Kūkai’s document.

The second manual, the *Sheng huanxi tian shi fa* 聖歡喜天式法 (*T.* 1275), focuses on Gaṇeśa. The text begins with instructions for setting up a “Heaven disk” (*tianpan* 天盤) and an “Earth array” (*dipan* 地盤).<sup>99</sup> The Heaven disk is in fact a mandala with various versions of *Huanxi tian* located in the cardinal directions. The Earth array contains Indra, Agni, Yama, Rākṣasa, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Vaiśravaṇa, Śiva, the twenty-eight lunar mansions, and so on. Then follows a series of *mudrās* and mantras to invoke the various beings, followed by two Daoist-looking talismans (*fu* 符) and twenty-seven sentences strongly reminiscent of those found in *T.* 1246. These are followed by a series of *mudrās* and spells (*zhou* 咒) for protecting the body, etc. Appended (*fu* 付) to the text is an outline of a ritual sequence looking more like what one encounters in the elite lineages: “Mantra and *mudrā* for purifying the three karma, next mantra and *mudrā* for protecting the body,” and so forth. Given what we know of Zhihuilun as a highly

<sup>97</sup> This text became one of the touchstones of canonical ritual. See Orzech 2009.

<sup>98</sup> *Gō shorai mokuroku* 御請來目錄, *T.* 2161 55.1063a28–29.

<sup>99</sup> Thus opening with terms freighted with Chinese symbolism—the terms often refer to stellar arrays on a circular heaven and the three-by-three-square array of the earth.

respected master of *abhiṣeka* and teacher of Enchin and Shūei, and the strong coloring of these texts with Chinese occult notions, it is unlikely that these manuals were written by Zhihuilun. Rather, they represent the appropriation of elements of elite Tang esoteric traditions into the broader current of Chinese Buddhism.



## KEY FIGURES IN ESOTERIC BUDDHISM DURING THE TANG





## 29. ŚUBHĀKARASIMHA (637–735)

Klaus Pinte

Śubhākarasimha<sup>1</sup> or [Shan]wuwei [善]無畏 (Chou 1945, 251–252 n. 3; Willemen 1981, 362–365; Abé 1999, 486 n. 42) was the first of the Kaiyuan 開元 period (713–741) *mahācāryas* (*dashi* 大師), who translated esoteric texts under imperial patronage (Chen 1997, 12–13; Weinstein 1987b, 51–57; Twitchett 1979, 333ff.). However, the only biographical evidence for Śubhākarasimha is found in Chinese hagiographical records (Chou 1945, 246–247), in which legendary tales venerating his thaumaturgies outbalance historical facts; see, for example, *Shenseng Zhuan* 神僧傳 (Biographies of Divine Monks), dated 1417 (T. 2064.50:996b11–996c10; Yu 1998, 912–913).

The epigraph written for Śubhākarasimha's funeral stele is the earliest extant source: *Datang dongdu Dashenshansi gu tianzhuguo Shanwuwei sanzang heshang beiming bing xu* 大唐東都大聖善寺故中天竺國善無畏三藏和尚碑銘并序 (Inscription with Preface of the Late Tripiṭaka Upādhyāya Śubhākarasimha from Central India, Who Died in the Great Shengshan Monastery in the Eastern Metropolis of the Great Tang). The text is preserved in Li Hua 李華 (d. ca. 770), *Xuanzong chao fanjing sanzang Shanwuwei zheng Honglu qing xingzhuang* 玄宗朝翻經三藏善無畏贈鴻臚卿行狀 (Necrology of Śubhākarasimha, Tripiṭaka and Translator during the Reign of Xuanzong, to Whom the Title of Director of the Court of State Ceremonial Was Bestowed; T. 2055.50:290b16–292a26), and served as the primary source for the later hagiography *Tang Luojing Shengshansi Shanwuwei Zhuan* 唐洛京聖善寺善無畏傳 (Biography of Shanwuwei of the Shengshan Monastery in Luojing [i.e., Luoyang] of the Tang; annotated English trans., Chou 1945, 251–272), which is collated in the official ecclesiastical biographies of the Northern Song (Bei Song 北宋 960–1279), *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Song Biographies of Eminent Monks; T. 2061.50:714b–716a), compiled by Zanning 贊寧 (919?–1001) in 988 (Chou 1945, 249, 272 n. 115; Vita 1988, 98).

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<sup>1</sup> The variant “Śubhakarasiṃha” is a questionable emendation by S. Lévi (Majumdar 1955, 63ff.).

According to these sources, Śubhākarasiṃha was born in India as the oldest son of King Buddhakara (Foshou-wang 佛手王), alleged ancestor of the Bhauma dynasty Kara kings who governed the region of Oḍra (Orissa) between the eighth and twelfth centuries (Chou 1945, 251–252 n. 3; Majumdar 1955, 63–65).<sup>2</sup> In his teens, Śubhākarasiṃha renounced his status and was ordained. He gained the degree of Trepitaka or “Buddhist Doctor” (Forte 1990, 247–248 n. 7) at Nālandā University, where he had studied under a certain Dharmagupta (Damojuduo 達摩掬多), who is said to have instructed him to disseminate his knowledge of esoteric Buddhism in China (Chou 1945, 251–258).

After changing his route because of unstable conditions in Central India (Snellgrove 1987, 324ff.), Śubhākarasiṃha went through Tibet (Chou 1945, 258–263, 309, appendix B) and arrived in Chang’an in 716 at the age of nearly eighty, carrying with him a collection of manuscripts, the catalogue of which is lost. At the behest of Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756) he first stayed at Xingfusi 興福寺, but was reassigned in 717 to Ximingsi 西明寺, where he assembled a team of assistants who, under his supervision, started translating his texts and exegeses.<sup>3</sup>

In 724 he joined the imperial retinue to Luoyang, where he stayed at Shengshansi 聖善寺 and Fuxiansi 福先寺 (Chou 1945, 258–265).<sup>4</sup> Śubhākarasiṃha died in 735 and was bestowed with the title of “Director of the Court for Ceremonial Affairs” (Honglu qing 鴻臚卿). He was buried in 740 in the hills to the west of the Longmen Caves. On these burial premises the Guanghuasi 廣化寺 was built in 758 (Chou 1945, 270–272).

Śubhākarasiṃha is most reputed for translating the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (T. 848), finished with the help of Yixing (683–727) ca. 724–725. The latter wrote its most authoritative commentary (T. 1796) based on notes from Śubhākarasiṃha’s lectures (Chou 1945, 264–246; Weinstein

<sup>2</sup> Another theory speculates that he was heir-apparent to Mādharāja II, alias “Yaśobhita II of the Śailodbhava dynasty ruling over Kongoḍa [i.e. Oḍra] during the third quarter of the seventh century” (Hodge 2003, 19–20).

<sup>3</sup> On Xuanzong’s relation to Buddhism, see Chou 1945, 265 n. 78, and 320, appendix L; Weinstein 1987b, 51–57; and Twitchett 1979, 333ff. For Xingfusi, see Chou 1945, 264 n. 71. For Ximingsi, see Chou 1945, 264 n. 72; Forte 1983, 700b–701a; and Abé 1999, 116, 485 n. 20. On the state and monastic institutions under the Tang, see Chen, “Esoteric Buddhism and Monastic Institutions,” in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> For Shengshansi and Fuxiansi, see Forte 1983, 696a–696b and 695a–695b, respectively.

1987b, 54–56).<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (Kaiyuan Period [713–741] Catalogue of Buddhism; T. 2154.50:571c27–572a26), compiled by Zhisheng 智昇 in 730, ascribes three other works to Śubhākarasimha, the first of which was completed in Chang’an in 717, the others translated in Luoyang ca. 726:

- (1) *Xukongzang-pusa nengman zhuyuan zuishengxin tuoluoni qiuwen chifa* 虛空藏菩薩能滿諸願最勝心陀羅尼求聞持法 (Method for Reciting the *Dhāraṇī* of Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha, Whose Unsurpassed Mind Can Fulfill All Requests; T. 1145);
- (2) *Suxidi jieluo jing* 蘇悉地揭羅經 (T. 893; hereafter, *Suxidi*), i.e., the Chinese version of the “Susiddhikāramahātantrasaddhanopāyi kāpaṭala” (“Section on Expedient Means for Rites of Accomplishment” in the *Susiddhikara Great Tantra*);
- (3) *Supohu tongzi jing* 蘇婆呼童子經 (T. 895), the Chinese translation of the *Subhāhu-paripṛcchā* (Questions of Subhāhu).<sup>6</sup>

Although there is neither contemporary catalogographical nor biographical evidence for any other works written by Śubhākarasimha, the *Taishō Daizōkyō* 大正大藏經 lists him as the translator/author of a series of sixteen additional translations/compilations (Tajima 1936, 24 n. 1; Demiéville 1978, 286). These include ritual manuals related to the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (T. 850–851); *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha* (T. 877); *Suxidi* (T. 893); initiation (T. 917); *Vijaya-uṣṇīṣa* (T. 973); Avalokiteśvara (T. 1068 and 1078–1079); Maitreya (T. 1141); Kṣitigarba (T. 1158); Āṭavaka Vidyārāja (T. 1239); Gaṇeśa (T. 1270); and *Dr̥dhā* (T. 1286).<sup>7</sup> Three additional texts (T. 905–907) have been unmasked as Japanese forgeries (Chen 1997; 1998). Aside from the latter, and the author’s own work on T. 917 (Pinte 2004), so far no substantial effort has been made to identify these works and/or to date and explain their attribution.

<sup>5</sup> On Śubhākarasimha’s expertise in both the *Mahāvairocana* and *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha* lineages, see Orzech 1989, 91.

<sup>6</sup> On T. 1145, see Chou 1945, 264 n. 75; Nanjiō 1975, 116; and van der Veere 2000, 60. For T. 893, see Giebel 2001, 114; English trans., 125–324. For a French study and excerpts from T. 895, see Strickmann 1996, 221ff.

<sup>7</sup> For partial studies on T. 1068, 1078–1079, 1158, and 1270, see Giebel, “Taishō Volumes 18–21,” in this volume.

### 30. YIXING

George A. Keyworth

In the conventional Sino-Japanese esoteric Buddhist traditions, Yixing 一行 (673–727), born Zhang Sui 張遂 in Henan province 河南省, is counted alongside Śubhākarasiṃha (Shanwuwei 善無畏, 637–735), Vajrabodhi (Jin'gangzhi 金剛智, 671–741), and Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705–774) as the only preliminary Chinese exponent of the innovative secret teachings that reached China during the reign of the august emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (685–762, r. 712–756). In the annals of Chinese history, however, Yixing is much more famous as a scientist, mathematician, and astronomer who built clocks, introduced Indian mathematics (the *Kuṭṭaka* method to solve equations), and produced the Kaiyuan-era *Dayan* calendar 開元大衍曆 between 721–727 (later condemned in 733 as a shoddy replica of the Indian *Navagraha* calendar; Needham 1959, 121, 202–203). Yixing gained access to Indian scientific knowledge through his extensive comprehension of Sanskrit, which he learned as a diligent disciple first of Śubhākarasiṃha and then of Vajrabodhi (Matsumura Yūkei 1969, 139; Lü Jianfu 1995, 226–227).

Biographical materials concur that Yixing was an exceptionally gifted scholar. Despite rather humble beginnings, he studied Daoism and read widely as a youth before taking tonsure at the age of twenty-one, becoming a disciple of the eminent Chan master Puji 普寂 (651–739) on Mt. Song 嵩山. He then went on to study monastic codes and Tiantai 天台宗 meditation and doctrines before finally ending up in Chang'an 長安 by 716. There he encountered Śubhākarasiṃha, and the two men jointly translated the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (*Dari jing* 大日經, T. 848), which sets forth the womb mandala (*garbhadhātu*, *taizangjie* 胎藏界). Yixing's biographies suggest that he trained with Śubhākarasiṃha for eight years before Vajrabodhi's arrival in Luoyang 洛陽, when Yixing became familiar with the teachings of the diamond mandala (*vajradhātu*, *jin'gangjie* 金剛界) expressed in the *Vajrasāekhara sūtra* (*Jin'gangding jing* 金剛頂經, T. 866), though the concept is much more fully developed in the translations supervised by Amoghavajra (*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 5, T. 2061, 50.732c7–733c24). The degree to which Yixing's views of esoteric practices were influenced

by the teachings of the diamond mandala remains the subject of scholarly debate. His *magnum opus* is the first and primary commentary to the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, the *Commentary on Mahāvairocana Becoming a Buddha* (*Da Piluzhe'na chengfo jingshu* 大毗盧遮那成佛經疏, T. 1796) in twenty rolls, which has been widely read in China, Korea, and Japan.

Contemporary scholars frequently discuss four main points of Yixing's commentary on the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*: the true nature of the mind (*xinshixiang* 心實相); grading the four vehicles according to the single path (*yidao sisheng panjiao* 一道四乘判教); the three mysteries (*triguhyāni, sanmi* 三密); and becoming a buddha in a single lifetime (*yisheng chengfo* 一生成佛) (Lü Jianfu 1995, 233–246). Indian Madhyamaka philosophical suppositions regarding the true meaning of emptiness (*śūnyatā, kong* 空) had been difficult for Chinese Buddhists to grasp for centuries; Yixing's commentary has no fewer than two hundred citations to Nāgārjuna's (ca. 150–250) pivotal *Madhyamaka-śāstra* (*Zhong lun* 中論, T. 1564), as well as to the colossal *Commentary on the Perfection of Wisdom in 25,000 Lines* (\**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa-śāstra, Dazhi dulun* 大智度論, T. 1509), also attributed to Nāgārjuna. Yixing's commentary provides an innovative approach to Madhyamaka exegesis in the form of reaching the nondual (between purity and the passions) state of true reality (*tattvasya lakṣaṇam*) by meditating on the single Sanskrit syllable “A” (*Dari jingshu* 7, T. 1796.39:651c).

Contemporary Chinese scholastic monks, especially Fazang 法藏 (643–712), who privileged the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經, T. 279), had already classified the sūtras and śāstras according to doctrinal taxonomies, always pointing to a single overriding text. Instead of a single text—such as the *Buddhāvataṃsaka* or *Lotus sūtras*—as the foremost expression of the Buddha's teachings, Yixing posited the category of the secret teachings of the Mahāyāna (*bimi dasheng* 祕密大乘) as the means to immediate awakening, juxtaposed with the exoteric teachings (*xianjiao* 顯教) venerated by all other contemporaneous Buddhists in China (*Dari jingshu* 15, T. 1796.39:731b14–17). The three mysteries refer to the body, speech, and mind of the buddhas, which one should replicate using *mudrās*, mantras, and *sādhanas* (*Dari jingshu* 14, T. 1796.39:729a–b). If one purifies one's deeds, words, and thoughts, by means of the support (*adhiṣṭhāna, jiachi* 加持) of these three esoteric practices of Mahāvairocana Buddha one will achieve enlightenment in this very lifetime (*Dari jingshu* 1, T.

1796.39:579b29–c01). This commentary is a landmark text for how it made intelligible to an East Asian audience the often incomprehensible, Sanskrit-laden terminology of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* and other ritual manuals (*kalpa, yigui* 儀軌), which set forth the actions—rather than the doctrines—of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. In China and Korea, Yixing’s discussion of the single path to awakening has largely been viewed through the inclusive lens of either Tiantai 天台宗 (Tendai) or Huayan 華嚴宗 doctrinal classification schemes. In Japan, where the distinct Tōmitsu 東密 (Shingon 真言宗) and Taimitsu 台密 (Tendai) traditions developed apart from other forms of Sinitic Buddhism, Yixing has been viewed as the formative interpreter of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*’s womb mandala.

In addition to his work with Śubhākarasiṃha on the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, Yixing also co-translated the *One Hundred and Eight Dharmakāya Mudrās of Vairocana According to the Vajraśekhara sūtra* (*Jin’gangding jing Piluzhe’na yibaibazun fashen qiyin* 金剛頂經毘盧遮那一百八尊法身契印, T. 877), and is credited with six other texts in the Taishō-era Sino-Japanese Buddhist canon. One of these is the *Procedures to Acquire Wishes from the Secret Techniques of the Innumerably Compassionate Mañjuśrī-Yamāntaka* (*Manshusheli Yanmandejia wan’ai mishu ruyifa* 曼殊室利焰曼德迦萬愛祕術如意法, T. 1219), which influenced Daoist liturgical spell practices (Sakade 1999). The remaining texts include ritual manuals, including the *Manual on the Cultivation of Mahāvairocana’s Dharma-Eye* (*Dapiluzhe’na foyan xiuxing yigui* 大毘盧遮那佛眼修行儀軌, T. 981) and the *Manual of the Spell to Remove Obstacles and Ward off Calamities by means of Bhaiṣajyaguruvaīdūryaprabha-[rāja]* (*Yaoshi liuliguang rulai xiaozai chunan niansong yigui* 藥師琉璃光如來消災除難念誦儀軌, T. 922); and materials that concern Indian astronomy and cosmology: the *Manual of the Constellations and Celestial Bodies* (*Suyao yigui* 宿曜儀軌, T. 1304), the *Procedures for Distinguishing the Movements of the Stars According to the Seven Planets* (*graha-nakṣatra*) (*Qiyao xingchen biexingfa* 七曜星辰別行法, T. 1309), and the *Procedures for the Fire Ritual for the Seventh Luminary* (Ursa Major or *Sapta-rṣi-tārā*) (*Beidouqixing humofa* 北斗七星護摩法, T. 1310).

It is regrettable that the breadth and depth of Yixing’s erudition has largely eluded Western scholarship on China, with the single exception of Joseph Needham’s (1959) remarkable study of science in pre-modern China.

### 31. VAJRABODHI (671–741)

Charles D. Orzech

Vajrabodhi (Jin'gangzhi 金剛智 or Bariluoputi 跋日羅菩提), the teacher of Amoghavajra, propagated the newly developed *Sarvata-thāgatattvasaṃgraha* (also referred to as the *Vajraśekhara* or *Vajrasuṅṅīṣā*, hereafter *STTS*) in China, and he may with some justification be seen as the source of what came to be called “Yoga” (*yuqie* 瑜伽) or alternately “Mantra” (*zhenyan* 真言) Buddhism in China. Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, and Śubhākarasiṃha are often referred to as the “Three Great Ācāryas” of the Tang and as the “founders” of the Chinese Zhenyan school. This is in fact misleading, as the three together did not constitute themselves as a “school” (宗), though later Chinese disciples and Japanese scholars regarded them as such.<sup>1</sup> Śubhākarasiṃha propagated the related but substantially different teachings of the *Mahāvairocanaḥisambodhi sūtra* (T. 848) and the *Susiddhikāramahātantra-saddhanopāyikāpaṭala* (T. 893).<sup>2</sup>

#### *Accounts and Sources*

The main sources for Vajrabodhi's life are Zanning's 贊寧 biography *Tang Loyang guangfu si Jin'gang zhi zhuan* 唐洛陽廣福寺金剛智傳 in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (T. 2061.50: 711b6–712a22, trans. Chou I-liang, 1945); the notices by Vajrabodhi's lay disciple Lu Xiang 呂向 in Yuanzhao's 圓照 *Zhengyuan xinding shijiao mu lu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (T. 2157.55:875b1–876b27, also known as the *Xing ji* 行記); and the account that follows Lu Xiang's in the same source by Kunlunweng 混倫翁 (T. 2157.55:876b29–877a21). Further information can be gleaned from Yuanzhao's collection of correspondence

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<sup>1</sup> The notion of “school” or “sect” in Chinese Buddhism is the source of much confusion. For a clear analysis of the topic, see Foulk 1992, 18–31.

<sup>2</sup> See Pinte, “Śubhākarasiṃha,” and Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūta to Amoghavajra (651–780),” in this volume. For the *Mahāvairocanaḥisambodhi sūtra*, see Hodge 2003; for the *Susiddhikāramahātantra-saddhanopāyikāpaṭala*, see Giebel 2001, 109–324.



between Amoghavajra and the government, *Daizong chao zeng sikong dabianzheng guangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集 (T. 2120).

### *Life and Career*

According to most accounts, Vajrabodhi was a South Indian Brahman whose father served as a royal priest and architect in Kanchipuram. He appears to have converted at the age of sixteen, though some accounts put him at Nālandā at age ten. As is typical of many important masters, Vajrabodhi's biographers portray him as a precocious child who was well read (including in Jain treatises), and he is said to have studied under the famous Buddhist logician Dharmakīrti. He studied the *STTS*—what would have then been the latest teaching—with a teacher named Śāntijñāna. Vajrabodhi sought out more of this new teaching, traveling to Sri Lanka and Śrī Vijaya. Having heard that Buddhism was flourishing in China, he then sailed to China and arrived in the capital in 720, with Amoghavajra 不空金剛 (705–774) in tow.<sup>3</sup> He was initially lodged at Cī'en Temple 慈恩寺 and then shifted to Jianfu Temple 薦福寺 (Chou 1945, 275).<sup>4</sup>

Like Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi spent most of his time performing rituals, granting *abhiṣeka* (consecration), teaching, and translating. Among his famous disciples are the Chan monk Yixing 一行 (673–727), to whom the emperor gave the task of learning as much as possible about Vajrabodhi and his new teachings and assisting in the translation work.<sup>5</sup> But the strong Daoist proclivities of Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–55) and the power of already established teaching lineages meant that Vajrabodhi's influence was limited, so the laudatory accounts of his stature and importance need to be read with a certain degree of circumspection.<sup>6</sup> Vajrabodhi was famous for his

<sup>3</sup> Lü Jianfu's (1995, 216) account puts Vajrabodhi in Luoyang in 720 before moving to Ch'ang'an. For Amoghavajra, see Lehnert, "Amoghavajra: His Role in and Influence on the Development of Buddhism," in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> The former was the temple where the famous monk-pilgrim-translator Xuanzang 玄奘 (602?–64) was lodged, while the latter housed an office for translation that had been set up for Yijing 義淨 (635–713).

<sup>5</sup> Yixing, a Chan monk in Puji's 普寂 (651–739) lineage, had assisted Śubhākarasiṃha in his translation of the *Mahāvairocanaḥisambodhi sūtra* and is the co-author of the *Great Commentary Dari jing shu* 大日經疏 (T. 1796) on it. For Yixing, see Keyworth, "Yixing," in this volume.

<sup>6</sup> For Xuanzong's Daoist interests, see Benn 1977.

thaumaturgical prowess, particularly in regard to rainmaking rituals. He died in 741 in Luoyang and was later interred in a *stūpa* at the Longmen 龍門 grotto. It is likely that he and Amoghavajra had set out for Luoyang on their way out of the country, in response to an imperial edict (740) expelling all foreign monks. Zanning's account includes a story that quotes Vajrabodhi saying that as an "Indian monk," (*fan seng* 梵僧), the order concerning "barbarian monks," (*hu seng* 胡僧), did not apply to him; the account continues with the emperor making special provision to retain him (Chou 1945, 278, 320). After his master's funeral, Amoghavajra continued on to South Asia where he sought out further teachings connected with Yoga tantra. In later years, at Amoghavajra's prompting, Vajrabodhi was awarded the posthumous honor of "Master of the State," (*guoshi* 國師), under Daizong, and his *stūpa* became the focus for rituals to conjure up rain. Vajrabodhi entered popular legend as a thaumaturge, and the Song encyclopedia *Taiping guang ji* 太平廣記 includes tales of his prowess as a magician.<sup>7</sup>

### *Teachings and Translations*

Vajrabodhi was the first major teacher to propagate the *STTS* in China. In 720, the *STTS* was cutting-edge Buddhism. The text of the *STTS* seems to have come together in the last quarter of the seventh century (Weinberger 2003, 28–35). In contrast to the three-buddha system of the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra*, the *STTS* is structured by a five-buddha system, and with its highly articulated practice, by which the adept generates himself as the Buddha, it can arguably be designated as the first fully "tantric" work.<sup>8</sup> Though Vajrabodhi taught a range of materials, it is clear that the "Yoga" portion of the *STTS* was considered the pinnacle, and he first rendered extracts it in 723 (*T.* 866).<sup>9</sup> His rendition outlines the key elements of the "yoga,"

<sup>7</sup> Vajrabodhi's magical prowess became the stuff of legend. See the *Taiping guang ji* account of Vajrabodhi's contest with Daoist magicians at *TPGJ* 22. See also the translation in Orlando 1981, Appendix A, 172–74.

<sup>8</sup> Tsuda Shin'ichi 1978 has argued precisely this point, arguing for a divide between the Mahāyāna and tantra, separating the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra* and the *STTS*.

<sup>9</sup> Vajrabodhi's rendition appears to be an extract largely from section one of the *STTS*. Amoghavajra also produced a partial rendering, the *Jin'gangding yiqie rulai zhenshi she dacheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing* (金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經 *T.* 865), but a full translation was not made until \*Dānapāla 施護 produced the

including the qualifications of disciples; the *mudrās* and mantras necessary for entry into the mandala; techniques for accomplishing *samādhi*; details of the Vajradhātu mandala; various signs of meditative accomplishment; techniques for erecting altars, making offerings, and bestowing *abhiṣeka*; and performing the various types of *homa*.

Vajrabodhi informed his disciple Amoghavajra that the teachings of the *STTS* originated with Mahāvairocana, who initiated the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi. The teachings were then passed down to a great worthy who gained entry to an iron *stūpa* (some accounts identify this person as “Nāgārjuna”), and who then, after “several hundred years,” transmitted them to Nāgabodhi; after a further “several hundred years,” Nāgabodhi had bequeathed them to Vajrabodhi *ācārya*.<sup>10</sup> According to the biography of Amoghavajra by Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001), Vajrabodhi initially withheld the Yoga teachings from him, and was convinced to initiate his disciple only after having had an ominous dream.<sup>11</sup> Aside from Amoghavajra and Yixing (also known here as Dahui chanshi 大慧禪師), Vajrabodhi had two other disciples of note: Yifu 義福 (or Dazhi chanshi 大智禪師), who was a disciple of the Chan master Shenxiu 神秀; and Huichao 慧超 from Silla (Lü 1995, 222).<sup>12</sup> The contacts between Vajrabodhi and the Chan masters are noteworthy.

Two years after arriving at the Tang capital, Vajrabodhi translated the *Jin’gangding yuqie zhong lue chu niansong jing* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經 (T. 866), and the *Fo shuo qi ju fomu Zhunti da ming tuoluoni jing* 佛說七俱胝佛母准提大明陀羅尼經, an important *dhāraṇī* text devoted to the goddess Cundī.<sup>13</sup> These represent two of the three types

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*Fo shuo yiqie rulai zhenshi she dacheng xianzheng san mei dajiaowang jing* (佛說一切如來真實攝大乘現證三昧大教王經 T. 882) during the early Northern Song.

<sup>10</sup> Amoghavajra’s account is found in the “Instructions on the ‘Gate to the Teaching of the Secret Heart of the Great Yoga of the Scripture of the Diamond Summit’” (*Jin’gangding jing da yuqie bimi shin di famen yigui*, 金剛頂經大瑜伽祕密心地法門義訣 T. 1798.39:808a19–b28). Another account by Amoghavajra’s disciple Zhao Qian 趙遷 is found in his biography in the *Xingzhuang*, (大唐故大德贈司空大辨正廣智不空三藏行狀 T. 2056.50: 292b16–21). For more, see Orzech, “After Amoghavajra: Esoteric Buddhism in the Late Tang,” in this volume.

<sup>11</sup> The story is found in *Lives of Eminent Monks Composed in the Song* (*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳), T. 2056.50:292c8–11.

<sup>12</sup> Vajrabodhi had other disciples, among them laymen like Lü Xiang 呂向. See Lü 1995, 223–24.

<sup>13</sup> For Cundī see Sørensen, “Central Divinities in the Esoteric Buddhist Pantheon in China,” in this volume.

of texts Vajrabodhi focused on: texts related to the Yoga teaching of the *STTS*, and *dhāraṇī* texts focused on particular deities that were designed to address specific, often worldly, needs, such as protection from disease or disaster. Vajrabodhi also produced ritual manuals (*yigui* 儀軌, *xiuxing fa* 修行法), though in these types of texts and in most of the work of other Tang masters some elements of ritual instruction are included. In 730 he translated another *dhāraṇī* text, the *Jin'gangding jing Manshusheli pusa wu zi xin tuoluoni pin* 金剛頂經曼殊室利菩薩五字心陀羅尼品 (T. 1173), which is actually an extract from the *STTS* that details a rite for summoning Mañjuśrī. In the same year he translated a ritual manual for Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara, the *Guanzizai ruilun pusa yuqie fayao* 觀自在如意輪菩薩瑜伽法要 (T. 1087).

Some twenty-four texts are attributed to Vajrabodhi by the editors of the *Taishō* canon, and lists of texts compiled by Japanese pilgrims include more beyond these (Lü 1995, 218). Among these are the *Jin'gang yuqie liqu boruo jing* (金剛頂瑜伽理趣般若經 T. 241, a version of the so-called tantric *Prajñāpāramitā*); *Da Piluzhe'na fo shuo yaolue niansong jing* (大毘盧遮那佛說要略念誦經 T. 849, a sketch of basic rites for the invocation of Mahāvairocana); *Yaoshi rulai guanxing yigui* (藥師如來觀行儀軌法 T. 923, procedures for the contemplation of Bhaiṣaja Tathāgata); *Qianshou qianyan Guanzizai pusa guangda yuanman wuai dabei xin tuoluoni zhou ben* (千手千眼觀自在菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼咒本 T. 1061, *dhāraṇī* for the worship of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara); *Budong shizhe tuoluoni mimi fa* (不動使者陀羅尼祕密法 T. 1202, secret *dhāraṇī* method of Acala); and *Beidou qixing niiansong yigui* (北斗七星念誦儀軌 T. 1305, procedures for worshipping the deities of the Northern Dipper).<sup>14</sup>

Finally, it is significant that Zanning also records an event in which Vajrabodhi used child-mediums to investigate the illness of one of Xuanzong's daughters.<sup>15</sup> The method employed, *āveśa* (*aweishe* 阿尾奢, is based on pan-South Asian techniques and it resembles later Song Dynasty Daoist techniques used by *fashi* 法師, called *kaozhao* 考召, “summoning and investigating”; it is discussed in Vajrabodhi's *Jin'gang feng louge yiqie yuqie yuqi jing* 金剛峰樓閣一切瑜伽瑜祇.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The full list is T. 241, 849, 866, 867, 876, 904, 923, 932, 980, 1061, 1062A, 1075, 1087, 1112, 1166, 1173, 1202, 1208, 1220, 1223, 1251, 1269, 1293, and 1305.

<sup>15</sup> T. 2061:711c. The episode is translated in Chou 1945, 278–79.

<sup>16</sup> Discussions of *āveśa* are found at T. 867.18:263a8, 264a19, 268c23, 268c26.

Other masters, including Amoghavajra's disciple Huiguo, are reputed to have used these techniques; Michel Strickmann (1996), Edward L. Davis (2001), and Frederick M. Smith (2006) have all argued that the methods introduced by Vajrabodhi and his followers inform and underlie later Chinese exorcism practice in the Tang, Five Dynasties, and Song periods, and especially prominent in these rites is the *vidyārāja* Ucchuṣma (Huiji jin'gang 穢跡金剛).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See Strickmann 1996, 213–41; Davis 2001, esp. 115–152, and Smith 2006, 435 ff.

## 32. AMOGHAVAJRA: HIS ROLE IN AND INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHISM

Martin Lehnert

Amoghavajra (704–774 C.E.; Amuqubazheluo 阿目佉跋折羅; Bukong jin'gang 不空金剛 or Bukong 不空) was born in Samarkand; his father was an Indian merchant or brahmin, and his mother was of Sogdian origin. There are several contradictory accounts on the place of his birth, the status of his parents, the circumstances under which he became a Buddhist monk, and the way he came to China (see Chou 1945, 285, 321). According to the account by Yuanzhao 圓照 (719–800 C.E.), Amoghavajra met Vajrabodhi (671–741 C.E.) in Java and became his disciple in 717 at the age of fourteen. Together they traveled to China, and they arrived in the Tang capital Chang'an in 721 (*T.* 2157.55: 881a). At the age of twenty, Amoghavajra was fully ordained but he was denied access to the advanced ritual knowledge of yoga covered in the *STTS*. As he intended to return to India in order to pursue further studies, Vajrabodhi decided to consecrate Amoghavajra in the practice of the *STTS*, the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, and also in the *abhiṣeka* and *homa* rites (*T.* 2056.50:292c). Shortly after Vajrabodhi's death in 741, Amoghavajra went to Ceylon and India to collect manuscripts and to complete his ritual expertise. He came to know the disintegration of Indian royal order into the medieval warring states, the crisis of monastic institutions, and the Buddhist contribution to tantric ritualism (see Davidson 2002, 26–168).

After his return to Chang'an in 746, Amoghavajra was ordered by Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713–756 C.E.) to serve in the office of the Court of State Ceremonial, to conduct the emperor's *abhiṣeka* (*guanding* 灌頂), and to perform apotropaic rituals. Vested with imperial honors, Amoghavajra was repeatedly assigned to perform *abhiṣeka* ceremonies for officials and military leaders, including, for example, the governor-general Geshu Han 哥舒翰 (d. 757 C.E.), who in 754 ordered him to translate the *STTS* (*T.* 865) and to conduct mass consecrations in the yoga of the Vajradhātu Mandala for his troops (*BDJ* (1974) 4385b).

Beginning in 756 Amoghavajra resided at Daxingshan Monastery 大興善寺 (Wang 1986), where he remained during the rebellion of General An Lushan 安祿山 (703–757 C.E.). In the summer of that same year, the rebel armies took Chang'an shortly after the emperor's flight to Chengdu. The crown prince, Li Heng 李亨, escaped northward to Lingwu (in modern-day Ningxia) and formed an alliance with Tibetan and Uighur forces, preparing to recapture imperial authority after Xuanzong's abdication. He succeeded the following year and ascended the throne of the rapidly disintegrating Tang empire as Emperor Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756–762 C.E.). The devastated capital was wracked by famine and epidemic plagues, and millions died—estimated at two-thirds of the total population on the tax rolls—resulting in a ruinous drop of tax revenue. The central government was forced to depend on foreign allies, military leaders, and provincial governors. Suzong and his successor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779 C.E.) found themselves without much political and economic control. Former rebels had to be pardoned and reinstalled into government posts, while allied foreign troops began raiding Tang territory, threatening the continuance of the dynasty (Dalby 1979).

Under these adverse conditions, Amoghavajra managed to gain the emperors' trust. Taking into account the severe crisis of imperial sovereignty, he adapted Buddhism as a repository of ritual services at the court (Orzech 1998). Though he received and instrumentalized imperial patronage, he did not establish a specific Buddhist denomination. The inclusivist approach and the scarcity of self-referential distinctions characteristic of Amoghavajra's writings indicate that he warranted the formation and purpose of his ritual services as features of the Mahāyāna (Sharf 2002a), emphasizing metaphors of universal sovereignty and state protection (Orzech 2003).

In order to underscore his ritual expertise in the *STTS*, however, Amoghavajra distinguished the “great teaching of yoga” (*yuqie dajiao* 瑜伽大教) by reference to the designation *jin'gangsheng* 金剛乘 (Vajrayāna, “Adamantine Vehicle”; Orzech 2006a, 46–52). In the *Encomium on a General Interpretation of the Meaning of Dhāraṇī* (*Zongshi tuoluoni yizan* 總釋陀羅尼義讚; T. 902.18:898; McBride 2004), a short tract attributed to Amoghavajra, formations of mantric speech were classified as the all-inclusive cause and immediate agency of Mahāyāna praxis. The *Treatise on the Production of the Thought of Anuttara Samyaksambodhi in the Adamantine Pinnacle Yoga* (*Jin'gangding yuqie zhong fa anoduoluo sanmiao sanputi xin lun*

金剛頂瑜伽中發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心論; *T.* 1665.32:572–574) further characterized the expertise of “men who practice words of truth” (*zhenyan xing ren* 真言行人) as the most advanced and efficient means of salvation, in contrast to the bodhisattva’s gradual course of conduct.

While the historical relation between practice and doctrine is difficult to determine, such self-descriptions remain ambiguous; they hardly indicate whether they were understood in terms of doctrinal distinctions based on the self-conception of a specific lineage, or were rather rhetorical, meant to establish an integrated yet exalted status of Amoghavajra’s ritual pragmatics in relation to Mahāyāna praxis. A significant context of these self-descriptions, however, is the apparent emphasis on the efficacy of ritual expertise and its technical implementation vis-à-vis established Buddhist praxis. This is mirrored in Amoghavajra’s use of tantric ritual pragmatics in conjunction with the role of the *ācārya*, monopolizing three basic functions of religious authority: to guarantee authentic transmission of doctrine and praxis, to direct the liturgy, and to mediate between divine force and imperial sovereignty (Lehnert 2006).

The traditional narrative of transmission claimed that seminal scriptures were lost during transport in a storm at sea; although the vessel was saved by Vajrabodhi’s wizardry, the scriptures were cast overboard by the panicked crew (*T.* 1798.39:808b; Orzech 1995b). Amoghavajra grounded his authority in the purportedly fragmentary textual tradition of the *STTS*, and he presented Vajrabodhi’s translation (*T.* 866) as a contingent reference to universal order that was still accessible through authentic ritual performance. Such textual policy ensured exclusive authority, despite the weak textual evidence for authenticity, and paved a pragmatic way to consolidate Amoghavajra’s legitimacy through textual production in close relation to ritual practice (Lehnert 2008). The purposeful way in which Amoghavajra arranged and justified elaborate ceremonies for specific aims helped to further dissolve traditional authority of textual transmission into his ritual aesthetics of (self-)sacralization. Directing liturgy, Amoghavajra referred to concepts of Indian dramaturgy (*T.* 869.12:286c10–14; Giebel 1995, 179–182) and situated the linguistic indeterminacy of mantric speech in mythical contexts. Such body politics allowed him to act as a mediator between the military elite, the imperial household, and domains of divine force demarcated by textual production and ritual practice.



Amoghavajra's influence on Buddhism can be understood in political terms as counteracting the imminent decline of Buddhist institutions following the An Lushan Rebellion (see Gernet 1995, 51–58). Often portrayed as a master of apotropaic wizardry, Amoghavajra accommodated the functional status of Buddhism at court in terms of the *ācārya* who is privileged to access “numinous empowerment” (*shenbian jiachi* 神變加持, *vikurvitādhiṣṭhāna*) and committed to protect imperial order. Overriding the confines of textual tradition and tying the authenticity of ritual praxis to his own expertise, he was never considered by tradition to be a patriarch, in the sense that the Tiantai or Chan lineages were construed. Since the status of his disciples depended on the exclusivity of being initiated into the proper ritual practice, testified to by the master's consecration, patriarchal and lineage claims were expressions of mutual recognition. As a way to legitimize competency, such claims rather referred to the synchronic formation and transmission of a hierarchy based on symbolic and ritual pragmatics, whereas diachronic (or rather, *post facto*) constructions of sectarian lineage have not emerged as a long-standing issue.

Although the magnitude of his activities and the recognition he received at court surpassed that of any other Buddhist master, Amoghavajra did not achieve comparably lasting fame. What remained after his death in 774, and after Emperor Dezong's 德宗 (r. 780–804 C.E.) decision to stop the liturgical services carried out by his disciples in the imperial chapel, was a complex, seemingly unsystematic body of rather technical scriptures barely accessible to the Buddhist laity. Amoghavajra's ritual policy, however, influenced later Buddhist ritual masters, the most prominent of whom was Kūkai 空海 (774–835 C.E.), who claimed to be an heir of Amoghavajra's lineage (Abé 1999, 128).

### *Imperial Preceptor and Ritual Expert*

Working in the imperial chapel and monasteries, maintaining close relations to the court, Amoghavajra introduced a large repertoire of purificatory and apotropaic rituals, ceremonies of fire immolation (*homa*) and consecration (*abhiṣeka*) rituals for the control of the weather and celestial phenomena, rituals for prolonging the emperor's life, and rituals for the salvation of the dynastic ancestors. He further developed a sumptuous liturgy of state protection, which allowed him to respond to the demands of the government for the sacralization of imperial sovereignty. His remarkable career depended less on insti-

tutional affiliation than on personal recognition. Accorded honors, titles, official rank, and fiefs, he consecutively sustained relationships with Emperors Xuanzong, Suzong, and Daizong, which were shaped by interests as diverse as the historical circumstances of their reigns and by rather individual factors that are difficult to assess, involving, for example, differences in age, loyalty, and friendship.

Known to the court as a disciple of Vajrabodhi who had been assigned to carry out rituals preventing drought and to care for a fatally ill princess (Weinstein 1987b, 55), Amoghavajra was ordered by Xuanzong to pray for rain and to grant him *abhiṣeka* soon after his return to Chang'an in 746. As reward, Amoghavajra received the purple robe (*ziyi* 紫衣), the most prestigious object that could be bestowed upon a monk by an emperor. Alluding to the initial bestowal of the purple robe on the Daoist priest Wang Yuanzhi 王遠知 (510–635 C.E.) in 620 for his contribution to the foundation of the Tang dynasty, the honor represented the double function of monk and official who held the right to participate in government assemblies and to access the imperial chapel as well as the Government Hall (Forte 2003). Emulating a coronation ritual similar to the investiture of a prince into state affairs, the *abhiṣeka* referred to the prerogative of the Brahmanic priest to confirm the legitimacy of the king and bestow sanctity upon him (see Strickmann 1990). This symbolic interaction institutionalized the mutual recognition between the Son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子) and the *ācārya* with reference to state formation, and helped to define the stage on which Amoghavajra was justified in taking further steps toward the creation of a Buddhist state.

The apocryphal *Scripture on Perfect Insight for Humane Kings* became a seminal text in this regard. Xuanzong commanded Amoghavajra to lecture on the earlier version (*Renwang boreboluomi jing* 仁王般若波羅密經, *T.* 245, d. late fifth century, falsely ascribed to Kumārajīva, 344–413 C.E.; cf. *T.* 2035.49:456a). Years later, Amoghavajra initiated a new “translation” of an allegedly expanded version; in fact, this re-translation was a matter of thoroughly rewriting the earlier text in order to give reasons for a grand ritual of state protection (*T.* 246; cf. Orzech 1998; *T.* 2120.52:831b). He introduced the notion of the “wheel of instruction and command” (*jiaoling lun* 教令論), proper for wrathful deities such as the *vidyārāja* Acala (Budong Mingwang 不動明王), which promised control over disorder and destruction to the enemies of the Dharma (Orzech 2006a).

Amoghavajra established Acala as a basic deity after he was detained in Chang'an during the An Lushan Rebellion; he secretly performed rituals to extirpate the usurpers and communicated sensitive information in support of the Tang loyalists (Chou 1945, 294–95; Orzech 1998, 141–42). In 759, soon after the restoration of the Tang, Amoghavajra was called to consecrate Emperor Suzong as a *cakravartin*, confirming the unstable reign of the Son of Heaven by reference to Buddhist notions of universal sovereignty. Likewise, the sudden death of the Uighur commander Pugu Huairen and the subsequent split of the Tibetan-Uighur military alliance that threatened the Tang in 765 were interpreted as the results of Amoghavajra's ritual command of Acala (Peterson 1979, 489–91). Emperor Daizong ordered over one hundred monks to be stationed in the palace to perform state protection rituals whenever a threat occurred, and further ordered that a copy of the *Scripture on Perfect Insight for Humane Kings* must be carried ahead of the emperor whenever he left the palace (Gernet 1995, 291–92). Amoghavajra had free access to the inner palace and was allowed to dispute the authority of ministers; he enjoyed support from chief ministers, eunuchs, and military commanders such as Wang Jin 王縉 (700–782 C.E.), Yu Chaoen 魚朝恩 (722–770 C.E.), Du Hongjian 杜鴻漸 (709–769 C.E.), and Yuan Cai 元載 (d. 770 C.E.). Such men, who were competing for influence on court politics, were eager to become his allies, and accordingly they also supported the construction of chapels and altars dedicated to Amoghavajra's ritual projects (Nakata 2006).

In 767, Amoghavajra initiated the ordination of thirty-seven monks for repeated rituals, referring to the Vajradhātu Mandala and its thirty-seven basic deities. These rituals emulated the “cosmocracy” of the Buddha Vairocana, the omniscient and omnipotent overlord reified in configurations of divine force accessible to the *ācārya*. Charged with “numinous empowerment,” the function of the *ācārya* was to evoke these deities in order to “establish the state as a field of merit” (T. 2120.52:835b21–c9; Orzech 1998, 161). The emperor in turn was obliged to protect the Dharma through government-sponsored maintenance of sacred sites, tax exemptions for monasteries, prohibitions against offending members of the clergy, and other measures in support of Buddhist institutions. Consequently, in 768, Emperor Daizong ordered his ministers, military commanders, and eunuch attendants to receive the *abhīṣeka* from Amoghavajra, whose rituals had become an

apotheosis of mutual recognition between the Son of Heaven and his *ācārya*: the former was granted sanctity while the latter gained factual power.

In 769, Amoghavajra was allowed to establish Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī as the official tutelary deity to be worshiped all over the country, two years after the costly completion of the palatial Golden Monastery (Jinge si 金閣寺) on Mt. Wutai, the site Amoghavajra had chosen to become the center of this cult (Weinstein 1987b, 79–82). He was vested with the title State Preceptor (*guoshi* 國師), and subsequently, by imperial decree, his scriptures were distributed among the Buddhist clergy to be memorized and recited.

Amoghavajra's emphasis on ritual expertise can be qualified as an "expertocratic instrumentalism" based on generic relations between the warring state, social disorder, and occult pragmatics. The Son of Heaven's readiness to rely on a ritual expert implementing "techniques" in conjunction with the demands of the military elite was legitimized by the unspoken premise that imperial sovereignty could no longer be grounded in moral wisdom, legal measures, and traditional notions of universal order alone. Triggered by the social and political disintegration following the An Lushan Rebellion, the "expertocratic" strain also referred to a conceptual shift in imperial sovereignty, inasmuch as it reflected the crisis of its mythological foundation. The legitimacy of the Son of Heaven was no longer deemed self-evident and therefore had to be reconfirmed by divine force, initially conceived of as being beyond the immediate reach of human influence. Amoghavajra's achievement was to position ritual practice as a technique by which such force could be manipulated—not only for apotropaic ends but also to validate the legitimacy of imperial sovereignty. In other words, Amoghavajra's ritual expertise anticipated the insight that imperial order was constituted by human action.

#### *Amoghavajra's Translations and Redactions of Scriptures*

Amoghavajra's extensive and eclectic body of scriptures superseded traditional standards of textual transmission, translation, and exegesis. According to his own account, he translated "one hundred and twenty odd fascicles, seventy-seven works" (*T.* 2061.50:713a29; cf. list in *T.* 2120.52:839a–840a, dated 771 C.E.), though the number of texts ascribed to him is significantly larger. His translations of the *STTS* (*T.* 865), the *Adhyardhaśatikā* (*T.* 243), and his redaction of the

*Renwang jing* (T. 246) were fundamental not only in terms of doctrine; apart from a few commentaries, Amoghavajra's work mainly consists of ritual manuals and rearrangements of chapters related to ritual knowledge, indicating his readiness to dissolve the traditional competence of transmission and translation into editorial work and textual pragmatics. A certain portion of the rather technical texts was possibly fabricated by Amoghavajra's disciples. The scriptures ascribed to Amoghavajra, as they are included in the *Taishō* edition, can be roughly classified as follows:

- 1) Translations and redactions of sūtras and related chapters: *Adhyardhaśatikā* (T. 243); *Renwang jing* (T. 246, redaction); *Bhadracaripraṇidāna* (T. 297); *Gaganagaṅḡa-paripṛcchā* (T. 404); *Gandayvūha* (T. 682); *Mahāmāyūrī* (T. 982); *Mahāmegha* (T. 989); the first chapter of the *STTS* (T. 865); *Guhya tantra* (T. 897); sūtras and chapters devoted to Mañjuśrī (T. 319, 469) and Kṣitigarbha (T. 413); teachings on the *tathāgatagarbha* (T. 667), the wish-fulfilling gem (T. 961) and the Buddha's relics (T. 962, 1022);
- 2) Ritual manuals and arrangements for ritual needs: Ritual manuals referring to the *MVS* (T. 856, 857, 861) and the *STTS* (T. 870, 873, 878–880); manuals for *homa* (T. 908, 909); rituals dedicated to various buddhas such as Akṣobhya (T. 921), Bhaiṣajyaguru (T. 924), Amitāyus (T. 930), Lokeśvarāja (T. 931), Amitābha (T. 933), and to several forms of the *buddhoṣṇīṣa* (T. 944, 948, 950, 953–955, 957, 963, 972); rituals of the *Mahāmāyūrī* (T. 983) and the *Mahāmegha* (T. 990); rituals for Avalokiteśvara in his various forms and the Lotus family (T. 1031, 1040, 1056, 1064, 1066, 1067, 1069, 1085, 1086), deities such as Hayagrīva (T. 1072), Cundā (T. 1076), Tārā (T. 1102), Vajrasattva (T. 1119, 1120, 1124, 1125), Samantabhadra (T. 1122, 1123), Vajrarāja (T. 1132), Vajrāyus (T. 1133–1136), Prajñāpāramitā (T. 1151), Mahāpratisarā (T. 1153, 1155), Vasudhārā (T. 1163), the eight great bodhisattvas (T. 1167), Mañjuśrī in his various forms (T. 1171, 1172, 1174–1177, 1195); rituals for *vidyārājas* and related deities such as Acala (T. 1199–1201), Trailokyavijaya (T. 1209, 1210), Yamāntaka (T. 1214), Vajrakumāra (T. 1222); rituals for miscellaneous deities such as Vaiśravaṇa (T. 1244, 1247–1250), Mārīcī (T. 1255–1258), Hārītī (T. 1260, 1261), Gaṇeśa (T. 1266, 1271), Garuḡa (T. 1276), Maheśvara (T. 1277), the twelve tutelary deities (T. 1297), celestial deities (T. 1297, 1299); manuals describing rites for the dead and

ancestral spirits (T. 1313, 1315, 1318, 1319); and rites for curing illness (T. 1323, 1324);

- 3) Tracts and commentaries by Amoghavajra, many of which are classified as translations: Commentaries concerning the ritual praxis of the *STTS* (T. 869, 871, 872, 874) and Vajrabodhi's translation of the *STTS* (T. 1798); tracts on the function of *dhāraṇīs* (T. 902, 903), on practicing the Mahāyāna (T. 1653), the teaching of yoga (T. 1665), and the precepts for initiation (T. 915); commentaries on rituals of the *Renwang jing* (T. 994–996), rituals of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* (T. 1000, 1001), rituals of the *Adhyardhaśatikā* (T. 1003, 1004), the ritual praxis for Avalokiteśvara and the Lotus family (T. 1030, 1032, 1033, 1041, 1042), and the ritual praxis for Ākāśagarbha (T. 1146).

Finally, there is Yuanzhao's *Collection of Documents* (T. 2120), comprising Amoghavajra's correspondence with the Tang emperors.

### 33. PRAJÑA

Paul Copp

Prajña<sup>1</sup> (Boruo 般若, alt. Bolaruo 般刺若; 744–ca. 810) was perhaps the last great translator of Buddhist texts in the Tang period—certainly, he was the last to receive the full support of the Tang imperial house. Most famous for his translation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha sūtra*, the *Da fang-guang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, in 40 *juan* (T. 293), he also translated important works such as the *Dasheng liqu liu boluomi jing* 大乘理趣六波羅蜜多經 (in 10 *juan*; T. 261), a text on the six perfections of Buddhist practice celebrated in part for its section containing *dhāraṇīs* and *mantras*, as well as other texts of Buddhist incantation practice.

Biographical sources state that Prajña was from Kapiśā (in present-day Afghanistan) and that at age seven he conceived the desire to follow the Buddhist path, left his home village at age fourteen and traveled south to India in order to seek Buddhist teachings, and took full ordination there at age twenty.<sup>2</sup> His early years as a fully ordained monk are said to have focused on the study of Sarvāstivādin texts, the *Abidharmakośa*, and the *Mahāvibhāṣā*. At age thirty-three he is said to have entered the great monastic university of Nālandā, where his studies centered especially on the *Vimsatikā*, the *Yogacārabhūmi*, the *Madhyānta-vibhāga*, the *Vajracchedikā*, and the basic “Five Sciences” of medieval Indian education.

After leaving Nālandā and, it is said, spending nearly two decades studying at the eight great stūpas of India, Prajña began his studies in the esoteric Buddhist tradition. The *Song gaoseng zhuan* reports that once he had “heard that *Vidyādhara* traditions (*chiming* 持明) were honored in southern India he journeyed there to search for a teacher,” meeting a consecration master (*guanding shi* 灌頂師) named \*Dharmayaśa (Damoyeshe 達摩耶舍; dates unknown), who taught

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<sup>1</sup> The proper transliteration of his name remains uncertain, whether “Prajñā” (“wisdom”) or “Prajña” (“wise”). My choice in this essay is highly tentative. Yoritomi 1979, 1–109 has an excellent treatment of Prajña.

<sup>2</sup> *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, T. 2061.50:716a; and *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄, T. 2157.55:893a.

him the esoteric “yoga techniques” (*yuqie fa* 瑜伽法) of *mandalas*, the “three mysteries” (*sanmi* 三密), personal protection (*hushen* 護身), and seals (*yinqi* 印契, i.e., *mudrās* and incantations). Prajña is said to have learned more than thirty-five hundred verses of scripture detailing these rites within a year.<sup>3</sup>

The account of his career in Yuanzhao’s 圓照 (fl. late eighth c.) *New Bibliography of the Buddhist Teachings* (*Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*) names the subject of his studies slightly differently. At one point it quotes Prajña stating that he “had from an early age contemplated the secret store” (*guan mizang* 觀祕藏), a term that, though it can refer simply to the Buddhist teachings in general, seems in this case clearly to indicate specifically the religion’s incantatory and esoteric traditions.<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere the text reports that Prajña “studied the yoga teachings and ascended the consecration altar, learning all the *mantras* of the Five Buddha-Families.”<sup>5</sup>

Pending deeper research into Prajña’s work and religious career, caution must be urged: the texts he is associated with in extant sources do not seem to bear close relation to the two traditions of high esoteric Buddhism present in late eighth-century China (or elsewhere), those associated with the *Vajraśekhara* and the *Mahāvairocana* scriptures. Instead, Prajña’s texts are for the most part in the older pre-tantric traditions of *dhāraṇī* practice, traditions that were also known by the terms “*vidyādhara*” and “secret store.”

Prajña’s biographers report that he had long desired to travel to China (Zhina 支那) because it was thought to be the adopted home of the great Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Wenshu 文殊). Thus, having completed his studies in (broadly) esoteric forms of Buddhism, Prajña set out for China by sea. The journey, said to have been plagued by multiple setbacks, took in all about twenty years and he arrived in Guangzhou in 781.<sup>6</sup> His translation activities began almost immediately with his translation of the *Dasheng liqu liu boluomi jing*, assisted by the Persian Nestorian Christian priest “Adam,” or Jingjing 景淨, author of the famous “Nestorian Stele” of Chang’an. As Stanley Weinstein has noted, the translation they produced was a failure: “As might be expected, the translation, executed by an Indian Buddhist who at the

<sup>3</sup> *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061.50:716a–b.

<sup>4</sup> *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*, T. 2157.55:893a.

<sup>5</sup> *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*, T. 2157.55:895c.

<sup>6</sup> Weinstein 1987b, 97; *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*, T. 2157.55:892a.



time knew little Chinese and a Persian Nestorian who could not read Sanskrit, was something of a fiasco.”<sup>7</sup>

A new translation was commissioned by the Tang emperor Dezong 德宗 (r. 780–805), with Prajña now aided by Yuanzhao, the eminent scholar-monk and prominent disciple of the then recently deceased esoteric master Amoghavajra. Dezong honored Prajña by personally composing a preface for the scripture and named him “Master of the Tripitaka.” This act, as Weinstein notes, recognized Prajña as “the leading translator at the court of Dezong.”<sup>8</sup> As Amoghavajra had done before him, Prajña returned to India in search of texts, returning to Chang’an in 792 with, as Weinstein notes, “a sizable collection of Tantric scriptures, many of which he subsequently translated.”<sup>9</sup>

Aside from the two abovementioned works, extant translations attributed to Prajña include the *Dasheng bensheng xindi guanjing* 大乘本生心地觀經 (T. 159), the *Bore boluomiduo xinjing* 般若波羅蜜多心經 (T. 253), the *Da huayan zhangzhe wen fo naluoyan li jing* 大花嚴長者問佛那羅延力經 (T. 547), the *Zhu fo jingjie she zhenshi jing* 諸佛境界攝真實經 (T. 868), the *Shouhu guo jie zhu tuoluoni jing* 守護國界主陀羅尼經 (T. 997), and the *Foshuo zaota yanming gongde jing* 佛說造塔延命功德經 (T. 1026).

<sup>7</sup> Weinstein 1987b, 98.

<sup>8</sup> Weinstein 1987b, 98.

<sup>9</sup> Weinstein 1987b, 98. See above for the need for caution in characterizing these texts as “tantric.”

ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN THE PROVINCES AND  
NEIGHBORING REGIONS



34. DUNHUANG AND CENTRAL ASIA  
(WITH AN APPENDIX ON DUNHUANG  
MANUSCRIPT RESOURCES)

Neil Schmid

Situated on the Silk Route on the northwest frontier of the Chinese Empire, the oasis of Dunhuang served as a pivotal site for trade and cultural interaction for over two millennia. This unique position enabled the creation of a sacred site of startling brilliance—the nearby Mogao Grottoes (Mogao ku 莫高窟). These 492 Buddhist cave-shrines date from the fourth to fourteenth centuries and contain a wealth of murals and iconography chronicling changes in belief and practice.<sup>1</sup> The discovery and subsequent dispersal of a vast cache of manuscripts in the early twentieth century brought worldwide attention to the Mogao Caves. Hidden behind a wall in the Mogao grottoes in the year 1000 were over 45,000 manuscripts together with paintings, statuary, and ritual paraphernalia.<sup>2</sup> Buddhist texts predominate but there are also documents representing religions from Nestorian Christianity to Daoism; the types of manuscripts range from writing exercises and

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<sup>1</sup> The Mogao caves (Mogao ku 莫高窟, “Caves of Unparalleled Heights”), also known as the Caves of a Thousand Buddhas (*Qianfo dong* 千佛洞), consist of a total of 735 caves divided into northern and southern sections. The northern portion of 243 caves was used by monks as living quarters and for religious practice. The 492 caves of the southern section are shrines in various scales created by individuals, families, and associations (*she* 社). The greater Dunhuang area (Dunhuang prefecture) contains four other major sets of caves dating from roughly the same period: The Western Caves of a Thousand Buddhas (*Xi qianfo dong* 西千佛洞), the Eastern Caves of a Thousand Buddhas (*Dong qianfo dong* 東千佛洞), the Five-Temple Grottoes (*Wuge miao shiku* 五個廟石窟), and the Yulin Caves (*Yulin shiku* 榆林石窟) in nearby Anxi 安西 county. The use of the term “Dunhuang” in this entry refers to all five sets of caves, with individual caves designated by their location and number within that location, i.e., Mogao cave 217. Research on Dunhuang exists as its own field of study (“Dunhuangology” *Dunhuangxue* 敦煌學) and there are voluminous resources. Whitfield, et al. 2000, Zhang 2000, and Fan 2010 provide general overviews of Dunhuang and its materials. Enoki 1980 furnishes a detailed historical survey of Dunhuang, while Rong 1996 and Yang Jidong 1998 discuss the Tang and Song eras, the periods most relevant to the study of esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang. The most extensive single source of information on all things Dunhuang is Ji Xianlin, ed. 1998.

<sup>2</sup> For a presentation of the different hypotheses for the nature of the cache and its concealment, see Rong 1999–2000.

circulars for lay associations to monastic economic records, many of which contain colophons and marginalia providing vital information about a wide array of people and their activities.

All these materials are unrivaled in China in terms of their breadth, complexity, and, perhaps most important, their immediacy. Textured by the richness and nuances of daily life, they allow us to situate religious practices within a complex web of human interaction—sociopolitical, ethnic, historical, and aesthetic. As such, the site establishes a sort of ethnographic collection unparalleled for the study of medieval esoteric Buddhism.

The preservation of materials no longer extant elsewhere, in conjunction with extensive information on their contexts of use, make Dunhuang a point of departure to better assess the conceptualization of esoteric Buddhism and its role in medieval China. The investigation of esoteric materials has been slow to develop in comparison to other Dunhuang materials. Yet the divergent uses of esoteric imagery, texts, and rituals not only counter the distinction between “pure” and “mixed” esoteric Buddhism promulgated in later Shingon scholarship, but also challenge the notion of the tradition as circumscribed by ritualistic magic directed toward enlightenment and worldly success.<sup>3</sup> The use of esoteric materials for immediate gain and enlightenment is certainly present at Dunhuang, but a range of materials—texts, rituals, images, and the caves themselves—also clearly indicates that esoteric Buddhism was fundamental to mitigating concerns about rebirth and the postmortem fate of one’s ancestors. In this sense, the tradition becomes intimately connected with filial duties and Pure Land goals.

The role of esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang and surrounding areas is perhaps best exemplified in the contrast between, on the one hand, the rarity of cave-shrines devoted entirely to esoteric pictorial programs and, on the other, the thorough integration of esoteric materials into everyday religious life. Of the 492 caves at Mogao, only three contain interiors completely devoted to esoteric iconography, caves 14 from the late Tang, and caves 95 and 465 from the Yuan period.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Orzech 1989 and Sharf 2002a have offered trenchant critiques of the Shingon tradition’s exertion of prototype effects on the study of esoteric Buddhism.

<sup>4</sup> The contents of the Mogao caves as well as the Western Caves of a Thousand Buddhas, the Eastern Caves of a Thousand Buddhas, the Five-Temple Grottoes, and the Yulin Caves are listed in Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed. 1996. The following volumes provide extensive collections of photographs of the caves’ contents: Dunhuang yanjiusuo, ed. 1980–1982, Duan Wenjie 段文杰, et al., 1999–; Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed.

Nearby Yulin caves 3 and 4, from the Xixia and Yuan periods respectively, also exhibit programs consecrated to esoteric and tantric deities. Another cave, Mogao 148, contains a unique mixture of exoteric pictorial motifs and esoteric sculpture.<sup>5</sup> Thus, rather than dominating the artistic and ritual programs of cave-shrines or being entirely excluded, the vast majority of caves integrate esoteric materials into their overall configurations, analogous in many ways to the use of those materials in everyday life.<sup>6</sup>

Esoteric images appear in caves paintings from the early Tang (618–704) onward, primarily as depictions of protective deities found in the antechambers and corridors of the caves, as well as along the eastern wall.<sup>7</sup> Among the most common are various forms of Avalokiteśvara, such as the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara (Ekādaśamukha; Shiyi mian Guanshiyin 佛說十一面觀世音), Amoghapāśa (Bukong juansuo 不空絹索), Cintāmaṇicakra Avalokiteśvara (Guanshiyin Ruyi lun 觀世音菩薩如意輪), and the Thousand-armed and Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara (Sahasrabhujāryāvalokiteśvara; Qianshou qianyan Guanshiyin pusa 千手千眼觀世音菩薩). Vajrasattva (Jin'gangsatuo 金剛薩埵), Mahāmāyūrī (Kongque mingwang 孔雀明王), and the Thousand-armed Mañjuśrī (Manshushili qian bi qian bo 曼殊室利千臂千鉢) also appear in these locations.<sup>8</sup>

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1997; Zhongguo bihua quanji 1989–1991; and Zhongguo meishu quanji 1985. Images of the caves' interiors can also be found online through ARTstor database.

<sup>5</sup> For a study of this cave, see Sonya S. Lee 2010. She notes that with its mixture of esoteric and exoteric materials, Mogao cave 148 exhibits “relative comprehensiveness in encapsulating what Buddhism meant in Dunhuang at the time” (Sonya S. Lee 2010, 199).

<sup>6</sup> The interior of the Mogao caves mirroring ritual spaces outside the caves is discussed in Schmid 2006.

<sup>7</sup> For an extensive list of deities, paintings, dates, and locations within the caves, see Sørensen 1991–1992b, 335–39. Peng 1996 and 1999 discuss the use of the Thousand-armed and Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara and Amoghapāśa images respectively in such contexts, while his volume on esoteric art at Dunhuang (Peng, ed. 2003) provides extensive images of esoteric materials. For seminal research on Dunhuang esoteric art, see Su 1989a and 1989b.

<sup>8</sup> Seldom found elsewhere in China, images depicting the Thousand-armed Mañjuśrī appear in at least 16 caves at Mogao. The deity is associated with the *Scripture of the Mahāyāna Yoga of the Adamantine Ocean, Mañjuśrī with a Thousand Arms and Thousand Bowls, the King of the Great Teachings* (*Dacheng yujia jin'gang xinghai Manshushili qianbei qianbo dajiaowang jing* 大乘瑜伽金剛性海曼殊室利千臂千鉢大教王經, also known as the *Scripture of a Thousand Bowls Qianbo jing* 千鉢經; T. 1177), attributed to Amoghavajra. Michelle Wang 2008 examines the use of the image in Mogao cave 14. For a study of the Thousand-armed Mañjuśrī, see Gimello 1997.

The placement of esoteric deities in the corridors and antechambers of the Dunhuang caves highlights their role of powerful facilitators in everyday life for the well being of individuals, family, communities, and the nation. *Dhāraṇī* literature, the textual genre connected with these and other deities, also comes to include sets of related ritual practices and additional images and objects, all of which together forms the most extensive body of esoteric materials from Dunhuang.<sup>9</sup> The cache of manuscripts contains numerous collections of *dhāraṇī* that are smaller and unorganized compared to canonical compilations such as Atikūṭa's *Collection of Coded Instructions* (*Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經; *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha sūtra*, T. 901). Most of these manuscripts date from the ninth and tenth centuries and contain invaluable information about their creation, use, and functions.

Such collections of seemingly unrelated scriptures, which are by no means limited to *dhāraṇī*, are especially significant because they likely represent liturgical traditions. Termed “chain scriptures” (*lianxie jing* 連寫經) by contemporary scholars, they tend to lack dedicatory colophons and are typically “apocrypha.”<sup>10</sup> A fascinating example of such an assemblage is S.2498, which consists of 29 *dhāraṇī*-like incantations

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<sup>9</sup> Lin and Shen 2000a, 2000b, 2003 provide a selection of edited esoteric manuscripts from Dunhuang. Li Xiaorong 2003 surveys Dunhuang esoteric Buddhist texts in her volume *Dunhuang mijiao wenxian lungao*. This work includes titles and discussion of texts and manuscripts omitted in the two collections by Lin and Shen (2000a, 2000b, 2003), which only take account of documents from the Stein, Pelliot, and Beijing collections, omitting those from collections in St. Petersburg and China. Li also contains a large number of edited materials. Numerous edited esoteric scriptures from Dunhuang are also found in T. 85, however caution is necessary due to the large number of textual errors. Dunhuang manuscripts in general are divided among a number of major and minor collections. Primary collections are located in London (“Stein Collection”), Paris (“Pelliot Collection”), Beijing, and St. Petersburg. See the appendix for a list of catalogues, reproductions, and edited compilations. Many Dunhuang and other Central Asian manuscripts are now digitized and available online through the International Dunhuang Project (IDP): <http://idp.bl.uk/>. The site also includes an extensive amount of ritual and visual materials from archaeological sites along the Silk Road beyond that of Dunhuang.

<sup>10</sup> This term was coined in Makita 1976, 39. Examples include P.3915, P.3920; S.5506 S.5532, S.5533, S.5537, S.5607, S.5608, etc. Drège 1996 discusses the various formats of such compilations, notably the butterfly and *pothi* styles that are characteristic of these manuscripts. Kuo 2000, 694–95, situates these compilations within the larger context of apocryphal texts and their various usages at Dunhuang, while Mollier 2008, 16–17, 113–14, demonstrates the format, contents, and ritual use they share with similar Daoist texts.

together with a wide range of ritual texts and images.<sup>11</sup> The variation among genre markers in such close proximity is striking and, given the possibility of an underlying logic to the collection as a whole, deserve close study. Such markers include “talismanic seal/*dhāraṇī*” (*fuyin* 符印), “spell *dhāraṇī*” (*tuoluoni zhou* 陀羅尼咒), “spirit incantations” (*shenzhou* 神咒), “*dhāraṇī* of the heart” (*xinzhou* 心咒), mantra (*zhenyan* 真言), “spell-seals” (*zhouyin* 咒印), and “text for unbinding spells” (*jiezhou wen* 解咒文), among others. The manuscript also contains numerous talismans, as well as an illustration for setting up a “superlative mantra altar” (*zunsheng zhou tan* 尊勝咒壇).<sup>12</sup> Another example of a Dunhuang text found in a large number of manuscripts as part of chain scriptures, though with a Daoist analogue, is the *Scripture of Incantations of the Eight Yang* (*Bayang shenzhou jing* 八陽神咒經, T. 2897).<sup>13</sup>

Dunhuang esoteric apocrypha such as the *Scripture of Incantations of the Eight Yang* and *Scripture for the Conjuration of Bewitchments, Preached by the Buddha* (*Foshuo zhoumei jing* 佛說咒媚經) provide points of comparison with Daoist materials and demonstrate an ongoing dialogue between the two religions, an extensive concern for sorcery, and the similar use of invocations and *dhāraṇīs* to counter such maledictions.<sup>14</sup> In keeping with tantric modalities of the ritual subjugation of enemies (*abhiçāraka*), the *Zhoumei jing* calls for the use of violence through the magical use of effigies, invocations, talismans, and spells.<sup>15</sup> Yet, at the same time, the *Scripture for the Conjuration*

<sup>11</sup> The *dhāraṇīs* of S.2498 are listed in Li Xiaorong 2003, 299–303. Michelle Wang 2008, 123–24, ff. also discusses this manuscript and its relation to other collections of *dhāraṇīs* and to Mogao cave 14.

<sup>12</sup> See below for a discussion of diagrams related to the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī sūtra*. Robson 2008, Mollier 2008, 55–133, and Copp (Chapter Three, unpublished manuscript) discuss the Buddhist use of talismans (*fu* 符).

<sup>13</sup> Mollier (2009:10–22) situates this text and its Daoist version, the *Scripture of the Eight Yang for Amending, Revealed by the Most High Lord Lao* (*Taishang Laojun shuo buxie bayang jing* 太上老君說補謝八陽經, DZ 635) in relation to chain scriptures and the penchant for parallels among Buddhist and Daoist in their “fight for hegemony in the domains of scripture and ritual” (2008, 10).

<sup>14</sup> Mollier 2008, 55–99 provides both a translation and a thorough discussion of the *Zhoumei jing* and its Daoist analogue the *Scripture for Unbinding Curses, Revealed by the Most High Lord Lao, Taishang Laojun shuo jieshi zhouzu jing* 太上老君說解釋咒詛經 (DZ 652).

<sup>15</sup> Mollier 2008, 84–89 details the use of effigies as “assassins” and points out the links with kindred scriptures by Amoghavajra, e.g., *Jin’gang yaosha zhennuwang xizai daweshen yan niansong yigui* 金剛藥叉瞋怒王息災大威神驗念誦儀軌, T. 1220 and



of *Bewitchments* was often copied together with nine other Buddhist sūtras, a practice done in the hope of assuring the deceased's rebirth in the Pure Land (in the context of the "feast of the seven sevens," *qiqi zhai* 七七齋), as in the case of Zhai Fengda's 翟奉達 (fl. 902–966) efforts for his deceased wife, for example.<sup>16</sup>

Similar to esoteric images integrated into the pictorial programs of Dunhuang caves, *dhāraṇī* and related materials appear in conjunction with sūtras. An example of this is manuscript no. 5444, dated 905 from the Stein collection, containing Kumārajīva's version of the *Diamond Sūtra* (*Jin'gang bore boluomi jing* 金剛般若波羅蜜經, T. 235), which is embedded in an esoteric liturgical format otherwise excluded from canonical sūtras.<sup>17</sup> The scripture begins with an invocation of the eight diamond guardians of Vairocana, specifying the benefits of each, followed by a "ritual invocation" (*qiqingwen* 啓請文) frequently found as prefaces to *dhāraṇīs*. This brief ritual genre is significant for instantiating the efficacy of the scripture through its description of the recitation's results.<sup>18</sup> Closing the *Vajracchedikā* is a series of mantras, i.e., *Dashen zhenyan* 大身真言, *Suixin zhenyan* 隨心真言, and *Xinzhong xinzheng yan* 心中心真言.<sup>19</sup>

The manuscript ends with a colophon written by a layman: "In the second year of the Tianyou era 天祐 on the twenty-third of the fourth lunar month (May 29, 905) the hand of an eighty-two-year-old man wrote this sūtra in order to spread it among the faithful." Remarkably, this same elderly man goes on to write a total of four such texts,

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*Shengjiani fennu jin'gang tongzi pusa chengjiu yigui jing* 聖迦柅忿怒金剛童子菩薩成就儀軌經 (*Vajrakumāra tantra*), T. 1222.

<sup>16</sup> For an examination of the life of Zhai Fengda, a prominent local official, see Teiser 1994, 102–121. Teiser 1994, 102–117, Kuo 2000, 692–694, and Mollier 2008, 68–70 all examine the ten sutras copied.

<sup>17</sup> Although translated by Kumārajīva, the scripture is the first example of the *Diamond Sūtra* in 32 sections, a version which would become standard.

<sup>18</sup> See Copp, unpublished manuscript, chapter 5. Li 2003, 234–49 discusses this genre at length and also provides numerous edited invocation texts from Dunhuang manuscripts, especially those associated with the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī sūtra* (Li 2003, 56–64) and with the *Scripture of Great Compassion* (*Da cibe jing* 大慈悲經, T. 380) (Li 2003, 84–89).

<sup>19</sup> The first mantra appears in Amoghavajra's *Akṣobhyatahāgatādhyāyapūjākalpa* (*Achurulai niansong gongyang fa* 阿閼如來念誦供養法 (T. 921.19:19b). The same three mantras conclude other texts, though combined with additional mantras (e.g., S1846, "Liang Dynasty Mahāsattva Fu's Odes on the Diamond Sūtra" *Liangchao Fu dashi song Jin'gang jing* 梁朝傅大士頌金剛經 (T. 2732.85:8c) and P.2094, *Chisong Jin'gang jing lingyan gongde ji* 持誦金剛經靈驗功德記 (T. 2743.85:160a).

S.5534, S.5444, S.5451, and S.5669, the latter two in ink mixed with his blood.<sup>20</sup> Rather than being written for liturgical use as with the “chain scriptures,” these manuscripts were explicitly penned in an act of devotion for merit and transmission of the Dharma.

Among the variety of *dhāraṇī* texts, the most popular by far is the *Sūtra of the Superlative Dhāraṇī of the Buddha’s Crown* (*Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī sūtra*, *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經), and notably in the translation by Buddhapālita (Fotuoboli 佛陀波利, fl. late seventh century).<sup>21</sup> The success of this *dhāraṇī* can be attributed in part to its salvific powers and promise of rebirth in Pure Lands. Accordingly, it is integrated in the pictorial programs as a sūtra or transformation tableau (*jingbian* 經變, *bianxiang* 變相) of caves, on par with major scriptures such as the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Amitābha Sūtra* that depict Pure Lands.<sup>22</sup> A cave such as Mogao 148, on the other hand, offers a comprehensive collection of doctrines and images, including esoteric, which is representative of Tang-period Buddhism.<sup>23</sup>

Like other *dhāraṇī*, the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī* calls for the creation of *maṇḍalas* in order to establish a ritual space. Dunhuang provides rare examples of such preparatory drawings used as ritual diagrams in the construction of altars.<sup>24</sup> Drawings on S.2498 (figure 1), Bei 7682, and Stein painting 174 all show a highly similar design for such an altar,

<sup>20</sup> See Giles 1940, 319–21 for this manuscript and another copy of the *Diamond Sūtra*, S.5534, written in the same hand. All of these manuscripts have “butterfly” bindings, a form commonly used for liturgical texts. See Drège 1996 and Teiser 1992. Teiser 1994, 121–28 examines the same person and his copying of the *Scripture of the Ten Kings* at the age of eighty-five.

<sup>21</sup> For an analysis of this scripture and its contexts of use, see Copp, unpublished manuscript. Citing the text’s ubiquity medieval religious life, Liu Shufen 1996, 189, calls this scripture the most popular sūtra of the Tang period.

<sup>22</sup> Caves that contain the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī sūtra* are 217, 103, and 23 from the first half the of the eighth century, cave 31 from the second half of the eighth century, and caves 55 and 454 from the second half of the tenth century. For a discussion of these caves, see Shimono 2004, Wang Huimin 1991, Kuo 2006, and Schmid 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Lee 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Stein painting 174 and S.2498 are examples of such images related specifically to the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī*. Fraser 2004, 149–58, discusses preparatory drawings. Copp (unpublished manuscript, chapter four,) demonstrates how such diagrams also serve as the basis for amulets that in effect contain the power of the ritual space and its enactment. For an overview of esoteric ink on paper drawings, see Sha 2006, 398–432.

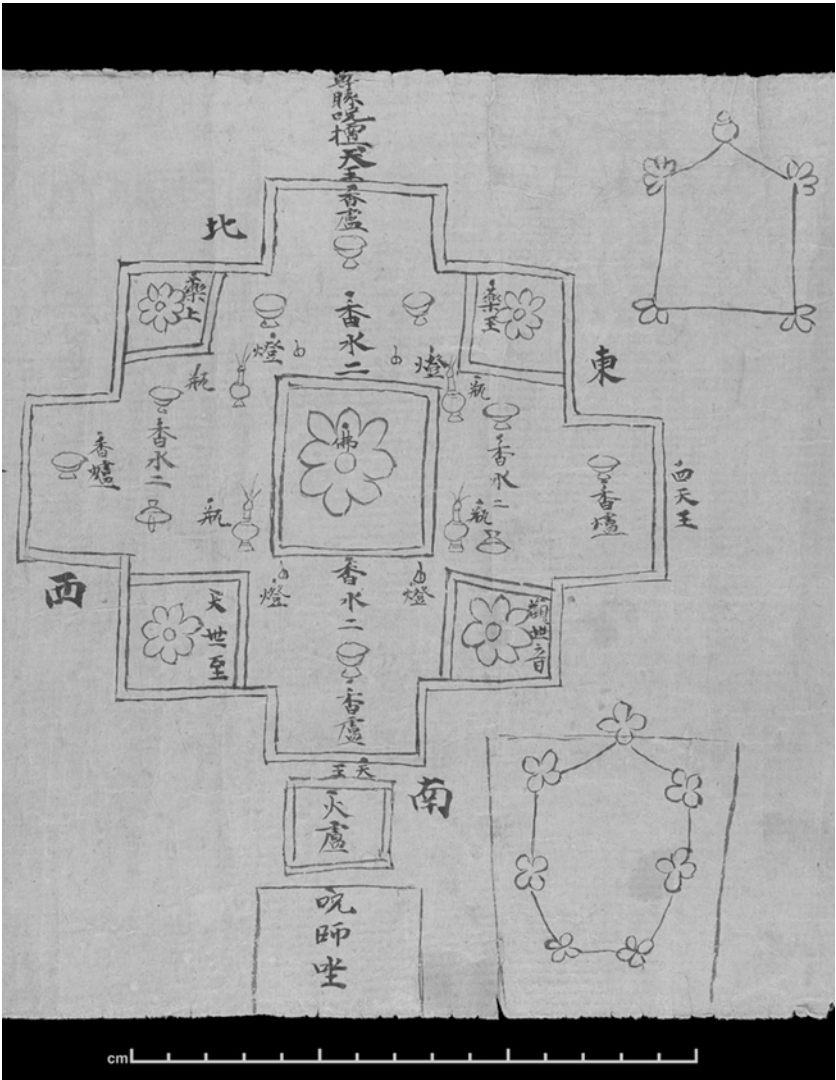


Figure 1. Superlative mantra altar diagram, Or.8210/S.2498r Copyright, the British Library Board. Image provided by the International Dunhuang Project (IDP). IDP is an international collaboration to make information and images of all manuscripts, paintings, textiles and artefacts from Dunhuang and archaeological sites of the Eastern Silk Road freely available on the Internet and to encourage their use through educational and research programmes. The image reproduced here of Or.8210/S.2498r can be freely accessed on the IDP website: <http://idp.bl.uk/>

complete with a setting for *homa* offerings as prescribed in Amoghavajra's translation of the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī sūtra*.<sup>25</sup>

Also of interest is that within mural paintings of the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī jingbian*, the *mandala* is shown in use, providing us with rare examples illustrating the normative use of such altars.<sup>26</sup>

The importance of the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī sūtra* at Dunhuang is further underscored by its likely relation to another *mandala*, the Mandala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas (*Bada pusa mantuluo* 八大菩薩曼荼羅) also current at Dunhuang.<sup>27</sup> The salvific powers of the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī sūtra* and other *dhāraṇīs* that offer the possibility of rebirth in paradisiacal realms no doubt appealed to a wide audience beyond the initiated.<sup>28</sup> It is not without significance that the earliest representations of Kṣitigarbha are found in conjunction with the eight bodhisattvas at Ajanta and Ellora.

Evidence from Dunhuang also demonstrates the complex use of mandalas for overlapping purposes; the rite of repentance (*chanhui* 懺悔), consecration (*guanding* 灌頂), and ordination (*jietan* 戒壇) could all use the same mandalas, in contrast to later Shingon differentiations between pure and mixed esoteric practices.<sup>29</sup> For example, multiple images of the Five Jina Buddhas (*wuzhi rulai* 五智如來) point to the popularity of this iconography at Dunhuang found across media, i.e., ink drawings: P2012, P4518, Stein Painting 173; portable paintings such as MG.17780, EO.3579, and EO.1148; and mural paintings

<sup>25</sup> I.e., *The Regulations for Reciting the Superlative Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Crown* (*Foding zunsheng tuoluoni yigui fa* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼念誦儀軌法, T. 972.19:364b. For a discussion of how this text differs with Sūbhakarasiṃha's (Shanwuwei 善無畏, 637–735) *Rite for the Yoga Ritual of the Superlative Buddha's Crown* (*Zunsheng Foding xiu yujia fa guiyi* 尊勝佛頂脩瑜伽法軌儀, T. 973), see Kuo 2006.

<sup>26</sup> Mogao caves 31 and 55 show the *mandala* in use. This feature along with the illustration of *dhāraṇī* lecterns that support the text become signature characteristics of the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī jingbian*, and permit the additional discovery of a hitherto misidentified painting of the scripture in cave 449 on the east wall. See Schmid 2010.

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of this *mandala*, see Michelle Wang 2008 and Zhiru 2007. Michelle Wang 2008, 82–101, examines at length this *mandala* in Mogao and discusses its association with the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī* through its insertion into the ritual manual ascribed to Amoghavajra, the *Rite for the Recitation of the Superlative Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Crown* (*Foding zunsheng tuoluoni niansong yigui fa* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼念誦儀軌法, T. 972). For a discussion of the Eight Bodhisattvas in Yulin cave 25, see Kapstein 2009.

<sup>28</sup> For a range of these paradisiacal realms in medieval China, see Schmid 2008.

<sup>29</sup> Kuo 1994.

found in Mogao caves 14, 432, and 462.<sup>30</sup> These mandalas appear to be associated with the *Scripture of the Vajra Pinnacle* (*Jin'gang jun jing* 金剛峻經)<sup>31</sup> and, although derived from South Asian tantric traditions, they were used in confession rites accessible to all social categories, including uninitiated laypeople.<sup>32</sup> Resources from Dunhuang thus provide details of materials employed in a wide range of ritual settings, the particulars of which may have been edited out through sectarian agendas elsewhere in East Asia.

The discussion above points to some directions in which Dunhuang materials offer possibilities across different media to open new ways of conceptualizing esoteric Buddhism. Although textual work has been done by pioneering scholars such as Ōmura Seigai, Osabe Kazuo, and Hirai Yūkei in Japan and Lin Shitian, Shen Guomei, and Li Xiaorong in China, the vast majority of manuscripts still remain unexamined in detail. Mining these textual resources in conjunction with the wealth of related materials at Dunhuang would establish a solid groundwork for comparative study of esoteric doctrines and practices across East Asia.

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<sup>30</sup> For overviews of the Five Jina Buddhas, see Sørensen 1991–1992, 291–94, and Wang 2008, 160–73.

<sup>31</sup> P.2197 “Vajra Lord Sūtra Vajra Uṣṇīṣa all Tathāgatas Body, the Secret Vajradhātu Great *Samaya* Cultivation Forty-two Types of Altar Methods Sūtra to be Used for Making the Ritual of the Great Vairocana Buddha Vajra Mind ground Followers Secret Method All Altar Methods” (*Jin'gang jun jing jin'gang ding yiqie rulai shen miao mimi Jin'gang jie da sanmeiye xiuxing sishierzhong tanfa jing zuoyong weiyi faze da Piluzhe'na fo jin'gang xindi famen mifa jie tanfa yize* 金剛峻經金剛頂一切如來深妙祕密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二種壇法經作用威儀法則大毘盧遮那佛金剛心地法門祕法戒壇法儀則). Translation in Sørensen 1991–1992, 291.

<sup>32</sup> Kuo 1998, 243

## APPENDIX: DUNHUANG MANUSCRIPT RESOURCES

## I. Esoteric Texts

## Catalogues of Esoteric Manuscripts and Texts

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## II. Catalogues of Dunhuang Manuscripts

See also “Reproductions” below. Each of the following works contains a catalogue of manuscripts.

## General

Shi Pingting 施萍婷 and Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院編, eds. 2000. *Dunhuang yishu zongmu suoyin xinbian* 敦煌遺書總目索引新編, 1st ed. Beijing Shi: Zhonghua shuju.

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Shang Lin 尚林, Fang Guangchang 方廣錫, and Rong Xinjiang 榮 新江. 1991. *Zhongguo suocang ‘Dagu shoujipin’ gaikuang* 中國所藏‘大活收集品’概況. Kyōto: Ryūkoku University Research Institute for Buddhist Culture.

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Wang Yiping 王倚平 and Tang Gangmao 唐剛卯. 2001. “Hubei sheng bowuguan cang Dunhuang jingjuan gaishu,” *Dunhuang Tulufan yanjiu* 敦煌吐魯番研究 5: 269–76.

Yang Ming 楊銘. 1996. “Chongqingshi bowuguan cang Dunhuang Tulufan xiejing mulu 重慶市博物館藏敦煌吐魯番寫經目錄,” *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1: 121–124.

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- . 1937. "Dated Chinese Manuscripts in the Stein Collection," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 9 (1): 1–25.
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## 35. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN THE NANZHAO AND DALI KINGDOMS (CA. 800–1253)

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

Although Sichuan and Yunnan share a common border—something that was also the case with the Nanzhao 南詔 kingdom (653–902) and the Tang—it is difficult to establish with any degree of accuracy to what extent their respective cultures exerted influence on each other, in particular during the early phase in the history of the Nanzhao. In the case of Esoteric Buddhism, it would seem that the general direction of influence took place as a north to south movement, that is, that the Sinitic Buddhist forms we encounter in the Nanzhao and Dali 大理 (937–1253) material are examples of imports from China. It remains a fact that the Nanzhao rulers adopted many elements from Chinese culture including the Chinese script, and Buddhist texts were exclusively transmitted through this medium. It is very problematic, indeed almost impossible, to trace any direct influence from the Nanzhao and Dali cultures on Sichuanese Buddhism, both during the Tang as well as later during the Song.<sup>1</sup> This being said it must also be acknowledged that the Nanzhao and Dali cultures were also heavily influenced by Burmese, Tibetan, and (indirectly) Indian cultural imports. Buddhism in medieval Yunnan, in particularly its religious art, was a hybrid, a conglomerate of influences from all the surrounding cultures expressed through the sensitivities of the local inhabitants, the Bai people. While Chinese was the official medium for writing, Sanskrit was also very important for the transmission of “magic language,” i.e., for spells and *dhāraṇīs*. And it would appear that a highly local form of Buddhism came into being as a result of these diverse factors. Although certain forms of exoteric Mahāyāna thrived in Yunnan under the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms, Esoteric Buddhism more than anything else

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<sup>1</sup> Howard 1989, 49–61 has attempted to show that some of the Tang Buddhist sites located in southwestern Sichuan were directly influenced from the south, i.e., from India via Yunnan, but does so without serious historical research to back it up. This theory has been refuted in Sørensen 1998, 33–67. For a study of the Nanzhao in relation to Sichuan and the Tang, see Backus 1981.

represents the heart of the local Buddhist tradition, and has continued to do so even after the area was colonized by the Chinese in the course of the Yuan and Ming dynasties.

*On the History of Esoteric Buddhism in the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms*

Buddhism may originally have entered the area covered by modern Yunnan province from India via Burma before the establishment of the Nanzhao kingdom in 653 C.E., but exactly when and how this took place we do not know for certain. A recorded history of Buddhism in the region only came about centuries later at a time when the Bai people had firmly consolidated themselves in the central and western parts of Yunnan.<sup>2</sup> After the founding of the Nanzhao, Buddhism entered its territory from several directions including Burma, Tibet, and of course Sichuan. Eventually Chinese Buddhism as imported from the north would leave its persuasive imprint on Nanzhao Buddhism, although the local tradition has continued as a blend of many influences (Xu 1979, 316–314). The foundation myth of the Nanzhao kingdom, which may have been formulated as late as the eighth century, is intimately linked with the figure of an Indian Buddhist monk who is credited with manifesting a series of miracles including the heralding of the Nanzhao and its founding clan.<sup>3</sup>

Material evidence from the late eighth to early ninth centuries, mainly in the form of Buddhist sculptures, reveals that various cults relating to Esoteric Buddhism were in vogue in the late Nanzhao period.<sup>4</sup> Prior to the establishment of the succeeding kingdom of Dali in 937 C.E., the appellation *ācārya* for monk practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism had come into use. This manner of appellation followed the norms of Esoteric Buddhism common during the mid- and late Tang.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For a survey of the early history of the Nanzhao kingdom in relation to Buddhism, see Qiu 1991b, 20–26 and Li Jiarui 1991, 348–363.

<sup>3</sup> For an extensive discussion of this issue, see Chapin 1970a, 5–41. The classical history of the Nanzhao kingdom can be found in the Ming compilation, the *Nanzhao yeshi huizheng* Mu, 1990. The primary concern of this work is to establish the royal genealogies of the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms and is largely based on Chinese sources. For recent research into the historical sources on the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms, see Lin 2006.

<sup>4</sup> For an excellent overview, see Xu 1979, 309–314.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Wang (2001, 97–224). Although largely without annotation, and relying somewhat uncritically on the late sources, this work contains by far the most qualified and comprehensive study of Esoteric Buddhism under the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms.

The close relationship that existed between the rulers of the Nanzhao and later Dali and Buddhism can be exemplified in the portraits of monks accompanying the ruler, such as is evident in group no. 2 at Mt. Shizhong, i.e., the niche for King Geluofeng 閣羅鳳 (r. 748–779) among the petroglyphs at Boshiwahei 博什瓦黑, and later during the Dali kingdom, when at least two kings formally abdicated in order to become monks while continuing to run the affairs of government (Chapin 1971, 109). The implication of this—of the king becoming an *ācārya* and vice versa—indicates the degree to which Buddhism and the Dali government were in a state of symbiosis.<sup>6</sup> In practice this meant that by the early eleventh century this relationship had reached such a level that the roles of ruler and his religious supervisor(s) were collapsed into one and the same person.<sup>7</sup>

The present-day Buddhist religion of the Bai, often identified with their officiating priests and referred to as *achali jiao* 阿吒力教, is a lay-based form of Esoteric Buddhism that by the time of the Ming traced itself back through thirty-two generations of masters to the Nanzhao (Wang 2001, 100–103). According to Wang Haitao 王海濤 (and others), Buddhism under the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms featured a dual Buddhist tradition consisting of monastics and married *achali*.<sup>8</sup> Wang bases this view on readings in Ming and other later sources. We should be skeptical, however, of the accuracy and historical value of the later sources for their descriptions of Buddhism under the Nanzhao and Dali periods. It is not unlikely that married priests existed during the late Dali (incidentally, the same is known for Buddhism in Korea during the mid-Koryŏ 高麗).<sup>9</sup> However, that these *achali* should have been representative for Buddhist practitioners during the Nanzhao and early Dali periods (prior to ca. 1100 C.E.) is a problematic claim

<sup>6</sup> A detailed discussion of this relationship can be found in Zhao 2006. Although this book has certain flaws, including a somewhat weak understanding of the historical sources and Esoteric Buddhism in particular, it is nevertheless useful for its focus on the relationship between royalty and Buddhism in Nanzhao (and Dali).

<sup>7</sup> When seen from the perspective of political power and religious mandate to the ruling house, one may correctly consider the *Long Scroll* an “official document” demonstrating the intimate, even symbiotic, relationship that existed between the Dali kings and (Esoteric) Buddhism.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, *Yunnan tujing zhi* 雲南圖經志 (Illustrated Gazetteer of Yunnan) compiled during the Jingtai reign (1450–1456) of the Ming and the voluminous *Yunnan tongzhi* 雲南通志 (Comprehensive Gazetteer of Yunnan) compiled during the early Yongzheng period (1721–1735) of the Qing.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Chen Jing 陳競 (fl. twelfth century), *Gaoli tujing* 高麗圖經 (Chen Jing 1983, 97).

in that there are no contemporary sources with which to substantiate it. The *Long Scroll* contains portraits of local Buddhist practitioners, including that of the Nanzhao King Mahārāja (Longshun; r. 877–897) depicted as an Indian *siddha* or *yogi*, and that of a layman with a red robe and black hat shown teaching a monk.<sup>10</sup> Could they possibly be the progenitors of the later *achali* religion?

What remains of the *achali* religion today can best be described as a distant echo of this tradition.<sup>11</sup> The *ācāryas* of the earlier periods were evidently ordained monks who transmitted their Esoteric Buddhist teaching in accordance with the established doctrine.

### *Esoteric Buddhist Literature from the Nanzhao and Dali*

Due to the recovery of many ancient Buddhist books in recent years, including many manuscripts and an extensive amount of surviving inscriptions in stone found in various locations in Yunnan, a relatively good understanding of the extent and type of Esoteric Buddhist literature that was in circulation during the late Nanzhao and Dali periods can now be had. In addition to many mainstream Esoteric Buddhist scriptures imported from Tang and Song China as found in the printed *Tripitakas*, a number of other texts from the Dali kingdom have been preserved in manuscript form.<sup>12</sup> Among the recovered material, mention can be made of the *Huguo cinan chao* 護國司南鈔 (Documents on Protecting the Country and Controlling the South)<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For these portraits, see Li Kunsheng 1999, 210 pl. 236 [far right], 213 pl. 237 [far right].

<sup>11</sup> This description is not intended as having a moral signification. It simply denotes that the way modern-day practitioners of the *achali* religion perform their rituals is a faint after-glow of the type of Esoteric Buddhism the Bai originally followed in past centuries. One indication of this is the inability of the majority of the present-day practitioners to read the original texts, including the liturgy and how it relates to Buddhist iconography. Today, most of this is being passed on orally, and has been so for quite some time, perhaps for longer than a century, with the resultant loss of meaning and ritual signification. For a discussion of the contemporary practices of the followers of the *achali* religion, see the overview in Yang 1999, 19–24. See also the short research note by McRae 1995. Note that in McRae's view the *achali* were originally married priests.

<sup>12</sup> For a survey of these manuscripts, including some epigraphical material, not all of which relates directly to Esoteric Buddhism, see Wang 2001, 221–225.

<sup>13</sup> Dated 894 C.E. (cf. Lan 1991, 296–297). It is kept in the Provincial Library of Yunnan. It has been suggested that the important *Renwang jing banruoboluomi jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經 (Scripture of the Benevolent Kings), T. 246, Amogha-

compiled by the monk Xuanjian 玄鑒 (n.d.); the *Da guanding yi* 大灌頂儀 (Ritual for the Grand *Abhiṣeka*);<sup>14</sup> the *Zhu fo pusa jin'gang deng qiqing yigui* 諸佛菩薩金剛等啓請儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for Invoking All Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Vajra[pālas], etc.),<sup>15</sup> a manuscript that was copied by the monk Zhao-ming 照明 (n.d.) and dated 1136 C.E.; the *Tongyong qiqing yigui* 通用啓請儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for Invocation);<sup>16</sup> *Mijiao sanshi yi* 密教散食儀 (Secret Teaching's Ritual for Bestowing Food);<sup>17</sup> *Mijiao qiqing cideng* 密教啓請次第 (Secret Teaching's Invocation in Successive Order);<sup>18</sup> *Mijiao guanxing cideng* 密教觀行次第 (Secret Teaching's Practice of Contemplation in Successive Order);<sup>19</sup> the *Dahei tianshen yigui* 大黑天神儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for [the Worship of] Mahākāla);<sup>20</sup> the *Da zizai suiuiu fomu qiqing yigui* 大自在隨求佛母啓請儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings for Inviting Mahāpratisarā, Mother of Buddhas);<sup>21</sup> the *Rāsmivimalaviṣuddhaprabhā-dhāraṇī sūtra* (T. 1024; a main source on the making of *stūpas* and pagodas); the *Jin'gangsadio huoweng tan shou guan yi* 金剛薩埵

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vajra's version, played an important part in formulating the close relationship that existed between the Nanzhao rulers and Buddhism as mentioned in the *Huguo cinan chao* (presently in the Provincial Library of Yunnan, Kunming). For a translation and detailed discussion of the *Renwang jing* in connection with kingship, see Orzech 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Kept in the Provincial Library of Yunnan, it is discussed in Lan 1991, 294–295.

<sup>15</sup> The manuscript is presently kept in the Provincial Library of Yunnan, no. 00982 and is discussed in Lan 1991, 304–305. It consists of a compilation of verses and mantras for invoking various Esoteric Buddhist divinities including the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and Samantabhadra, as well as protectors, such as the *mahākrodha* Vajrayakṣa, apparently lifted from the ritual works of Amoghavajra. It features many textual anomalies and variations when compared with the text from which it was copied. The colophone reads:

Hence, the Buddhist disciple, holder of *vidyā* (*chiming* 持明), the monk Ven. Zhao-ming, with the worldly name Yang Yilong, on behalf of the young male Yang Longjun and on behalf of himself and others, copied the *Zhu fo pusa jin-gang deng qiqing* in one roll [consisting of] one hundred leaves.... Recorded on the 15th day of the 9th month in the 8th royal year of Baotian.

<sup>16</sup> Kept in the Provincial Library of Yunnan, no. 00984, and discussed in Lan 1991, 294.

<sup>17</sup> Kept in the Provincial Library of Yunnan, no. 00983.

<sup>18</sup> Kept in the Provincial Library of Yunnan, no. 00985.

<sup>19</sup> Kept in the Provincial Library of Yunnan, no. 00986.

<sup>20</sup> ZWF, First Series, vol. 6, pp. 372–81. See also T. 1287.21:355b–358a.

<sup>21</sup> This manuscript is reported to have been among the hoard of manuscripts found at Beitangtian 北湯天 outside Dali in 1956. Now in the Provincial Library of Yunnan. Cf. Sørensen. "Textual Material Relating to Esoteric Buddhism in China Outside Taishō, Vols. 18–21," in this volume. There are several Esoteric Buddhist texts devoted to the worship of this female divinity, including T. 1154–1156a. As is the case with many of the Dali Buddhist manuscripts this work seems to represent a local tradition.

火瓮壇爰灌儀 (Ritual for the Vajrasattva Fire Urn Altar Bestowal of *Abhiṣeka*);<sup>22</sup> and others.<sup>23</sup>

Here mention can also be made of an interesting diagram drawn on silk depicting the Vajradhātu Mandala with the positions of the divinities indicated in Sanskrit.<sup>24</sup> This mandala was in all likelihood meant to be placed on an altar as a ground plan on which images were placed when the appropriate ritual was being performed. Through comparison with orthodox representations of this mandala as seen in the surviving Sino-Japanese examples from the ninth century, it is clear that the type of ritual of the Vajradhātu Mandala as conducted by the Bai during the Dali period deviated to a considerable extent. It is immediately clear that the early Tang form with its nine assemblies was not employed by the Dali Buddhists, but included instead an extended, single-assembly type evolving around the five *dhyāni* buddhas and their *kulas*.<sup>25</sup>

Another interesting item is a spell written in red color in Sanskrit in combination with a large composite talisman of the traditional Chinese variety, in this case with Siddham syllables and swastikas substituting the usual Chinese characters (Lutz 1991, 214–216). Both the mandala as well as the talisman were recovered from the relic throne found in the large pagoda of the Chongsheng Temple and would appear to date from the twelfth century. It seems that written talismans were quite popular in Dali Buddhism and that they were used in ways that we do not see in Chinese Buddhism (figure 1).

One example of this can be seen in the above manuscript of the *Zhu fo pusa jin'gang deng qiqing yigui*, which features a series of talismans written in red underneath the manuscript's main text.<sup>26</sup> Although the

<sup>22</sup> Not known from the Chinese canonical sources. The urn mentioned in the title is evidently for the ashes of the dead after cremation and reflects a Buddhist practice characteristic of the Bai people (cf. figure 3). How Vajrasattva came to occupy a position as supervisor or guide for the spirits of the dead is not known. This text may be from the post-Dali period.

<sup>23</sup> See also Li 1979, 54–56, + 1 pl. Photos of some of the manuscripts can be found in *Nanzhao Dali wenwu*, 1992, 226–227, pls. 96–98. The short essay by Li 1979 above has been republished with minor modifications in *Nanzhao Dali wenwu* 1992: 170–174. For an updated presentation, see Li Xiaoyou 1991, 277–305.

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of the Vajradhātu Mandala see Lutz 1991, 95–99. See also Jiang, Qiu, and Yunnan 1998, 83. For the talisman and related writings, see Jiang, Qiu, and Yunnan 1998, 84–87.

<sup>25</sup> A similar view was presented by Soper many years ago, but without access to any concrete material with which to support it. See Chapin 1971, 115.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. in *Nanzhao Dali wenwu*, pls. 96–98, pp. 226–227. For a close-up, see Lutz 1991, 87. This close-up also shows the use of Sanskrit written in red to denote the correct sounds to be used when intoning the spells.

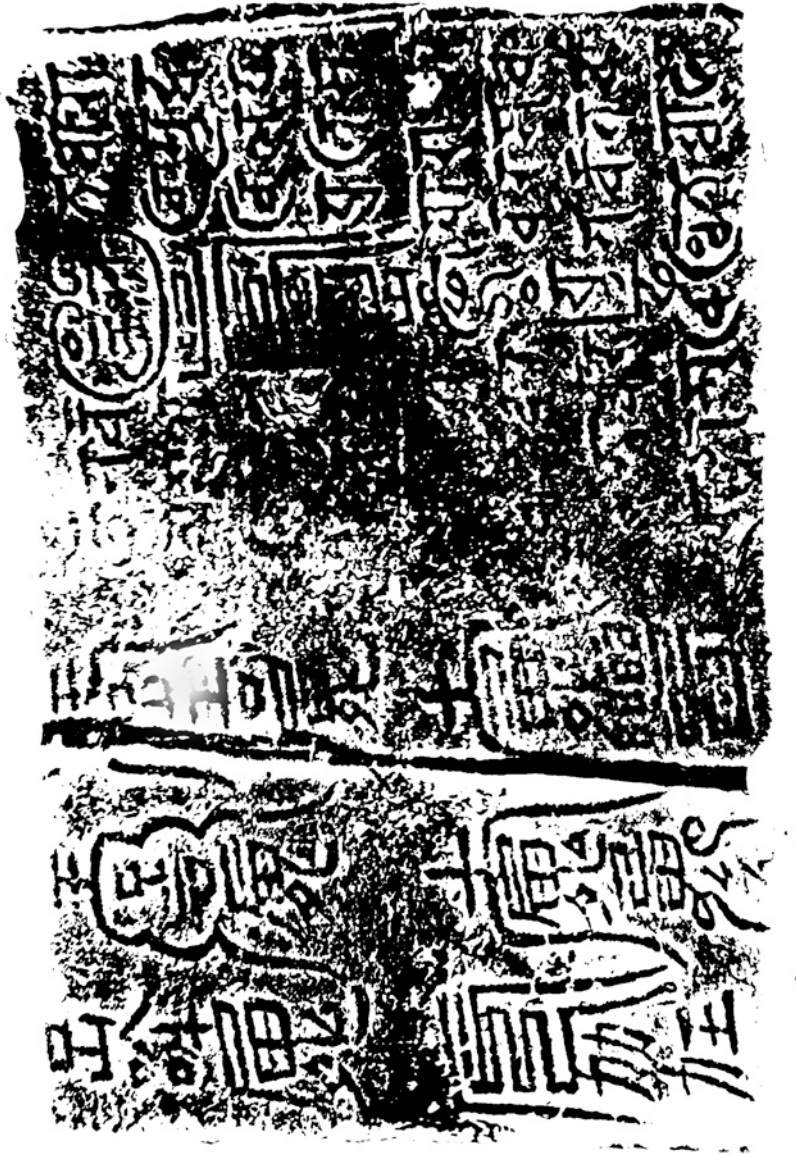


Figure 1. Brick rubbing of Chinese talismans and Sanskrit spells, late Dali period.



exact meaning behind this practice is unclear, it may be interpreted as an additional way of empowering a given scripture. Moreover, the actual origin of this type of practice may well have its antecedence in Chinese Daoism, where the use of talismanic script in double layers is well known.<sup>27</sup>

This list of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures, most of which are ritual texts—many apparently non-canonical—indicates that the Bai of the Dali period also followed practices that were used by the Chinese of the contemporary Song. However, there are also many differences and anomalies special to the Buddhists of Dali. This indicates the existence of a flourishing local form of Esoteric Buddhism that was only partly under the influence of Chinese culture.

### *Of Spells and Dhāraṇī*

In addition to the various Esoteric Buddhist texts discussed above we know that the Buddhists of Nanzhao and Dali cherished spells and mantras of any sort and for any purpose. Many were engraved on stone slates and impressed on clay (figure 2).

Characteristic of most of these engraved spells is the consistent use of Sanskrit, although in some cases they also have their titles written in Chinese.

The *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* was a spell of major importance to the Buddhists of Dali, just as it was in the entirety of East Asia during the medieval period and later.<sup>28</sup> This practice probably entered Nanzhao during the ninth century, where it quickly caught on among the Bai people. Although the chief use of the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* was for engraving on pillars, only one significant example from the Dali period has come down to us today. This is the pillar from the Dizang Temple 地藏寺, actually a *stūpa*-pillar, that features an elaborate and extended iconographical program far beyond the relatively simple message and use of the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* itself.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of this practice, see the ground-breaking work by Drexler 1994.

<sup>28</sup> The use of the *dhāraṇī*-pillars and stone slabs engraved with the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* placed in tombs, or in the vicinity of them, is a practice that can be found in all of China from the mid-Tang to the Ming. For an excellent study of this spell and its socio-religious context, see Copp 2005.

<sup>29</sup> See the lengthy study by Howard 1997, 33–72.



Figure 2. Brick rubbing of the *Shanzhu bimi zhenyan*, late Dali period.

Other spells and *dhāraṇīs* of importance include the *Yiqie zhu fo guiming zhou* 一切諸佛皈命咒 (Spell of All the Buddhas for Returning to Life [?]),<sup>30</sup> *Da foding xin zhou* 大佛頂心咒 (Great Buddhōṣṇīṣa Heart Spell),<sup>31</sup> *Ruyi baozhu zhou* 如意寶珠咒 (Cintāmaṇi Spell),<sup>32</sup> the *Rāsmivimalaviśuddhaprabhā-dhāraṇī*, the *Shanzhu bimi zhenyan* 善住秘密真言 (Secret Mantras of the Good Lord),<sup>33</sup> and several unidentified ones. The *Long Scroll* also features a pair of painted *dhāraṇī*-pillars similar to those normally featuring the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī*, one with a spell said to come from the *Prajñāpāramitā hṛdaya*, the other with the *Huguo jing zhou* 護國經咒 (Spell of the Nation-Protecting Scripture)<sup>34</sup>.<sup>35</sup> Many of the popular spells have been found impressed on bricks and tiles from votive *stūpas* and pagodas, evidently to empower and protect them. Nearly all of them include the respective spell written in Sanskrit and in some cases include a dedication or verse in Chinese. In rare cases they are written in Chinese only (Liebenthal 1947, 1–40).<sup>36</sup>

### *Esoteric Buddhist Cults*

The figure of Avalokiteśvara, in particular in the form of the *Acuoye Guanyin* 阿嵯耶觀音, is closely connected with the founding myths of the Nanzhao kingdom and continues to be invoked as an accessory to the royal mandate down through the Dali period.<sup>37</sup> In fact, the

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Jiang, Qiu, and Yunnan 1998, 95–96, pl. 188. This spell includes Chinese, Sanskrit, and Siddham script. I have been unable to locate the spell in the standard Buddhist canonical material.

<sup>31</sup> Jiang, Qiu, and Yunnan 1998, pl. 187. This normally refers to the *dhāraṇī* of the *Shoulengyan jing* 首楞嚴經 (Pseudo-Śūraṅgama Sūtra), T. 945. However, the examples found in the Dali material are shorter, and may be considered variations possible in abbreviated form.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Jiang, Qiu, and Yunnan 1998, pl. 186. It consists of a text in pure Chinese in which invocation, mantra, and an explanatory verse have been combined into one single spell. There are several spells in the Chinese canonical material with this title, none of which match directly with the one we have here.

<sup>33</sup> Jiang, Qiu, and Yunnan 1998, pl. 190. The full title of this spell is *Da bao guangpo louge shanzhu bimi tuoluoni* 大寶廣博樓閣善住秘密陀羅尼 (Secret Dhāraṇī of the Good Lord of the Great, Precious Pagoda). For another example, see Yang 1993, 8:36.

<sup>34</sup> This spell is a hybrid text, possibly a local product, which has not been lifted from one single scripture. The title may refer to the *Renwang jing*, but the spell in question does not match any of the mantras found in that scripture.

<sup>35</sup> Described by Soper in Chapin 1971, 133–134.

<sup>36</sup> Rubbings of many different examples can be found in Yang 1993, vol. 8.

<sup>37</sup> For a discussion of the meaning of this name, see Soper's comments in Chapin 1970a, 19.

mythic Indian monk who is credited with bringing Buddhism to Yunnan is considered a manifestation (*huashen* 化身) of Avalokiteśvara.<sup>38</sup> Although it is obvious that much of our knowledge about Nanzhao Buddhism, in particular the early beliefs and practices, comes from later sources, there can be little doubt that the cult of Avalokiteśvara was one of the defining features of both Nanzhao Buddhism as well as that of the succeeding Dali kingdom.

The cult of Avalokiteśvara was not limited to the Acuoye Guanyin, but appears in many forms, many of which are documented in the famous *Long Scroll*. Hence we find such Esoteric Buddhist forms as Amoghapāśa, Ekādaśamukha, the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (Dabei Guanyin 大悲觀音), and Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara, as well as certain local forms, most of which have an extensive accompanying literature. This material, mostly in the form of ritual texts, must have been present in Yunnanese Buddhism in some form or the other during the periods in question. The various cults of the different forms of Avalokiteśvara are reflected in the surviving sculptural art going back to the late Nanzhao, such as in the caves of Mt. Shizhong, and are of course prominent among the images in the *Long Scroll*.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the cult of Avalokiteśvara, Esoteric Buddhism under the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms developed a number of other cults, such as those devoted to the category of protective demon generals and wrathful divinities. Prominent among these cults are those pertaining to Mahākāla, a divine demon who has several manifestations, and Vaiśravaṇa, the “Heavenly King of the North.”<sup>40</sup> Consequently, it is not surprising that we encounter these two protector gods rather frequently in the pictorial and sculptural Yunnanese art from the period ca. 800–1200 C.E.

#### *Esoteric Buddhism and Burial Practices in the Dali Kingdom*

The Bai of the Dali kingdom followed special procedures for burial, procedures that differed considerably from the practices of traditional China. Although Chinese-style burials are known from both the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms, cremation appears to have been the norm for

<sup>38</sup> Yü 1991, 28–39. This essay deals primarily with the cult of the Acuoye Avalokiteśvara.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Chapin 1971, 75–108, 109–10, 116–19, pls. 35–37, 41–42.

<sup>40</sup> This has been pointed out in a number of studies, including Howard 1991, 50–52. See also Yang 2002, 231–236.

the majority of the local Buddhists, monastics and lay alike. After the funerary pyre had burned down, the ashes and other remains were collected and placed in a lidded urn of burnt clay. The urn was next placed in a small coffin made of schist slabs together with other offerings and personal belongs of the deceased. It is possible that the ritual described in the *Jin'gangsaduo huoweng tan shou guan yi* mentioned above was used in connection with the sealing and interring of the funerary jars, something that may be taken as solid proof of the connection between Esoteric Buddhist lore and the afterlife beliefs current among the Bai in Dali. The Esoteric Buddhist context of these burials can be deduced further from the fact that the sides of the coffins were decorated with Sanskrit *bija* representative of Buddhist divinities. Furthermore, many urns or funerary jars as well as tomb inscriptions feature the engraved *Buddhoṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī* written in Siddham (figure 3).<sup>41</sup>

### Conclusion

Buddhism may have entered Yunnan as early as the late Han dynasty, but almost no solid data exist with which to document this. Only from the time of the founding of the Bai kingdom of Nanzhao during the seventh century does an outline of Buddhist influence in Yunnan begin to take shape. However, it is not until two centuries later that a clearer picture begins to manifest. At that time a full-fledged local form of Buddhism had come about, complete with monks, temples, grotto sanctuaries, and cults. It would appear that Esoteric Buddhist practices were particularly widespread during the second half of the ninth century. The succeeding kingdom of Dali continued to build on the myths of the Nanzhao, in particular those aspects that cemented the relationship between the ruling houses and Buddhism.

On the basis of the extant manuscripts from the Dali, Song, and later periods that have been found in western Yunnan, it is clear that many of the Esoteric Buddhist texts that constituted the foundation of the religious beliefs and practices of the Bai people were imported from southwest China. By extension this was also the case with Buddhist iconography as reflected in sculptures and votive paintings. Among the Esoteric Buddhist text-material from the Dali period, we also find

<sup>41</sup> Howard 1997, 33–72 has discussed the connection between burial and cremation in Yunnan in relation to the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī*. See also Yang 1993, vol. 7 for numerous examples dating from the late Dali kingdom to the Ming.

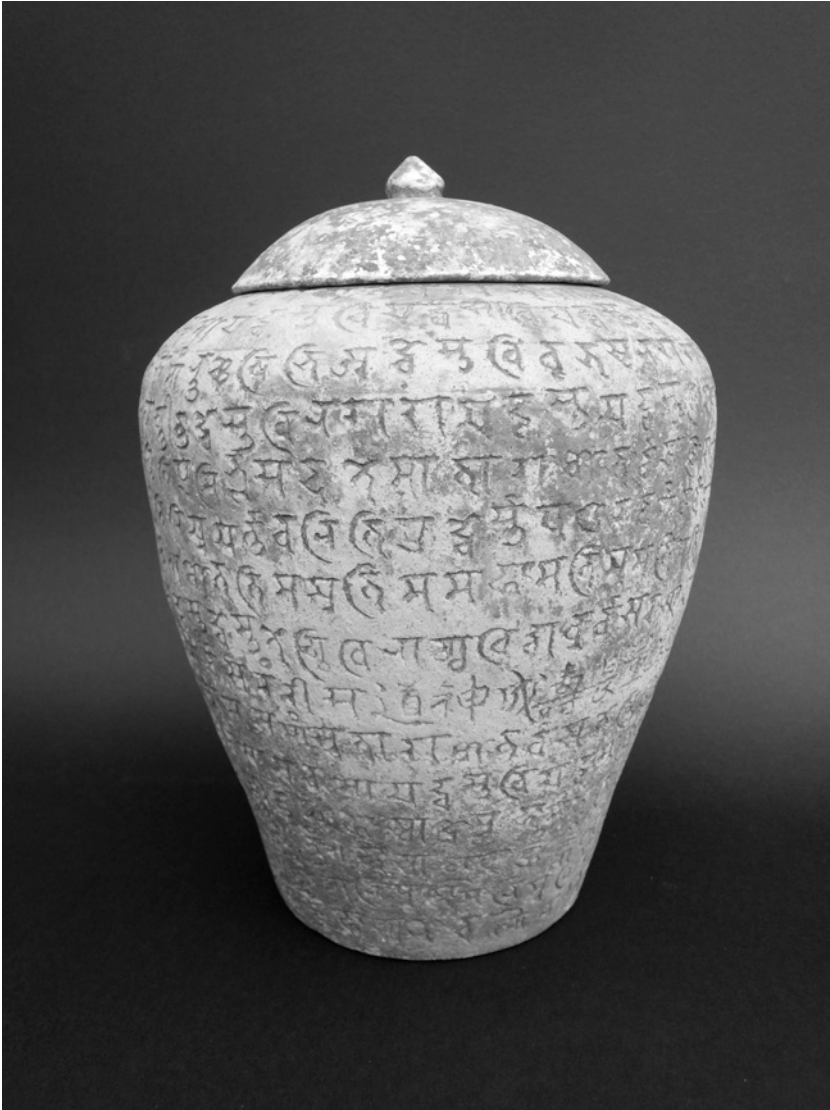


Figure 3. Funerary jar with the *Buddhōṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī*, Dali kingdom, twelfth to thirteenth centuries. Private collection.

a sizable number of texts that were the product of the local tradition. It is therefore not surprising that much of this material reflects a fusion between Esoteric Buddhist practices common to Chinese Buddhism and the local tradition.

Initiation of the Buddhist believers into the secrets of Esoteric Buddhism was the province of the *ācāryas*, a practice that also included the dead. Practices, beliefs, and the use of spells and *dhāraṇīs* in connection with a variety of rituals undoubtedly represent the core of the Bai's Esoteric Buddhist practice. In contrast to the rest of medieval China where mastery of Sanskrit was reserved for very few people, it would appear that the *ācāryas* of Dali were adepts in the writing and use of Devanāgarī. Although not exclusive to spells, the vast majority of those written on paper or engraved on stone are all in Sanskrit. Siddham script was equally widespread. However, all the extant scriptures point to the dominance of written Chinese as the preferred mode of transmitting Buddhist literature.

Nanzhao and Dali was the home of many Buddhist cults, among which those devoted to Avalokiteśvara (in a number of forms, most of which belonged to Esoteric Buddhism) was preeminent. This was undoubtedly due to the close link that existed between the Nanzhao rulers and the bodhisattva as transmitted via the kingdom's foundation myth. Also of great importance were the cults of Mahākāla and Vaiśravaṇa, both of which had the status of tutelary deities.

Cremation was common among the medieval Bai, and it would appear that disposal of bodies on a funerary pyre was the norm for both monastics and laypeople. Burial practices were greatly influenced by Esoteric Buddhist beliefs, something that can be clearly seen on funerary jars and the small burial caskets of stone. The introduction of Chinese-style burial in the region probably began after the Yuan conquest in the second half of the thirteenth century.

Buddhism under the Nanzhao (and in particular that of the succeeding Dali), about which much more is known, was not exclusively esoteric in nature, but encompassed other traditions as well, including the Huayan 華嚴 and Chan 禪. One may even argue that Dali Buddhism was a hybrid of several Buddhist traditions, although Esoteric Buddhism and its rituals appear to have been dominant, at least politically. This situation may have been related to the practice of the *ācāryas* bestowing *abhiṣeka* on the rulers, something that took place on a regular basis.

## 36. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN SICHUAN DURING THE TANG AND FIVE DYNASTIES PERIOD

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

In reconstructing the history of esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan from the pre-Song period we are to a large extent forced to rely on archaeological evidence, in particular Buddhist art and data gleaned from the surviving epigraphical material carved on stone or metal. With the exception of a few gazetteers (*fangzhi* 方志) from the Southern Song, very little in terms of contemporary, written records (books) have been preserved.

If we take the sculptural sites as our guide, esoteric Buddhism entered Sichuan (Jiannan 劍南) via two routes, both from the north. One was the road leading down into Sichuan from Chang'an over the Daba 大巴 mountain range, the other was the route that entered the province from Gansu via Tianshui 天水, which constituted a direct link with the Silk Road. It is also likely that esoteric Buddhism entered Sichuan from the east via the Yangzi River, possibly during the Liang dynasty (502–552), but at present we have nothing with which to support this. That Buddhism entered Sichuan from the south, from India via Yunnan and Burma, is not unlikely either; however, in case it did, there is virtually nothing in terms of cultural material with which to prove it, at least not in Sichuan—and certainly nothing in terms of esoteric Buddhist art. The esoteric Buddhist art that developed in Yunnan under the Nanzhao was essentially derived from Chinese Buddhism—that is, from Sichuan, not from the south.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Transmission of Esoteric Buddhism to Sichuan*

The sculptural sites in Sichuan dating from the Tang featuring esoteric Buddhist images and iconographical topoi are distributed in such a way that we are able to plot a kind of map indicating the general

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<sup>1</sup> A brief discussion of this can be found in Sørensen 1998, 33–67.



spread of this form of Buddhism in the region.<sup>2</sup> This “map” shows a clear line extending from the north to the provincial capital of Yizhou 益州 (modern Chengdu) and a gradual spread to the counties directly to the south, southwest, and east of there. The main county towns again served as centers whence esoteric Buddhist iconography penetrated into the deeper countryside.

The earliest examples of esoteric Buddhist art in Sichuan dates from the second half of the seventh century and gradually increased in number during the following centuries. To the extent that the esoteric Buddhist sculptures are indicative of a corresponding religious activity, it would appear that the first flourishing of esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan took place in the course of the ninth century, especially after the Huichang Suppression (845–846), and continued after the fall of the Tang.<sup>3</sup> This is backed by recent research into the history of esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan, which has revealed that orthodox Zhenyan Buddhism entered the Jiangnan at the end of the eighth century. It would appear that it was chiefly monks associated with Huiguo 惠果 (746–805),<sup>4</sup> the famous disciple of Amoghavajra, who spread the more advanced teachings of esoteric Buddhism there. One of these monks was a certain Hongzhao 洪照 (795–872), who had received the fivefold *abhiṣeka* at the Da Xingshan Temple 大興善寺<sup>5</sup> in Luoyang (cf. Huang 2008, 107–112). In 833 C.E. he arrived in Sichuan from Chang’an bringing with him the orthodox, esoteric Buddhist teachings of the Zhenyan tradition. Hongzhao’s stay in Sichuan, lasting over four decades, greatly stimulated the spread of esoteric Buddhism with his temple in Mianzhou 綿州 as its center. This success depended to a great extent on the support he received from the local literati and members of the land-holding elite (see Zhao 1998, 67–71).

Despite this influence from orthodox Zhenyan Buddhism during the second half of the Tang, the type of esoteric Buddhism that flourished in Sichuan during the Tang, in particular from the eighth century

<sup>2</sup> For a general overview of the sculptural sites in Sichuan from the Tang, see Howard 1988, 1–164. Note that this survey contains no explicit reference to esoteric Buddhism or its iconography.

<sup>3</sup> An indication of the spread of esoteric Buddhist cults in the Chengdu area can be had from the description of painters of Buddhist subjects active there during the second half of the Tang. See Huang 1963, 1–42.

<sup>4</sup> For Huiguo see Orzech, “After Amoghavajra: Esoteric Buddhism in the Late Tang,” in this volume.

<sup>5</sup> For the Da Xingshan temple see Chen, “Esoteric Buddhism and Monastic Institutions,” in this volume.

onwards, does not appear to have been distinct from the mainstream Buddhist tradition as practiced there, but rather part and parcel of it. This means that although there certainly would have been specialists of esoteric Buddhist ritual and related practices as indicated above, there is no solid indication that they worked outside the normal Buddhist context.

### *Esoteric Buddhist Cults*

A survey of old temple sites and locations with Buddhist sculptures reveals that since the early eighth century cults devoted to esoteric Buddhist forms of Avalokiteśvara were both widespread and popular in the eastern part of Sichuan (Yizhou/Jiannan). Vairocana Buddha in his adorned form is among the earliest esoteric Buddhist images in Sichuan. He occurs in several sculptural locations in the central part of the province from the late seventh century onwards, including Nankan 南龕 in Bazhong (cf. Sichuansheng wenwu guanliju et al. 2006, 61–63, 157–159), Qianfoyan 千佛巖 in Guangyuan, at the temple in Qionglai, and at Feixiangge 飛仙閣 in Pujiang, to mention the more important sites.

The cult of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara was extremely popular in the whole of eastern Sichuan, and virtually all the sculptural sites feature one or more images depicting this form of Avalokiteśvara. Likewise, Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara was also popular and can be found in several locations including Nankan 南龕 in Bazhong, at Niushenyai 牛神崖 in Jiajiang, and at Mt. Bei 北山 in Dazu. Images of Amoghapāśa are frequent during the Five Dynasties period, but relatively uncommon during the Tang. For some reason no images of Ekādaśamukha have so far been identified among the sculptural material from Sichuan.

Although Vaiśravaṇa, the Heavenly King of the North, cannot be considered an esoteric Buddhist divinity explicitly, he was eventually elevated as such in the course of the Tang. Not only was he lifted from the traditional context as one of the Four Heavenly Kings, but during the middle of the dynasty an esoteric Buddhist cult had sprung up around his persona as the primary object of worship. The Vaiśravaṇa cult was widespread in Sichuan during the Tang, and images of this god can be found in most of the sculptural sites in the province.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> This development is reflected in a series of ritual texts including the *Beifang*

Hence he occurs prominently, often with more than one image/niche in such sites as Nankan in Bazhong (cf. Sichuansheng wenwu guanliju et al. 2006, 96–97, 147–148), Beiyān 北巖 in Zizhong 資中 (Zizhou 資州) (see Wang and Ceng 1989, 34–40), at Mt. Bei in Dazu,<sup>7</sup> and in Jiajiang 夾江 to the south of Chengdu at Qianfoyan 千佛巖 (cf. Sørensen 1997b, 37–48) and Niushenya 牛神崖 (see Zhou 1988, 27–32).

While we do know that mature esoteric Buddhism in the form of the Zhenyan tradition associated with Śubhākarasimha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra did enter Sichuan during the late eighth century, very few concrete traces of this can be found today. Images of the protector Acala, as well as the ghost king Shensha 深沙, give some indication of the spread of orthodox Zhenyan iconography and indirectly signal that rites for invoking them were performed by the local Buddhists.<sup>8</sup>

As was the case elsewhere in China during the Tang, pillars engraved with the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* were common in Sichuan during this time. A *dhāraṇī*-pillar made entirely of cast iron in Langzhong 閬中 county in northeastern Sichuan is mentioned in the *Jinshi yuan* 金石苑 (Garden of Inscriptions in Metal and Stone). It is of the usual octagonal pillar type with a double lotus base and a simple, rounded roof of the type often found on Chinese pavilions. It is dated 745 C.E., and the text of the *dhāraṇī* was cast in the calligraphic standard for Tang official script (*lishu*) derived from the Han dynasty (cf. *Jinshi yuan*,

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*Pishamen tianwang sui jun hufa yigui* 北方毘沙門天王隨軍護法儀軌 (Ritual of the Method of the Heavenly King Vaiśravaṇa of the Northern Direction Accompanying the Army for Protection). Cf. T. 1247; the *Beifang Pishamen tianwang sui jun hufa zhenyan* 北方毘沙門天王隨軍護法真言 (Mantra of the Heavenly King Vaiśravaṇa of the Northern Direction Accompanying the Army for Protection); T. 1248; the *Pishamen yigui* 毘沙門儀軌 (Ritual for Vaiśravaṇa), T. 1249; the *Beifang Pishamen duowen baozang tianwang shenmiao tuoluoni biexing yigui* 北方毘沙門多聞寶藏天王神妙陀羅尼別行儀軌 (Different Ritual of the Heavenly King of the Precious Treasury, Vaiśravaṇa of the Northern Direction Divine and Wonderful Dhāraṇī); cf. T. 1250. There are also a number of non-canonical Vaiśravaṇa scriptures recovered from among manuscripts from Dunhuang, which likewise throw light on the cult of Vaiśravaṇa. As an example of these, see, *Dawei de Pishamen tianwang congming taizi zhenyan* 大威德毗沙門天王聰明太子真言 (Mantras of the Greatly Angry Worthy Vaiśravaṇa, the Heavenly King and Wise Prince); cf. P. 2322 (10). The importance of the Vaiśravaṇa cult elsewhere in China under the Tang is also pointed out in Lü 1995, 363–369.

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed treatment, see Suchan 2003.

<sup>8</sup> See the section on esoteric Buddhist art in Sichuan during the Tang in Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Tang,” in this volume.

ch. 2., 107b–9a). *Dhāraṇī*-pillars made of iron are known from later periods; however, they are rare for the Tang dynasty. Interestingly, the donor inscription refers to the monument as a “*stūpa*.” There is also a bas-relief of similar, pagoda-like *stūpas* among the Buddhist sculptures at Nankan at Bazhong in the bottom section of the main group of carvings (Sichuansheng wenwu guanliju et al. 2006, 141–142). It dates from 751 C.E., and although the donor-inscription is unrelated to the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī*, it is nevertheless a good example of the blurred distinction between *dhāraṇī*- or sūtra-pillars and certain *stūpas*. Moreover, small votive *stūpa*-columns engraved with the *dhāraṇī* have been found in Tang tombs in the area around Chengdu (see Chengdu shi wenwu kaogu yanjiu 2000, 91–92; Ma, Zhou, and Hu 1958, pls. 61–65). This shows that the use and importance of this spell extended far beyond the confines of the Buddhist temples and into the burial practices of the common people. This practice was continued during the Five Dynasties period (907–978), and many such *stūpa*-pillars were carved on commission for laypeople at Fowan at Mt. Bei in Dazu.<sup>9</sup>

*Liu Benzun, Thaumaturge and Esoteric Buddhist Lay-Adept*

During the second half of the ninth century the thaumaturge and adept of esoteric Buddhist practices Liu Benzun 柳本尊 (855–907) made his advent in the area of Guanghan 廣漢 just to the north of Yizhou.<sup>10</sup> The earliest source on Liu is the *Tang Liu Benzun zhuan* 唐柳本尊傳 (Account of Liu Benzun of the Tang; hereafter *TLZ*),<sup>11</sup> which was

<sup>9</sup> Nos. 250, 260, 262, 269, 271 etc.; cf. Liu, Hu, and Li 1985, 420–424.

<sup>10</sup> For a daring attempt at placing Liu Benzun within the context of esoteric Buddhism in China, see Wang Jiayou 1985, 168–174. For a study of the cult of Liu Benzun as it manifests in the sculptural art of Dazu, see Sørensen 2001, 57–100.

<sup>11</sup> For a modern critical edition of this inscription, see Chongqing Dazu Shike yishu bowuguan and Dazuxian wenwu baoguan 1999, 207–209. The *TLZ* is said to have been copied from the original stele kept in the Shengshou Temple 聖壽院 in Mimeng to the north of modern Chengdu by Zhao Zhifeng during the late twelfth century. Cf. the *Chungxiu Baoding shan Shengshou yuan ji* 重修寶頂山聖壽院記 (Record of the Repair of Shengshou Cloister on Mt. Baoding) from 1425 C.E. by Liu Tianren 劉旼人 (fl. first half of the fifteenth century), in Chongqing Dazu Shike yishu bowuguan and Dazuxian wenwu baoguan 1999, 211–215. Today the text of the stele has been almost completely effaced and only small portions of the original text can now be read. Fortunately the stele was copied several times while the text was still legible, hence we have quite a good idea of what the original looked like. An attempt at a translation of this text can be found in Howard 2001, 170–174.

written by the Buddhist Chan monk Zujue 祖覺 (1087–1150)<sup>12</sup> during the Northern Song.

According to the account in the *TLZ*, Liu met a strange woman as a young man, who evidently initiated him in the secrets of esoteric Buddhism.<sup>13</sup> This event, whether mythological or not, signals two important things: first, that there were female lay practitioners of esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan during the late ninth century, and second, that esoteric Buddhist doctrines and practices—normally the province of ordained monks in Tang China—were also transmitted by Buddhist laypeople. Incidentally, Liu was also a layperson and remained so his entire life. Moreover, the tradition he is credited with having begun upheld a transmission that was lay-based (at least until the second half of the Southern Song).<sup>14</sup>

As far as the data provided by the primary sources allows us to go, the type of esoteric Buddhism that can be ascribed to Liu Benzun was at least nominally following the ritual and doctrinal antecedents as provided by the mature Zhenyan tradition of the Tang. The *TLZ* refers to his use of the spells and mantras of the Mahā Mandala (Dalun 大輪), which probably indicates the Dharmadhātu Mandala. In addition, there is mention of exorcism and healing practices and a strong element of sustained self-mortification that characterizes the major events in the account of Liu's life, or rather around which the *TLZ*'s account of his life has been constructed.

Liu Benzun's rise to prominence took place during the early years of the Former Shu (907–926) and indicates that a certain relationship existed between him and the local secular powers. Such a relationship of course follows a classical model in which Buddhist thaumaturges, and esoteric Buddhist masters in particular, provided spiritual and ritual assistance to the ruler and in turn were supported by them.

Indications in the primary sources point to the continued importance of the cult of Liu Benzun during the Northern and Southern Song.<sup>15</sup> However, it is not known whether the Shengshou Temple

<sup>12</sup> Biographical entry in *Foguang dazang jing bianxiu weiyuan hui* 1988, 5:4243ab.

<sup>13</sup> Howard's translation of the *TLZ* misses this point all together and instead turns the woman in question into Liu's mistress Howard 2001, 170.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Chongqing Dazu Shike yishu bowuguan and Dazuxian wenwu baoguan 1999, 208–209.

<sup>15</sup> During the first half of the thirteenth century, Mt. Baoding in Dazu was established—at least partly—as a Buddhist cult center to commemorate Liu Benzun. Three

聖壽寺, which served as the center for his cult in Mimeng 彌夢, continued to function after the Mongol destruction of much of Sichuan province in the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>16</sup>

### Conclusion

Available sources on the history of esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan are scanty; for this reason, the sculptural material surviving in situ represents our most valuable information on the popularity of this form of Buddhism. As was the case with esoteric Buddhism in the other provinces, the type of esoteric Buddhism that existed in Sichuan during the Tang was only partly a reflection of what flourished in the region of the twin capitals, at least until the end of the Tang.

Recent studies on epigraphical sources have revealed that in the course of the ninth century at least one monk in the lineage of orthodox Zhenyan Buddhism settled in the central-northern part of Sichuan. This data is important, as it provides us with a direct link between the type of mature esoteric Buddhism that flourished in the twin capitals of the Tang and the Sichuanese developments. Not only does this give us the much needed proof for a connection with the examples of Zhenyan Buddhist iconography in the province, it also links Liu Benzun, albeit indirectly, with full-fledged Zhenyan Buddhism. However, this should not blind us to the fact that, overall, esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan did not exist as a separate sectarian entity, but was part of the larger Buddhist tradition.

On the basis of the extant cultural remains, especially Buddhist sculptures and *dhāraṇī*-pillars, we are partly able to determine the degree of its popularity, which appears to have been pervasive. In any case, it is clear that the esoteric Buddhist forms of Avalokiteśvara were especially popular, which indicates the high status afforded the different cults associated with this bodhisattva.

Towards the end of the Tang a local esoteric Buddhist tradition sprang up around the thaumaturge Liu Benzun in the area around the provincial capital. This tradition claimed an indirect link with Zhenyan Buddhism and would seem to have perpetuated some of the practices

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separate shrines were made there as part of this cult. A description of this can be found in Sørensen 2001, 57–100. See also Howard 2001, 100–108.

<sup>16</sup> Chongqing Dazu Shike yishu bowuguan and Dazuxian wenwu baoguan 1999, 211. The site, unfortunately, has not been identified yet.

associated with orthodox esoteric Buddhism such as the ritual use of mandalas, perhaps even those of the Dharmadhātu and Vajradhātu. Most importantly, Liu Benzun's tradition was transmitted by a lineage of laymen, a rather unusual occurrence at this late stage in the history of esoteric Buddhism in China.

## 37. ESOTERIC BUDDHIST ART UNDER THE TANG

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

The rise of the Tang dynasty heralded a new era for Esoteric Buddhism. New scriptures were translated in which detailed iconographical information was contained, and this was to have a lasting effect on the production of Esoteric Buddhist art. The seventh century was a period in which Esoteric Buddhism and its art still was neither systematized nor represented a uniform, iconographical expression. This was undoubtedly because the many new texts dealing with Esoteric Buddhist iconography came from diverse sources (i.e., different iconic traditions on the Indian Subcontinent) and because they were also introduced to different parts of China in highly diverse contexts ranging from small, expatriate communities to local Chinese monasteries and the imperial palace. However, in the course of the seventh century, especially after Xuanzang's return to Chang'an, Esoteric Buddhist art would appear to have entered a period of rapid development. By the early eighth century the cults of a number of Esoteric Buddhist divinities, in particular the esoteric forms of Avalokiteśvara, as well as the widespread popularity of *dhāraṇī*-pillars, had become firmly established in the central provinces of the Tang Empire.

One of the new ways of dealing with Buddhist images that was a direct result of the growing influence of Esoteric Buddhism was the practice of consecration. It would appear that the consecration of Buddhist images already was incorporating Esoteric Buddhist elements by the end of the sixth century; however, by the mid-Tang virtually all forms of consecration took place within an Esoteric Buddhist context. This is not only evident from the sanctified materials that were stored inside a given image—essentially a new practice as regards Buddhist images, which might include printed *dhāraṇīs* and other relics—but the very ritual that was believed to make the image “come alive,” the so-called “opening of the eyes” (*kaiyan* 開眼, *kaiguang* 開光) that was formulated on the basis of Esoteric Buddhist lore. Of course images carved in stone were normally not filled with relics, although they underwent the ceremony of consecration.



*Esoteric Buddhist Art during the Seventh Century*

The Longmen Caves 龍門窟 in the vicinity of the eastern capital of Luoyang is one of the earliest sites where signs of the growing influence of Esoteric Buddhist iconography during the seventh century can be found. The caves of interest to us here are the group known as the Leigutai Caves 擂鼓台 located in the eastern hills of the site. Among the relevant images is a large statue of Vairocana Buddha seated on a column-like throne, a relief of the eight-armed Avalokiteśvara (Ekādaśamukha?), and an impressive relief of the standing, thousand-armed, thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara.<sup>1</sup> Although the Vairocana does not feature the *vajramuṣṭī-mudrā* commonly associated with the Esoteric Buddhist forms of this buddha, the identification is fairly certain on account of the ornate, conical crown and the jewelry he wears (figure 1).

Inscriptions found in connection with these images reveal that they were made between 692 and 704 C.E. However, the Vairocana would appear to date from the early period of the reign of Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 684–704), perhaps even slightly before, and can be considered the prototype on the basis of which the series of Sichuanese Vairocana images from the late seventh century were made.<sup>2</sup> The thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara would appear to have been made around 700 C.E. and may be one of the very first images of this form of the bodhisattva to be made.<sup>3</sup>

Free-standing sculptures of Esoteric Buddhist divinities from Tang China are relatively rare, and those that survive do not in any way represent the large number of buddhas, bodhisattvas, and protectors, the existence of which is otherwise indicated by the primary sources. Nevertheless, at present many images, both those made of stone as well as those of cast bronze, can be found in museums scattered around the world.

<sup>1</sup> The most informative article on these images to date is Li Wensheng 1991, 61–64. More preliminary reports are those by Gong 1980a and Gong 1980b, 45–46. See also Rhie 1988, 26–27, figure 27.

<sup>2</sup> These are found at Qianfoyan in Guangyuan, at Mt. Nan in Bazhong, and at Feixiang in Pujiang. See Sørensen 1998, 33–67.

<sup>3</sup> This can be estimated on stylistic and iconographical grounds. When compared with other similar images from the eighth century, the Longmen image is clumsier and more archaic, which indicates that it is an older image.



Figure 1. Adorned Vairocana Buddha from Leigutai, Longmen. Tang, second half of 7th cent. Line-drawing after *Longmen shiku diaoke cuibian*.

Incidentally, images of Ekādaśamukha, the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, have survived in a fairly large number as compared to other forms of the Esoteric Buddhist Avalokiteśvara, both as stone carvings as well as bronze images. The earliest examples may date from the final decades of seventh century while the later ones most probably belong to the first quarter of the eighth century. The one in the niche from Qibao Terrace 七寶台 of the Kuangzhai Temple 廣齋寺 in Chang'an<sup>4</sup> is among the earliest distinct Esoteric Buddhist sculptures in high relief known today. The fact that there are several other free-standing images of Ekādaśamukha from this period scattered in museums around the world indicates that images of this kind were extremely popular during the first half of the Tang (cf. Jin 1995, 311–322, pls. 291–302).

*Esoteric Buddhist Art in the Twin Capitals during the Eighth Century*

With the activities of the three *ācāryas* Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra in Chang'an during the Kaiyuan period (713–741) and the subsequent rise of mature Esoteric Buddhism in the area of the “twin capitals,” a wealth of religious art and ritual paraphernalia was being produced in connection with this development. Unfortunately, very little of this rich material has survived in China, and were it not for the Japanese pilgrim-monks who came to China during the second half of the Tang to study Esoteric Buddhism and, upon returning to Heian, brought with them many images, paintings, mandalas, blueprints, manuals, and ritual objects, our knowledge of the material culture of Esoteric Buddhism during the mid- to late Tang would have been almost non-existent. In fact, aside from recent archaeological findings, almost nothing remained of Esoteric Buddhist art in Xi'an (Chang'an) beyond a handful of free-standing sculptures, steles, and temple ruins.<sup>5</sup> The important Esoteric Buddhist temples in Chang'an that still stand, including Da Xingshan Temple 大興善寺 and the Qinglong Temple 青龍寺, have been entirely rebuilt or modified during

<sup>4</sup> Now in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., access no. 2007060577. Cf. Howard et al. 2006, 307, figure 3.

<sup>5</sup> The Shanxi Provincial Museum (Peilin 碑林) houses a number of these steles including the important one, now slightly fragmented, raised to commemorate Amoghavajra from 781 C.E. compiled by the military official and literatus Yan Ying 嚴郢 (fl. second half of the eighth century). See Orzech 1998, 201–202. For a discussion of this stele, cf. Li Yuqing 1995, 187–188. For additional information, see Han 1990, Wang Bingrong 1990, and Chang 1990.

later periods, and none of them hold any religious images or objects that date as far back as the Tang. Hence they are largely irrelevant to the present discussion.

In 1959 an archaeological survey of the ruined site of Anguo Temple 安國寺 in X'ian revealed a hoard of fragmented but high-quality Esoteric Buddhist images in white marble.<sup>6</sup> The temple was originally constructed in 710 C.E. and in the course of the eighth century became an important center of Esoteric Buddhism in the western capital. The time of its destruction is not known, and it was formerly believed to have taken place during the Huichang Suppression of Buddhism around 846 C.E. However, there are indications that it happened at a later date, most likely during the upheavals half a century later that engulfed the region around Chang'an at the close of the Tang.<sup>7</sup> Among the images and sculptural fragments recovered from the site are those of buddhas, bodhisattvas, and *vidyārājas*, which clearly reveal the Esoteric Buddhist context that produced them. The latter images are particularly noteworthy as they may be one of the earliest ensembles of Esoteric Buddhist protectors including images of Vajrapāṇi, Ucchuṣma, Trailokyavijaya, and Acala carved in a uniform style connected with the mature Zhenyan tradition of the mid-Tang.<sup>8</sup> Various speculations as to the function and ritual role of the Anguo Temple images have been put forward.<sup>9</sup> However, there can be little doubt that most of them once formed part of a large, three-dimensional mandala, possibly representing that of the Dharmadhātu.

### *Esoteric Buddhist Art at Famen Temple*

Famen Temple 法門寺 in Fufeng county, some one hundred kilometers to the west of modern Xi'an, is famous for its Buddhist relics,

<sup>6</sup> For the original report, see Cheng 1961, 63. See also Brinker and Goepper 1981, 212–222. Here the images have been dated to ca. 760 C.E. An additional photo can be found in Matsubara and Akayama 1969, 165, pl. 156. For a full list of these sculptures together with photos, see Li Yuqing 1995, 86–91. A recent update on the Anguo sculptures can be found in Jin 2003, 34–39.

<sup>7</sup> Chang'an was almost completely destroyed during the Huangchao Rebellion, which ravished Shaanxi province in 880 C.E. See Twitchett and Fairbank 1979, 745–747.

<sup>8</sup> In other words, the style and iconography that has been transmitted via the Shinjō school in Japan. Cf. Cheng 1961, pls. 5–10.

<sup>9</sup> For these, see Li Yuqing 1995, 86–91 and Jin 2003, 34–39.

which are said to include a finger bone from Śākyamuni, the historic Buddha.<sup>10</sup> After an earthquake, the Ming pagoda, which had been raised over the underground relic-chamber or crypt (*digong* 地宮),<sup>11</sup> partly collapsed in 1981. Only after the rebuilding of the pagoda was undertaken in 1984 were the relics re-discovered and subsequently exhibited to the public.<sup>12</sup> Although the treasury of relics contains a number of objects that bear the imprint of Esoteric Buddhism, when seen as a whole the crypt and the Buddhist artifacts it contains cannot be considered Esoteric Buddhist per se. Nevertheless, various scholars have pointed to the Esoteric Buddhist nature of the relics and the reliquary, some even going so far as to consider the set of caskets in which the main relic is kept as a mandala (cf. Luo 1995, 53–62).<sup>13</sup> When looking at the set of the reliquary consisting of six reliquary boxes and a small *stūpa* of pure gold, the ones that interest us here are the three boxes with engraved illustrations (figure 2).

The outer casket features images of the Four Heavenly Kings, one to each side. The second being undecorated, it is the third that is of special interest to us here as the lid and its four sides are decorated with five buddha assemblies representing the five *kulas* or “families” of the five *dhyāni* buddhas (i.e., Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi, Amitābha, and Akṣobhya).<sup>14</sup> The Chinese scholars Han Wei and Luo Zhao have correctly identified the iconography on this box as representing the Vajradhātu Mandala; however, their argument is only par-

<sup>10</sup> The controversy surrounding the Buddha’s finger relic and the socio-political commotions that it caused have been described in Ch’en 1973, 267–271. See also Weinstein 1987b, 37, 46, 58, and 125.

<sup>11</sup> It appears that the installment in Buddhist pagodas was based on practices and beliefs that had pre-Buddhist origins. Investigations of many pagodas from the late medieval period have revealed that many had two relic storage areas: an underground chamber (the *digong*), and an upper chamber (the *tiangong* 天宮). This of course reflects the classical Chinese concepts of *yin* (earth) and *yang* (heaven).

<sup>12</sup> Numerous articles and books have since been published on the relics from the pagoda of the Famen Temple. Included here are those of special merit, either as regards to their description of the relics or because of the documentary value of their illustrations. For a general introduction, see Chen 1988, Zhang et al. 1990, and Famen si Archaeological Team 1988. See also <http://academic.hws.edu/chinese/huang/mdln210/famensi.htm> for easy access to photos of some of the important relics.

<sup>13</sup> Luo’s understanding of the Famen Temple relics and the underground chamber is more balanced and perceptive than the analysis provided by Han 1992, and he argues with good reason against seeing the underground chamber as reflecting Esoteric Buddhist beliefs per se.

<sup>14</sup> Han 1992. This is the first really serious attempt at identifying and contextualizing the iconography of the third relic box.

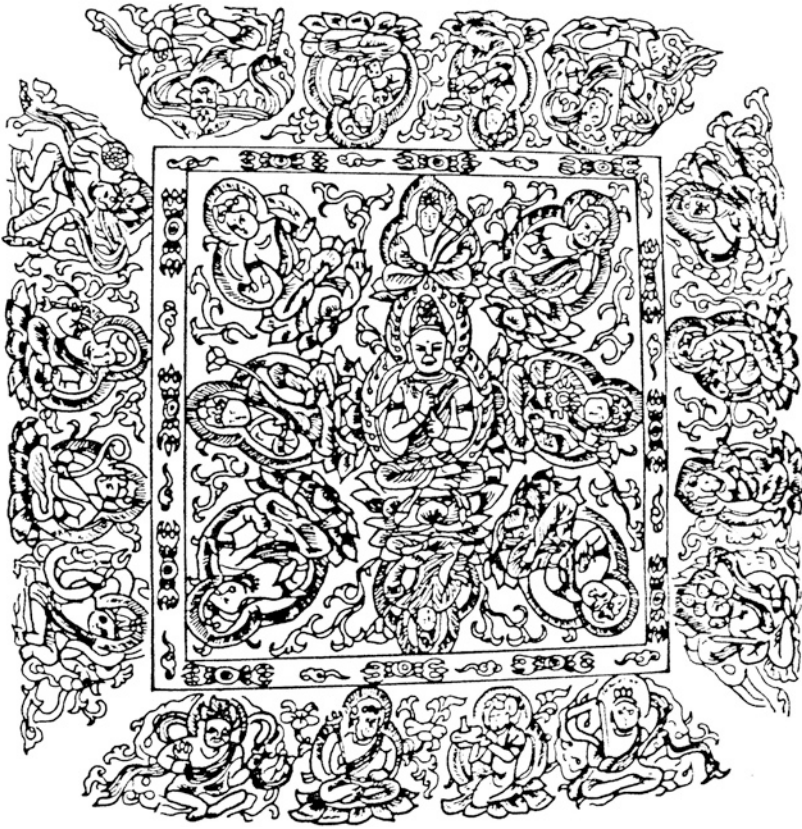


Figure 2. Line-drawing of the Vajradhātu Mandala decorating the lid of the 3rd relic box from the crypt under the pagoda of Famen Temple, second half of 9th century (After Han Wei 1992, *Wenwu* 8).

tially successful as the casket in question only features five assemblies and not the nine normally associated with the orthodox Sino-Japanese representations of the Vajradhātu Mandala.<sup>15</sup> Han's identification is further problematic when identifying the casket in question as being that of the assembly of the perfected body (*chengshen hui* 成身會), the central of the orthodox nine assemblies in the Vajradhātu Mandala. A comparison with the older Vajradhātu Mandala as represented by the Japanese copy in Tōji in Kyōto reveals that the Famen Temple

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Snodgrass 1988, 555–727. See also the excellent translation of the *Vajraśekhara* in Giebel 2001, 19–107.

example is different both iconographically and structurally. In fact, the lid of the relic casket bears closer correspondence with the assembly of the four *mudrās* (*siyin hui* 四印會) in the Vajradhātu Mandala, i.e., it is complete with a central Vairocana flanked by the four other *dhyāni* buddhas to which has been added four additional bodhisattvas, and as such comes closer to the iconography of the central panel of the famous travel shrine box from the Nelson Gallery.<sup>16</sup> In other words, it is a mandala in its own right and does not need the four other assemblies. The additional four sides of the casket feature the sub-assemblies of the four other *dhyāni* buddhas, each with a following of four bodhisattvas. Somehow the maker of the third relic box has conflated at least two of the assemblies of the orthodox Vajradhātu Mandala into one iconographic whole, but in this process duplicated the four *dhyāni* buddhas whose assemblies decorate the sides.<sup>17</sup> In short, the mandala on the third relic box does indeed represent a Vajradhātu Mandala, but done in a variant manner that does not correspond to the orthodox form as transmitted in the Zhenyan tradition (i.e., as transmitted in the Japanese Shingon school via Kūkai). As we know that the box with the finger relic was in all likelihood made during the time when the relic was last paraded through Chang'an in 871 C.E., this relatively late date—almost a full century after the demise of Amoghavajra, the doyen of Tang Esoteric Buddhism—may explain its anomalous if not unorthodox iconography.

The fourth relic box has an orthodox rendering of Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara on one side but its iconography does not reflect any known mandala or description of a mandala. It is simply a representation of one of the major Esoteric Buddhist aspects of Avalokiteśvara, and an iconographically orthodox one at that. Apart from the third and fourth relic boxes, the set of caskets as a whole does not constitute any known iconic arrangement. It is simply a set of relic boxes featuring various Esoteric Buddhist themes and iconic arrangements, but it cannot be considered an iconographical (or ritual) unity in accordance with traditional Zhenyan orthodoxy.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Granoff 1968–1969. Although outdated on some points, this article is still the best study in a Western language on these shrine boxes. See also Tokyo National Museum 1996, 213, pl. 225.

<sup>17</sup> For line illustrations of the images in question as well as photos of all the sides of the box, see Han 1992.

Other items from the underground treasury of Famen Temple with references to Esoteric Buddhism include a unique, painted gold and silver image of an offering bodhisattva kneeling on a high lotus throne. Generic offering bodhisattvas of this type are commonly found in connection with certain Esoteric Buddhist mandalas, usually in a set of four, one for each of the cardinal points (Zhang et al. 1990, 98–101). In this case, however, there is only one. What is especially interesting here is that the lotus throne is decorated with engraved images. All the petals of the upper lotus seat have images of buddhas and bodhisattvas in a manner resembling a mandala. The middle section of the stand has images of the Four Heavenly Kings, and encircling the rim of the base are those of eight *vidyārājas* including Acala, Ucchuṣma, Kuṇḍali, Mahātejas, Hayagrīva, etc., all of which occupy important roles in mature Esoteric Buddhism. In the orthodox transmission of Esoteric Buddhism from Amoghavajra the traditional group of *vidyārājas* normally consists of five divinities, one for each of the five *kulas*. However, here we have eight such protectors, which indicates that new iconographic and ritual developments took place in Esoteric Buddhism in the course of the ninth century.<sup>18</sup> Other relics from the crypt showing the influence of Esoteric Buddhism include a miniature *khakkara* with a standing *vajra* in its top section, a squat, *kuṇḍikā*-like vase of parcel-gilt silver, and a pair of finger rings, all of which feature double *vajras* (Zhang et al. 1990, 105–106, 118, 133–134). As can be seen from these examples, no fixed program based on Esoteric Buddhist practices and iconic lore can with any reason be associated with the relic chamber of the Famen Temple, although Esoteric Buddhism can be said to have left its imprint on many of the votive offerings placed in the crypt.<sup>19</sup>

### *Esoteric Buddhist Art at Dunhuang*

Regarding the Esoteric Buddhist art from the Tang found at Dunhuang, it makes sense to see this material as representing three different stages

<sup>18</sup> Howard 1999 has asserted that groups of eight *vidyārājas* are special to south-western China, i.e., Yunnan and Sichuan. In the light of the relics from Famen Temple this is, of course, an incorrect assessment.

<sup>19</sup> A similar conclusion can be found in Luo 1995. This article places an emphasis on the Vajradhātu Mandala as the iconic inspiration for the relic casket containing the so-called finger bone of the Buddha, but otherwise acknowledges the secular structure of the crypt itself.



in the local development of this form of Buddhism. The first phase began roughly in the middle of the seventh century and lasted until the late eighth century. Characteristic for this early phase are images of *Ekādaśamukha*.

The second phase covers roughly the six decades of Tibetan occupation of Shazhou (ca. 785–848 C.E.). During this period Chinese Buddhism and its iconography came under the influence of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist art and developed certain unique features that are primarily borne out in the repertoire of the local Esoteric Buddhist art. Among this material are also several sheets drawn on paper with depictions of how to construct various mandalas (figure 3).

Here we also find representations of *mahākrodhas* rendered in iconographical styles not seen elsewhere in China.

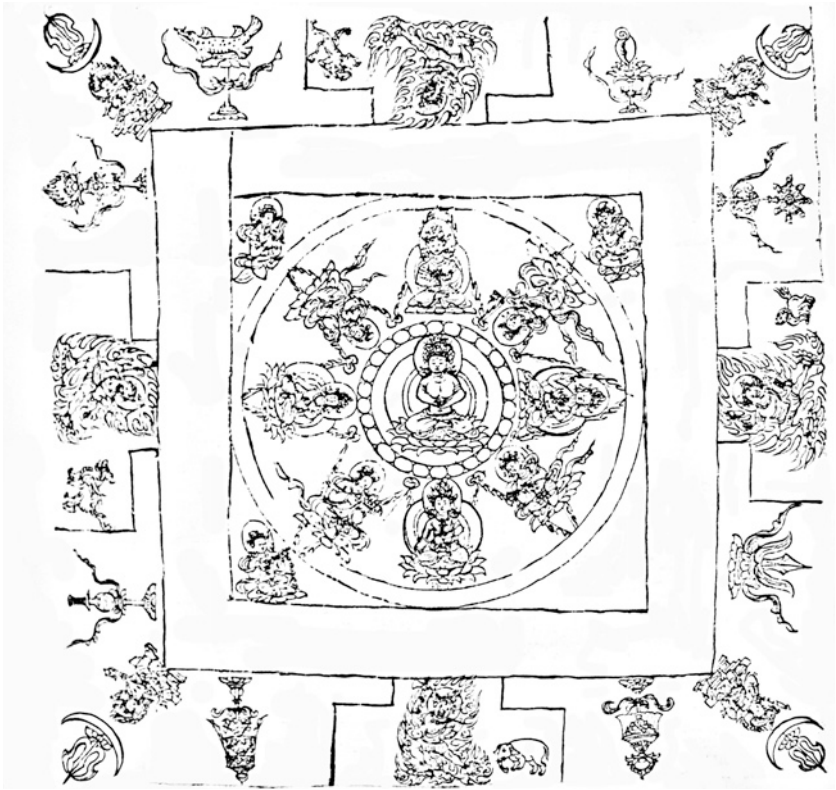


Figure 3. Line-drawing after Dharmadhātu Mandala from Dunhuang. Mogao Caves, late 8th century (courtesy Henrik H. Sørensen).

The third phase began with the ending of the Tibetan occupation of Shazhou and lasted well into the tenth century. The Esoteric Buddhist art from this period is in many ways a return to the forms and styles of the post-Tibetan period, and as such celebrates the classical Esoteric Buddhist art of the mid-Tang.

Together with the wall-paintings in situ, the large amount of Esoteric Buddhist paintings found among the manuscript hoard of in cave no. 17 at the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang constitutes the single most important collection of Esoteric Buddhist art in China from the Tang. Not only do we here find a broad range of the most common iconic themes pertaining to Esoteric Buddhism, but also more specialized and localized forms reflecting influence from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.<sup>20</sup> Important examples of votive paintings for displaying on a wall are the Vajradhātu Mandala from Musée Guimet and the numerous paintings of the various forms of Avalokiteśvara. The forms of this bodhisattva by far dominate the repertoire of depicted Esoteric Buddhist divinities. Wall paintings also feature a range of Esoteric Buddhist themes, including the thousand-armed Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi, Vairocana, and so on. *Jingxiang* from the Uṣṇīṣavijayā can be found in cave nos. 55 and 454. Cave no. 14 features entire scenes drawn from the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon, and can be rightly considered a full Esoteric Buddhist shrine (Guo 2006).

While the importance of the Tang Esoteric Buddhist art from Dunhuang can hardly be overestimated, one must not overlook the fact that Shazhou, the prefectural seat of Dunhuang, was situated on the western margins of the Tang Empire along the Silk Road. Hence, the forms of Buddhism that developed here can hardly be considered mainstream in the sense of being representative of Chinese Buddhism as such at that time, and neither can the forms of religious art that it produced. The Esoteric Buddhist art found in connection with the Mogao Caves constitutes a unique blend of cross-cultural iconographical themes and styles not seen elsewhere, in effect a cultural and religious melting pot. This does not mean that the more common forms and types of Tang Esoteric Buddhist art are not representative, but that they are often

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<sup>20</sup> For an overview of the type of Esoteric Buddhist art found at Dunhuang, cf. Peng 2008. See also Sørensen 1991–1992b; although slightly outdated in some of its observations, much of the information is still relevant.

strongly informed and influenced by those of India, Tibet, and the Uighur kingdom in Turfan.

While the pictorial Esoteric Buddhist art from Dunhuang is both abundant and variegated, almost no related sculptures have so far been identified, with the exception of the important travel altar in the Nelson Art Gallery (see Tokyo National Museum 1996, 213, pl. 225) and a few insignificant wood images depicting Ekādaśamukha (cf. Denès 1976, 28–33, 41–43, etc.). An octagonal *stūpa*-pagoda standing in front of the Mogao Caves, a location that may have originally held a Buddhist monastery, features an image of the seated Mārīcī, the goddess of war.

### *Esoteric Buddhist Art in Sichuan during the Tang*

Due to its geographically protected location in the southwestern corner of China, the province of Sichuan (Jiannan 劍南/Shannan 山南) was spared most of the conflicts that in certain periods ravaged the central provinces of the Tang Empire. It therefore became a haven for refugees from the Zhongguan 中關, at times even the imperial court, and as a consequence its Buddhist temples and their religious art thrived.<sup>21</sup> Already during the Tang, Sichuan was considered one of the main centers for Buddhist painting, as reflected in the written records (see Huang 1963).

Qianfoyan 千佛岩 in Guangyuan 廣元 and Mt. Nan 南山 in Bazhong 巴中 in northern Sichuan and the site of Feixiange 飛仙閣 in Puijiang to the southwest of Chengdu hold some of the earliest Esoteric Buddhist sculptures in the province. Here we find crowned and adorned images of Vairocana dating from the late seventh century (figure 4).

The presence of these early images can undoubtedly be attributed to the fact that both sites are on the direct road entering Sichuan from the region of the twin capitals of the Tang. This type of image is especially noteworthy, as it pre-dates the arrival of Śubhākarasiṃha in Chang'an and the beginning of mature Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang. It also

<sup>21</sup> Not even the depredations of the Mongols during the second half of the thirteenth century and the wanton vandalism of the Communists that swept China during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) have been able to obliterate the rich Buddhist sculptural art of that province. For these reasons Sichuan boasts one of the richest troves of Esoteric Buddhist art in China, in particular in the form of sculptures carved in stone.



Figure 4. Vairocana with retinue. Qianfoyan, group no. 366. Late 7th to early 8th century, Guanyuan. Photo by author.

shows how quickly Esoteric Buddhist images (and, we must suppose, their cults) spread to the provinces.

At the ruined site of Pantuo Temple 盤陀寺 in Qionglai 邛崃 county adjacent to area of the provincial capital of Yizhou 益州 (modern Chengdu), we find images of Esoteric Buddhist deities including Vairocana, Trailokyavijaya, and a rare, early example of Acala, seated with the sword in traditional pose, probably dating from the middle to late eighth century.<sup>22</sup>

Qianfoyan 千佛巖 and Niushenyai 牛神崖, both in Jiajiang county 夾江縣, feature sculptures belonging to the cults of both Vaiśravaṇa and the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, something that is also seen in Zizhong 資中 (Zizhou 資州) to the east of Chengdu, where, at Beiyān 北巖, there are several Esoteric Buddhist sculptures from the eighth to ninth centuries (see Hu 1994, 45–49). Here we also find uncrowned images of Vairocana with the hands forming the characteristic *vajramuṣṭī-mudrā/bodhi-śrī-mudrā* (*jin'gang zhi yin* 金剛智印). This reveals that the transmission of Esoteric Buddhism to this area did not always follow the iconographic norms of mainstream Zhenyan Buddhism in the region of the twin capitals.

Dazu 大足 county in the eastern part of Sichuan is undoubtedly the most well-known area with Buddhist sculptural sites, and it is also the home of the largest concentrations of Esoteric Buddhist sculptures and reliefs in Sichuan. There are only two Tang-period sites of note here, Shengshui Temple 聖水寺 (see Chongqing and Sichuansheng 1994, esp. 34–36) and Mt. Bei 北山.<sup>23</sup> At these sites we find images of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (figure 5), Vaiśravaṇa, Acala, and Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara. As with all the other Sichuanese sites from the Tang, there is no logical order or internal coherence detectable in connection with the sculptural groups and the overall placement of the images, which seems to reflect the spiritual concerns of individual donors or donor-groups and resulted in the rocks being carved in an ad hoc manner.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Pak 2000. Although the images from Pantuo Temple discussed in this article are severely damaged, they do provide us with important information on the iconography and typology of Esoteric Buddhist images in the Chengdu area during the late eighth century.

<sup>23</sup> For a brief discussion of the former site, see Sørensen 2008. The latter site is discussed in great detail in Suchan 2003.



Figure 5. Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara. Fowan, group no. 9. Late 9th cent., Mt. Bei, Dazu. Photo by author.

The Sichuanese sites reveal that it was chiefly the cults of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara that dominated the Esoteric Buddhist imagery and iconography during the Tang. It is important to note, however, that Esoteric Buddhism, at least as it is reflected in the stone sculptures of Sichuan, was neither dominant nor especially prolific. However, that situation was to change dramatically in the proceeding centuries.

*On the Esoteric Buddhist Art from Tang China Kept in Japan*

Throughout the ninth century Japanese pilgrim-monks studying under Esoteric Buddhist masters in China exported a large amount of Esoteric Buddhist material to Japan. While the most important among these monks are Saichō and Kūkai, the founders of the Tendai and Shingon schools, respectively, there were many others, including the Tendai monks Ennin 圓仁 (793/794–864) and Enchin 圓珍 (814–891).<sup>24</sup> These important monks left inventories of the Buddhist books and artifacts they brought with them back to Japan, and a perusal of these gives us an indication of the availability of Esoteric Buddhist material under the Tang. Kūkai's list, the *Go Shōrai mokuroku* 御請來目錄 (Catalogue Submitted by Imperial Request), refers to a wide range of Esoteric Buddhist images, mandalas, and ritual implements (cf. *T.* 2161.50:1064b–65a), while the inventory by Jōgyō 常曉 (?–865), the *Jōgyō ōsho seirai mokuroku* 常曉和尚請來目錄 (Ven. Jōgyō's Catalogue Submitted by Imperial Request),<sup>25</sup> also mentions images and ritual objects, as well as various votive paintings including the divinities of the five planets and the twenty-eight constellations (*T.* 2163.55:1070c–1071ab).

Due to the geographic position of Japan and its special veneration for Buddhist art, many of these artifacts have been relatively well preserved. Here it is important not to overlook the fact that much of our knowledge of the Esoteric Buddhist art from the Tang has been preserved via early Heian icons. Hence, much of the relevant material presently surviving in Japan may not be truly Chinese, but in many cases may be copies based on Tang prototypes. This is actually true for a significant portion of the Shingon material associated with Kūkai

<sup>24</sup> For these monks see Orzech, "After Amoghavajra," Tinsley, "Kūkai," and Dolce, "Taimitsu," in this volume.

<sup>25</sup> *T.* 2163. In terms of Esoteric Buddhist art and material culture, this catalogue is as important as Kūkai's *Go Shōrai mokuroku*.

and his immediate successors (see Goepper et al., 1988). Even so, for those pieces that were lost, the existing copies allow us to have an idea of what the original pieces may have looked like. In any case, the early Shingon and esoteric Tendai art, especially that made during the ninth to tenth centuries, does—to a considerable extent—reflect mainstream Esoteric Buddhist art from eighth-century Tang China. Hence, the repository of Esoteric Buddhist artifacts from Tang China and their contemporary Japanese derivatives constitute a unique and extremely important source of information and knowledge on Zhenyan-related Buddhist art.<sup>26</sup>

### *Conclusion*

On the basis of what has been shown above, we may distinguish between two stages of Esoteric Buddhist art under the Tang: an early phase covering roughly the first century and a half, and a mature phase evident during the rest of the dynasty. The early phase is represented by the sculptures at Longmen and the several free-standing images of Ekādaśamukha. The mature phase starts with the arrival of Śubhākarasiṃha and the subsequent development of Zhenyan Buddhism. The second phase was clearly centered in the area of the twin capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang, and its influence gradually spread to the provinces during the second half of the eighth century.

Although the view that Esoteric Buddhism under the Tang, especially the Zhenyan tradition, was more or less destroyed during the Huichang Suppression of Buddhism (845–846 C.E.) is based on misunderstandings and a superficial reading of the historical records, it cannot be denied that the large monastic centers were greatly and negatively impacted at that time. Nevertheless, Esoteric Buddhism, like most of the other denominations of Chinese Buddhism, survived the setback caused by the Huichang Suppression. However, it would appear that the period of real damage to institutionalized Esoteric Buddhism in the central provinces actually took place between the end of the ninth century and the middle of the tenth century. By the time

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<sup>26</sup> For a presentation of much of this material, see Tokyo National Museum 1983–1984, 2003–2004, and 2006. The latter catalogue introduces a series of wooden images of Ekādaśamukha from the Tang that rarely has been shown to the public; cf. Tokyo National Museum 2006, pls. 1–3. Reproductions of the copies of the oldest extant Dharmadhātu and Vajradhātu Mandalas said to have been brought back to Japan by Kūkai can be found in Seibu Museum of Art 1978.



China was unified by the Northern Song, much of the ritual and iconographical lore associated with the orthodox Zhenyan tradition had been lost, and only vestiges of the once powerful and important Esoteric Buddhist school survived in isolated pockets around the empire. The revival of Esoteric Buddhism that took place during the second half of the tenth century was relatively limited in geographical and cultural influence and does not seem to have influenced Chinese Buddhism so deeply despite the large output of translations its proponents produced. In any case, this second wave of mature Esoteric Buddhist texts was not enough to reinstate Esoteric Buddhism as a major and independent Buddhist tradition matching that which had flourished during the Tang.

ESOTERIC BUDDHISM AND THE BUDDHIST TANTRAS:  
THE SONG, LIAO, XIXIA, JIN, AND YUNNAN



## 38. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM UNDER THE SONG: AN OVERVIEW

Charles D. Orzech

### *Introduction*

While there is circumstantial evidence for continued but limited propagation of the *abhiṣeka* delineated “Yoga” tradition in the period between the end of the Tang in 906 and the founding of the Song in 960, it is clear that the broader adoption and integration of esoteric techniques and deities by Chinese Buddhists continued apace. During the same period, there had been little by way of new texts and translations. The last major translator under imperial patronage was Prajña, working in the early ninth century.<sup>1</sup> The engine of translation that had sustained Chinese Buddhism for some seven hundred years had for all intents and purposes stopped. When we look elsewhere on the continent—to the Liao, Xixia, and to Korea—we see a similar pattern, with little or no evidence of the Tang *abhiṣeka* lineages, but ongoing incorporation of spell lore and its attendant ritual practices (spell texts, *dhāraṇī* pillars, etc.) and deities.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, this ongoing incorporation was not limited to buddhist milieux, as the appearance of the Vidyārāja Ucchuṣma (Huiji jin’gang 穢跡金剛) in exorcistic cults and the adoption of Mārīcī in Daoism (see below) indicate.<sup>3</sup> The Liao in particular synthesized Huayan traditions with the esoteric traditions of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lü 1995, 347–349 lists translations lacking attribution dating from the late Tang, many of them culled from Japanese pilgrim accounts. For Prajña see Copp, “Prajña,” in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> These developments are traced in Dunnell, “Esoteric Buddhism under the Xixia (1038–1227),” Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism under the Liao,” Esoteric Buddhist Art 960–1279,” and “Esoteric Buddhism under the Koryō.” Despite the widespread use of *dhāraṇī* pillars (*shichuang* 石幢) in Liao, Jin, Dali, etc., few seemed to have been built in the Song domains. One surviving example is the eighteen meter pillar in Zhaozhou, Hebei built under the Northern Song in 1038. Yan 1959 and Murata 1993 survey the form.

<sup>3</sup> For an account of the appearance of Ucchuṣma in exorcistic cults see Davis 2001, 126–152.

<sup>4</sup> See Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism under the Liao,” in this volume.

But the first Song emperors, seeking to restore the lost glory of the Tang empire and to surpass it, turned again to South Asia and restarted the engine of translation with a massive infusion of patronage. The effect of this highly visible century-long effort was limited, but it may indeed have had an unintended impact on Chinese nativistic sentiments in the court and the rise of Linji Chan.<sup>5</sup> In the process of collecting, translating, and printing the entire Buddhist canon we also see the emergence of the “esoteric” as a distinct bibliographic and discursive category. Japanese pilgrims including Chōnen 喬然, Jōjin 成尋, Eisai 榮西 and others continued to come to China to seek esoteric and other teachings, notably Chan. The period is also marked by distinctive regional efflorescence of esoteric deities. Numerous sculptural groups carved throughout the southwest, especially in Sichuan, at such sites as Beishan and Baodingshan still testify to the spread and assimilation of esoteric deities, from the Thousand-armed Guanyin to the patroness of the military arts, Mārīcī.<sup>6</sup> So too, Nanzhao and its successor state Dali, independent and outside the Chinese empire until the conquest of Kublai in 1279, saw the development of a distinctly esoteric-tinged form of Buddhism.<sup>7</sup>

### *Evidence for Yoga lineages*

Writing at the end of the tenth century, Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001), the leader of the Buddhist community in the early Northern Song, tells us that the Tang Yoga lineages continued down to his own time, though their stature and accomplishments did not match that of their Tang forebears.<sup>8</sup> A proponent of an inclusive version of Chan, Zanning was an advocate for doing everything to acquire, translate and disseminate Buddhist scriptures. Zanning’s sympathies lay with the branch of Chan that had developed in Wuyue 吳越 (the Fayan branch), and he

<sup>5</sup> See Orzech, forthcoming and “Translation of Tantras and other Esoteric Buddhist scriptures,” in this volume.

<sup>6</sup> See Copp, “Esoteric Buddhism in Song dynasty Sichuan,” and Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhist art 960–1279,” in this volume, and Howard, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> See Sørensen, 2001, and his “Esoteric Buddhism in the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms (800–1253),” “Esoteric Buddhist art under the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms,” in this volume. Also Howard, 1997 and 1999.

<sup>8</sup> For the Yoga in the Tang see Orzech 2006b, and “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra (651–780),” and “After Amoghavajra: Esoteric Buddhism in the Late Tang,” in this volume. For a brief introduction to Zanning see Welter, 1999.

sought to embrace the various strands of Buddhism emerging from the late Tang. Zanning, like the earlier Chan synthesizer Zongmi, took the position that “the sūtras are the Buddha’s words, and Chan is the Buddha’s meaning. The mind and speech of the Buddha cannot be at odds.”<sup>9</sup> Thus his inclusive position contrasts to that of the growing number of proponents of Linji who championed “a teaching outside of the scriptures” (*jiaowai biechuan* 教外別傳).<sup>10</sup> His understanding of Buddhism—and the role of esoteric Buddhism within it—can be seen in the following passage:

Now, as for the Teaching... there are three varieties. The first is the Exoteric Teaching (*xianjiao* 顯教), which is the *Vinaya*, Sūtra, and *Abhidharma* of all the vehicles... The second is the Esoteric Teaching (*mijiao* 密教), which is the method of Yoga: the *abhiṣeka* of the five divisions, the *homa*, the three secrets, and the methods for the mandala... The third is the Mind Teaching (*xinjiao* 心教), which is the method of Chan: the direct pointing at the human mind, seeing one’s nature and attaining Buddhahood. The first of these is the Wheel of the Teaching (*falun* 法輪), this then is the Exoteric Teaching. It takes Kāśyapa Mātāṅga as the first patriarch. The second is the Wheel of Instruction and Command (*jiaoling lun* 教令輪), this then is the Esoteric Teaching. It regards Vajrabodhi as its first patriarch. The third is the Wheel of Mind (*xinlun* 心輪)... this then is the Teaching of Chan. It regards Bodhidharma as the first patriarch. Therefore, those who transmit the Wheel of the Teaching use the sound of the Teaching to transmit the sound of the Teaching (*yi fayin chuan fayin* 以法音傳法音). Those who transmit the Wheel of Instruction and Command use the secrets to transmit the secrets (*yi bimi chuan bimi* 以祕密傳祕密), and those who transmit the Wheel of Mind use the mind to transmit the mind (*yi xin chuan xin* 以心傳心). These are the three Wheels of the Three Teachings, whose three patriarchs came from the West to the East.<sup>11</sup>

I have argued elsewhere that Zanning saw the esoteric Teaching as serving a crucial military function in defense of the State.<sup>12</sup> What is surprising is despite his promotion of the “Esoteric Teaching” as one of the three foundational teachings of Buddhism, and despite his having written a brief treatise on the “Transmission of the Esoteric

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Foulk 1999, 235. The original is *T.* 2015.48:400b10–11.

<sup>10</sup> Welter 2008, 38.

<sup>11</sup> *Lives of Eminent Monks Composed in the Song* (*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 *T.* 2061.50:724b16–26).

<sup>12</sup> Orzech 2006b, 64–68.

Treasury” (*Chuan mizang* 傳密藏) evidence of Song Dynasty lineage transmission in the Yoga tradition is extremely meagre.<sup>13</sup>

The last solid evidence concerning lineage holders in the Yoga tradition stemming from Huiguo dates to the last half of the ninth century and to the involvement of Zhihuilun with the relics of the Fammen pagoda.<sup>14</sup> The Five Dynasties period that follows affords scant record of the *abhiṣeka*-delimited transmission. Among the few notices is that of Daoxian 道賢 of the Latter Tang 後唐 (923–937) who set up “powdered altars” (*fentan* 粉壇) and taught the “method of Yoga *abhiṣeka*.”<sup>15</sup> According to Zanning, “everyone in the two capitals became his disciples.” Also active in the early tenth century was a “Vajra Tripitaka” and his disciple Zhitong 志通,<sup>16</sup> and in Sichuan Yanmi 演秘 and his disciple Shouzhen 守真, also professing the “Yoga teaching.”<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the most famous proponent of “Yoga” was active in the late ninth century. Liu Benzun 柳本尊 claimed to the Yoga lineage of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, though the veracity of these claims is questionable.<sup>18</sup> Finally, we know of a few practitioners in the Song court in the mid-eleventh century. Qing *ācārya* 慶阿闍梨 and his disciple Zhilin 智林 were patronized by emperor Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1022–1063) who received a Ratnasambhavaḥ *abhiṣeka*.<sup>19</sup> Zhilin’s disciple Zhang Wending 張文定 continued his master’s practice. Although by the late tenth century translations of the Anuttarayoga tantras were being produced in China, there was no terminological distinction between the Yoga and Highest Yoga texts and it seems that the teachers above were all connected with the Tang Yoga tradition.

<sup>13</sup> The treatise is in *Da Song sengshi lue* 大宋僧史略 T. 2126.54:240a–b.

<sup>14</sup> For an account see Orzech, “After Amoghavajra: Esoteric Buddhism in the Late Tang,” and Chen, “Esoteric Buddhism and Monastic Institutions,” in this volume and Chen, forthcoming.

<sup>15</sup> His biography is in *Song gaoseng zhuan* T. 2061.50:870c9–871a7 and a brief notice is in *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 T. 2035.49.391a29–b4. Also see Lü 1995, 432.

<sup>16</sup> T. 2061.50:858c12–859a19.

<sup>17</sup> T. 2061.50:871b17. It is notable that we have here both mention of altars for *abhiṣeka* and altars for the *shuilu* 水陸 rites, 871c2–3. Lü 1995, 436–437. For the Shuilu see Lü 1995, 459–463, Lye, 2003, and his “Song Tiantai Ghost Feeding Rituals,” in this volume.

<sup>18</sup> For a recent appraisal see Sørensen 2001, and “Esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan during the Tang and Five Dynasties Period,” in this volume.

<sup>19</sup> See Lü 1995, 434–436 and the biography of Zhilin in *Buxu gaoseng zhuan* 補續高僧傳 *Xuzangjing* 1524.77:518c20–519c16.

*The renewal of State-sponsored Translation*

The early Northern Song emperors looked to the civilizing heroes of the ancient Zhou 周 as well as to the more recent reign of Tang emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756) as benchmarks and patronized religion (including both Daoism and Buddhism), literature, and the arts in an effort to restore the cultural heritage lost in the chaos following the collapse of the Tang. The first three Song emperors sponsored the compilation and printing of encyclopedia (*Taiping guangji*, *Taiping yulan*), had the previous seventeen dynastic histories printed (994–1063), underwrote the major Chan “lamp” collections (1004 / 1009; 1036), collected, translated and printed the entire Buddhist canon (983 with periodic updates), and began the collection of the Daoist canon (1020).

Taizong (r. 976–997), in 982 constructed a special building for the translation of scriptures comprising three offices and support structures in the western sector of the Taiping xingguo 太平興國 temple. For one hundred years the Institute for Canonical Translation 譯經院 (*Yijing yuan*, soon renamed the Institute for the Propagation of the Teaching *Chuanfa yuan* 傳法院), turned out new translations of recently imported Indic works.<sup>20</sup> Yet another special building, the Institute for Printing the Canon 印經院 (*Yinjing yuan*), was erected on the same grounds and dedicated to the printing of a complete edition of the Buddhist scriptures.<sup>21</sup> The newly printed Canon was disseminated to official government monastic libraries and given as prestations to other states.<sup>22</sup>

A sizable proportion of what was translated in the *Yijing yuan* was esoteric or tantric. Translations included new scriptures that had

<sup>20</sup> Founded in 982 the institute was not disbanded until 1082.

<sup>21</sup> Printing had commenced in Chengdu in 972 and the first full edition—referred to as the Kaibao canon after the reign period in which it appeared—was complete in 130,000 woodblocks by 983.

<sup>22</sup> As Huang notes, Taizong used the establishment of printing at the Institute to “circulate widely the work it had produced.” Taizong awarded printed canons to revered or important visitors. A set was given to the Japanese monk Chōnen 喬然 (938–1016) as well as Korean envoys on behalf of their king. See Huang 1994, 152 and note 45. These events are related in *Fozu tong ji* T. 2035.49:399a16–400c. Sets of the Canon were requested by the Uighurs, the Vietnamese, and the Xi Xia. The Tanguts requested a sixth set in 1073, the Vietnamese requested another version in 1098–99, and so on. See Sen 2002, 40–41. Both the Khitan and the Koreans cut their own canons and were in competition with the Song in these inter-state prestations. On the development of the Canon see Lancaster 1989, 144–156, and Lancaster and Park 1979.



emerged since the Tang, including the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (T. 1191), the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (T. 885), and the *Hevajra ḍākinī-jala-saṃvara-tantra* (T. 892). Certain key works that had only been partially translated during the Tang such as the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* (STTS, T. 882) were translated in full. The monks of the Institute also rendered numerous ritual manuals for the worship of individual deities (such as Vināyaka and Mārīcī) as well as many short *dhāraṇī* texts.<sup>23</sup>

*The emergence of Esoteric as a bibliographic category*

The *Catalogue of the Dharma Treasure Compiled in the Dazhong Xiangfu Period* 大中祥符法寶錄 presented in 1013 and covering the first prolific decades of the Institute contains dated reports of translations completed, summaries of contents of the works, names of members of the translation teams, and requests for entry into the canon and circulation.<sup>24</sup> According to the bibliographical taxonomy of the *Catalogue* texts are designated as belonging to three sūtra categories: “The Hinayāna Scriptural Collection,” (*Xiaocheng jingzang* 小乘經藏) “the Mahāyāna Scriptural Collection,” (*Dacheng jingzang* 大乘經藏) and “the esoteric portion of the Mahāyāna Scriptural Collection.” (*Dacheng jingzang mimi bu* 大乘經藏秘密部).<sup>25</sup> We also see occasional uses of subsidiary classifiers, such as “Yoga” (*yuqie* 瑜伽), and “Lineage/School of the Five Secrets” (*wumi zong* 五密宗).<sup>26</sup> Other doxological categories that would signal the distinctiveness of the cult of the cremation ground, of texts of the Anuttarayogatantra or Yogini tantra are absent from this work. For example, The *Catalogue* records Dānapāla’s 1002 translation of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* 佛說一切如來金剛三業最上祕密大教王經 (T. 885) and summarizes its contents. But it says nothing about its iconography.<sup>27</sup> What is notable is that the usage of the catalogue—broad-brushed though it was—marks the emergence of a distinctive bibliographic category “esoteric,” and that category appears to include everything with a *dhāraṇī* or mantra in it.

<sup>23</sup> For further information see Willemen 1983, 23–26, Huang 1994, Sen 2002, and Orzech, “Translation of Tantras and other Esoteric Buddhist scriptures,” in this volume.

<sup>24</sup> This catalogue is an essential resource for the study of the period. Issued in 1013, the *Catalogue* was compiled under the leadership of Zhao Anren 趙安仁 (958–1018). It is found in *Zhonghua da zang jing* 中華大藏經 (ZDJ) 73: 414–523. For a discussion of it see Jan 1966a, 27–30.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, ZDJ 73: 420 which has all three classifications.

<sup>26</sup> ZDJ 73: 456.

<sup>27</sup> ZDJ 73: 472.

*Evidence of the impact of newly imported texts*

Recent work on the institutes by Jan (1966a) and Sen Sen (2002) have pointed out that the new Song translations apparently stimulated little or no exegetical work, and Sen argues that the lack of commentary is evidence that the new translations had no impact.<sup>28</sup> Is there any evidence at all for their circulation and use during the Song?

We get a tantalizing glimpse of circulation through the eyes of the Japanese Tendai monk Jōjin 成尋 (1011–1081) who documented his journey to Tiantaishan and Wutaishan in 1072–1073 in *San Tendai Godai san ki* 參天台五臺山記.<sup>29</sup> After spending three months on Tiantai Jōjin had to come to the capital to obtain permission to travel to Wutaishan. While there Jōjin spent considerable time at the Institute and his record preserves information concerning the new translations and xylographic texts produced there. Jōjin mentions temples connected with eight vidyārājas and even individual deities such as Trailokyavijaya. But the most striking account describes a temple on the imperial palace grounds. Jōjin's morning visit to the complex was cut short and he made a special arrangement to return that afternoon. He observed that,

all [the palaces] are elevated on stone mounds like mountains. Permission [to enter] is dependent on official authorization. Persons lacking such are stopped.... All the great masters were individually screened.... The imperial palace hall is on the South side and not easily seen. Its halls and towers all have imperial thrones, day beds, etc. Each one has a guard. Who can venture to tell how many people are within the palace [compound]? Right in the middle is the Shangzao 賞棗 palace with unimaginably opulent paintings. Finally we saw Dalun mingwang 大輪明王 (Mahācakra vidyārāja). A snake coiled around each of his two forearms. His right hand grasped a cudgel and the cudgel was surmounted by a skull. A snake was coiled around the cudgel and the skull. On the Buddha's *uṣṇīṣa* was a transformation Buddha. [Also present was] Dali mingwang 大力明王. The left and right of its terrifying three faces were

<sup>28</sup> Though some of the translations did stimulate considerable Imperial preface writing and some commentary the newer cemetery texts apparently did not. For the imperial commentaries see Huang 1994, 154–158.

<sup>29</sup> Found in *BZ* (1978–1983), vol. 15: 321–490. The record covers 169 double pages. Jōjin's home monastery was Enryakuji 延曆寺 on Mt. Hiei. He arrived in 1072 and sent a cache of printed texts back to Japan in 1073 covering translations made since Chōnen's 喬然 mission in 984. Unfortunately, the list of the texts he sent back to Japan is no longer extant. Borgen 1987 has a useful introduction to Jōjin's diary. von Verschuer 1991 has a more detailed treatment.

red, while its primary body was black. On the top of its central face was a transformation Buddha. There were two snakes, one coiled around his forearm.<sup>30</sup>

This appears to be a description of Vajrapāṇi (Mahācakra Vajrapāṇi) probably drawing on \*Devaśāntika's translation of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (*Da fang guang pusazang Wenshushili genben yigui jing* 大方廣菩薩藏文殊師利根本儀軌經 T. 1191).<sup>31</sup> The likely source of the second image is \*Dharmapāla's 983 translation of the *Mahābalasūtra* (*Fo shuo chusheng yiqie rulai fayan bianzhao Dali mingwang jing* 佛說出生一切如來法眼遍照大力明王經 T. 1243). Jōjin's account is evidence that certain of the newly translated scriptures were instantiated in practice, if only to a very elite audience.

A remarkable number of sculptures of deities of esoteric origin survive from the Song period, the majority in the southwest. These include a range of images from the one thousand-armed Guanyin, to Mahāvairocana, to Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī, to groupings of the various *vidyārājas*.<sup>32</sup> It appears that most have been drawn from scriptures promulgated during the Tang. However, a few images testify to some circulations of texts translated in the Song. One instructive example is the figure of Mārīcī, goddess of the dawn and patroness of the military arts found at Beishan 北山, in Sichuan.

The carvings at Beishan were begun by the late ninth century militia commander Wei Junjing 韋君靖 for his Yongchang fortress and carving continued until 1162. The carvings now include depictions of the Pure Land, images of Avalokiteśvara, Vaiśravaṇa, *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī* (*Da kongque mingwang* 大孔雀明王), and Mārīcī (*Molizhi* 摩里支). The Mārīcī image has been dated to the Northern Song period. Texts concerning Mārīcī have a long history in China beginning with the Sui or early Tang period *Dhāraṇī Scripture of Mārīcīdevī* (*Molizhitian tuoloni zhou jing* T. 1256) and a treatment in Atikūṭa's

<sup>30</sup> BZ vol. 15: 456–457.

<sup>31</sup> The text was translated sometime between 983 and 1000. The deity is described at T. 1191.20: 876b4-c01, and in several other places (*juan* 11, 12, 15, and 16) but the iconography is inconclusive. Mention of a similar deity also occurs in T. 1169 and T. 890 translated by Dharmabhadra. T. 890 is Dharmabhadra's translation of the *Māyājālamahātatra*. T. 1243 is the *Mahābalasūtra*.

<sup>32</sup> See Sørensen 1990b on Anyue and his "Esoteric Buddhist art 960–1279," in this volume. Also Howard, 1999, 2001, and the recent detailed treatment of Beishan by Suchan 2003.

*Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* (*Tuoloni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 T. 901).<sup>33</sup> As is the case in many *dhāraṇī* scriptures, the deity is invoked for a variety of difficulties ranging from government oppression, to bandits, to floods, fires, *ḍākinīs*, etc.<sup>34</sup> *Mārīcī*'s cult gained in importance during the ascendancy of the “yoga” teaching of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra in the mid-Tang.<sup>35</sup> One of her key attributes is her association with the sun. Her splendor can be blinding and thus her association with the blinding of foes and the power of invisibility.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, her iconography in all of the seventh and eighth century texts is minimal. Her standard description is that found in Atikūṭa's collection, viz, an image made of something precious, the left arm bent at the elbow the hand touching the breast and making a fist grasping a fan. The right arm is stretched out with fingers down.<sup>37</sup>

According to the *Catalogue of the Dharma Treasure* a team headed by Devaśāntika translated the *Great Mārīcī Bodhisattva sūtra* (*Damolizhi pusa jing* 大摩里支菩薩經) in 986–987.<sup>38</sup> In contrast to the vagueness of earlier texts, Devaśāntika's text presents an elaborate iconography and ritual program including various *sādhana* and *homa* to the goddess. It also presents a variety of images of the goddess—two armed, four armed, six armed, and eight armed, some in dance posture, some standing straight, some sitting. She commonly has three faces, and one of these is wrathful and porcine. In some she sticks out her tongue and her face has a slight smile. Her gown can be deep blue, or red, or white. She is crowned, and the crown contains a *stūpa* or an image of Mahāvairocana. She is in a chariot pulled by boars, and two of her hands hold a needle and thread to sew up the eyes of enemies. In most descriptions she grasps a branch of the Aśoka tree. In others she grasps a sword, a staff, a vajra, a severed head (of Rāhu), a wheel, a bow, arrows. The text details a variety of methods including the already familiar forms of protection, invisibility, and so forth,

<sup>33</sup> T. 901.18:869c8–10.

<sup>34</sup> T. 901.18:869c29–870a11.

<sup>35</sup> Texts involved are T. 1254, 1255 A & B, 1256, 1259.

<sup>36</sup> She also has connections to Mahāvairocana and to Ursa Major—the big dipper.

<sup>37</sup> Three Tang texts are attributed to Amoghavajra (T. 1254, 1255, and 1258). For a treatment of the pre-Song texts see Hall 1990, 67–189.

<sup>38</sup> T. 1257 Sanskrit: *Mārīcīdhāraṇī(sūtra)* which corresponds to an extant Sanskrit manuscript as well as to the iconography found in the *Sāadhanamālā*). *Mārīcī*'s iconography is discussed by Bhattacharyya 1993, 93–100.

as well as offensive and necromantic rites based on the traditions of the *śītavana* using cremation shrouds, human bones, flesh and blood for the painting of pata. The Beishan Mārīcī is clearly drawn from this more abundant iconography. Virtually every element of Mārīcī's iconography here including her faces, implements, smile, chariot, boar vehicle, and so forth can be found in Devaśāntika's text. Although we cannot completely rule out the possibility of an alternative source, her image at Beishan argues for the circulation of Devaśāntika's translation and it suggests that recently translated scriptures did circulate.

But Mārīcī moved even beyond Buddhist settings. Sometime in the late Song or early Yuan Mārīcī begins to appear in Daoist texts as the "Dipper Mother" (Dou mu 斗母), an association that may have been enabled by Mārīcī's long association with the dipper.<sup>39</sup> The relationship between Dou mu and Mārīcī is hardly secret. The *Xiantian Doumu zou gao xuan ke* 先天斗母奏告玄科 specifically calls Dou mu Mārīcī<sup>40</sup> and the *Xiantian leijing yin shu juan* 先天雷晶隱書 presents her "heart mantra"<sup>41</sup> that Capitanio has noted is derived from Amoghavajra's brief text on Mārīcī (*Molizhi pusa lue niansong fa* 摩利支菩薩略念誦法 T. 1258).<sup>42</sup> Her iconography, however, is certainly not from a Tang text and must postdate Devaśāntika's translation, as it details her three faced eight armed version with bows, arrows, and boar chariot.<sup>43</sup> She represents an excellent example not only of the circulation of the text of Devaśāntika or of icons drawn from it, but also of the broader impact of the texts and practices of esoteric Buddhism.

<sup>39</sup> There are a variety of texts concerning Dou mu in the *Daozang*, the earliest including the *Doumu da sheng yuan jun benming yan sheng xin jing* 太上玄靈斗母大聖元君本命延生心經 (DZ 621) are of Late Song vintage, the rest from the Yuan and Ming. Schipper dates these texts tentatively to the Southern Song (1127–1279). See Schipper and Verellen 2004, 2:952.

<sup>40</sup> DZ 1452, 34.769a. The text is possibly of Yuan (1279–368) vintage. See Schipper and Verellen, 2: 1234.

<sup>41</sup> The text is attributed to Wang Wenqing 王文卿 and is part of a corpus of texts connected with the Five Thunder tradition (Wulei fa 五雷法). It may be as early as the Southern Song. See Schipper and Verellen 2004, 2:1107–1108.

<sup>42</sup> See Capitanio, "Esoteric Buddhist Elements in Daoist Ritual Manuals of the Song, Yuan, and Ming," in this volume. The correspondence between the mantra here and the one in Amoghavajra's text is not exact and the text labels another mantra than the one so labeled in the Buddhist text as her "heart mantra."

<sup>43</sup> It is loosely based on T. 1257.21.269a25ff., 272c22ff., etc.

### 39. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN SONG DYNASTY SICHUAN

Paul Copp

As it was in the Tang and Five Dynasties periods, Buddhism in Song Dynasty Sichuan was deeply infused with elements of esoteric Buddhism—broadly construed here as encompassing not only the systematic high ritual traditions introduced into eighth-century China from India and elsewhere, but also the looser and older heritage epitomized in *dhāraṇī* literature and its enactments across medieval China.<sup>1</sup> Yet, despite the pervasiveness—and, in the case of the Buddhist sites of Baodingshan and Anyue, the great prominence—of these elements, Song Sichuan seems to have lacked a fully self-aware or systematic esoteric tradition.

Given the lack of much evidence pointing to specific esoteric circles or frames of reference (aside from scattered references to Liu Benzun’s “Yoga” and Diamond Realm practices), it might be safer to take the proliferation of apparently esoteric images as the realia of local traditions; the precise nature and histories of the practices of these local traditions are not yet well understood, but they all seem to have been seen mainly as forms of mainstream Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism. In this light, and though it dates from early in the Song and does not cover any Sichuan phenomena, a text like Zanning’s 贊寧 (919–1001) brief late tenth-century account of the transmission of esoteric practices, the *Chuan mizang* 傳密藏 (Transmission of the Mystic Store),<sup>2</sup> which presents an elliptical image of post-Tang esoteric practice as a diffuse heritage of occult techniques and shadowy figures, bears a remarkable resemblance, at least in broad strokes, to surviving traces of Sichuan esoteric Buddhism in Song times.

A prominent Chinese scholar of Sichuan Buddhist visual culture, in a recent study covering the seventh–twelfth centuries, lists a wide

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the entry of the high Esoteric tradition into Sichuan, see Sørensen. “Esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan During the Tang and Five Dynasties Periods,” in this volume. For a brief discussion of the nature of early *dhāraṇī* traditions and their later life in Tang, Five Dynasties, and early Song China, see Copp, “Dhāraṇī Literature,” in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> *Da Song sengshi lüe* 大宋僧史略 T. 2126.54:240a–b.

range of cliff and cave sculptures as traces of the Song-era esoteric tradition.<sup>3</sup> Among the Song-era images he includes are a relief of the occult adept Baozhi 寶誌 (418–514) found at Beishan (Dazu); images of the Peacock King (or Queen, Kongque mingwang 孔雀明王) featured at Beishan, Baodingshan, and Shimenshan; Hārītī (Heledi 訶利帝, etc.) carvings located at Beishan and Shimenshan; an image of Cundi (Zhunti 准提) at Anyue; images of Māricī (Molizhi 摩利支) at Beishan and Anyue; and six images of Buddha Vairocana (Pilu-zhena 毘盧遮那), in different configurations—two at Beishan, one at Baodingshan, and four at Anyue. Perhaps most prominent are images of various forms of Guanyin, including Cintāmaṇicakra (Ruyilun 如意輪) at Beishan, Mala (rosary)-counting Guanyin (Shuzhushou 數珠手) at Beishan, Amoghapāśa (Bukong juansuo 不空羂索) in three different niches at Beishan, and the Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Guanyin (Qianshou qianyan 千手千眼) at Baodingshan.<sup>4</sup>

The variety and spread of such images speaks to the importance of “esoteric” styles of Buddhism in Song Dynasty Sichuan. However, one must be cautious about statements claiming that sculptures of multi-armed bodhisattvas and other deities described in *dhāraṇī* literature and in the scriptures and manuals of esoteric Buddhism are in all cases examples of discrete esoteric traditions. Such claims are very common, especially in art historical works and in Chinese scholarship of all modes. In the great majority of cases, nothing is known of the original social or religious contexts of these images. Thus, the nature of the traditions in which they were produced—if it is even meaningful to speak in these terms—is not always (at least at this time) knowable. Indeed, as I will note below, what clues we do have point as often to non-tantric frameworks, even to native frames of filial piety. Yet the preponderance of these images does strongly suggest the popularity of *dhāraṇī* and esoteric practices, or at least their remnant emblems, in Song Sichuan.

Esoteric connections are suggested even more clearly when we turn to the most famous and striking members of this family of images: those featuring the local esoteric adept Liu Benzun 柳本尊 (855–907) and his self-appointed successor and promoter, Zhao Zhifeng 趙智風

<sup>3</sup> Ding 2003, 402–25.

<sup>4</sup> Ding 2003, 417–18.

(1159–1249).<sup>5</sup> Song Dynasty sources—the *Biography of Liu Benzun of the Tang* (*Tang Liu Benzun zhuan* 唐柳本尊傳) by Zujue 祖覺 (1087–1150) and the visual programs of Baodingshan and Anyue—focus on Liu’s use of incantations to defeat evil spirits, the extreme acts of asceticism for which he became famous, his mastery of an occult tradition described using terms from Tang esoteric Buddhism, and his spiritual identification with Vairocana. Scholars have so far been unable to determine the precise nature and antecedents of the form of esoteric Buddhism ascribed to him in extant sources, sketched using such standard terms as “Yoga,” “Great Wheel,”<sup>6</sup> “Five Families,” as well as Tang adepts such as Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, and Yixing.<sup>7</sup> In this light, it is striking that the descriptions of Liu’s religious life and the few direct quotations attributed to him in the *Biography* emphasize not complex doctrines and ritual systems but assertions of Liu’s innate supernatural gifts, as well as simpler incantation practices directed at specific ends, such as are common in miracle tales and in the ancient corpus of *dhāraṇī* literature.<sup>8</sup> Taken as a whole, the *Biography* suggests a situation in which an occult figure of local legend was mapped onto an esoteric Buddhist system that was at least in large part foreign to the early legends. Sørensen asserts that the picture of Liu’s practice given in the text, and elsewhere in Baodingshan and Anyue, is best characterized as a combination of

esoteric Buddhist tradition, which in Sichuan derived from the late Tang, on the one hand, and the ascetic tradition of self-mortification as promulgated in the *Pseudo-Śūraṅgama sūtra* and the *Pseudo-Brahmajāla sūtra*, on the other.

Sørensen further notes that on the esoteric side, however, he can find no specific texts that account for this style.<sup>9</sup> Ding Mingyi’s work agrees with this picture in general terms, describing what he calls the “mutual

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<sup>5</sup> For more on these figures, see Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan During the Tang and Five Dynasties,” in this volume.

<sup>6</sup> For information on this term, see Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan During the Tang and Five Dynasties,” in this volume. See also the entry “Dairin” by Durt, 1994d.

<sup>7</sup> For a convenient, though not unproblematic, translation of the *Biography*, see Howard 2001, 170–74.

<sup>8</sup> See Copp, “Dhāraṇī Scriptures,” in this volume. For a similar characterization of Liu’s practice, see Teiser 2006, 223.

<sup>9</sup> Sørensen 2001, 85.



practice of esoteric and exoteric teachings” characteristic of the region, and finds in accounts of Liu’s practice a combination of esoteric Buddhism and native Chinese traditions of filial piety.<sup>10</sup>

Liu’s miraculous austerities are dramatically presented in monumental tableaux at Baodingshan and Anyue, where they exist alongside other images including those of the vidyārājas and Vairocana. Though they are found in esoteric traditions, the images—especially those of Vairocana—are also shared by other traditions, including that of Huayan. In fact, the esoteric Buddhism figured in these images and sketched in their accompanying texts often overlaps significantly with the Vairocana imagery characteristic of Huayan literature, a body of scripture much favored by the creator of the sites, Zhao Zhifeng.

Perhaps most important in this regard are the structures located at the Xiaofowan 小佛灣 site at Baodingshan, an extremely important site that is not yet completely understood. Such structures include especially the “Vairocana Shrine” (*pilu an* 毘盧庵) and the “Scripture-Stūpa of the Patriarch’s Dharma-Body” (*zushi fashen jingmu ta* 祖師法身經目塔), both of which are covered with texts and images of keen interest to the scholar of esoteric Buddhism in Song Sichuan. These examples make clear that any full investigation of this subject must look to material and visual culture even more than to texts.

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<sup>10</sup> Ding 2003, 419.

## 40. BUDDHIST TANTRAS AND CHINESE CULTURE

George A. Keyworth

There are two oft-repeated assumptions regarding Chinese Buddhism and Indian tantric Buddhist literature. First, Chinese social and ethical sensibilities were unreservedly offended by the frequent demands in the tantras to employ the passions—breaking taboos—in carefully administered ritual contexts utilized to expedite the path to liberation. Second, Chinese translations of some tantras, first made during the late tenth- and early eleventh-centuries at the Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Scriptures (Yijing yuan 譯經院, quickly renamed the Institute for Disseminating the [Buddha-]Dharma (Chuanfa yuan 傳法院), which was newly established at Taiping xingguo Monastery 太平興國寺 in the Bianjing 汴京 capital in 982, are unequivocally misleading, corrupt, and too late (Chou 1945; Jan 1966; Tucci 1971b, 338 n. 1; Brough 1964; Huang 1997; Sen 2002; Orzech 2006a, 2006b). Consequently, the two inherently erroneous categorizations of Chinese religion as primarily Confucian and, following modern philologists' fixation with Sanskrit and Pāli textual antecedents, that Chinese Buddhism can only be the product of reliable Indian-language translations, have clouded the lens through which we might view Chinese tantra.

In the latter misconception, one might take heed of the fact that nearly all of the most popular Buddhist scriptures upheld in China are poor translations. Kumārajīva's (344–413) *Lotus Sūtra* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮花經, T. 262) is, beyond a doubt, admired precisely because it is a Chinese text, easily comprehensible for a Chinese reader, with little to no knowledge of Sanskrit. The reception of tantric literature in China, therefore, like other forms that preceded it, was diffuse and only became viable in means that responded to Chinese religious and cultural concerns.

There is a further, perhaps larger, problem that colors Chinese tantra, which needs to be addressed. The *sine qua non* for the study of Buddhist tantras is the anachronistic grading of Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian, and even Tangut (Xi Xia 西夏) fragments, using the coupling of Sanskrit- and Tibetan-language texts under the fourfold

division of *kriyā* (*shi* 事), *caryā* (*xing* 行), *yoga* (*yuqie* 瑜伽), and *anuttarayoga* (*wushang yuqie* 無上瑜伽) (Matsunaga 1980, Lü 1995, 10–12). Dalton (2002) has recently demonstrated that this classification scheme is 1) Tibetan rather than Indian in origin, and 2), is late (twelfth century), which has led Orzech (2006b) to suggest these should be discarded as superfluous anachronisms when approaching Chinese tantra. The fact that scholarship on Buddhist tantric literature has overwhelmingly accepted the sorting of its literature according to Tibetan accounts, which stem from the self-styled Tibetan renaissance (ca. 950–1200) that support the *gsar ma* tantras reintroduced after the imposing efforts of the translator (Tib. *lo tsa ba*) Rin chen bZang po (958–1055) in the western Tibetan kingdom of Gu-ge (Guge 古格), remains a weighty obstacle for those wishing to explore both Indic and indigenous manifestations of tantra across Asia (Davidson 2002a, 2004; Samuel 2008).

Scholars remain deeply divided over what should and should not be classified as tantra. One need only consider the question of the twofold mandalas of East Asia, primarily Japan: the Womb (Skt. *garbhadhātu*, Ch. *taizangjie*, *taizōkai* 胎藏界) and Diamond (*vajradhātu*, *jin'gangjie*, *kongōkai* 金剛界) mandalas, from the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (*Dari jing* 大日經, T. 848) and the *Vajrasekhara sūtra* (*Jin'gangding jing* 金剛頂經, T. 865), respectively. These texts have been classified as either tantric, esoteric (*mijiao* 密教), or both (Orzech 1998, 2006b; Tachikawa 2009).

To make matters even worse, it is extremely difficult to identify what terms the Chinese have used to classify texts and practices subsumed under the rubric of tantra. For example, the modern transliteration *dateluo* 怛特羅 for tantra cannot be found in the Sino-Japanese *Taishō* edition of the Buddhist canon. There are several other terms, including “secret teachings” (*mijiao*), “secret canon” (*mizang* 密藏), “secret canon of the Mahāyāna” (*Dasheng jingzang mimibu* 大乘經藏秘密部), and so forth, all of which have been shown to refer to materials both within and beyond the fruitful limits of tantra suggested by Orzech (2006b) and Davidson (2002a). Other, more technically accurate terms, such as *yoga*, *mantra* (*zhengyan* 真言), and diamond or adamantite (*jin'gang* 金剛)—as in the Vajrayāna (*Jin'gangsheng* 金剛乘)—are testimony to the reception of tantric Buddhism in China; however, they do not signal a distinctly separate tradition of

tantric Buddhism in China as in Tibet, Nepal, or Mongolia (Orzech 2006b, 45–52).

Only a few of the so-called core tantras (e.g., the *Guhyasamāja*, *Hevajra*, *Cakrasamvara*, *Vajravārāhī*, *Kālacakra*, and so forth) were translated into Chinese. \*Dānapāla (Shihu 施護, active 982–1012) translated the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (*Yiqie rulai jin'gang sanye zuishang mimi dajiaowang jing* 一切如來金剛三業最上祕密大教王經, T. 885), and \*Dharmapāla (Fahu 法護, 963–1058) translated the *Hevajra-[dākinījālasambara-] tantra* (*Dabei kongzhi jin'gang dajiaowang yigui jing* 大悲空智金剛大教王儀軌經, T. 892) (Matsunaga 1978, 2000; Snellgrove 1959; Willemen 1983). Several other significant ritual manuals (*kalpa*, *yigui* 儀軌) that have been used by *sādhakas* in India, Nepal and Tibet, including the [*Avalokiteśvaragūṇa-*] *Kāraṇḍavyūha-sūtra* (*Dasheng zhuangyan baowang jing* 大乘莊嚴寶王經, T. 1050) and the [*Ārya-*] *Mañjuśrūmūlakalpa* (*Dafanguang pusazang Wenshushili genben yiguijing* 大方廣菩薩藏文殊舍利根本儀軌經, T. 1191), both translated by \*Devaśanti (Tianxizai 天息災, a.k.a. \*Dharmabhadra [Faxian 法賢], d. 1000), confirm that tantric literature entered the Chinese Buddhist canon precisely at the time of massive state-supported efforts to propagate the Buddhadharma, epitomized by the first printing of the canon in 983 (*Shuban da zangjing* 蜀版大藏經).<sup>1</sup> Some scholars have suggested that these texts may have been either proscribed or had restricted audiences, but there is little evidence to confirm such claims (Jan 1966; Sen 2002; Orzech 2006b). There is, however, ample art historical evidence to show that images of some of the deities from these texts were produced and received veneration in China.

Within the last millennium in China, as mentioned above, contact between Indian, Nepalese, Tibetan, and Mongolian adherents of tantric forms of Buddhism interacted with Chinese on a massive scale across the contemporary (though certainly not static) boundaries of China. On Buddhist mountains across China, including Mt. Wutai 五台山 in Shanxi 山西省, Emei 峨眉山 in Sichuan 四川省, and Putuo 普陀山 on an island off the coast of Zhejiang 浙江省; and at grottoes

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of these efforts see Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism under the Song,” and “Translation of Tantras and Other Esoteric Buddhist Scriptures,” in this volume.

and in caves from Gansu 甘肅省 near Dunhuang 敦煌, both Mogao 莫高窟 and Yulin 榆林窟 to Chongqing 重慶, Baodingshan 寶頂山, and Beishan 北山, near Dazu 大足, and Feilailong 飛來峰, next to Lingyin Monastery 靈隱寺 in Hangzhou 杭州—to list only a few—one can easily encounter tantric manifestations of Vajrapāṇi (Jin'gangshou 金剛手), Mahākāla (Daheitian 大黑天), and especially Avalokiteśvara (Guan[shi]yin 觀[世]音) (Jin 1999). What we fail to see in a Chinese—rather than a clearly Tibetan—context are examples of the increasingly feminine wrathful Buddhist representations of the *ḍakīnīs* (*tuzhini* 荼枳尼) that figure prominently in the tantric literature.

The reception of the tantras in China cannot be separated from the question of Sino-Tibetan, as well as the less prominent though still significant Sino-Nepalese, cultural, religious, and political developments from the thirteenth century on. Weidner (2001) is an excellent example of the much-needed recent trend toward looking at the complex relationship between tantric Buddhist cultures (Nepal, Tibet, Mongolia) and the Chinese cultural sphere, specifically from an art historical perspective. The chapels constructed by Ming 明代 (1368–1644) and Qing 清代 (1644–1911) emperors—especially Emperor Yongle 永樂 (r. 1402–4124), Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (r. 1661–1722), and Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1736–1795)—to implement the rituals taught by their Tibetan *bla mas* (*lamas* 喇嘛), have only begun to receive the attention they deserve, let alone the efforts of these teachers in other areas of the Chinese cultural sphere. Whether Chinese Buddhists viewed tantric literature primarily as Tibetan cultural artifacts, as has chiefly been suggested by Japanese scholars, or whether these rituals became part and parcel of Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhist liturgical rituals, tantra can be found in China and has profoundly shaped Chinese repentance (*kṣama*, *chanhui* 懺悔) rites since at least the eleventh century.

## 41. TRANSLATION OF TANTRAS AND OTHER ESOTERIC BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES<sup>1</sup>

Charles D. Orzech

### *Early Song Literary Projects as Context*

The first three Song emperors consolidated their rule not only through military superiority but also through promoting their “civilizing virtue” (*wen* 文). They took as their models the culture heroes of the ancient Zhou 周 (1122–255 B.C.E.), and regarded the reign of the Tang emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756), some two hundred and fifty years earlier, as a benchmark. They therefore generously patronized religion (both Daoism and Buddhism), literature, and the arts in an effort to recover lost cultural heritage.

Much indeed had been lost in the chaos stretching from the fall of the Tang. As Glen Dudbridge observed, the imperial library in the early Northern Song was smaller than that of Xuanzong’s time, and was filled with works of more recent times. In other words, a significant portion of the literary legacy of earlier times had been lost.<sup>2</sup> In pursuit of recovery, and with military operations mostly over, the second emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976–997) increased support for literary production and for the imperial infrastructure needed for it with an enlarged library and new projects, both religious and secular. An effort was made to recover lost books and to rebuild the imperial library holdings. This included compiling and printing encyclopedia (*Taiping guangji*, *Taiping yulan*); printing histories of the previous seventeen dynasties (994–1063); underwriting the major Chan “lamp” collections (1004/1009; 1036); collecting, translating, and printing the entire Buddhist canon (983) and issuing periodic updates; and beginning the collection (1020) of what would lead to the Daoist canon.

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<sup>1</sup> This essay summarizes portions of Orzech 2006b.

<sup>2</sup> Dudbridge 2000, 1–4.

*The Institute for the Propagation of the Dharma (Chuanfa yuan 傳法院)*

The creation of canonical collections signaled more than a wish to be seen in the mold of past culture heroes; it also indicated wide-ranging imperial oversight of the production and circulation of knowledge. Further, the acquisition of the Buddhist scriptures was an integral part of the Song's vision of itself as the center of a great continental empire. Taizu 太祖, the first emperor (r. 960–976), initiated the task by dispatching one hundred and fifty seven monks to India in 966 to collect scriptures for the imperially sponsored translation institute.<sup>3</sup> The first translations in over a century and a half were made by a team headed by Dharmadeva (Fatian 法天, d. 1001) in 973.<sup>4</sup> Soon after, the Court received three more Indian monks who had come to form the core of the translation team: \*Devasāntika (Tianxizai 天息災, from 978 called Faxian 法賢, d. 1000), \*Dānapāla (Shihu 施護, d. 1018), and Fahu 法護.<sup>5</sup>

In 982 Taizong constructed a special building for the translation work that included three offices and support structures in the western part of the Taiping xingguo 太平興國 temple. The Institute for Canonical Translation 譯經院 (*Yijing yuan*, renamed the Institute for the Propagation of the Teaching *Chuanfa yuan* 傳法院 in 983) turned out translations of recently imported Indic works for a century.<sup>6</sup> In addition, an imperially authorized team searched monastic libraries for Sanskrit texts that had not yet been translated.

In parallel with other literary projects, the Song put to use printing technology for the Buddhist canon. Another building, the Institute for Printing the Canon (*Yinjing yuan* 印經院), constructed on the same grounds as the Institute for Canonical Translation, was dedicated to printing a complete edition of the Buddhist scriptures. The printing of the Buddhist canon had been initiated in Chengdu in 972 by imperial order and the first edition (referred to as the Kaibao canon, after the reign period in which it was initiated, 968–976) was completed in

<sup>3</sup> Tansen Sen 2002, 31–32. Tansen Sen's essay, along with the work of Huang Qijiang 黃啟江, 1994 and 1997, is now the authoritative source.

<sup>4</sup> See Tansen Sen 2002, 33–34.

<sup>5</sup> *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記, T. 2035.49:396b22–25. See also Tansen Sen 2002, 34. This Fahu soon returned to India and is not to be confused with a second monk, \*Dharmapāla 法護 (963–1058), who translated the *Hevajratantra*. A solid account of the work of these translators is in Jan 1966a, 24–42.

<sup>6</sup> Founded in 982, the institute was not disbanded until 1082.

130,000 woodblocks by 983. After the work shifted to the new institute, periodic updates appeared as new translations were produced.

We are fortunate to have actual descriptions of the translation process in the Chuanfa yuan:

In the Eastern Hall facing west, powder is used to set out an altar to the sages with openings [consisting of] four gates, each with an Indian monk presiding over it and reciting esoteric spells for seven days and nights. Then, a wooden altar is set up and surmounted with a circle having the syllables of the sages and worthies. [This is] called the *Mahādharmā mandala* (*dafa manchaluo* 大法曼荼羅). The sages and worthies are invoked and ablutions are performed using the *arghya*. [vessel]. Incense, flowers, lamps, water, and fruits are presented as offerings. Bowing and circumambulation [take place]. Prayers for protection from evil are offered in order to extirpate demons and obstructions.<sup>7</sup>

Like a nineteenth-century museum, the institute was located at the metropolitan center and served as the official repository for manuscripts. It was under the jurisdiction of the Court of State Ceremonial (Honglu si 鴻臚寺), which was charged with the reception of foreign envoys, among other duties.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the processing of texts at the institutes resembled a production line, and the presence of esoteric ritual was overshadowed by the government status of the Chuanfa yuan itself. The monastery had been transformed into a factory for the production of the Dharma, a place dedicated to the collection, selection, and translation of texts that were then enshrined in the newly printed canon, disseminated to official government monastic libraries, and presented to other states.<sup>9</sup>

Although the translations that were produced came from all periods and schools of Indian Buddhism, much of the material was esoteric

<sup>7</sup> I follow Tansen Sen's translation of the *Fozu tongji*, T. 2035.43:398b2–b8, with minor emendations.

<sup>8</sup> Sen 2002, 41.

<sup>9</sup> As Huang Qijiang notes, Taizong used the establishment of printing at the Institute to "circulate widely the work it had produced." Taizong awarded printed canons to important visitors: a set was given to the Japanese monk Chōnen 齋然 (938–1016) and to Korean envoys of the Korea king. See Huang 1994, 152, n. 45. These events are related in the *Fozu tongji*, T. 2035.49.399a16–400c. Sets of the canon were requested by the Uighurs, the Vietnamese, and the Tangut Xi Xia. The Tanguts requested a sixth set in 1073, the Vietnamese requested another version in 1098–1099, and so on. See Tansen Sen 2002, 40–41. Both the Khitans and the Koreans printed their own canons and were in competition with the Song in these inter-state prestations. On the development of the canon see Lancaster 1989, 143–56; Lancaster and Park 1979. This latter with updates is available online at [http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive\\_catalogue/](http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/).



or tantric, including major works such as the first full translation of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasamgraha* (T. 882) by Dānapāla,<sup>10</sup> the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (T. 1191) by Devaśāntika,<sup>11</sup> the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (T. 885) by Dānapāla,<sup>12</sup> and the *Hevajra ḍākinī-jala-saṃvara-tantra* (T. 892) by Dharmapāla.<sup>13</sup> Also translated were substantial ritual manuals for the worship of a variety of deities, including *Vināyaka* (T. 1272)<sup>14</sup> and *Bhairava* (T. 1242) by Dharmabhadra,<sup>15</sup> and *Māricī* (T. 1257) by Devaśāntika.<sup>16</sup> Also included in this production was material drawn from the *siddha* traditions that employed the imagery of the cremation ground (*śmaśāna*, *hanlin* 寒林) in rites to subdue enemies, attract sexual partners, and so forth, as well as numerous short *dhāraṇī* texts.

### *Availability of Texts and Translators*

Despite imperial sponsorship the institute faced serious obstacles during its century of operation under the Northern Song. These included repeated requests by monks at the Chuanfa yuan to shut down the project, calls from members of the court and bureaucracy to shut it down on ideological and financial grounds, and a shortage of Sanskrit manuscripts;<sup>17</sup> the lack of trained Sanskrit scholars was also an issue. Attempts were made to deal with this problem, and while it is true that the period of the most prolific output was during the tenure of Devaśāntika, Dānapāla, and Dharmadeva, the Japanese pilgrim Jōjin (成尋 1011–1081), who spent an extended period at the institute, reports the presence of a number of South Asian and Central

<sup>10</sup> *Foshuo yiqie rulai zhenshi she dacheng xiancheng sanmei dajiaowang jing* 佛說一切如來真實攝大乘現證三昧大教王經.

<sup>11</sup> *Dafanguang pusa Wenshushili genben yigui jing* 大方廣菩薩藏文殊師利根本儀軌經.

<sup>12</sup> *Foshuo yiqie rulai jin'gang sanye zuishang mimi dajiaowang jing* 佛說一切如來金剛三業最上秘密大教王經.

<sup>13</sup> *Foshuo Dabei kongzhi jin'gang dajiaowang jing* 佛說大悲空智金剛大教王儀軌經.

<sup>14</sup> *Jin'gangsato shuo Pinnayeja tian chengjiu yigui jing* 金剛薩埵說頻那夜迦天成就儀軌經.

<sup>15</sup> *Foshuo miaojixiang yuqie dajiao jin'gang peiluo zu lun guanxiang chengjiu yigui jing* 佛說妙吉祥瑜伽大教金剛陪囉俎輪觀想成就儀軌經.

<sup>16</sup> *Foshou da Molizhi pusa jing* 佛說大摩里支菩薩經.

<sup>17</sup> See Sen 2002, 41. The initial shortage of Indic manuscripts prompted a further scouring of monastic libraries that resulted in a surfeit of texts. For this situation, see Fozu tongji, T. 2035.49:410a15–17. The problem was soon to become a lack of experienced translators.

Asian monks there in 1073.<sup>18</sup> According to the *Song Huiyao* (SHY), the Institute for Printing of Scriptures was abolished in 1071, but apparently this order was not executed, since new copies were produced in response to requests from the Tanguts and the Vietnamese.<sup>19</sup> The institute was reconstituted under the Southern Song (1127–1279) with different functions.

### *The Institute Catalogue*

Records of the ongoing work of the institute is found in a variety of sources, but none conveys the flavor of the undertaking better than the *Catalogue of the Dharma Treasure Compiled in the Dazhong Xiangfu Period* (*Dazhong xiangfu fabao lu* 大中祥符法寶錄, hereafter *Catalogue*).<sup>20</sup> Presented in 1013 and covering the first decades of the institute, the catalogue consists of dated reports of completed translations, summaries of the scriptural contents, names of members of the translation teams, and requests for entry into the canon and circulation.

The bibliographical taxonomy of the *Catalogue* is simple. Sūtras are assigned three categories: the “Hinayāna Scriptural Collection” (*Xiaocheng jingzang* 小乘經藏), the “Mahāyāna Scriptural Collection” (*Dacheng jingzang* 大乘經藏), and the “Esoteric Portion of the Mahāyāna Scriptural Collection” (*Dacheng jingzang mimi bu* 大乘經藏秘密部).<sup>21</sup> Other subsidiary classifications, such as “Yoga” (*yuqie* 瑜伽), “Lineage/School of the Five Secrets” (*wumi zong* 五密宗), and even a “Section on Subjugation” (*xiangfu bu* 降伏部), occur sporadically.<sup>22</sup> However, doxological categories of texts of the Anuttarayogatantra or Yogini tantra, which would signal the distinctiveness of the cult of the cremation ground, are absent. For example, the *Catalogue* records Dānapāla’s 1002 translation of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*

<sup>18</sup> See Jōjin 成尋, *San Tendai Godai san ki* 參天台五臺山記, BZ (1978–1983) 15: 321–490.

<sup>19</sup> See Sen 2002, 40; *Song huiyao* (SHY), 200 (daoshi 2): 7893a; *Song shi* (SS), 486: 14009; *Song huiyao* 197 (fanyi 4): 7734a.

<sup>20</sup> This catalogue is an essential resource for the study of the period. Issued in 1013, the *Catalogue* was compiled under the leadership of Zhao Anren 趙安仁 (958–1018). It is found in the *Zhonghua da zang jing* (ZDJ) 中華大藏經, vol. 73: 414–523. It is now available online in digital facsimile at <http://www.fjdh.com/soft/>. Another catalogue, the *Jingyou xinxiu fabao lu* 景祐新修法寶錄 is a continuation. It is found in ZDJ vol. 73: 524–600.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, ZDJ, vol. 73: 420, which has all three classifications.

<sup>22</sup> ZDJ, vol. 73: 456.

(T. 885) and summarizes its contents. But aside from a mention of *yogini* (*mingfei* 明妃), the *Catalogue* says nothing about its iconography.<sup>23</sup> What's more, the *Catalogue* classifies as "esoteric" everything from *dhāraṇī* texts to the *Guhyasamāja tantra*. The compilers of the *Catalogue* apparently regarded all *dhāraṇī* as "esoteric."

It is also noteworthy that the *Catalogue* is as interesting for what it does not record as for what it does. When compared with records of canons produced from the Song printings in Liao, Korea, and elsewhere, the *Catalogue* has obvious glaring omissions. The missing texts include Devaśāntika's translation of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (T. 1191), translated between 983 and 1000; as well as Dharmabhadra's translation of a text dedicated to Vajrabhairava (T. 1242) and his translation of the *Vināyaka sūtra* (T. 1272), both of which were translated between 989 and 999. What are we to make of this? Are these mere oversights or do they reflect official suppression? Or are they perhaps indicative of special treatment—scriptures deliberately kept out of the official books?

### *Too Risqué?*

Jan Yün-hua and more recently Tansen Sen have noted that the new Song translations appeared to have stimulated little or no exegetical work, and both see the lack of commentary as evidence that the new translations had no impact.<sup>24</sup> The assumption is that the lack of commentary indicates that such texts offended the Chinese audience. The only concrete evidence pointing to such a reaction appears in the *Chronicle of the Buddhas and Patriarchs* (*Fozu tong ji* 佛祖統記) compiled by Zhipan 志磐 in 1269.<sup>25</sup> It claims to quote an imperial edict of 1017 defending translation subsidies but with a warning against mixing "heterodox and orthodox." It says,

<sup>23</sup> *ZDJ*, vol. 73: 472. Indeed, the *Guhyasamāja* is rendered in a way that without the explanation of an *ācārya* there is little that would set it apart from previously translated works.

<sup>24</sup> Though some of the translations did stimulate considerable imperial preface writing and some commentary, the newer cemetery texts apparently did not. This issue is treated in greater detail in Orzech 2006a.

<sup>25</sup> For Zhipan, see Jan 1964, 371–72.

[B]lood sacrifices are inimical to the True Vehicle and foul curses are contrary to the exquisite principle. This newly translated *Vināyaka sūtra* in four *juan* is not permitted to be entered into the canon. From now on this [sort of] scripture will not be translated.<sup>26</sup>

The objections are to “sacrifices of flesh and blood” (*hunxie zhi si* 葷血之祀) and to “disgusting curses” (*yanzu zhi zi* 厭詛之辭) judged to be contrary to the “True Vehicle” (*zhensheng* 真乘) and to its “exquisite principle” (*yonguai yu miaoli* 尤乖於妙理). Such objections to elements of the cemetery cult are plausible. But elements of cemetery practice—the use of human bones in ferocious *homa* offerings, the revival of corpses, etc.—occur as early as Śubhākarasiṃha’s 善無畏 (Shanwuwei, 637–735) translation of the *Subāhu-paripṛcchā* (*Supohu tongzi qingwen jing* 蘇婆呼童子請問經) in 726.<sup>27</sup> However, unlike earlier translations, where the passages were rendered discretely, Song translations were transparent and seem to revel in gory descriptions of cemetery sorcery.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, we cannot simply assume that our own or even later Chinese attitudes concerning what is or is not transgressive apply during the Song. Sexual practices could be found in certain Buddhist ritual texts from at least the Tang, and while certain passages were rendered obliquely, obfuscation also occurred in South Asia.<sup>29</sup> So too, ritual violence and its iconographic representation is not unknown in esoteric texts and practices, as is evident from the use

<sup>26</sup> T. 2035.49:405c26–406a2. This “edict” might have more to do with Zhipan’s milieu than with that of the Institute. A “*Vināyaka sūtra*” (T. 1272) in four *juan* is indeed found in the canon. It was translated by Dharmabhadra sometime between 989 and 999.

<sup>27</sup> See, for instance, T. 895.18:726c29–727c22, or Manicintana’s late seventh-century translation of the *Scripture of the Amoghapāśa dhāraṇī* 不空羂索陀羅尼自在王咒經 (T. 1097), which includes straightforward instructions for spells for resurrecting corpses to help find buried treasure (20:425b22) and spells for entering the bedchambers of *asura* women (20:425c24–426b1).

<sup>28</sup> This is certainly the case for the text on the worship of Vajrabhairava (T. 1242). See for instance, 21:204a23ff, 207a18ff, etc. Charles Willemen notes in his translation and study of the Chinese *Hevajratantra* that Dharmapāla “rendered the Indian original in a very tactful, deliberately abstruse way, but remaining true to the actual proceedings of the Indian original” (Willemen 1983, 29).

<sup>29</sup> Secrecy and its opposite—deliberate and flagrant transgressiveness—are well-known tropes in the tantras. As Ronald M. Davidson has observed, secrecy coupled with titillation may have been the most effective strategy for the propagation of a religious system. See Davidson 2002a, 245–47.

of *homas* of subjugation.<sup>30</sup> What constitutes transgression, in short, is part of a “cultural system.”<sup>31</sup>

*Confucian Objections and the Rise of Linji Chan*

Emerging in parallel with the vision of a continental Buddhist ecumene was a movement that became an increasingly prominent feature of the religious and political landscape of tenth- and eleventh-century China. The “Ancient Culture” movement (*guwen* 古文), based on Ruist 儒 (Confucian) ideology, was strongly nativistic and anti-Buddhist.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, it repeatedly raised objections to the Institute on economic and ideological grounds.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, the first half of the eleventh century saw the composition of the major Chan “Lamp” chronicles. During the height of the Song translation and canon projects, the government issued the *Record of the Transmission of the Lamp from the Jingde Era* (*Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄, T. 2876), a work first composed by Dao Yuan 道原 in 1004, which was heavily revised by the courtier Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020). Albert Welter has argued that the original appears to have been written along accommodationist lines to embrace the spectrum of traditional Buddhist teachings and the emerging varieties of Chan. Yang Yi’s revised version leaned toward the anti-accommodationist teachings connected with Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄, exemplified by the slogan “a teaching outside of the scriptures” (*jiaowai biechuan* 教外別傳).<sup>34</sup> Proponents of the Linji teaching denigrated the traditional approach of scriptural learning. By the time the *Expansive Lamp Record from the Tiansheng Era* (*Tiansheng guangdeng lu* 天聖廣燈錄, X 1553) edited

<sup>30</sup> The iconography of the *vidyārājas* and their role in *homas* for subjugation was a prominent selling point of Tang esoteric Buddhism. See Orzech, 1998, 160–62, 169–205; Orzech and Payne, “*Homa*,” in this volume.

<sup>31</sup> In some cases texts proclaim and perform their own transgressiveness. A good example is the opening scene of the *Buddhakapāla-yogini-tantra-rāja*, in which the Buddha dies during intercourse with his consort, scandalizing and confounding the assembled audience. For a discussion of this text see Davidson 2002a, 247–52.

<sup>32</sup> For an overview of the *wen* movement see Bol 1992.

<sup>33</sup> As early as 999, Chen Shu 陳恕 (944–1022) of the Ministry of Rites complained of the great cost of the Institute and advocated its abolishment. Tian Kuang 天況 (1005–1053) castigated Taizu for his Buddhist extravagance and Vice Censor-in-Chief Kong Fudao 孔輔道 (fl. 11th c.) pressed Emperor Renzong (r. 1022–1063) to shut down the Institute. See Sen 2002, 38, 42; Fozu *tongji*, T. 2035.49:402a18–19, 410a18–19; Huang 1994, 165–66.

<sup>34</sup> Welter 2008, 38.

by Li Zunxu 李遵勗 was issued in 1036, the Linji faction's dominance at court was complete.

Could the Linji branch of Chan's rise to prominence in the court have had any relationship to the Institute for the Propagation of the Teaching? Circumstantial evidence suggests that there may have been a link. The defeat of the Song armies at the hands of the Liao and the humiliating terms of the Shanyuan treaty 澶淵 in 1004–1005 fueled anti-foreign sentiment and the nativism of the *Guwen* movement. Linji Chan championed the sayings of home-grown Chinese buddhas—sayings modeled on the ancient Confucian *Analects* and the *Zhuangzi*—over the teachings of foreign Indian buddhas. One of the most visible emblems of the foreign in the capital—particularly of foreign Buddhism—was the Chuanfa yuan. So perhaps we should view esoteric Buddhism and government patronage of translation as contributing to the rise of Linji Chan. And perhaps Linji Chan was in part the answer to what some in the Northern Song saw as increasingly alien Indian Buddhism and as the nativist reply to the Song dream of a Buddhist ecumene.

But the shift in court fashions did not mean that the popularity of esoteric deities, scriptures, or practices, whether on their own or as elements in other systems, lessened or abated. Esoteric Buddhism had been a part of the Chinese scene for centuries, and late Chinese Mahāyāna was already “esotericized” and would remain so. There is also some evidence that some of the esoteric texts rendered at the institute did in fact have an impact on Song Buddhism.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Key Personnel of the Chuanfa yuan*

The main translators in the first decades of the institute were Devaśāntika, Dānapāla, Dharmadeva (d. 1001), and Fahu.<sup>36</sup> Translation of Sanskrit works, prolific during the first decades of the Institute, became sporadic thereafter, and for all intents and purposes ceased after the death of Richeng 日稱 (Sūryakīrti, d. 1078).<sup>37</sup> Eighteen texts in the *Taishō* canon are attributed to Devaśāntika, and another seventy-four are attributed to him under his new name (from 978),

<sup>35</sup> For this, see Keyworth, “Buddhist Tantras and Chinese Culture,” and Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism under the Song,” in this volume.

<sup>36</sup> An excellent discussion of these four monks is found in Jan 1966a, 36–41.

<sup>37</sup> Bowring 1992, 79–93.

Faxian. Dānapāla accounts for one hundred and fifteen texts; Dharmadeva has forty-four listed. Eleven texts appear in the *Taishō* under the name of Fahu, none of them esoteric. However, there were two monks with this name, the first of whom returned to India in short order; the second, Dharmapāla (963–1058), translated the *Hevajra-tantra*. Translators worked in teams, so attributions indicate the lead translator. The main sources of information for these monks' activities are Zhipan's *Fozu tong ji*, the *Song huiyao*, the *Dazhong xiangfu fabao lu*, and the *Jingyou xinxiu fabao lu* 景祐新修法寶錄.<sup>38</sup> Devaśāntika, Dānapāla, and Dharmadeva accounted for the overwhelming bulk of production at the Institute. Takeuchi Kōzan puts the number of esoteric works translated at one hundred and twenty-three, totaling two hundred and twenty-eight fascicles; forty-four Mahāyāna works totaling one hundred and sixty-nine fascicles were translated.<sup>39</sup>

#### *Dharmadeva*

Dharmadeva (Fatian, d. 1001) was from Magadha and studied at Nālanda. The first of the new translators to reach the Song, he had set out for China with his brother and two other monks but only the two brothers reached their destination; the other two companions died along the way.<sup>40</sup> They met Fajin 法進, a monk trained in Sanskrit, and began translating the texts they had carried with them in Fuxian 富縣 (Shaanxi province). The translation team included the prefectural official Wang Guicong 王龜從 (fl. 970s). Reports of their work reached the capital and they were summoned to court, arriving there in 979 or 980. Dharmadeva is credited with forty-four translations, among them a retranslation of the *Subāhu-paripṛcchā* (T. 896), the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī sūtra* (T. 974a), and numerous shorter *dhāraṇī* scriptures.<sup>41</sup>

#### *Devaśāntika/Faxian (Dharmabhadra)*

Apparently from Kaśmīr and the cousin of Dānapāla, he entered monastic life at age twelve at the Milin monastery (密林寺, Tamasāvana

<sup>38</sup> For an appraisal of these texts, especially of the last two sources (which were recovered only in the twentieth century), see Jan 1966a, 27–30.

<sup>39</sup> Takeuchi 1975, 35.

<sup>40</sup> *SHY*, 200 (daoshi 1): 7891a.

<sup>41</sup> Sen 2002, 44.

saṅghārama?) in Jālandradhara, and initially trained in grammar and philology (Śabdavidya *shengming xue* 聲明學). While traveling to China Devaśāntika and Dānapāla were detained in Dunhuang before escaping and arriving at the Song court in 980.<sup>42</sup> He was a strong advocate for the translation project and petitioned the emperor to provide novices to be trained in Sanskrit to insure the viability of the institute.<sup>43</sup> In 987 the emperor bestowed the name Faxian on him. He was a prolific translator with some ninety-four works to his credit, including Mahāyāna scriptures on Mañjuśrī and Prajñāpāramitā<sup>44</sup> and a wide range of esoteric scriptures—some deeply concerned with the cemetery cult. Most significant are the *Kāraṇḍavyūha sūtra* (the source of Avalokiteśvara’s famous mantra *Om maṇi padme hūm*);<sup>45</sup> the *Māyājālamahātantra*,<sup>46</sup> a manual for the worship of the goddess of the military arts, Mārīcī,<sup>47</sup> the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*,<sup>48</sup> a text whose title is suspiciously similar to a Vināyaka manual that was supposedly banned,<sup>49</sup> and a text to Bhairava;<sup>50</sup> as well as an assortment of *dhāraṇī* texts. It is notable that the last four named texts were not recorded in the institute’s *Catalogue*.

### *Dānapāla*

Dānapāla (d. 1018), Devaśāntika’s paternal cousin and traveling companion, appears to have been a language prodigy, mastering many

<sup>42</sup> SHY, 200 (daoshi 1): 7891b. It is unclear exactly where the cousins were from, as there is contradictory evidence. See Jan 1966a, 37.

<sup>43</sup> See Sen 2002, 45; SHY, 200 (daoshi 1): 7891b; *Xiangfu fabao lu*: 418b8–18.

<sup>44</sup> *Foshuo shengfomu xiaozhi banroboluomiduo jing* 佛說聖佛母小字般若波羅蜜多經 (T. 258) in 982, *Foshuo guanxiang fomu banroboluomiduopusa jing* 佛說觀想佛母般若波羅蜜多菩薩經 (T. 259), n.d., *Foshuo dacheng shan jian bianhua Wenshushili wen fa jing* 佛說大乘善見變化文殊師利問法經 (T. 472), in 984.

<sup>45</sup> *Dasheng zhuangyan baowang jing* 大乘莊嚴寶王經 (T. 1050), translated in 983. The mantra is found at T. 1050.20:61b14. For a study of this text, see Studholme 2002.

<sup>46</sup> *Yuqie dajiaowang jing* 瑜伽大教王經 (*Māyājāla-tantra*) (T. 890), translated in 995.

<sup>47</sup> *Foshuo da Molizhi pusa jing* 佛說大摩里支菩薩經 (T. 1257), translated 986–987. The translation was logged in the *Catalogue of the Dharma Treasure*, ZDJ 73: 434a. For a sample of various spells and mundane operations see T. 1257.21:264b.

<sup>48</sup> *Da fangguang pusa zang Wenshushili genben yigui jing* 大方廣菩薩藏文殊師利根本儀軌經 (T. 1191), translated between 983–1000.

<sup>49</sup> *Jin’gang sato shuo Pinnayejia tian chengjiu yigui jing* 金剛薩埵說頻那夜迦天成就儀軌經 (T. 1272), 989–999.

<sup>50</sup> *Foshuo miaojixiang yuqie dajiao jin’gang peiluo zu lun guanxiang chengjiu yigui jing* 佛說妙吉祥瑜伽大教金剛陪囉俎輪觀想成就儀軌經 (T. 1242), 989–999.



scripts and texts from as far abroad as Sri Lanka, Śrīvijaya, and Java.<sup>51</sup> With some one hundred and eleven translations, he was the most prolific known translator after Amoghavajra,<sup>52</sup> and garnered numerous accolades and honors.<sup>53</sup> Over half of his output could be classified as Mahāyāna, the rest esoteric, much of it *dhāraṇī* texts. Perhaps his most significant contributions were the *Mahāsahasrapramardana sūtra*,<sup>54</sup> the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*,<sup>55</sup> completed in 1002, and the first complete translation of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* (*STTS*),<sup>56</sup> completed between 1012 and 1015.

### *Fahu* (*Dharmapāla*)

Dharmapāla was also a Kaśmīri monk who had studied the Vedas and other Hindu literature before his conversion. Once fully ordained, he attained the status of *ācārya* and studied Vinaya, Śabdavidyāśāstra, and Mahāyāna works at Vikamaśīla. He arrived at the Chinese court in 1004.<sup>57</sup> Like the other key monks for the Institute, he garnered various honors.<sup>58</sup> He worked closely with Weijing 惟淨 (973–1051) who had mastered Sanskrit, though he had never left China. The pair produced a Sanskrit-Chinese lexicon, the *Jingyou Tianzhu ziyuan* 景祐天竺字源, which garnered an imperial preface from Emperor Renzong.<sup>59</sup> In 1054–1055 Dharmapāla presented his translation of the *Hevajra dākinī-jala-saṃvara-tantra*.<sup>60</sup> He died three years later in 1058.

<sup>51</sup> SHY, 200 (daoshi 2): 7892a.

<sup>52</sup> Sen 2002, 45.

<sup>53</sup> Sen 2002, 46.

<sup>54</sup> *Shouhu da qian guotu jing* 守護大千國土經 (T. 999) completed in 983. This text had considerable influence beyond the capital and images drawn from it were enshrined in the monumental sculpture of Baodingshan in Sichuan under the Southern Song.

<sup>55</sup> *Foshuo yiqie rulai sanye zuishang mimi dajiaowang jing* 佛說一切如來金剛三業最上祕密大教王經 (T. 885).

<sup>56</sup> *Foshuo yiqie rulai zhenshi she dacheng xiancheng sanmei dajiaowang jing* 佛說一切如來真實攝大乘現證三昧大教王經 (T. 882).

<sup>57</sup> *Fozu tongji*, T. 2035.49:402c18–20. See also Sen 2002, 46; Willems 1983, 27–28.

<sup>58</sup> Jan 1966a, 40–41.

<sup>59</sup> See Sen 2002, 46; van Gulik 1980, 91–96. The text is preserved in *ZDJ*, 72: 850–930.

<sup>60</sup> *Foshuo Dabei kongzhi jin'gang dajiaowang yigui jing* 佛說大悲空智金剛大教王儀軌經 (T. 892).

## 42. TIBET AND THE CONTINENT FROM THE TENTH TO THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

David Gray

### *Introduction*

The period of the tenth through thirteenth centuries was one of the most important eras in Tibetan religious history, and one that subsequently impacted Central Asian religious history. This was the era characterized by Tibetan Buddhists as the second or “latter dissemination” (*phyi dar*) of Buddhism to Tibet. During this period the transmission of Buddhism from South Asia to Tibet resumed. This occurred in a relatively decentralized political environment, and thus was not subject to the censorship that appears to have characterized the early imperial period. It is also the first era in Tibetan history for which abundant documentary evidence has survived.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Latter Dissemination of Buddhism to Tibet*

In approximately 842 C.E., the Tibetan empire collapsed with the assassination of King Lang Darma by the monk Lhalung Pelgi Dorjé (*lha lung dpal gyi rdo rje*), allegedly motivated by the king’s persecution of Buddhism. Tibet then entered a period known as the “time of fragmentation” (*sil bu’i dus*), characterized by political disunity, with power shifted from the political center, the region of Ü (*dbus*) in Central Tibet, to regional kingdoms such as Gugé (*gu ge*) in Western Tibet.<sup>2</sup> For approximately one hundred years, from the mid-ninth to mid-tenth centuries, the transmission of Buddhism from India and China, and the associated translation of Buddhist scriptures, was halted. Tibetan histories report that Buddhism almost disappeared in Central Tibet, with surviving monks fleeing to the far northeast to the

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<sup>1</sup> For an introduction to Tibetan historiography, see Martin 1997. A quick examination of this bibliography dramatically illustrates the sources available for the study of Tibetan history. Only eight entries are listed for works composed prior to the twelfth century.

<sup>2</sup> For an excellent overview of Tibetan history see Kapstein 2006, 51–174.

regions of Liangzhou and Tsongkha in what is now Qinghai province. The Tibetan traditions of monasticism and *vinaya* study thrived there, and this Eastern Vinaya tradition was reintroduced to Central Tibet in the mid-tenth century (Davidson 2002a, 84–106).

During the tenth century, the transmission of Buddhism from India gradually resumed in an informal fashion. The focus of this transmission was the new genres of tantric Buddhist literature that rose to prominence during the eighth and ninth centuries, the *mahāyoga* and *yoginī tantras*. The earliest of these texts, such as the *Guhyasamāja* and *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga tantras*, were composed by the early eighth century. They were followed by scriptures such as the *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Hevajra tantras*, which were composed by the early ninth century.<sup>3</sup> These texts are characterized by their focus on transgressive practices involving sexuality and violence. There is evidence indicating that there were attempts to block the translation of these texts during the imperial period due to their objectionable content (Gray 2007, 81–82). It also appears that advocates of certain of these texts (most likely the *Hevajra*) began teaching practices associated with them in Tibet during the tenth century.<sup>4</sup> This attracted the attention of the King of Gugé, Lha-lama Yeshé-ö (*lha bla ma ye shes 'od*, ca. 959–1036 C.E.), who, like his imperial precursors, objected to the practice of “heretical teachings” in Tibet. In 985 C.E. he wrote an ordinance criticizing these practices and characterizing them as non-Buddhist (see Karmay 1980b).

Apparently motivated by concern over the transgressive nature of the new teachings filtering into Tibet, Lha-lama Yeshé-ö sent a team of monks, led by Rinchen Zangpo (*rin chen bzang po*, 958–1055 C.E.) to India to discover whether or not these new texts and practices were orthodox or not. Rinchen Zangpo studied with several Buddhist masters in Kashmir and learned that these scriptures were considered orthodox Buddhist texts, by their advocates at least. With the

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the dating of these texts, see Gray 2007, 11–14, as well as Snellgrove 1959, 1.12–16, Willemsen 1983, 20–22, and Davidson 2002b, 77–78 n. 69.

<sup>4</sup> Tibetan historians focus on a group known as the *ar tsho bande* or *a ra mo bande*, who were evidently led by an infamous practitioner known as the “Red Ācārya,” who appeared in western Tibet at this time. The latter figure taught a practice known as the “drop of the path of passion” (*chags lam thig le*), which was apparently derived from the *Hevajra tantra*. Regarding this see Ruegg 1984, 367 and Karmay 1980a, 13–14.

assistance of his teachers he translated a number of these new tantric works, including the *Guhyasamāja* and *Cakrasaṃvara tantras*.<sup>5</sup>

This inaugurated a period of rapid transmission of new Buddhist texts and practice traditions to Tibet. From the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, large numbers of Tibetans traveled to South Asia to acquire and translate Buddhist scriptures. Many of these translators became quite influential and powerful on their return to Tibet, and the most successful of them contributed to the development of the “new” (*gsar ma pa*) schools of Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>6</sup> This period saw the establishment of three major new schools, the Kadamba (*bka’ dam pa*), Kagyü (*bka’ brgyud*), and Sakya (*sa skya*) schools. The pre-existing Nyingma (*rnying ma*) school of Buddhism, as well as the non-Buddhist Bön tradition, also underwent significant development during this period.

### *The New Schools*

Following the return of Rinchen Zangpo to western Tibet, the kings of western Tibet were still concerned about the new *tantras* that were being translated and disseminated under his patronage. Tibetan histories report that they thus decided to go to great trouble and expense to invite to Tibet the renowned Indian scholar Atiśa Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna (982–1054 C.E.). Traditionally, King Yeshé-ö is credited with not only inviting Atiśa to Tibet, but also sacrificing his life to make the visit possible, but these tales are apocryphal, and it was almost certainly one of his successors who invited Atiśa (see Kapstein 2006, 93). Atiśa arrived in Tibet in 1040 C.E. and spent the remainder of his life there. While a tantric practitioner himself, he was also a strong advocate of monastic celibacy, and he advocated a more conservative approach to tantric practice.<sup>7</sup> His approach was followed by his Tibetan disciple Dromtön Gyelwé Jungné (*’brom ston rgyal ba’i ’byung gnas*, ca. 1004–1064 C.E.), who, in conjunction with advocates of the Eastern Vinaya tradition, founded the Kadamba tradition, which was renowned for its strict adherence to the monastic code.

<sup>5</sup> Regarding Rinchen Zangpo and his work, see Tucci 1988.

<sup>6</sup> For an extended discussion of the power and influence attained by the more successful translators, see Davidson 2002a, 117–160.

<sup>7</sup> Regarding Atiśa’s life, see Chattopadhyaya 1967; regarding his journey to Tibet, see Decler 1997. The classic collection of his works is translated in Sherburne 2000.

Another important translator was Marpa Chögi Lodrö (*mar pa chos kyi blo gros*, 1012–1097 C.E.), who traveled to India and studied with the great saint Nāropa (1016–1100 C.E.). He, in turn taught the great Tibetan *yogī* Milarépa (1040–1143 C.E.), whose disciples founded the numerous Kagyü lineages.<sup>8</sup> The Kagyü traditions were especially renowned for their intensive practice of meditation, and particularly the advanced tantric yogic practices known as the “six yogas of Nāropa” (see Mullin 1996), as well as the advanced techniques for realizing the nature of mind known as Mahāmudrā. The latter are divided into *tantra*-based and *sūtra*-based techniques. While the *tantra*-based techniques are derived from the “new” higher yoga *tantras* imported from India, there is considerable evidence suggesting that the *sūtra*-based Mahāmudrā tradition was strongly influenced by the Chan teachings that entered Tibet from China during the eighth and ninth centuries (see Jackson 1994).

The Sakya school originated in the interactions between an influential translator and an aristocratic family. In this case, Drokmi Śākya Yeshé (*'brog mi shā kya ye shes*, b.c. 992 C.E.), the translator of the *Hevajra tantra*, became the teacher of Khön Könchok Gyelpo (*'khon dkon mchog rgyal po*, 1034–1102 C.E.), who founded Sakya monastery, and hence the Sakya school (see Davidson 2002a, 161–209). This school focused on the *Hevajra tantra*, and, in particular, a system of practice known as “path and fruit” (*lam 'bras*), which was attributed to the oral teachings of great Indian saints such as Virūpa.

### *Renewal of the Old Schools*

The massive influx of new scriptures and practice traditions dramatically reshaped Tibet’s religious geography, and naturally had a major impact on the preexisting religious traditions. Both the Nyingma school and the Bön tradition underwent considerable transformation during this period. Although both traditions had a base of preexisting teachings and practices, their bodies of texts and practices expanded during this period, in part through an incredibly fruitful process of “rediscovery” and revelation of “treasure texts” (*gter ma*), new scriptures and practice traditions that were attributed to great past mas-

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<sup>8</sup> Regarding Marpa and Milarépa, see Trungpa 1995 and Lhalungpa 1985, respectively.

ters such as Padmasambhava.<sup>9</sup> Both the Bön and Nyingma traditions developed during this period their best-known practice tradition, the “Great Perfection” or Dzogchen (*rdzogs chen*), which, like the Kagyü Mahāmudrā teachings, aim for the direct realization of the nature of mind.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Sakyas and the Mongols*

The thirteenth century saw a major development in Central Asia, the rise of the Mongols, which dramatically accelerated the spread of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions in Central Asia. While Tibetan lamas had already been active in the Tangut state of Xixia, under Mongol rule Tibetan lamas would even more actively disseminate their traditions outside of Tibet. In 1244 C.E., the Mongol ruler Kōtan summoned the leader of the Sakya school, Sakya Pandita (*sa skya paṇḍi ta*, 1182–1251 C.E.) to his court. On behalf of the chieftains and lamas of Tibet, Sakya Pandita submitted to the Mongols, and in turn was granted authority over Tibet’s religious affairs. Sakya Pandita was accompanied on this trip by his nephews, Pakpa Lodrö Gyeltsen (*‘phags pa blo gros rgyal mtshan*, 1235–1280) and Chakna Dorjé (*phyag na rdo rje*, 1239–1267), who spent years living with the Mongols.

Sakya Pandita and his entourage evidently impressed the Mongols, some of whom converted to Buddhism. During this time a number of Tibetan Buddhist texts connected with the Sakya tradition were translated into Uighur (see Kara and Zieme 1976). Sakya Pandita’s nephew, Pakpa, would go on to serve as a preceptor in the court of Khubilai Khan (1215–1294 C.E.). He evidently played a significant role in the dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism among the Mongols and in China. In fact, an extra-canonical collection of Chinese texts, allegedly translated from Tibetan by Pakpa, has recently been republished in Taiwan, and is contributing the contemporary spread of Tibetan Buddhism in Han Chinese communities.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For an excellent introduction to the Nyingma tradition see Dudjom Rinpoche 1991. Regarding the Bön tradition, see Snellgrove 1967. Regarding the phenomenon of treasure texts see Davidson 2002a, 210–243.

<sup>10</sup> For an excellent introduction to the history of Nyingma Dzogchen teachings, see Germano 1994. Regarding the Bön Dzogchen see Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen 2002.

<sup>11</sup> This collection is entitled *The Secret Collection of the Quintessential Path of the Mahāyāna* 大乘要道密集. This collection has been preserved in Taiwan, where it has been published three times between 1962 and 1981. Regarding this work, see Beckwith 1984.

### 43. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM UNDER THE LIAO

Henrik H. Sørensen

#### *Introduction*

During the early phase of Esoteric Buddhism under the Khitan Liao (916–1124), which corresponds roughly to the tenth century, certain aspects of the Tang Zhenyan traditions of Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra continued to be in vogue. In the second phase covering the rest of the Liao, Esoteric Buddhism would appear to have been roughly similar to what existed under the neighboring Northern Song and Koryō 高麗 kingdoms (918–1392). It is also known to have shared some aspects in common with the Sinitic parts of the emerging Xixia empire to the west. We have too little evidence to indicate that Esoteric Buddhism existed as an independent denomination or school in the Liao empire, but there is enough to show that it was a pervasive element in Liao Buddhism as a whole. Indeed, much of the surviving material culture of Khitan Buddhism is directly related to the Esoteric Buddhist tradition.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Scriptural Sources*

The carving of the Liao Tripiṭaka itself was initiated in Yanjing during the reign of Emperor Xingzong (1031–1054) and completed in 1068 C.E. As far as the Esoteric Buddhist material goes, most of the texts found in the Kaibao Tripiṭaka were also included here.<sup>2</sup> The majority of Esoteric Buddhist literature available in the Northern Song empire was copied and included in the printing of the Liao Tripiṭaka during the eleventh century.

The existing number of classical scriptures relating to Esoteric Buddhism written under the Liao is fairly limited, however, consisting of only a few books. The most significant works are the *Dari jing yishi yanmi chao* 大日經義釋演密鈔 (Abridged Commentary on the

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<sup>1</sup> For a survey of the history of Esoteric Buddhism under the Liao, see Lü 1995, 463–94.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Lü 1995, 489–94.

Extensive Secrets of the Meaning of the Vairocana Sūtra)<sup>3</sup> from 1070 C.E., written by Jueyuan 覺苑 (fl. late eleventh century);<sup>4</sup> and the *Xianmi yuantong chengfo xin yaoji* 顯密圓通成佛心要集 (Collection of the Perfect and Complete Buddha's Mind Essentials according to the Manifest and Esoteric Buddhist Traditions),<sup>5</sup> authored by Daochen 道殿 (fl. late eleventh–early twelfth centuries).<sup>6</sup> Both works were important in shaping the type of Esoteric Buddhism that developed under the Liao. Moreover, the former work was imported to Korea and included in the important scriptural catalogue *Sin'pyönchejong kyojang ch'ongnok* 新編諸宗教藏總錄 (Comprehensive Record of the Scriptural Collections of All Schools and Teachings Newly Compiled),<sup>7</sup> by the royal prince and monk Uich'ön 義天 (1055–1101).

The hoard of Buddhist scriptures engraved in stone from Fangshan 房山 in Hebei includes many Esoteric Buddhist texts and spells that were perpetuated under the Liao.<sup>8</sup> A good deal of this material is directly related to Esoteric Buddhism and indicates that the Khitan had in large measure access to the same scriptures as did the Chinese to the south. To what extent they made use of this resource we can only speculate, but there are strong indications that the scriptures associated with the Zhenyan tradition of the Tang exercised considerable influence on the formation of Khitan Esoteric Buddhism. The degree to which the elaborate Esoteric Buddhist rituals practiced by Amoghavajra and his followers, and the associated paraphernalia, were ever transmitted to the Liao remains an open question, however. Esoteric Buddhist scriptures translated under the Liao and included in the Fangshan material features the *Da shuiqiu tuoluoni* 大隨求陀羅尼 (*Mahāpratisarā-dhāraṇī*),<sup>9</sup> the *Yiqie rulai Baisangai da foding tuoluoni* 一切如來白傘蓋大佛頂陀羅尼 (White Umbrella Buddoṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī

<sup>3</sup> ZZ (1975–1989) 439.37:1–275.

<sup>4</sup> For a brief biography, see *FDC*, vol. 7, pp. 6797c–98a.

<sup>5</sup> T. 1955.

<sup>6</sup> This important monk was active at Jinhe Temple 金河寺 on “Small Mt. Wutai.” For a note on him and his role in Huayan/Esoteric Buddhist synthesis, see Gimello 1994, 501–612 (cf. esp. 509, n. 16). As noted by Gimello, Daochen's name is sometimes wrongly rendered “Daoshuo 道碩.”

<sup>7</sup> T. 2184.55:1166a–1178c (cf. p. 1168b).

<sup>8</sup> For this material, cf. Zhongguo fojiao xiehui Fangshan shijing zhengli yanjiu zu, ed. 1986. See also Lu 1995, 492.

<sup>9</sup> *Zhonghua dazang jing* 中華大藏經 (Zhonghua Tripiṭaka), vol. 1612.68:456–59.



of all Tathāgatas),<sup>10</sup> the 大悲心陀羅尼 (Great Compassion *Dhāraṇī*),<sup>11</sup> and the *Foshuo Ruyilun lianhua xin rulai xiuxing guanmen yi* (佛說如意輪蓮花心如來修行觀門儀 (Ritual of Cultivating Mañicakra Lotus Heart Tathāgata's Method of Contemplation),<sup>12</sup> all translated by the Indian monk Cixian 慈賢 (fl. tenth century) from Magadha.<sup>13</sup> This material reflects the later transmission of Esoteric Buddhist texts to China.<sup>14</sup>

Extracanonical material on Liao Buddhism can chiefly be found in the important collection of epigraphs *Quan Liao wen* 全遼文 (Complete Liao Texts; hereafter, *QLW*),<sup>15</sup> compiled during the middle of the Republican period. Almost half of the material contained in this collection relates directly or indirectly to Liao Buddhism (including Esoteric Buddhism),<sup>16</sup> and therefore remains a vital resource for the study of Liao Buddhism.

#### *The Transmission and Nature of Esoteric Buddhism under the Liao*

While the history of the transmission of Esoteric Buddhism from the late Tang to the Liao is still somewhat unclear, it would seem to have taken place both as a scriptural process and through introduction by monk-specialists. Zhao Xiaoyan 趙孝嚴 (fl. eleventh century), in his preface to the *Shenbian jiachi jing yishi yanmi chao*, mentions that the spread of Esoteric Buddhism in the Liao was partly due to the efforts of a Kashmiri *ācārya* by the name of Maṇi 摩尼 (fl. eleventh century).<sup>17</sup> This monk is said to have popularized the use of “spell books.” At that time Esoteric Buddhist scriptures were clearly seen as constituting a distinct type of Buddhist scriptures known as the “esoteric class (*mibu* 密部).”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Zhonghua dazang jing*, vol. 1601.68:287–91.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Zhonghua dazang jing*, vol. 1601.68:295.

<sup>12</sup> *T.* 1090.20:220.

<sup>13</sup> *FDC*, vol. 6:5809bc.

<sup>14</sup> For more on Song translations of tantras, see Orzech, “Translation of Tantras and other Esoteric Buddhist Scriptures,” in this volume.

<sup>15</sup> For the most useful edition of this work, see Chen, 1982.

<sup>16</sup> For a brief but useful essay on the importance of this collection for the study of Liao Buddhism (including Esoteric Buddhist practices), see Gao 2006: 28–31.

<sup>17</sup> *QLW*, p. 268. We also learn from this source that Jueyuan received instructions in Esoteric Buddhism from Maṇi. Cf. *QLW*, p. 269.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *QLW*, p. 269.

Interest in Sanskrit, including the mastery of Siddham, necessary for the proper use of mantras and *dhāraṇīs*, is reflected in the *Longkan shoujian xu* 龍龕手鑿序 (Preface to the *Longkan shoujian*)<sup>19</sup> by the Liao monk Zhiguang 智光 (fl. second half of tenth century), as well as in the preface to the *Xu yijie jing yin yi* 續一切經音義 (Continuation of the Meaning of the Sounds of All the Scriptures).<sup>20</sup> As was the case in the Tang and Northern Song, many *dhāraṇīs* engraved in stone reflect the widespread use of Siddham.

Although there evidently were monks who focused exclusively on Esoteric Buddhist practices, such practitioners do not appear to have been very numerous under the Liao. Esoteric Buddhism, in particular the lore of spells, was however widespread in all the Buddhist denominations, including the Chan, Jingtu, Huayan, and Cien 慈恩 (Yogācāra) schools. In this way, Esoteric Buddhism under the Liao would appear to have been fairly close to the esoteric tradition that existed in the neighboring kingdom of Koryō, with which the Khitans, despite obvious political differences, had a longstanding relationship. Hence, a comparison with the type of Esoteric Buddhism that existed on the Korean peninsula during the tenth–twelfth centuries makes good sense. The Huayan and Cien were the most important schools of doctrinal Buddhism under the Liao, and it is chiefly in this context that we encounter adepts of spell lore. The same was also the case under the Koryō.<sup>21</sup>

### *Huayan Esotericism*

A common feature of Liao Buddhism is the doctrinal harmonization and amalgamation of beliefs found in the Huayan tradition following the exegesis of Fazang 法藏 (643–712), and in particular Chengguan 澄觀 (738–840), on the one hand; and Esoteric Buddhism as represented by the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* on the other.<sup>22</sup> This development, which also manifested in the other East Asian cultures, found its expression in a number of Liao texts, including the *Dari jing*

<sup>19</sup> *QLW*, pp. 103–4. Dated 997 C.E.

<sup>20</sup> *T.* 2129. For the preface, cf. *QLW*, pp. 142–43.

<sup>21</sup> See Sørensen 2006a.

<sup>22</sup> For a list of early Japanese scholarship on this development, see Gimello 1994, cf. esp. 508, n. 15.

*yishi yanmi chao* and the *Xianmi yuantong chengfo xin yaoji* mentioned above.<sup>23</sup>

Jueyuan, an important monk from Yuanfu Temple 圓福寺 in Yanjing 燕京 and the author of the *Dari jing yishi yanmi chao*, reveals in his preface that he was engaged in both *abhiṣeka* and *homa* rituals. The mantras and *dhāraṇīs* accompanying the rites in this work are referred to as “secret spells” (*mizhou* 秘咒) and their use as “spell arts” (*zhoushu* 咒術). Moreover, Jueyuan also signals an ideological and ritual affiliation with the Zhenyan tradition of the mid-Tang by invoking the names of Śubhākarasiṃha and Yixing, the original translators and commentators on the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* in China.<sup>24</sup> Jueyuan’s formulation of Esoteric Buddhism and Huayan reveals that even though he did combine the two, he placed primary emphasis on the former.<sup>25</sup>

In comparison, the integration between Huayan doctrines and Esoteric Buddhist practices takes on a more evenly balanced form of harmonization in Daochen’s *Xianmi yuantong chengfo xin yaoji*. In this work, Esoteric Buddhism is added to and correlated with the *panjiao* 判教 system of the so-called “five teachings” (*wujiao* 五教), i.e., the provisional teaching (*faxiang* 法相 etc.); the teaching of emptiness (*prajñā*); the “final teaching” represented by the *Nirvāṇa* and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*; the sudden teaching of the One Vehicle;<sup>26</sup> and the perfect teaching of the *Avataṃsaka*.<sup>27</sup> The *Cundī-dhāraṇī-mantra* is especially mentioned for its importance to the practice of Esoteric Buddhism,<sup>28</sup> and its use is recommended as part of the concept of “protection of the realm” (*huguo* 護國).<sup>29</sup>

The harmonization of Esoteric Buddhism and Huayan is also reflected in the epigraphical material. The inscription on the stele raised for the monk Xuanzhao 玄照 (d. 1106) informs us that he was a follower of the

<sup>23</sup> For an attempt at coming to terms with the doctrinal contents of this work, see Tang 2004.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. QLW, p. 269.

<sup>25</sup> For a rather detailed discussion of Jueyuan’s brand of Esoteric Buddhism, see Lü 1995, 476–85.

<sup>26</sup> Here referred to as the “One Vehicle of the Sudden Teaching (*yisheng dunjiao* 一乘頓教),” as transmitted by the Chan School of Bodhidharma. Cf. T. 1955.46:990a.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Lü 1995, 485–89. That the cult of the bodhisattva Cundī was very popular among the Khitans and their Chinese subjects is well adocumented in the extant sources.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. T. 1955.46:994c. For a discussion of this aspect of Daochen’s practice of Esoteric Buddhism, see Tang 2004, 28–42.

<sup>29</sup> T. 1955.46:999b.

Huayan school, but also that he was an adept in the use of mantras and *dhāraṇīs*. The text makes specific mention of the *Mahācundī-dhāraṇī*, the *Miezui tuoluoni* 滅罪陀羅尼 (*dhāraṇī* for destroying evil), the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī*, and the *Ekākṣaroṣṇīṣacakrarāja-dhāraṇī*.<sup>30</sup> This shows that Xuanzhao's interests in ritual practices went well beyond the usual repertoire expected of a follower of Huayan Buddhism. Another source mentions how Dharma Master Huayan 花嚴法師 (fl. early twelfth century) "discoursed on the *Avataṃsaka*, the Bodhisattva Precepts and the secret texts of Cundī on a daily basis."<sup>31</sup> This trend is also evident in an inscription found on the funerary *stūpa* of Ven. Chanhui 懺悔上人 (1010–1070), a master of Buddhist doctrines who specialized in the *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論 (Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna) among other texts;<sup>32</sup> the inscription mentions how he chanted the great compassion heart spell (*Nilakanṭhaka-dhāraṇī*) every day.<sup>33</sup>

On the level of material culture, the Huayan/Esoteric Buddhism rapprochement also becomes evident in the Esoteric Buddhist iconography produced by the Khitans, which reflects a crossover between Zhenyan iconography from the Tang combined with imagery inspired by the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* and related scriptures. One example of this is the printed frontispiece of the *Da faju tuoluoni jing* 大法炬陀羅尼經 (Scripture on the Great Dharma Torch Dhāraṇī)<sup>34</sup> found inside a buddha image kept in the large wooden pagoda in Ying county 應縣.<sup>35</sup> In this case, Vairocana is depicted flanked by Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra in accordance with Huayan tradition, but his hands form the *vajramustī-mudrā/vajra-mudrā* characteristic of the Zhenyan tradition of Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>36</sup>

### Stūpas, Pagodas, Dhāraṇī Pillars, and Funerary Practices

Practices concerning the empowerment of pagodas and *stūpas* under the Liao were not always based on Esoteric Buddhist beliefs but could

<sup>30</sup> Cf. QLW, p. 293.

<sup>31</sup> QLW, p. 280.

<sup>32</sup> T. 1667.

<sup>33</sup> QLW, p. 207. See also p. 287.

<sup>34</sup> T. 1340.

<sup>35</sup> See Zhongguo lishi bowuguan and Shanxi sheng wenwuju, ed. 1991.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Zhongguo lishi bowuguan and Shanxi sheng wenwuju, ed. 1991, pl. 7; 28, 39. See also Chaoyang Beita kaogu kancha-dui, comp. 1992.

also feature exoteric ritual elements.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, elements of material culture, such as offerings, votive gifts, and icons placed in the *stūpas* and pagodas, could very well be represented by standard Buddhist forms reflecting the mainstream tradition. However, in most cases the empowerment and worship of these monuments would have had strong Esoteric Buddhist elements, as documented in the many archaeological reports. When subjected to archaeological investigation in 1984, the Northern Pagoda at Chaoyang, built of brick and mortar, was found to contain numerous artifacts associated with Esoteric Buddhist practice.<sup>38</sup>

The *Sarvadurgatībodoṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī sūtra* was exceedingly popular during the Liao and the vast majority of the engraved *dhāraṇī* pillars raised by the Khitans and their Chinese subjects featured this spell-scripture.<sup>39</sup> Other popular spells engraved in stone included the *Pratyutpannabuddha-samukhā-vasthita-dhāraṇī*,<sup>40</sup> the *Nilakaṇṭhaka*,<sup>41</sup> and the *Raśmivimala-dhāraṇī sūtra*,<sup>42</sup> as well as various esoteric and exoteric Buddhist scriptures.

Excavated tombs have revealed widespread use of *dhāraṇī* pillars in connection with funerary practices.<sup>43</sup> One source mentions that such a *dhāraṇī* pillar was placed outside the portrait hall (*yingtang* 影堂) of a deceased monk.<sup>44</sup> *Dhāraṇī* pillars were also placed in imperial tombs, such as the one constructed for Shengzong 聖宗 (r. 983–1030).<sup>45</sup>

<sup>37</sup> For more on this topic, see Orzech and Sørensen, “*Stūpas* and Relics in Esoteric Buddhism,” in this volume.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Chaoyang Beita kaogu kancha-dui, comp. 1992. See also Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhist Art in China, 960–1279,” in this volume.

<sup>39</sup> For the most comprehensive discussion of this *dhāraṇī* in the context of Khitan culture, see Liu 1996, 1997. See also the excellent study by Copp 2005. For donor inscriptions related to the *Sarvadurgatībodoṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī*, see *QLW*, pp. 81–82, 105, 115, 170, 177, 186, etc.

<sup>40</sup> *T.* 1339. Cf. *QLW*, p. 299.

<sup>41</sup> A *sūtra* pillar from 1067 C.E., bearing the engraved text of the *Nilakaṇṭhaka-dhāraṇī*, set up as an act of filial piety also invokes the legacy of Amoghavajra, who also made a translation of this spell. Cf. *QLW*, p. 187.

<sup>42</sup> *T.* 1024. Stele for a *stūpa* inscribed with the text of the *Raśmivimala-dhāraṇī sūtra*, composed by the monk Hezhao 和照 (fl. first half of eleventh century). Cf. *QLW*, pp. 117–18.

<sup>43</sup> See Han 2000. During the mid-Liao period, it was common for important monks to be buried in tombs. Similar practices are known from contemporary Koryō. Cf. Sørensen 2009.

<sup>44</sup> *QLW*, p. 209.

<sup>45</sup> *QLW*, pp. 357–58. This pillar featured both the *Sarvadurgatībodoṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī* as well as the celebrated spell of the *Pseudo-Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (*T.* 945).

Esoteric Buddhist spells were also engraved on funerary *stūpas*.<sup>46</sup> The stele inscription for the funerary *stūpa* of Vinaya Master Faxing 法性 (1040–1103) of Zhengjue Temple 正覺寺 in Anci county 安次縣 mentions that his “numinous bones were placed in the *stūpa*,” which was adorned “on the upper part with all the miscellaneous *dhāraṇīs*.”<sup>47</sup> Another inscription dating from 1090 C.E., concerning the erection of his own funerary *stūpa* by the monk Shouen 守恩 (fl. eleventh century),<sup>48</sup> refers to all the various spells of which he was a master. In addition to sūtras and texts of repentance, these included the “*Six Character Avalokiteśvara Spell*, the *One Character Mañjuśrī Spell*, the *Ten Blessings Dhāraṇī of Mañjuśrī* and other mantras.”<sup>49</sup>

### *Astrology and Esoteric Buddhism under the Liao*

Tejaprabha, a late-comer to the Buddhist pantheon in East Asia, was a chief divinity in the lore and ritual practices concerning worship of the planets and constellations in Liao Buddhism.<sup>50</sup> The relevant material on the cult of Tejaprabha can be found in textual form as well as reflected in the surviving religious art. The importance of the Tejaprabha cult under the Liao is evident in the many examples of surviving icons, including material from the wooden pagoda in Ying county mentioned previously.<sup>51</sup>

Although astrology in its Buddhist form may have followed multiple directions in Liao culture, there is evidence that during the late tenth century the Khitans were under considerable influence from the Koryō Buddhist tradition in this regard. This may be understood when reading through the preface for the important astrological manual *Xingming congguo* 星命總括 (Summary of the Divination of the Planets), compiled by the Liao scholar and official emissary to Koryō, Yelü Chun 耶律純 (fl. tenth century).<sup>52</sup> Here it is mentioned how he

<sup>46</sup> See Shen 2001.

<sup>47</sup> *QLW*, p. 283. See also p. 285.

<sup>48</sup> The sources indicate that he was a master of invocation (*nianchi* 念持) and that he lived at Guangyin Temple 廣因寺 in Yanjing. Cf. *QLW*, p. 234.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>50</sup> See Sørensen, “On the Worship of the Planets and Asterisms in Esoteric Buddhism during the Tang,” in this volume. See also Sørensen 1995c.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Ying xian muta Liao dai mizang*, pls. 12, 85; 64. See also Meng 1996.

<sup>52</sup> *QLW*, pp. 93–4. For the *Xingming congguo* itself, see *Qinding siku quanshu* (Complete Books of the Four Collections made by Imperial Command), zibu (zi section), 7.

received a special person-to-person transmission on the lore of astrology from the National Preceptor (*kuksa* 國師).

### *Conclusion*

Esoteric Buddhism under the Khitan was in many ways a continuation of what had existed under the Tang. The scriptural sources in particular were widely available in the Liao empire, through the printing of the Buddhist Canon and through the scriptures engraved in stone at Fangshan. However, despite the fact that Esoteric Buddhist practices were widespread and common in Khitan culture, there is no solid evidence that Esoteric Buddhism ever existed as an independent school of Buddhism. Instead, Esoteric Buddhist doctrines and practices were integrated into the ritual and belief systems of the various formal Buddhist schools that were then current.

As for the transmission of Esoteric Buddhism, in particular, of the *abhiṣeka* from master to disciple, it would appear that the type of rituals employed by the Zhenyan tradition of Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, and their heirs in the Tang no longer applied. In any case, there is no evidence of a direct transmission of Esoteric Buddhist lore from the Tang to the Liao. This is further underscored by the fact that the elaborate iconic tradition associated with Zhenyan Buddhism is not evident in the surviving cultural material, or at least only partly so. A special feature of Esoteric Buddhism under the Liao is its conflation with the doctrines and beliefs of the Huayan tradition, evidenced in both written sources and surviving icons.

The use of *dhāraṇīs* and spells was widespread in Liao Buddhism, and they were used to adorn *stūpas*, pillars, and tombs. Numerous *dhāraṇī* pillars engraved with the *Sarvadurgatibodoṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī* have been documented in the sources.

Buddhism played an important part in the beliefs and systematics of astrology during the Liao. The cult of the cosmic buddha Tejaprabha enjoyed great prominence. Evidence shows that astrology transmitted via Korean court Buddhism was influential during the late tenth century.

#### 44. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM UNDER THE XIXIA (1038–1227)

Ruth Dunnell

Discussion of esoteric Buddhism under the Xia must begin with a caveat about sources. The extant body of Xia-era evidence, consisting primarily of texts and artifacts from sites that were closely connected to the royal court or its agents, allows generalizations about court-sponsored and elite religious activity, but the political context of that activity as well as what forms esoteric Buddhism may have taken in popular practice are less accessible to us. Though the bulk of that extant material comes from one site, Edzina or Khara Khoto, a military garrison on the northern Xia frontier, temples in Ningxia, Gansu, and southern Inner Mongolia continue to yield other texts, images, and ritual paraphernalia dated to the Xia era that supplement the Khara Khoto discoveries (Men'shikov 1984, Kychanov 1999, Samosiuk 2006). In addition, the Chinese National Library houses a collection of Xixia materials, mostly found in Ningxia in the early twentieth century, containing about 122 Buddhist items (Shi, Wang, Quan, and Lin 2002). Smaller collections in other repositories in north and west China supplement this body of material, analysis of which remains an ongoing and demanding enterprise, given the paucity of secure knowledge about its context.

Other sources for reconstructing Xia Buddhism include works compiled during the Yuan and published later, and Ming editions of Buddhist texts in Chinese. Of the former, the *Dacheng yaodao miji* 大乘要道密集, a fourteenth-century collection of tantric texts affiliated with Sa skya teachings, contains works that were compiled and/or translated in Xia monasteries in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (Chen 2000, Shen 2007b, Dunnell 2009ab). A 1641 edition of a Huayan text published in Lijiang, Yunnan, has a colophon listing the names of five Xia state preceptors and two imperial preceptors (Nie 2005); this text and others compiled by Xia monks were preserved in the seventeenth century Jiaying canon, though not without undergoing change.

What survives reveals two main currents shaping Xia Buddhism: one from north India, Tibet, and Central Asia, and another from



North China and the Liao/Jin empires. According to Kirill Solonin's (2003) research on the Chinese sources of Tangut Buddhism, the Huayan (Avatamsaka) tradition of Zongmi (780–841) survived in the north and flourished among the Khitans and Tanguts. Early sources of esoteric Buddhism in Xia included Indian and Central Asian monks traveling through Gansu on the way to Kaifeng in the late tenth and eleventh centuries to present texts to the Song court or to work in the Bureau for Canonical Translations established there by Song Taizong in 980 (Dunnell 1996; Sen 2002). Many of these translations made their way to Xia in the Kaibao canons that the Tanguts received from Song in the eleventh century. Perhaps those early Chinese translations were deemed of inferior quality, compared to work being done in Tibet itself, in large part owing to indifference on the part of Song Buddhists. Xia Buddhists interested in new doctrinal developments from India and Tibet increasingly turned to Tibet for their religious needs, with Tibetan communities in Xia (especially in the Liangzhou and Ganzhou regions) providing natural channels of communication.

In sum, the Indo-Tibetan innovations of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were grafted onto a bedrock formed by the Tang Buddhist legacy to North China, comprising already established modes of popular esoteric Buddhism and shared by Tanguts, Khitans, and Jurchens (Solonin 2007). The importance of late Tangut activity for the Mongol appropriation of Buddhism is now well documented (Sperling 1987, 1994, 2004a; Dunnell 1992; Shen 2007c). Of the many questions that Tangut sources give rise to, one is the relationship between the prominent Huayan-Chan stream in Xia Buddhism and the esoteric or tantric stream, and how Tanguts themselves framed the issues that occupied their involvement with these Buddhist traditions (Solonin 2007).

A second caveat thus concerns the compass of "esoteric" itself. Conventionally scholars of Xia have labeled as esoteric anything translated from Tibetan, whereas the Chinese component of Tangut Buddhism, comprised of "the Huayan-Chan synthetic doctrine," as Solonin calls it, is exoteric. Analysis or description of Xia Buddhist thought and practice, and the place of tantra in it, is slowly moving beyond this misleading characterization, which reflects longstanding bias in both western and Chinese scholarship.

To be sure, the Tanguts themselves used terms to distinguish exoteric and esoteric teachings. For example, in one text we are told that Xianmi (Exoteric and Esoteric) Dharma Preceptor, Deputy Director

of the Sangha Office, śramaṇa Zhou Huihai 顯密法師功德司副使, 沙門周慧海 translated two texts from Tibetan during the early years of the Xia emperor Renzong's reign (1139–1193) (Kychanov 1999; Chen Bingying 1983). Like the Tibetans, Xia Buddhists saw esoteric teachings as an integral part of the Mahāyāna, as evidenced in the title of an imperial preceptor: Dacheng Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor 大乘玄密帝師 or Mahāyāna Esoteric Imperial Preceptor (Chen 2000; Shen 2005b). Xia Buddhists, of course, were not of one mind about the new tantric teachings, and the more difficult research on their doctrinal positions is necessary.

Here “esoteric” refers to specific texts, teachings, and practices associated with the second wave of tantra translations in Tibet and its transmitters, as well as to compilations of *dhāraṇī*, mantra, and related texts in the Chinese canons available to the Tanguts. It embraces images and artifacts, such as the magnificent collection of Khara Khoto *thangkas* in the Hermitage Museum (Samosiuk 2006). High- and low-ranking subjects of the emperor, especially monks and officials, undertook copying texts, sponsoring printings of sūtras or ever-popular confessional texts, commissioning the painting of *thangkas* and mandalas, and dedicating shrines (e.g., at Dunhuang and Yulin). Popular objects of veneration included Maitreya, the Medicine Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru (five *thangkas* dedicated to him are in the Khara-Khoto collection), Amitābha, and Avalokiteśvara, in addition to the tantric cults discussed below.

The evidentiary trail for esoteric Buddhism in Xia thickens considerably from the mid-twelfth century onward, as Tibetan-inspired or -transmitted Buddhist teachings, texts, and practices infused court-sponsored Buddhism and popular practices. Underlying this development was the dynamism attending the formation of Tibetan teaching lineages in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Cultural and geographic proximity, as well as political receptivity to this dynamism, made the Xia royal court and sangha partners and patrons in the Tibetan renaissance of the era (Davidson 2005).

As Tangut struggles with the Song recede from the historical stage after the third decade of the twelfth century, Tibetan missionary activity comes into focus and dominates the source record. Shortly thereafter (1140s), the first Tangut civil law code was produced; it prescribed the framework of a religious bureaucracy and the normative regulation of clerical ordination, promotion, and livelihood. The interpenetration of clerical and secular power in the Xia state structure can be glimpsed

already in the 1094 court-sponsored Liangzhou stele inscription (Dunnell 1996). Certainly the most important *function* of the clerical and Buddhist arm of the Xia governing apparatus from its beginning was precisely apotropaic—protection of the state and dynasty, hence the enthusiasm with which Xia emperors patronized Buddhist clerics (Tibetan and otherwise) who evinced knowledge of tantric rites and other esoteric techniques, old and new, associated with defense against various kinds of hostile forces, or with the cultivation of strength and health.

*Tantra, Esoteric Buddhism, and Translations from Chinese, Tibetan, and Sanskrit*

Over 80 percent of the Tangut and Chinese texts recovered from Khara Khoto are Buddhist in content, among which by Shen Weirong's count are about 283 more or less whole works. Of this number, about a hundred comprise standard Chinese works such as *Huayanjing* (*Avataṃsaka sūtra*), *Jin'gang polomiduojing* (*Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*), *Miaofa lianhuajing* (*Sūtra of the Wonderful Lotus*), etc. Another sixty or so are printed fragments of other common Chinese Buddhist works; thirty are fragments of commentaries, hagiographies, Chinese apocrypha, and other less common items.

The remaining ninety-three or so items comprise esoteric works, both printed and manuscript texts (complete and fragmentary), that, apart from some popular *dhāraṇī* texts found in the Chinese canon, by and large did not make it into any standard Buddhist canon. Most were translated from Tibetan (a few from Sanskrit) into Tangut and/or Chinese, and are ritual guides (*man ngag*) for various types of yogic practices, meditation manuals (*sgrub thabs*, *sādhana*), or compilations of *dhāraṇīs* and mantras (Shen 2006, 2007a). The existence of so many ritual guides of one sort or another, in both Tangut and Chinese, testifies to the apparent popularity among local residents in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries of such practices as worship of Vajravārāhī (consort of Heruka-Saṃvara) and the protector deity Mahākāla (who became the Mongols' tutelary deity), along with various healing and protective cults. Saṃvara-Vajravārāhī mandalas and *thangkas* are particularly numerous in the Khara Khoto collection, along with at least sixteen ritual texts in Tangut and seven in Chinese devoted to Vajravārāhī (Samosiuk 2006; Shen 2007c).

The Mahākāla cult may have been introduced to the Xia court and clerical circles through the teaching and translation activity of the Rtsa-mi lo-tsä-ba Sangs-rgyas grags-pa (early twelfth century), reputedly of Tangut royal descent, who traveled and studied in India and Tibet (Sperling 1994). Works associated with the Mahāmudrā or Great Seal tradition of early bKa' rgyud pa teachers, who transmitted the “six doctrines of Nāropā” (yogic practices), dominate the many translations from Tibetan in the Khara Khoto archive. BKa' rgyud pa adepts actively spread their teachings to their Sino-Tangut disciples, although Nāropā's teachings were also embraced by the Sa skya pa (Shen 2005a). Solonin's analysis of a Tangut Mahāmudrā texts reveals a sharing (or appropriation) of vocabulary and concepts among Xia esoteric and Huayan-Chan texts (Solonin forthcoming).

Tantric teachings disseminated by Sa skya adepts also made their way into the Tangut corpus. The Khara Khoto archive includes Tangut translations of texts found in the Chinese compilation *Dacheng yaodao miji* 大乘要道密集, as well as other works in the *lam 'bras* (*dao guo fa* 到果法, “path with result”) tradition formulated by the early Sa skya master Grags pa rgyal mtshan (Stearns 2001; Davidson 2005). In Ningxia in the 1990s, scholars recovered from a dynamited pagoda the first known text produced with moveable type, a translation into Tangut from the Tibetan; its title in Chinese is rendered as *Jixiang bianzhi kou he benxu* 吉祥遍至口合本續 (Tib. *dPal kun tu kha sbyor zhes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po*, or *Jixiang bianzhi kou he benxu wang* 吉祥遍至口合本續王). A colophon attributes the text (perhaps falsely) to Indian guru Gāyadara and his Tibetan translator 'Gos Khug pa lhas btsas. This title is not found in the Tibetan canon, although another version translated by 'Brog mi shākya ye shes (Drokmi, eleventh century) is, possibly the *Samputi-nāma-mahātantra* (Shen 2007a).

The Tangut version of the *Samputata tantra* from the Square Pagoda can be dated to the mid- or late twelfth century. This text is associated with the *Hevajra* cycle at the heart of the Sa skya pa *lam 'bras* teachings (Shen 2007c). From the same site come other ritual texts (*sādhana*) in Chinese on the visualization of the tantric deities Cakrasaṃvara, Vajravārahī, and Heruka, as well as a Huayan confessional text (Ningxia wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo 2005; Shen 2006). How far beyond the confines of monastic centers the knowledge and practices conveyed in these texts spread remains unknown. But the oft-repeated tale conveyed in Peng Daya and Xu Ting's *Heida shilue*

黑鞅事略 (ca. 1237) of the ritual deflowering of girls before marriage by a Xia state preceptor suggests that at least some high-ranking clerics were practicing the sexual yoga of the Hevajra tradition, though which girls from what kinds or ranks of families are just a few of the questions the story raises.

*A Xixia Canon or a Hexi Canon?*

Scholars have asserted that Xia had produced a Buddhist canon in Tangut translation by the end of the twelfth century. A vow accompanying a 1312 printing of a Tangut sūtra states that by the end of the eleventh century 3,579 “rolls” (*juan* 卷) of Buddhist texts had been translated into Tangut (Shi 1988). Its complete printing, however, had to await Mongol sponsorship (Nishida 1966, Li Jining 2000). Shen Weirong hypothesizes that Xia Buddhists were not necessarily intent upon producing their own version of the *Tripitaka* (as did Song, Liao, and Koryō), but rather focused their interests on certain kinds of texts, especially on the new tantric materials transmitted by Indian and Tibetan teacher-translators (Shen 2006). Thus, many items in the *Tripitakas* acquired from Song did not get translated, for neither the originals nor any translations into Tangut made from them survive. Numerous translations from Tibetan into Tangut and Chinese survived instead (a few of which entered the later Tibetan canon).

Although an integral publication of a Tangut version of the canon occurred only in the early fourteenth century with the completion of the so-called Hexi canon in Hangzhou, Xia rulers probably did envision the production of their own *Tripitaka*, whether for reasons of religious merit or political legitimation, even if that ambition remained unrealized (Shi 1988; Shi, Wang, Quan, and Lin 2002). The Hexi canon counted some 3,620 rolls of texts, close to the figure cited above as having been translated by the end of the eleventh century. This number is about half that for other Chinese canons of that time: 6,362 for the Jisha canon and 6,010 for the Puning canon, for example. Presumably the forty or fifty rolls added to the Hexi canon included works translated from Tibetan tantric texts that had come to the attention of Tangut Buddhists from the mid-twelfth century on. Most of the Xia-era Tangut works translated from Tibetan are in manuscript form. The degree of overlap between the Hexi canon and Xia-era texts from Khara Khoto and Ningxia still awaits elucidation.

No doubt after the printing of the Hexi canon, many Tangut and Chinese texts used to produce it were lost or destroyed in the wars of the late Yuan. Some of what did survive, mostly Yuan printed editions, ended up in the collection of the Chinese National Library by the end of the 1920s. In fact, the production of the Jisha, Puning, and Hexi canons in the Yuan (late thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries) were closely connected projects, sharing facilities, personnel, and sponsorship, with the involvement of Tangut monks (and Chinese artisans) throughout (Wang Han 2005). In effect, the translation and publishing activities begun by the Tanguts in the eleventh century continued into the thirteenth century and came to fruition in the fourteenth century, merging with the massive Buddhist printing projects at Hangzhou. Yet the so-called Hexi canon is not included in lists of Chinese canons issued over the years, evidently owing to its smaller size, unreadable script, and fragmentary survival. In all it appears that that almost two hundred copies of the Hexi canon were printed and distributed in the former Tangut lands in the fourteenth century (Shi 1988). Hexi monks also distributed Chinese versions of Buddhist texts in the former Xia territories, though from which edition—Jisha or Puning—is not always unclear.

#### *The Xia State Sangha and Monk-Translators*

The formation of the Xia sangha went hand in hand with the promulgation of the Tangut script between 1032 and 1038, following which State Preceptor Bai Faxin 白法心 (a Uighur?) and other monks were charged with translating sūtras into Tangut, relying mainly on texts from both Song and Liao sources. The Liang empresses who dominated Xia politics in the latter half of the eleventh century heavily patronized Buddhist translations. A Yuan blockprint reproduction of the *Sūtra on the Thousand Buddha Names of the Present Bhadra Kalpa* (*Xianzai xian jie qian foming jing* 現在賢劫千佛名經) preserves an earlier illustration of Empress Dowager Liang and her son, Emperor Huizong (r. 1068–1086) presiding over a session of the sūtra translation bureau (Dunnell 1996).

The Buddhist bureaucracy expanded in the twelfth century, especially during the reign of the devout Renzong (1139–1193), who revised and edited earlier translations and issued new editions of popular texts in vast quantities, as attested by the imperial vows attached to many

extant works in the Khara Khoto collection. Imperial birthdays and other anniversaries became occasions for Buddhist ceremonies lasting days, featuring lavish public displays of piety and the distribution of sūtras, coins, banners, and *tsha tsha*, lectures by prominent Buddhist teachers, the recitation of *dhāraṇī*, the performance of *homa* rituals, and other rites suggestive of Sa skya influence (Shi 1988, Shen 2007b). Translations from Tibetan texts multiplied from Renzong's reign forward.

According to the Tiansheng code issued early in Renzong's reign, two offices of the second rank (out of five levels) oversaw affairs of Buddhist monks and novices; each bureau was headed by six state preceptors (*guoshi* 國師) and a supporting staff. In addition, the emperor also retained personal preceptors, which in the Tiansheng code included a supreme preceptor (*shangshi* 上師, also the gloss for *lama*) and a state preceptor (*guoshi*). The earliest reference to an imperial preceptor (*dishi* 帝師) seems to occur in the 1160s, after publication of the extant version of the Tiansheng code (see below). A hierarchy of preceptors thus arose, at the top of which presided the national and imperial preceptors. Dozens of preceptor titles survive; monks from India (probably via Tibet), Tibet, Kashmir, and possibly other Central Asian and Himalayan centers held positions and titles in the Xia sangha, along with native monks, Tibetans, Tanguts, and Chinese (Dunnell 2009ab). It is also likely that Uighur monks, both native residents from the Ganzhou area and those from beyond the Tanguts' western border, played a significant role in Xia, especially in the dissemination of esoteric teachings, although it is more difficult to identify them as such (Shi 1988; Shen 2006).

In addition to presiding at festival and court ceremonies, teaching, translating, and publishing, the sangha staff administered the network of national monasteries and temples and the procedures by which novices and monks were recruited, trained, ordained, and promoted, regulations that are laid out in the Tiansheng code. The examination curriculum consisted of reciting eleven texts of "sūtras and *gāthās*," one list of texts for candidates testing in Chinese, and another for those testing in Tangut and Tibetan. Each list was headed by the *Humane Kings Sūtra* (*Renwang huguo banruo bolomiduo jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經) (Kychanov 1987–1989; Shi, Nie, and Bai 1994). Between the two lists (not all the titles of which have been identified with certainty), the Tangut and Tibetan one seems to feature more works translated from Tibetan. This curriculum, heavy on *dhāraṇī* and

ritual texts, clearly served public purposes and focused on the apotropaic ends of state and dynastic protection.

### *Prominent Monk-Translators*

Monks whose names and titles appear regularly in the Khara Khoto collection as translators of works from Tibetan or Sanskrit into Tangut and Chinese, or as authors of original compositions, feature prominent figures like Zhou Huihai 周慧海, Dehui 德慧, (Li) Demiao (李) 德妙, Xibi Baoyuan 西畢 [鮮卑] 寶源, Fahui 法慧: (possibly two persons), and Li Huiming (Huizhao) 李慧明 (慧昭), all resident Tanguts or Chinese. Clerics of Tibetan or Himalayan origin holding positions in Xia and involved in the production of new works or translations from Tibetan or Sanskrit originals include the above named Jayānanda (Kashmiri) and Ānanda-kīrti (Tibetan, Kun-dga' grags), Fashizi 法獅子 (Tibetan, \*Chos-kyi seng-ge; also styled a supreme preceptor), and Baoshizi 寶獅子 (Tibetan, \*Rin-po-che Seng-ge or \*Dkon-mchog seng-ge) (Van der Kuijp 1993; Kychanov 1999).

Of particular interest are Xibi (or Xianbi) Baoyuan and Fazhizi. Baoyuan was the Chinese translator of the *Sheng shenghui dao bi'an gongde baoji jie* 聖勝慧到彼岸功德寶集偈. (*Phags-pa śes-rab-kyi pha-rol-tu phyin-pa yon-tan rin-po-che bsdud-pa tshig-su-bcad-pa*), which survives in a bilingual Tibetan-Chinese edition of 1447 (Luo 1983). In the twelfth-century Chinese edition, he appears with the title “Dharma Explicating Preceptor [in the] Tangut-Han Academy and concurrent Superintendent [of the Sangha Office], rank... Śramaṇa Xianbei Baoyuan 詮教 法師番漢三學院兼偏袒提點 [rank] 沙門鮮卑寶源.” Baoyuan and Zhou Huihai teamed up with Jayānanda to produce the Chinese and Tangut translations, respectively, of another text from Tibetan, *Shengguan zizai dabeixin zongchi gongneng yijing lu, sheng xiang dingzun zongchi gongneng yijing lu* 聖觀自在大悲心總持功能依經錄. Baoyuan rose to the rank of state preceptor and redacted a Tangut translation from the Chinese *Diamond Sūtra* (*Jin'gang ban-ruo boluomiduo jing* 金剛般若波羅蜜多經), affixing his title as Faxian State Preceptor Xibi Baoyuan of the Dadumin Monastery of the Great White High State 白高大國大渡民寺法顯國師西畢寶源. (The *faxian* in this title could be a reference to the fourth-century pilgrim, or to the exoteric or revealed dharma.) The notation to this text informs us of his ability to read Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tangut commentaries (Kychanov 1999, entry 53, tang. 386, inv. 3834).



Baoyuan also authored a popular Buddhist morality book, *A Compendium of Wisdom and Virtue* (*Xian zhi ji* 賢智集) or *Xibi State Preceptor's Compendium of Admonitions to the World* (*Xibi guoshi quanshi ji* 西畢國師勸世集), published in Tangut in 1188. The book was evidently reprinted at least once, with blockprint illustrations of State Preceptor Xibi. Baoyuan evidently did not align himself with the new tantric teachings, and perhaps even adopted a critical attitude towards them, unlike his Tibetan colleague at the Dadumin Monastery, Fashizi.

Fashizi held the title of Enlightened State Preceptor Juezhao guoshi 覺昭國師 and was the translator of two texts compiled by (or attributed to) Zhang Rinpoche (Zhang G.yu-brag-pa Brtson-'grus-grags-pa, Lama Zhang), as well as many other yoga *tantras* (Kychanov 1999; Dunnell 2009ab). He also composed a tract in Tangut, *Quintessential Instructions for Eliminating Demons* (*Moduan yaolun* 魔斷要論). The puzzling moniker often found accompanying his name or title, "A-lion-si-pa," could refer to his Tibetan origins in the Yarlung Valley (Yar-klungs-pa). Fashizi transmitted tantric texts on various yogic practices associated with the *bardo* (intermediate state between life and death) as expounded in the "six doctrines" of Nāropā.

One such work, *Zhongyou shen yaomen* 中有身腰門 (Quintessential Instructions on the Body of the Intermediate State), exists in a Chinese translation as well (Shen 2005a). Fashizi thus may have studied under sGam-po-pa (1079–1153), founder of the bKa' brgyud school, who established his monastery (Dwags-la sGam-po) just east of Yarlung. His name occurs in association with prominent Xia monks Demiao and Huiming, mentioned above. No texts associated with Fashizi are dated, although he had arrived in Xia by the 1180s and worked actively in temples in the capital area to promote the new Tibetan teachings. He was fluent in Tangut, and may have traveled to Xia in the company of the lama reported in Tibetan sources as an imperial preceptor, Gtsang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge. Fashizi's association with Lama Zhang is shared by Ti-shri Ras-pa, the lama whom Tibetan sources name as Dkon-mchog's successor (see below).

### *Imperial Preceptors*

Imperial preceptors served as tantric masters and teachers for the Tangut court, conveying their knowledge of Tibetan texts and prac-

tices to the emperor and high-ranking courtiers and clerics. They were not necessarily all ethnic Tibetans, although they appear to have been trained in that tradition. Evidence from Chinese, Tangut, and Tibetan sources suggests that there were at least three to five imperial preceptors dating from the mid-twelfth century to 1227, the fall of Xia.

The earliest documented reference occurs in the twelfth-century Tangut edition (and in its 1447 reprinting in Chinese and Tibetan) of the *Sheng shenghui dao bi'an gongde baoji jie*, which lists the persons involved in producing the original translation from Tibetan (the translators provided the Sanskrit title as well) into Chinese and Tangut during Renzong's reign. Mentioned here is the Xianjue Imperial Preceptor 賢覺帝師 Boluoxiansheng 波羅顯勝, along with Kashmiri monk Jayānanda and his Tibetan translator Ānanda-kīrti (Luo 1983). The 1447 notation repeats in Chinese information from the original Tangut colophon, only in the opposite order to Tangut custom, naming the high-ranking Boluoxiansheng last, right before the emperor. Boluoxiansheng was at the Tangut court by no later than the 1160s; he is mentioned in six Khara Khoto texts, the most complete being the above, where he is described as “Lecturer in Sūtra, *Abhidharma*, and *Vinaya*; Director of the Sangha Office; Superintendent . . ., and Holder of the Rank of ‘Completed Precept.’” The name Boluoxiansheng suggests a Tibetan or Indian (or another non-Tangut Inner Asian, not yet identified), or a clerical fashion for Tibetanized or Sanskritized names.

Also documented in texts from Khara Khoto and in the Yuan-era compilation *Dacheng yaodao miji* is Dacheng Xuanmi (Mahāyāna Esoteric) Imperial Preceptor Huicheng 大乘玄密帝師慧稱, whose name appears in four Khara Khoto Tangut texts, in company with that of State Preceptor Dehui, author of *The Collection of Basic Notes on the Ultimate Great Seal [Mahāmudrā]* 大手印究竟要集 analyzed by Solonin (forthcoming). Although Xuanmi's name, Huicheng, can be reconstructed in Tibetan as Śes-rab grags-pa (Prajñākīrti), he has not yet been identified with any known historical figure. In the *Dacheng yaodao miji*, Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor appears in transmission lineages for two “great seal” teachings, linking Tibetan and Tangut monks over time and space, and suggesting that this figure was active by the mid-twelfth century (Shen 2007b; Dunnell 2009ab). A Xuanmi State Preceptor is mentioned in colophons to Chinese sūtras issued by Renzong in 1189 and his widow Empress Luo in 1194 (Shi 1988). Thus

Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor, whatever his nominal ethnic origin, was promoted from the position of state preceptor at the end of the twelfth century; his career at the Xia court (and perhaps in Tibet) overlapped that of Gtsang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge and Ti-shri Ras-pa. A Chinese skeptic suggests that the title of “imperial preceptor” was posthumously awarded to Huicheng and perhaps others too (Nie 2005).

Later Tibetan sources describe three lamas who occupied high positions in the Xia Sangha: (1) Gtsang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge (d. 1218/19), who was dispatched by Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa to Ren-zong and presumably became an imperial preceptor; (2) ‘Gro-mgon Ti-shri Ras-pa (Ti-shri sangs-rgyas ras-chen, 1164/65–1236), who spent roughly thirty years from 1198 to 1226 in Xia, succeeding Dkon-mchog seng-ge as imperial preceptor; and (3) the latter’s successor Gsang-ba ras-pa dkar-po Shes-rab byang-chub (the Huijue 慧覺 who helped to reprint a Tangut edition of the *Jingguangming zuishengwang jing* 金光明最勝王經 in 1247 and became a Yuan state preceptor (Shi 1988; Dunnell 1992; Sperling 1987, 1994, 2004a). One might hypothesize the identity of the Baoshizi 寶獅子 mentioned in seven items in the Khara Khoto archive with Gtsang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge. Baozhizi (\*Dkon-mchog seng-ge) was active in Xia in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, around the time that we might date Gtsang-po-pa’s career, though Baozhizi’s name never occurs with such an exalted title. In some texts he appears as Tibetan Dharma Preceptor, Enlightened Master of the Three Vehicles Baozhizi 西藏中國三乘知覺寶獅子法師 (in Tangut texts the phrase rendered with the Chinese graphs 中國 refers to Tibet, not China). In another instance the epithet 大喜智 (*da xi zhi*) is added in front of his name, a tantric version of the epithet bestowed on the Tang-era translator of esoteric texts, Amoghavajra 大廣智 (*da guang zhi*). The two main works that Baozhizi introduced, edited, and saw translated appear to be closely related to the *lam ‘bras* teachings being developed by Sa-skya and ‘Bka-brgyud lamas at this time (Kychanov 1999; Dunnell 2008).

Two more candidates have joined this crowded gallery of presumed Xia imperial preceptors: Xinyuan Zhenzheng Imperial Preceptor 新圓真證帝師 and Zhenguo Miaoju Jizhao Imperial Preceptor 真國妙覺寂照帝師, recorded in the colophon to a 1641 edition of a Chinese Huayan text in forty-two chapters, *Da fang guangfo huayan jing haiyin daochang shi chong xingyuan chang bianti chanyi* 大方光佛華

嚴經海印道場十重行原常遍體懺儀, published in Lijiang, Yunnan (Nie 2005). This material reflects loss or suppression of memory (or deliberate distortion) in the titles attached to the names listed in the colophon, so it is difficult to identify these figures with any of the above discussed imperial preceptors (Dunnell 2009ab).

## 45. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM UNDER THE JIN (1115–1234)

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

When the Jurchen defeated the Liao and established the Jin empire in Northern China between 1115–1234 C.E., they took over a realm in which the Buddhist religion was a strong presence at all levels of society.<sup>1</sup> Virtually all the Buddhist denominations that existed at the time of the overthrow of the Khitan empire, including Chan 禪, Huayan 華嚴, Pure Land 淨土, and Vinaya 律, continued unabated under the new rulers. Although several attempts were made by various Jurchen rulers to curtail the influence of Buddhism on the higher echelons of Jin society, it would appear that Buddhism enjoyed widespread popularity among the nobility and government officials, as had been the case under the Liao. A similar situation prevailed under neighboring Koryō 高麗 (918–1392), where the nobility and officialdom had close ties with the Buddhist schools and their leading representatives until the final decades of the dynasty.<sup>2</sup> This stands in some contrast to the Jin dynasty's rival, the Southern Song empire (1125–1276), in which Neo-Confucianism made rapid inroads into the higher levels of society, at the expense of Buddhism, in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries.

The transition of power from the Liao to the Jin had evidently no noticeable effects on the popularity of Esoteric Buddhist practice in Jurchen society in general. Hence, the types of beliefs and practices we encounter in the Jin material should be seen as reflecting a largely unbroken continuation of the Esoteric Buddhist tradition that had flourished under the Khitans.<sup>3</sup> There are also indications that Esoteric Buddhism under the Jin was influenced by Koryō Buddhism.

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview of Jin Buddhism, see Yao 1995. Note that this brief article contains virtually no information on Esoteric Buddhism, mentioning it only in passing as “Tantric Buddhism,” which is of course incorrect. See also He Junzhe, Zhang Dachang and Yu Guoshi 1992, 556–58.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hō 1986, 2–104. See also Vermeersch 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lü 1995, 495–96.

*On the Transmission of Esoteric Buddhism to the Jin*

Historical sources on the transmission and spread of Esoteric Buddhism under the Jin are meager; only by grafting together odd bits and pieces gleaned from a variety of different sources may we achieve the semblance of a useful historical overview. Moreover, virtually no original Esoteric Buddhist works by Jin authors have been identified so far (though due to intensified interest in the field, some may in fact be identified in the near future). It is interesting to note that the area of material culture is where the most significant information on Esoteric Buddhism under the Jin can be found.

Despite the paucity of historical sources, there are a few details on important Jin practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism to be had. Among these is a monk referred to as “The Great Chinese Monk 大漢僧” or Ven. Pomo 破魔和尚, the “Demon Basher” (fl. first half of the twelfth century). A biographical entry on him in the *Bu xu gaoseng zhuan* 補續高僧傳 (Supplement to the Continuation of Histories of Eminent Monks)<sup>4</sup> describes him as a thaumaturge and master of the scriptures active during the reign of Emperor Xizong 熙宗 (1138–1148). In typical fashion, the text mentions how by “chanting spells [Pomo] was able to drive out evil (*neng songzhou quye* 能誦咒驅邪).”<sup>5</sup> The entry ends with a description of the large red *śarīra* recovered from the ashes after his cremation.<sup>6</sup>

The same source contains another account of an adept of Esoteric Buddhism, Fazhong 法沖 (fl. second half of the twelfth century) from Mt. Wutai 五臺山, who was active during the Dading reign period (1161–1189). He is also described as a worker of miracles, a master of spellcraft who could make rain and who was able to drink poisonous wine without being harmed.<sup>7</sup> The account mentions Fazhong’s use of a *vajra* to perform his magical feats, and of how he drew a *vajra*-circle (probably an enclosure marked off by *vajras*) on the ground that was then empowered with a spell as part of a ritual.<sup>8</sup> Fazhong became so famous that he was eventually invited to the imperial palace.

<sup>4</sup> ZZ (1975–1989), 1524.77.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. ZZ, 1524.77, 525a.

<sup>6</sup> ZZ, 1524.77, 525a.

<sup>7</sup> ZZ, 1524.77, 503a.

<sup>8</sup> ZZ, 1524.77, 503b.

Foreign *ācāryas* were also present in Jin, and the *Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載 (Comprehensive Record of Historical Generations of Buddhas and Patriarchs)<sup>9</sup> provides information on the activities of the North Indian master Humkaraśrī<sup>10</sup> (1104–1166) and his seven disciples, including one Samayaśrī<sup>11</sup> (n.d.), who were active during the reign of the important Emperor Shizong 世宗 (r. 1161–1189).<sup>12</sup> Humkaraśrī was an adept in the use of spells and rainmaking. He was also a worshipper of Mañjuśrī and sojourned for a period in the Wutai Mountains before being called to the Jin capital for consultations with the emperor. While the *Fozu lidai tongzai* provides no information on the possible transmission of Tantric Buddhist teachings by Humkaraśrī to the Jin, such an influence may however be taken for granted.

These three examples of Esoteric Buddhist practitioners from the Jin are generally in line with similar Chinese accounts of famous monks, and while they can be seen in part as representing literary tropes or formulaic descriptions of thaumaturges, there are enough elements in them to see distinct imprints of Esoteric Buddhist lore. In the account of the Chinese monk Fazhong, we are provided with slightly more details on the ritual practices that made him famous. And while few details are given about the type of Esoteric Buddhism he taught, the Indian master Humkaraśrī was in all likelihood an exponent of mature Tantric Buddhism. Again, Mt. Wutai, the fabled abode of Mañjuśrī and a center of Esoteric Buddhism since the mid-Tang, looms large in the accounts.

### *Compilation and Printing of Esoteric Buddhist Scriptures*

The stone-carved Tripiṭaka at Fangshan 房山, located outside modern Beijing in Hebei province, is a central source of information on Jin Buddhism. It so happens that the majority of the scriptures carved during the Jin period at Yunju Temple 雲居寺 are related to Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>13</sup> While this may be seen as a coincidence rather than interpreted as a sign of the interest in and popularity of Esoteric Buddhism

<sup>9</sup> T. 2036.

<sup>10</sup> Honghaluoxili 吽哈囉悉利.

<sup>11</sup> Sanmoyexili 三磨耶悉利.

<sup>12</sup> T. 2036.49:699c.

<sup>13</sup> This fact can readily be observed by checking the table of contents of Buddhist scriptures carved under the Liao and Jin. Cf. Zhongguo fojiao xiehui Fangshan shijing zhengli yanjiu zu, ed. 1986.

and its practices, the large number of such texts committed to stone in the course of Jurchen rule over North China is indeed noteworthy. The majority of the stone slabs at Fangshan carved during the Jin feature full documentation in the form of donors' colophons, so further insight into the religious beliefs of the sponsors of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures may be gleaned from these dedications. This data reveals that mainly Buddhist monks and their disciples, including important secular and military officials, were behind what is uniformly referred to as meritorious work.<sup>14</sup>

Here it is also interesting to observe that none of the monks mentioned in connection with the carving of the Fangshan scriptures, some of whom were highly influential in their own time, are mentioned as being followers of Esoteric Buddhism *per se*, but appear to have hailed from different sectarian backgrounds, including the Chan, Huayan, Pure Land, and Vinaya schools. This information tallies rather well with similar information we have from the Song, Liao, and Koryŏ, where Esoteric Buddhist practices in broad terms formed part of mainstream Buddhism. However, it is important to note that not a single original work on Esoteric Buddhism composed under the Jin is included among the engraved scriptures at Fangshan. This may indicate that the forms of Esoteric Buddhism practiced by the Jurchen followed previously established norms and teachings that were handed down in the canonical scriptures from the Song and Liao.

A survey of the Esoteric Buddhist scriptures carved at Fangshan reveals that the Jurchen based themselves on both the classical Zhenyan 真言 tradition of the Tang, as formulated by Śubhākarasimha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra, on the one hand; and on the early Song dispensation of texts translated by Dharmapāla, Dānapāla, and Dharmadeva (Fatian 法天) on the other.<sup>15</sup> Importantly, a few works, which have not been transmitted in the Song and Koryŏ canons, have survived in Jin versions included among the stone scriptures at Fangshan. The more significant of these are the important compendium of *dhāraṇīs*, the *Shijiao zuishang sheng bimi zang tuoluoni ji* 釋教最上乘祕密藏陀

<sup>14</sup> Xuanying 玄英 (fl. mid-twelfth century), the abbot of Baoning Temple 保寧寺, was one of the important Jin monks involved in the carving of the stone slabs at Fangshan. His name occurs in the colophon of several Esoteric Buddhist scriptures. Cf. Beijing tushuguan jinshi zu and Zhongguo fojiao tushu wenwuguan shijing zu, eds. 1987, 568, 592–96, 598, 610, etc.

<sup>15</sup> See Orzech "Translation of Tantras and other Esoteric Buddhist Scriptures," in this volume.



羅尼集 (Collection of the Secret Storehouse of *Dhāraṇīs* of the Highest Vehicle of Buddhism),<sup>16</sup> the *Zunsheng foding zhenyan xiu yuqie fa* 尊勝佛頂真言修瑜伽法 (Method of the Sarvabodhoṣṇa-mantra for Cultivating Yoga),<sup>17</sup> the *Amituo Guyinsheng wang tuoluoni jing* 阿彌陀鼓音聲王陀羅尼經 (Scripture on Amitābha's Drum Sounding King *Dhāraṇī*),<sup>18</sup> the *Putichang suoshuo yizi touding lunwang jing* 菩提場所說一字頭頂輪王經 (Scripture Spoken at the Bodhimanda on the One Letter Uṣṇīṣa Wheel King)<sup>19</sup> and the apocryphal *Foding xin Guanshiyin pusa da tuoluoni jing* 佛頂心觀世音菩薩大陀羅尼經 (Scripture on the Great *Dhāraṇī* of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa Heart of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva).<sup>20</sup>

Also included in the Fangshan material carved under the Jin is a preface, the *Dazang zhu fo pusa minghao ji xu* 大藏諸佛菩薩名號集序 (Preface to the Collection of All the Buddhas' and Bodhisattvas' Names in the Great Treasury of the Teaching),<sup>21</sup> that discusses, among other things, the benefit of chanting the names of buddhas and bodhisattvas, which is compared with the use of spells/*dhāraṇīs*. When seen in an overall context, this preface represents a doctrinal compromise between Huayan and Esoteric Buddhism, a situation that also prevailed under the Jin.

### *Popularity of Spells and Dhāraṇīs*

The widespread popularity of spells and mantras under the Jin is best documented in the many surviving examples engraved in stone. Numerous *dhāraṇī* pillars and structural elements of tombs inscribed

<sup>16</sup> *Zhonghua dazang jing* 中華大藏經, 1619.68, 500–675. See also *Fangshan shijing: Liao-Jin kejing zhi bu*, vol. 22. The stone slabs for this compendium were carved in 1147 C.E. This is possibly the single most important Esoteric Buddhist spell collection from the Tang to have come down to us. For a more detailed discussion see Sørensen, “On Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition,” in this volume.

<sup>17</sup> *Fangshan shijing: Liao-Jin kejing zhi bu*, vol. 21.

<sup>18</sup> *Fangshan shijing: Liao-Jin kejing zhi bu*, vol. 7.

<sup>19</sup> *Fangshan shijing: Liao-Jin kejing zhi bu*, vol. 19. This scripture is mentioned in the *Zhengyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (Newly Established Catalogue of the Buddhist Teaching from the Zhengyuan Era). Cf. T. 2157.55:881b.

<sup>20</sup> *Fangshan shijing: Liao-Jin kejing zhi bu*, vol. 22. This work also exists in a well-preserved Dunhuang manuscript from the end of the Tang. Cf. P. 3916 (5). See also Yü 1995.

<sup>21</sup> Reproduced in *Fangshan Yunju si shijing*, pls. 63a–64b. It was written by Sixiao 思孝 (fl. mid-eleventh century), an important monk-official from Haiyun Temple 海雲寺.

with a variety of *dhāraṇīs* have been documented from the Jin period.<sup>22</sup> When compared with similar pillars from the Liao, where they were equally significant and numerous, those from the Jin generally reveal a higher level of compositional and artistic creativity. These pillars also reveal that the lore of Siddham script continued to be transmitted in Northern China well into the thirteenth century.

Pillars engraved with the *Uṣṇīṣāvijayā-dhāraṇī* dominated, but many other spells and mantras were also engraved on similar pillars and steles.<sup>23</sup> For example, a pillar that once stood at the entrance of Shifo Temple 石佛寺 in Fangshan was engraved with the *dhāraṇī* of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara.<sup>24</sup>

The octagonal memorial pillar raised over the grave of Chan Master Sidu 思度 (fl. mid-twelfth century) found at Fangshan is engraved with mantras on three sides. This indicates that Esoteric Buddhist practices, i.e., the chanting of mantras and spells, took place within the sectarian confines of the Chan school.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, the inscription on the burial *stūpa* raised for Dharma Master Ven. Qian 謙公法師 (d. 1200), a Huayan scholar, also features a series of *dhāraṇīs*, including that of Cundī, written in Siddham.<sup>26</sup>

The widespread presence of *dhāraṇīs* in connection with mortuary practices indicate that there were no real, or at least no well-defined, boundaries between secular and Buddhist-influenced burials. The placing of *dhāraṇī* pillars in tombs was a common practice documented in various archaeological reports.<sup>27</sup> When comparing Jin burials with those of the Liao and the Song, it would appear that socially important Jin burials give much more evidence of the presence of Buddhist beliefs and symbolism than is normally seen in tombs from the latter, whereas it would appear that the Jin followed similar norms for burial as documented from the former state. This tallies well with our

<sup>22</sup> For a listing of ingraved spells from the Jin period, many still *in situ*, see “Beijing Jin dai beike xulu (A Record of the Stele Carvings from the Jin Dynasty in Beijing),” <http://www.btp.net/lt/lt074.htm>. See also Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhist Art in China, 960–1279,” in this volume.

<sup>23</sup> Liu 1997, 669–70, 674.

<sup>24</sup> “Beijing Jin dai beike xulu,” #70.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. “Beijing Jin dai beike xulu,” #22.

<sup>26</sup> “Beijing Jin dai beike xulu,” #57.

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of several examples including plates, see Liu 1997, 643–786.

general knowledge of the transmission of cultural practices in North-east Asia.<sup>28</sup>

### *Esoteric Buddhist Cults*

Mahāvairocana, the chief divinity of mature Esoteric Buddhism, enjoyed considerable popularity under the Jin. Excavation of the foundation of a twelfth-century pagoda outside Beijing has revealed an almost intact stone-carved image of Vairocana that is iconographically similar to the images associated with the Zhenyan tradition of the mid-Tang, complete with crown, adornments, and displaying the *vajramuṣṭī-mudrā*.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, the five buddha families (Skr. *pañcakula*) as known from the Vajradhātu Mandala are also reflected in the sculptural arrangement in the main hall of Shanhua Temple 善化寺 in Datong, a former Jin capital. An image of the six-armed Avalokiteśvara, possibly Amoghapaśa, can also be found in this temple.<sup>30</sup>

Other examples of Esoteric Buddhist deities worshipped under the Jin include the group of eight *vidyārājas* (*ba mingwang* 八明王), which were painted on the wall of the main hall of Yanchang Temple 延昌寺 in Huayuan 華原 under the direction of the monk Fahui 法誨 (n.d.).<sup>31</sup> The cult of the goddess Cundī, an emanation of Avalokiteśvara, appears to have enjoyed considerable popularity under the Jin as well.<sup>32</sup> Evidence of this can be found on many stone pillars, as well as among the engraved stone scriptures at Fangshan.

<sup>28</sup> See Sørensen 2006a.

<sup>29</sup> See “Beijing shi Daxingqu Liao Jin shidai talin kaogu faju gaikuang (A Summary of the Discovery of a *Stūpa* Forest of Artifacts from the Liao and Jin Periods at Daxingqu in Beijing),” *Beijing wenwu yanjiu* 23 (2009). Cf. <http://www.bjww.gov.cn/2009/4-28/1240906304640.html>, pl. 5.

<sup>30</sup> Jin, ed. 2004, 16–17, 26ab. The Avalokiteśvara image is here incorrectly identified as a “Moon Divinity.”

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *Yanchang si ji* 延昌寺記 (Record of Yanchang Temple) from 1188 C.E. The *stūpa* stele of this monk can still be seen on the grounds of the now ruined Yanchang Temple 延昌寺. Cf. “Yanchang si yizhi ji ta (The Ruins of Yanchang Temple and Its Pagoda),” <http://tongchuan.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/gaikuang/200609/20060903068346.html>.

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of the cult of this important goddess, see Sørensen, “Central Divinities in the Esoteric Buddhist Pantheon in China,” in this volume.

### Conclusion

The form of Esoteric Buddhism that existed under the Jin would appear to have followed the kinds of practices found under the Liao, and there is evidence of great interest in its scriptures. It is also possible that the combination of Esoteric Buddhism and Huayan common to the Liao was taken over by the Jurchen. In short, it makes little sense to discuss Esoteric Buddhist developments under the Jin as divorced from its predecessor, the Liao, or apart from a general comparison with Buddhism that flourished in the neighboring Song empire and, of course, the Koryō. However, it is important to note that Esoteric Buddhism under the Jin most probably did not exist in the form of a sectarian denomination or school in the institutional sense; rather, its related scriptures, practices, and beliefs formed part of the mainstream Buddhist tradition.

The Fangshan scriptures carved in stone provide us with information on which Esoteric Buddhist scriptures were in vogue under the Jin. They also document the interest in Esoteric Buddhist teachings among members of the Buddhist community as well as among those from the upper levels of Jin society, including important officials and the nobility. Despite the relatively great importance that Esoteric Buddhist scriptures enjoyed under the Jurchen, so far no works by Jin authors have been identified.

Esoteric Buddhist existed as an integral part of Buddhism and was evidently not represented by a school or a sectarian group of practitioners. However, the use of spells, the building of *dhāraṇī* pillars, and the importance of *stūpas* and pagodas as *foci* of religious worship were common throughout the Jurchen empire.

Although the information presented here is obviously scattered and incomplete, it does reveal that a substantial number of Esoteric Buddhist divinities were worshipped in Northern China under the Jurchen. We do not have enough material to establish the extent to which a comprehensive transmission of cultic practices on the basis of the Esoteric Buddhist scriptures available under the Jin also took place. However, the indications are that such a comprehensive transmission was not the case. While Esoteric Buddhist practices were prevalent and seemingly rather abundant throughout the Jin empire, the evidence we do have does not reflect the existence of a systematic tradition comparable to that of the mid-Tang or of late-Heian Japan. Rather, Esoteric Buddhism under the Jin was similar to what had existed under

the Northern Song, and probably quite similar to what existed in the Koryŏ kingdom. This was probably because the formal transmission from *ācārya* to disciple no longer took place as a matter of course but happened only occasionally. The lacuna of Esoteric Buddhist ritual paraphernalia, including images and paintings, substantiates this.

## 46. ESOTERIC BUDDHIST ART UNDER THE NANZHAO AND DALI KINGDOMS

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

Since the rediscovery in the 1930s of the *Long Scroll*, a hand scroll attributed to the artist Zhang Shengwen 張勝溫 (ca. 1172–1180),<sup>1</sup> the Buddhist art of Yunnan, especially that associated with the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms, began to captivate the attention of scholars both in the West and in East Asia. While the foundation of the study of the Buddhist art of Yunnan was laid prior to the establishment of the People's Republic of China, substantial developments have only taken place during the last three decades. Consequently, our knowledge of the Buddhist art of Nanzhao and Dali has increased significantly. This is the result of both ample and better documentation of the material itself, much of which was previously beyond scholarly reach.

### *Buddhist Painting and the Long Scroll*

The most important source on Esoteric Buddhist art in Nanzhao and Dali is the so-called *Long Scroll* mentioned above. Together with the bronzes of the pagoda of Chongsheng Temple 崇聖寺 and the cave sculptures at Mt. Shizhong 石鐘山, the scroll provides us with extensive information on Buddhist practice and beliefs, albeit in a sort of retrospective format. Moreover, it can be taken as a manual of Buddhist iconography from the Dali period. A brief overview of the *Long Scroll* reveals that most of the divinities it depicts are related to Esoteric Buddhism; this includes Vairocana Buddha and the four other *dhyāni* buddhas, as well as Ekādaśamukha, the thousand-armed

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapin 1970a, 1970b, 1970c, 1971. Zhang Shengwen is discussed by Soper (in Chapin 1971, 134–136). The entire scroll has been reproduced in full color in Li Kunsheng 1999, 194–239. Soper and others have discussed the present condition of the *Long Scroll*, and it is apparent that the repairs and remounting it has undergone in the course of its several centuries of existence has caused alterations to the original sequence. Moreover, it would seem that several of the original pictorial frames are missing as well, which may explain the arbitrary, and sometimes confusing, iconographical arrangements in evidence.

Avalokiteśvara, Vajrasattva, Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara, and so on. The cults of Mahākāla and Vaiśravaṇa are also prominently represented, the former of which appears in at least two different forms in the *Long Scroll* (Chapin 1971, nos. 119 and 124).

In addition to a wide range of Esoteric Buddhist images reflecting a standard iconography found elsewhere in the Chinese cultural sphere, the *Long Scroll* also contains images of many uncommon bodhisattvas, protectors, and other divinities that cannot be found elsewhere. Included among these significant, local forms are Brahma-Mahākāla, Āṭavaka or Da Yuanshuai 大元帥,<sup>2</sup> Mahāyakṣa, and Maheśvara (Śiva), as well as several forms of Avalokiteśvara and, of course, the celebrated Acuoye of both seated and standing types.<sup>3</sup>

### *Bronze Figures*

Among the Yunnanese Buddhist bronzes, it is a special iconographical form of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the so-called Acuoye Guanyin 阿嵯耶觀音, that is the most popular. Acuoye Guanyin is a transcription of the Sanskrit “Ajaya Avalokiteśvara,” which means “All-Conquering Avalokiteśvara.”<sup>4</sup> This name obviously refers to the immense power ascribed to this bodhisattva by the faithful.<sup>5</sup> In Zhang Shengwen’s *Long Roll of Buddhist Images*, the Acuoye Guanyin is referred to as Zhen-shen Guanshiyin 真身觀世音, i.e., the “True Image of Avalokiteśvara.” This image is usually shown in standing pose (although sitting versions with one leg bending are also known), and it generally can be said to reflect Buddhist art from Southeast Asia rather than China. This is most clearly evident in the elongated slender body in combination with a somewhat stiff pose (figure 1).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion of this divinity, see Duquenne 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Li 1999, 232 [central frame] and 234 [right frame] for Brahmā-Mahākāla; 196 [right frame] for Āṭavaka; 235 [central frame] for Mahāyakṣa; 237 [left frame] for Maheśvara; and 222 [central frame] and 227 [left frame] for Acuoye. Iconographically speaking, the Acuoye Avalokiteśvara is really not an Esoteric Buddhist deity, but it should nevertheless be considered as such on account of the contexts in which it occurs, including its function in Esoteric Buddhist rituals.

<sup>4</sup> See also Sørensen “Esoteric Buddhism in the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms (ca. 800–1253),” in this volume.

<sup>5</sup> The origin of this image is described in the *Nanzhao tuzhuan* 南詔圖傳 (Picture Scroll of the History of Nanzhao). For a detailed study of the history and cultural context of the Acuoye Guanyin, cf. Chapin 1944.

<sup>6</sup> Münsterberg, a noted authority on Chinese Buddhist art, describes it as having “Gupta influence” 1967, 68, pls. 58–59. However, the alleged “Gupta influence” is



Figure 1. Acuoye Avalokiteśvara. Gilt bronze, eleventh century. Dali, Chongsheng Pagoda (Qiu and Jiang 1984. *Chongsheng si san ta*, 15).



Although the Acuoye does not display iconographic features representative of a distinct Esoteric Buddhist iconography, the context in which it was venerated was one replete with spells, magic, and miracles.

The Acuoye Guanyin appears in both gilded and non-gilded images, but all have been rendered with a more or less similar iconography. It appears that the majority of the images once featured both a halo and a *mandorla* cast as a separate piece that was attached to the back of the images. Now more than a dozen such images have been documented in museums and private collections around the world. The extant images of Acuoye Guanyin reveal that it was made in a variety of sizes, with the smallest measuring from around twenty-five centimeters and the largest rising to a height of as much as three meters.<sup>7</sup>

A rare and highly interesting bronze image of the seated, thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara has recently surfaced in Europe.<sup>8</sup> When compared with similar bodhisattva images from other parts of China, this example is very slender and has unusually long, thin arms. As is common for many Dali pieces in bronze, the Avalokiteśvara is seated in the same half-lotus posture bespeaking a stylistic influence from Southeast Asia.

Among the numerous Buddhist relics that came to light in connection with the restoration of the pagodas of the Chongsheng Temple is a large hoard of bronze images from the mid-Dali period. Most of these images belong to Esoteric Buddhism and include buddhas, bodhisattvas, various *vidyārājas*, and other protectors (see Jiang, Qiu, and Yunnan 1998, 71–80; Lutz 1991, 76–153; and Lutz and Howard, 1991). At least two sets of the five *dhyāni* buddhas have been found, which reveals that rituals involving the Vajradhātu Mandala in some form were being practiced among the Bai during the eleventh to twelfth centuries (Jiang, Qiu, and Yunnan 1998, 74, pls. 64–97).<sup>9</sup> Images of Vairocana

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in my opinion not immediately clear, as the style and iconography of the Acuoye Guanyin comes much closer to the inherited Buddhist art of the Pāla kingdom. Perhaps Münsterberg was referring to the obvious Indian elements reflected in the image rather than the Buddhist art from the Gupta period as such.

<sup>7</sup> For the large image, cf. Lutz 1991, 36, pl. 12.

<sup>8</sup> The image in question was originally offered up for sale at a German auction house and was later purchased by a Belgian gallery. For a description of the image as well as a photo, see Marcel Nies *Oriental Art* 2002, 14–15. The piece is dated by the gallery to the tenth century, which may be rather too early when seen in comparison with similar pieces.

<sup>9</sup> A closer study of these bronzes and the painted diagram of the Vajradhātu Mandala recovered from the main pagoda of the temple may reveal a ritual correspon-

appear as two main types: one holding his hands in the *vajramuṣṭī-mudrā* (Lutz and Howard 1991, 164–174, pls. 38–39), the other with posture and gesture similar to that of the standard Śākyamuni images, but with bodily ornaments (see, for example, Hang 1999, 61–63, pl. 1).<sup>10</sup> Buddhas with earrings and in half-lotus posture are distinct to the Esoteric Buddhist iconography of the Bai (for examples of this see Li 1999, pls. 270–280). For some reason crowned images of Vairocana are unknown, or at least they have not been identified.

As is also evident with many of the divinities in the *Long Scroll*, the bronzes from Chongsheng Temple include several images, the iconography and types of which are known elsewhere in the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon from other parts of Central and East Asia. Among these are various *vidyārājas* or *mahākrodhas* such as Vajrapāṇi, Mahākāla, Hayagrīva (Li 1999, pls. 283–288), and a multi-armed, seated figure with one leg bending, which reflects an iconography reminiscent of later Tibetan depictions of the *ḍākinī* Kurukullā.<sup>11</sup> These images reveal the existence of what appears to be “independent” or special cults of Esoteric Buddhism in Dali.

In addition to the many pieces that have been recovered from *stūpas* and pagodas in the Dali area of Yunnan, many Buddhist votive images in bronze from museums and private collections have now been identified. This material adds significantly to our knowledge of the Buddhist art of Dali and gives us new insights into the Esoteric Buddhist iconography of the region.<sup>12</sup>

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dence, if not a direct match. See Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms (ca. 800–1253),” in this volume.

<sup>10</sup> It is possible that this form of Vairocana was conceived of as the main deity of the Dharmadhātu Mandala. However, it may equally well have been associated with the exoteric *Avataṃsaka sūtra*.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Jiang, Qiu, and Yunnan 1998, 78, pl. 153. Here it is said to represent Sarasvatī, which is of course not correct. Due to the small figure of a buddha in the crown, it is clear that we are dealing with an aspect of Avalokiteśvara. However, further research will be needed before we can be certain which form this image is meant to be.

<sup>12</sup> Musée Guimet holds in its collection an important four-armed Brāhmin-Mahākāla seated on a kneeling bull. It is covered with gold leaf on a brown-patinated bronze. The image has been placed in the section on Tibetan art but is identified as being either Sichuanese or Yunnanese (Musée Guimet, inv. no. MA 6046 A+B). The image has, however, been wrongly dated by the museum’s experts to be from the Ming. Evidently it is a Yunnanese image from Dali and does not appear to predate the thirteenth century. Its iconography is similar to the usual standing Brāhmin-Mahākāla from Dali. Cf. *Long Scroll*, pl. 248.

*The Buddhist Cult Centers on Mt. Shizhong and at Mt. Jing*

Located some twenty-five kilometers to the west of the northern town of Jinchuan 金川, an old Dali garrison town, is Mt. Shizhong with its unique Buddhist cult center and site commemorating the early royalty of Nanzhao. The site consists of several manufactured caves with mainly Buddhist sculptures.<sup>13</sup> Although the Buddhist iconography is dominated by a variety of standard Mahāyāna themes, its Esoteric Buddhist images are highly significant.<sup>14</sup> A precise dating of the site has generally been avoided in most scholarly reports, but it would appear that the majority of the caves and their images were carved sometime during the late ninth and early tenth centuries.<sup>15</sup> In terms of Esoteric Buddhist iconography, one of the most important caves on the site is no. 6, which features a central Śākyamuni/Vairocana Buddha flanked by images of the eight *vidyārājas*, Mahākāla, and Vaiśravaṇa. Cave no. 8, with a small niche holding a vulva (usually explained in the secondary literature as a fertility symbol), is also important. The sculpted vulva was probably not only envisaged as a fertility symbol (at least that was not its original meaning) but would appear to have

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Moreover, a few years ago Christie's in Hong Kong sold three outstanding Yun-nanese Buddhist gilt bronzes at their auction. Cf. Christie's London 1991, 50–51; lot. no. 52 of Vairocana, gilt bronze, 28.5 centimeters high, is wrongly identified as Five Dynasties/Song dynasty. Christie's Hong Kong 1998, lot. no. 603 of a standing image of Avalokiteśvara holding willow wisp (now lost) and *kunḍika*, richly adorned with jewel garland and other ornaments, 46.2 centimeters high, is wrongly dated to the Liao dynasty. Lot. 604 of an adorned Śākyamuni Buddha (actually Amitābha on account of the *mudrā*) seated in the *sattvapayankāsana* with hands in the *dhyāna-mudrā* (there is a similar image in the Cleveland Museum of Art), 22.3 centimeters high, is wrongly dated to the Liao dynasty. Acuoye Guanyin seated in *ardhaparyankāsana* with the hands in the *vitarka* and *varada-mudrās* is correctly dated to the Dali kingdom, ca. eleventh to twelfth centuries (38.1 centimeters high, lot. 606). Apparently none of these pieces have been published previously, and therefore constitute important additions to what we already know about the Dali bronzes.

<sup>13</sup> See Chen 1980. The most extensive recording of the sculptures at Mt. Shizhong can be found in Li 1999, 50–103. Provided access can be had, the Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania Libraries, has nice, clear photos of most of the sculptures available online at <http://dla.library.upenn.edu>.

<sup>14</sup> For a useful survey of the site, see Howard 1991.

<sup>15</sup> One drawback of Howard's otherwise excellent article is the early and overall general dating, i.e., "9th century," which Howard ascribes to the sculptures here 1991, 42. In my view such a dating is imprecise and too general. Inscriptions *in situ* reveal that while the earliest dated carvings in cave no. 1 were made as early as 850 C.E., other carvings date from the early tenth up to the mid-eleventh centuries. Cf. Liu 2001, 14–33. The most up-to-date discussion of the dating of the site can be found in Zhongguo shiku diaosu quanji bian jiwei yunhui 2000, 2–13.

had strong tantric Buddhist connotations. As such it would have represented the worship of the female sex as the holder of transcendent wisdom. Cave no. 8 features multi-armed images in shallow relief of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, clearly cast as a female divinity in an early and rare form carrying a small figure of the Buddha above her head (figure 2).<sup>16</sup>

Mt. Liang 涼山 is another significant Nanzhao site located near Boshiwahe 博什瓦黑 in what is now southern Sichuan province. This area was originally part of the Nanzhao kingdom and constituted its frontier with Tang China to the immediate north. The site is unique for its extensive and monumental Buddhist petroglyphs featuring mainly Esoteric Buddhist images.<sup>17</sup> Although depictions of royal processions and general Buddhist images are prominent, the site holds many Esoteric Buddhist images, most notably carvings of a series of *vidyārājas* (figure 3),<sup>18</sup> including that of Brahma-Mahākāla, the tutelary deity of the Dali kingdom (see Yang 2002).

### *Pagodas and Buddhist Relic*

The Chongsheng Temple in the town of Dali has three tall pagodas built in the special slender style characteristic of the Bai. The temple itself dates from the Nanzhao period, but the pagodas as they stand today evidently represent the architecture of the Dali kingdom with repairs and reconstructions from later periods. When undergoing reconstruction during the 1980s all three yielded a massive amount of relics, with an impressive number hidden in the *tiangong* 天宮 chamber of the central Qianxun Pagoda 千尋塔.<sup>19</sup>

From the perspective of Esoteric Buddhism the most significant material from these pagodas are a number of high-quality gilt-bronze sculptures depicting such divinities as Vairocana and the other *dhyāni* buddhas, Acala, Vajrapāṇi, the eight-armed Mahākāla, the four-armed Brahma-Mahākāla, and Vajrayakṣa, many of which also occur in the

<sup>16</sup> See Li 1999, 102, pl. 99.

<sup>17</sup> For the report on the first survey on this site, see Liang Shan Boshiwahe Shike Huaxiang Diaochazu 1982. For photos, see Li 1999, 150–163.

<sup>18</sup> Briefly discussed in Howard 1999. Howard's view that groups of eight *vidyārājas* are "unique" to southwestern China, i.e., Sichuan and Yunnan, is no longer tenable as such groups have been documented elsewhere in China and earlier than the examples she discusses. Cf. Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Tang," in this volume.

<sup>19</sup> For this material, see Jiang, Qiu, and Yunnan sheng wenhua ting wenwu chu Zhongguo wenwu yanjiu 1998 and Lutz and Howard 1991. Additional photos can be found in Li 1999, 245–281.



Figure 2. Rubbing of stele depicting Uṣṇīṣavijayā. Thirteenth century, Jianquan, Yunnan.



Figure 3. Rubbing of engraving depicting *vidyārāja*. Nanzhao, tenth century, Boshiwahe, southern Sichuan province.

*Long Scroll* with similar iconographical features.<sup>20</sup> Ritual implements such as *vajras* and *ghanṭās* miniature *stūpas*; finger rings with *vajras* and Tibetan-style *phurbas*; circular, votive clay seals reminiscent of the clay-impressed images (Tib. *tsa-tsa*) known from Tibetan culture;<sup>21</sup> and several scriptures including *dhāraṇīs* and spells, diagrams of mandalas, and talismanic writing have also been recovered.<sup>22</sup> All in all this hoard of treasures reveals that a variegated and rich Esoteric Buddhist culture existed in Yunnan under the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms.

### Conclusion

Despite its richness and considerable diversity, the overall imagery of the Esoteric Buddhist art from the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms is stylistically and iconographically relatively uniform. This is further underscored by a loose comparison between the sculptural material and the iconography as reflected in the *Long Scroll*. However, a loose comparison with the contemporary Buddhist art found in the rest of China reveals that the art associated with both the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms was influenced by Esoteric Buddhism to a degree rarely seen elsewhere.

Stylistically the sculpture of Nanzhao and Dali art reflects Chinese norms more than anything else, in particular those of Sichuan. However, various traits and features, which superficially may be referred to as Southeast Asian, also occur. The latter are most easily detected in the images of the famous Acuoye Avalokitesvara as well as in the characteristic half-lotus posture (*padmāsana*) common to Southeast Asian Buddhist sculpture seen in many Buddha images from Dali.

The *Long Scroll*, with its impressive and extensive pantheon, rightly occupies a central place in the art of the Dali kingdom, reflecting as it does not only a variety of Buddhist cults and practices but also the history of the Bai people in relation to Buddhism. The importance of this painted scroll is further enhanced by the fact that it features many iconographical forms that would appear to have been unique to Dali Buddhism.

<sup>20</sup> Jiang, Qiu, and Yunnan sheng wenhua ting wenwu chu Zhongguo wenwu yanjiu 1998, 71–80, pls. 64–157.

<sup>21</sup> Jiang, Qiu, and Yunnan sheng wenhua ting wenwu chu Zhongguo wenwu yanjiu 1998, 86–87, pls. 172–176.

<sup>22</sup> See Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms (c. 800–1253),” in this volume.

The importance of erecting pagodas as part of their Buddhist practice and belief is a defining characteristic of the Bai people, and although not unique to their culture and religious expression, hardly finds comparison elsewhere in China. Esoteric Buddhist beliefs would appear to have been closely associated with the making of pagodas and with the rites of empowerment and protection connected with these monuments, as can be seen in their rich deposits of relics.



## 47. ESOTERIC BUDDHIST ART IN CHINA, 960–1279

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

As was the case with Esoteric Buddhist practices in the post-Tang period, Esoteric Buddhist art can be characterized by its discontinuity with the Zhenyan tradition that dominated Esoteric Buddhist art in China during the second half of the Tang. With the possible exception of the Esoteric Buddhist art of the Xixia (which in any case reflects a strong influence from Tibetan tantric Buddhism), the Esoteric Buddhist art of the Song, Liao, and Jin has many features in common. These include major iconographical themes, the same cults, concepts of ritual spaces, and last but not least a shared Buddhist literature in print. All of these features resulted from the overall dominance of Chinese cultural practices. A general divergence from the orthodox iconography of the Zhenyan tradition of the Tang, and a more flexible, if not random, blending with exoteric Buddhist forms is evident in all three cultures. This may be seen as an indication that the orthodox transmission of ritual practices, including the accompanying oral instructions used during the latter half of the Tang, no longer applied. Incidentally, such an understanding is supported by the surviving elements of material culture, including images, paintings, and ritual objects that have been identified as belonging to Esoteric Buddhism.

Despite notable discontinuity, it is also important to acknowledge that many aspects of Esoteric Buddhist art did continue after the Tang. Major iconographical themes were continued, although they no longer conformed so closely to the textual norms. The cult surrounding engraving *dhāraṇīs* on pillars and steles continued unabated, and may even have become more widely adopted in secular contexts than had previously been the case. Likewise, the tradition of using the ornamental Siddham script reached new heights, especially during the Liao and Jin periods, from which there are numerous extant examples. However, it is clear that distinctions between exoteric and Esoteric Buddhist art became less obvious, with the result that some icons, such as Vairocana Buddha, became transformed into more hybrid figures.

*Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Northern and Southern  
Song Dynasties*

Esoteric Buddhism was vital in many provinces of the Song empire, though it was a bifurcated and nonheterogenous tradition without a firm center. From early on in the dynasty, it appears that no orthodox transmission of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism had survived the Tang. What did survive were scattered vestiges of ritual practices and related modes of belief. In terms of Esoteric Buddhist art, some remnants from the Tang had survived but these were for the most part divorced from an Esoteric Buddhist context. The close connection between Esoteric Buddhist ritual practice, iconography, and belief no longer existed as there was no longer anyone to provide instructions.

In conjunction with the appearance of a handful of Indian *ācāryas* at the Northern Song court in Kaifeng during the late tenth century, Esoteric Buddhism was given a boost.<sup>1</sup> Yet despite the rather concerted and massive textual influence that developed due to the activities of these new missionary-translators, it does not appear that much ritual paraphernalia, including votive paintings and statues, was produced at that time.<sup>2</sup>

A number of high-quality bronzes from the Northern Song depicting the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara have survived, most of which are in private and museum collections in Europe and the U.S. Due to cultural and geographical proximity as well as a shared style, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish these images from similar pieces made under the Liao. However, it remains a fact that very few concrete examples have survived. Among the few extant paintings from the Song featuring Esoteric Buddhist themes, mention can be made of the celebrated Ninna-ji depiction of the *vidyārājñī* Mahāmāyūrī<sup>3</sup> and the printed *Mahāpratiṣarā-dhāraṇī* from Dunhuang, which is undoubtedly representative of a standard iconographical template for this divinity.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For this development, see Orzech, “Translation of Tantras and other Esoteric Buddhist Scriptures,” in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> One of the few descriptions of esoteric temple art and statuary appears in Jōjin’s diary of his visit to the capital in 1072–1073. He describes not only temples with images of Trailokyavijaya but also images in a temple on the palace grounds that were apparently based on the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (大方廣菩薩藏文殊師利根本儀軌經, T. 1191). See *San Tendai Godai san ki*, 137a, and the discussion in Orzech 2006a, 152.

<sup>3</sup> See Cahill 1972, 50–52.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Whitfield and Farrer 1990, 106–107.

The *Shuilu* 水陸, or water and land ritual, came to the fore during the Song, when different ritual traditions are known to have existed.<sup>5</sup> In the course of the Southern Song, the different traditions appear to have coalesced in the *Fajie shengdan shuilu shenghui xiu zhai yigui* 法界聖凡水陸勝會修齋儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings of the Meager Feast for the Holy and Worldly in the Dharmadhātu's Exalted Assembly of the Water and Land),<sup>6</sup> compiled by the Tiantai monk Zhipan 志磐 (fl. thirteenth century).<sup>7</sup> The complex and multifaceted ritual set forth here involved a great amount of paraphernalia, including a set of large-scale votive paintings depicting all the divine and ordinary beings of the *dharmadhātu* to be displayed during the event.<sup>8</sup> Although no such paintings are known to exist today, we can surmise that they did exist originally, given the universal popularity of the *Shuilu* ritual. Rubbings from a set of stone slabs at Zhengjue Temple 正覺寺 in Shanxi that were engraved with the divinities depicted in the *Shuilu* paintings, dating from the Northern Song or Jin, have been identified in recent years (figure 1).<sup>9</sup> In order to gain an understanding of how these paintings would have looked, we need to turn our attention to the extant sets of *Shuilu* paintings from the Ming.<sup>10</sup>

As is the case with Yunnan under the Dali kingdom, a local brand of Esoteric Buddhism was developed in Sichuan during the course of the Song dynasty. The Buddhist sculptural art at Mt. Bei 北山, located just outside of the county seat of Dazu, dates back to the late Tang,

<sup>5</sup> Rituals of this kind or conceptually similar rites are known from the latter part of the Tang, but exactly how or in what contexts they were performed have still not been fully explored. There are some rudimentary ritual texts that relate to the *Shuilu* from Dunhuang, probably dating from the Five Dynasties period (906–978), eg. P. 3542 (1) and P. 3542 (2). Cf. Xie and Xie 2006, 40–48. It would appear that the *Yulanben jing* 佛說盂蘭盆經 (Ullambana Scripture) and possible the *yankou*-type rituals were the actual forerunners of the more developed *Shuilu* rituals of the early Song dynasty.

<sup>6</sup> It is now represented by the heavily redacted version by the Ming master Zhuhong 株宏 (1535–1615). Cf. ZZ. (1975–1989) 1497.74, 784b–823a.

<sup>7</sup> See Lye, "Song Tiantai Ghost-feeding Rituals," in this volume.

<sup>8</sup> See Stevenson 2001.

<sup>9</sup> An interesting stele with an engraved image of the Buddha commemorates the setting up of a *Shuilu* ritual at Yanshan Temple 巖山寺 in 1158 C.E. The text informs us that the occasion for the rite was to honor the many war dead at the time of the Jin takeover in northern China. Cf. Shanxi sheng gu jianzhu baohu yanjiu, comp. 1990, 3, pl. 120.

<sup>10</sup> Such as the famous set of paintings from Baoning Temple. Cf. Shanxisheng Bowuguan, comp. 1988.

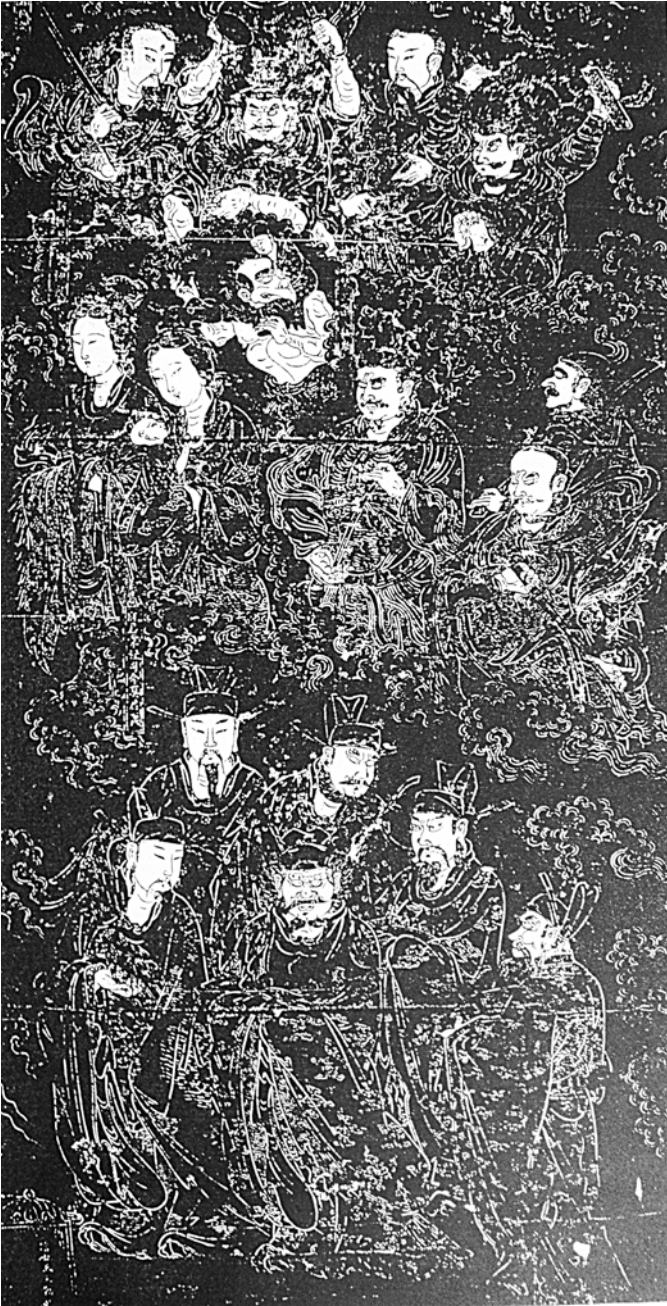


Figure 1. Divinities from the Department of Thunder. Rubbing of a stele with the divinities of the *Shuilu* ritual, Northern Song.

when the first images were carved on behalf of a local military leader.<sup>11</sup> However, the site flourished during the Northern and early Southern Song, when the majority of the most interesting and sophisticated sculptural groups were made at Fowan 佛灣, as Mt. Bei is known today. There is an unusually high concentration of Esoteric Buddhist images among the more than two hundred numbered groups at this site.<sup>12</sup> They include images such as the bodhisattva Precious Seal-hand (Fowan group no. 136),<sup>13</sup> Amoghapāśa-Avalokiteśvara (Fowan group no. 123, 119), the four *vidyārājas* (Fowan group no. 133), Cintāmaṇi-Avalokiteśvara (Fowan group no. 149), Māricī (Fowan group no. 130), Mahāmāyūrī (Fowan group no. 155), and so on.<sup>14</sup> As is also the case in many other sites in Sichuan, the various forms of Avalokiteśvara are prominently represented. Compared with the iconography of the mature Zhenyan tradition of the Tang, most of the images at Mt. Bei are often quite different and somewhat “non-canonical,” apparently reflecting local or at least regional characteristics. In a sense they appear less orthodox, perhaps as a result of a general break with the earlier tradition.

Mt. Baoding 寶頂山, essentially a Buddhist sanctuary located on top of a small mountain northeast of the county seat of Dazu, has some of the most spectacular and iconographically diverse Buddhist sculptural groups of all and it represents the last major efflorescence of Buddhist sculptural art in China.<sup>15</sup> The site was established during the late Southern Song under the visionary instructions of one man, the Buddhist monk Zhao Zhifeng 趙智風 (1178–ca. 1225).<sup>16</sup> The Esoteric Buddhist iconography seen in the sculptures and reliefs here are mainly the result of local traditions and only vaguely reflects the Golden Age of the Tang, though Zhao consciously invoked the pedigree

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<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of these early images, cf. Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Tang,” in this volume.

<sup>12</sup> All the images are numbered and briefly described in Liu, Hu, and Li, comp. 1986, 364–429.

<sup>13</sup> This is of course a constructed name.

<sup>14</sup> See the monumental and groundbreaking study by Suchan 2003. All the groups at Mt. Bei are discussed and described in considerable detail.

<sup>15</sup> For a survey of the sculptural art at Mt. Baoding, see Howard 2001.

<sup>16</sup> The official dates for him are 1178–ca. 1249 C.E. However, the exact date of his death is uncertain and may have taken place sometime between 1225 and 1250. For a study of this truly important figure, see Sørensen 2006b.

of the Tang tradition of Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>17</sup> At the heart of Zhao's sculptural groups and sanctuaries is the cult of Liu Benzun 柳本尊 (855–907),<sup>18</sup> a lay thaumaturge and Esoteric Buddhist specialist who allegedly played a major role in spreading and popularizing Esoteric Buddhism in the region around Chengdu (Yizhou 益州) during the final years of the Tang and the early Five Dynasties period.<sup>19</sup>

Thus we see in the sculptural groups at Mt. Baoding a curious blend of exoteric and esoteric forms of Chinese Mahāyāna, including *bona fide* elements of Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>20</sup> This has resulted in a hybrid sculptural vocabulary in which classical Esoteric Buddhist iconography has been tempered with themes and imagery associated with concepts from Huayan Buddhism, as is evident in some of the Vairocana images found at the site (color plate 5).<sup>21</sup> Incidentally, the same trend can also be observed in the Esoteric Buddhist art of the Liao empire and in the Korean kingdom of Koryō. The view that the sculptural art of Mt. Baoding primarily reflects Esoteric Buddhism is incorrect and cannot be maintained, given the overwhelming data that proves otherwise.

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<sup>17</sup> A longstanding debate has been going on among Chinese scholars regarding the sectarian affiliation of the site; many argue that Mt. Baoding's sculptural groups reflect Esoteric Buddhism, and some even go so far as to insist that the site can only be understood in terms of Esoteric Buddhism. For such a radical view, see Guo 1997. Recently, the Chinese scholar Hou Chong has tried to show that Mt. Baoding was meant to function as a site for *shuilu* rituals. Cf. Hou 2005. Both views have been disproved and rejected in Sørensen 2008, 384–85.

<sup>18</sup> Different opinions regarding the dates of Liu Benzun has resulted in a confused reading of his life in most Chinese studies on this topic. A discussion of this can be found in Sørensen 2001, 60–64. A similar reading of his dates can also be found in Howard 2001, 100–102.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Sørensen 2001. Biludong 毗盧洞 in neighboring Anyue 安岳 county also features large-scale tableaux relating to the cult of Liu Benxun, indicating that it enjoyed a certain prominence in Eastern Sichuan during the second half of the Southern Song.

<sup>20</sup> These include the important tableaux of Liu Benzun (Dafowan, group no. 21), the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (Dafowan, group no. 8), the demon generals of the *Āryamāhāsāhasra-pramardanī-mahāyāna sūtra* (Dafowan, group no. 2), Mahāmāyūri (Dafowan, group no. 13), the ten *vidyārājas* (Dafowan, group no. 22) etc. For some general observations on the Esoteric Buddhist sculptures at Mt. Baoding, see Sørensen 2008, 383–89. An excellent photo record of these images can be found in Chongqing Dazu shike yishu bowuguan, comp. 1999.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Sørensen 2008, 385–86.



Color plate 5. Vairocana: First half of thirteenth century  
Mt. Baoding, Dazu. Photo by author.

*Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Liao*

Some of the features of Esoteric Buddhist art from the Liao, especially that dating from the first century of the dynasty, reflect a rather pronounced influence from the second half of the Tang. Later, however, this influence becomes less evident during the course of the eleventh century and is gradually replaced by a less orthodox style that emulates the iconographical norms in vogue under the Northern Song.

Much of what has survived of Esoteric Buddhist art from the Liao has been found in connection with repairs and restoration of pagodas and other Buddhist monuments. A notable example is the Northern Pagoda at Chaoyang, in present-day Liaoning province, where archaeologists found two caches of Buddhist relics and treasures during restoration work carried out between 1984 and 1988.<sup>22</sup> The upper repository of relics, traditionally referred to as the “heavenly palace” (*tiangong* 天宮), yielded a rich hoard of Esoteric Buddhist artifacts, including a small scripture *stūpa*, a dharma wheel with a *vajra* and *ghaṇṭā*, and so on. The stone casket holding the artifacts is decorated with engraved images on all four sides: the eastern side has images of the *trikāya*, represented by Śākyamuni as the *nīrmānakāya*, Rocana as the *sambhogakāya*, and Vairocana as the *dharmakāya*;<sup>23</sup> the northern side features a mandala in which a central Vairocana is surrounded by the eight great bodhisattvas (this mandala bears some resemblance to the variant Vajradhātu Mandala found on the relic casket at Famen Temple).<sup>24</sup> The outer side of the scripture *stūpa* mentioned above is decorated with an image of the crowned Vairocana with his hands in the *vajramuṣṭī-mudrā* (figure 2), and the inner layer features the same mandala found on the northern wall of the stone casket. All of these items reflect to some extent earlier Esoteric Buddhist concepts; however, this connects them only indirectly and partially with classic Zhenyan Buddhism of the Tang.

<sup>22</sup> See Chaoyang Beita kaogu kancha-dui, comp. 1992. The double treasuries were sealed during the first half of the eleventh century. See also Zhang, Wang, and Dong 1992.

<sup>23</sup> While on the surface this triad would appear to reflect iconography related to the *Avatamsaka sūtra* rather than an Esoteric Buddhist motif, the *vajramuṣṭī-mudrā* of Vairocana clearly indicates an Esoteric Buddhist influence. Such a synthesis between the Huayan tradition and Esoteric Buddhism is not uncommon in Buddhist iconography from the post-Tang period. Cf. Sørensen 2008, 385–86.

<sup>24</sup> See Sørensen “Esoteric Buddhist Art Under the Tang,” and Chen, “Esoteric Buddhism and Monastic Institutions,” in this volume.





Figure 2. Line drawing depicting Mahāvairocana surrounded by the eight *stūpas* from the North Pagoda. Chaoyang, Hebei, Liao dynasty (After Zhang and Dong 1992 *Wenwu* 7).

The material found in connection with the opening of the underground chamber, the “earthly palace” (*digong* 地宮), included a large octagonal, three-storied *dhāraṇī* pillar with engravings of a series of *dhāraṇīs* as well as the *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdāya sūtra*, which was evidently also understood as a spell text by the makers of the pillar. While the Buddhist relics recovered from the North Pagoda are not exclusively Esoteric Buddhist in nature, they do constitute a significant, if not dominant, element in the overall iconographical program of the pagoda.<sup>25</sup> The Chaoyang Pagoda alone cannot be taken as representative of Esoteric Buddhist art in the Liao empire, but it provides us with a general notion of what sort of material to expect and the context(s) in which it was used.<sup>26</sup>

### *Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Jin*

Information about art related to Esoteric Buddhism from the Jin is generally hard to come by; however, in recent years new or hitherto

<sup>25</sup> This has led the Chinese archaeological team to incorrectly conclude that the pagoda represents “Liao Esoteric Buddhism.” Cf. Chaoyang Beita kaogu kancha dui, comp. 1992, 28b.

<sup>26</sup> See also the data presented in Li 1961.

overlooked material has come to light. Among this material is the group of monumental images placed in the main hall of Shanhua Temple 善化寺 in Datong, Shanxi.<sup>27</sup> The main hall itself was built around 1150 C.E. and its immense size makes it one of the most impressive buildings from the early Jin to survive to this day. The Buddhist images in this hall are placed along the back wall of the main hall and feature the five *dhyāni* buddhas, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhī, Vairocana, Amitābha, and Akshobya, flanked by a retinue consisting of bodhisattvas, *devas*, and protectors. Although the images of these five buddhas as a group reflect the classical Esoteric Buddhist arrangement of the Dharmadhātu Mandala from the Tang, there is not much similarity between the Jin and Tang images. In a manner of speaking, the traditional Esoteric Buddhist iconography has here undergone a strong modification in the direction of more standard Buddhist iconography. None of the five buddhas are ornamented or wear crowns, and virtually none of the attending divinities reflects a strong sense of Esoteric Buddhism. As we have seen under the Song and Liao, Vairocana here features the *abhiṣeka-mudrā* and not the *vajramuṣṭī-mudrā* common to Esoteric Buddhist images of this buddha, as seen in the Tang material.

As was the case under the Liao, spells and *dhāraṇīs* were also prominent features of Esoteric Buddhism under the Jin and their use permeated all forms of Buddhism. At Shaolin Temple 少林寺, the famous stronghold of Chan Buddhism 禪宗, a stele engraved with the demonic image of Vajrapāla Nārāyaṇa (*Naluoyan jin'gang shentian* 那羅延金剛神天; i.e., Vishnu) cast in the role as Esoteric protector can be found (figure 3). Pillars engraved with the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* were also common under the Jin and reflect new, more tantric Buddhist developments that may originally have come from the Xixia empire (figure 4).

### *Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Xixia*

Esoteric Buddhist art under the Xixia can be divided into three types: A Sinitic type that reflects the forms common to the Song, Liao, and Jin; a Tangut-Tibetan type that reflects tantric Buddhism of the late Indo-Tibetan variety, as associated with the second spread

<sup>27</sup> See Jin 2004. It would appear that some of the images have been repaired or at least repainted at a later date, possibly during the late Ming. Nevertheless, the present arrangement reflects the original one from the Jin.



Figure 3. Nārāyaṇa as a Buddhist vajrapāla. Rubbing from a stele at Shaolin Temple, Jin dynasty.



Figure 4. *Dhāraṇī* pillar with the Uṣṇīsāvijayā-dhāraṇī in Siddham script and *bija* syllables. Jin, dated 1153 C.E. Private Collection.

of Buddhism in Tibet; and a third type that reflects a hybrid form in which Sinitic and Tangut-Tibetan elements are mixed.<sup>28</sup> There is a tendency that the purely Sinitic variety was dominant in the areas inhabited by a largely Chinese-speaking population, while areas with a large concentration of Tanguts and Tibetans followed a Tibetan style. However, the line of division was never really clear-cut, and sites such as Dunhuang,<sup>29</sup> Yulin 榆林,<sup>30</sup> and Khara Khoto<sup>31</sup> have yielded examples of Esoteric Buddhist art of both varieties as well as examples of syncretic Chinese and Tibetan style.<sup>32</sup>

The Chinese-style Esoteric Buddhist art we come across is in many ways identical to what we know existed in China and other East Asian states during the tenth–thirteenth centuries. The various cults of Avalokiteśvara were prominent, especially that of the thousand-armed form, but Ekādaśamukha can also be found. Uṣṇīśāvijayā seems to have been especially important as part of the imperial cult, and many votive paintings depicting this female divinity have been found.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the Lord of the Constellations, Buddha Tejaprabha, occurs prominently as well.<sup>34</sup> Although two-dimensional images in the form of wall paintings and hanging scrolls dominate the extant material, some images in wood and clay have also survived, including depictions of the “Double-headed Buddha,” the Crowned Vairocana.

With its predominance of tantric divinities and tantric Buddhist ritual imagery, Tibetan-style Esoteric Buddhist art is closely related to the Buddhist art from Central and Southern Tibet current during the twelfth–thirteenth centuries. It would appear that the Karma-gyud’pa school was especially important during the second half of the Xixia empire, as its prelates occur prominently in the surviving votive paintings that are actually proper *thangkas*.<sup>35</sup> Important tantric

<sup>28</sup> See Dunnell, “Esoteric Buddhism under the Xixia (1038–1234),” in this volume.

<sup>29</sup> For this material, cf. Duan et al., comp. 1996. See also Dunhuang wenwu yanjiu yuan, ed. 1998. The slightly later wall paintings from the early Yuan period reflects to a high degree the earlier Xixia style.

<sup>30</sup> For a useful introduction to the Xixia material, cf. Zhang 1995. See also Zhongguo shiku, comp. 1997.

<sup>31</sup> For an impressive catalogue featuring the best pieces from the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, cf. Piotrovsky 1993. See also Sørensen 1994b.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Samosyuk 1993.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Linrothe 1996; 1998.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Piotrovsky 1993, 228–31. See also Sørensen, “Astrology and the Worship of the Planets in Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang,” in this volume.

<sup>35</sup> See Dunnell 2001.

Buddhist divinities appearing in these paintings include the five *dhyāni* buddhas, Sadakṣari-Avalokiteśvara, Green Tārā, Palden Lhamo, Acala, Vajravārāhī, Sitāpatrā, Kurukullā, and so on. In addition, several mandalas, such as those of Cakrasaṃvara, Saṃvara, and Hevajra, have been found.<sup>36</sup> Much of the recovered religious art has been found in excavated *stūpas* and temple ruins.<sup>37</sup>

Taken together, it is evident that Esoteric Buddhism, especially in its mature tantric form, was extremely important to Xixia culture. As such, it appears to have dominated Tangut Buddhism, though it was not the only form of Buddhism to thrive there.

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<sup>36</sup> Piotrovsky 1993, 106–79. See Dunhuang yanjiu yuan, ed. 1997.

<sup>37</sup> For a comprehensive and detailed study, see Xie 2002.



THE BROADER IMPACT OF ESOTERIC BUDDHISM





## 48. THE ESOTERICIZATION OF CHINESE BUDDHIST PRACTICES

George A. Keyworth

Despite the fact that serious scholarly debate persists regarding both the working definition of esoteric Buddhism (*mijiao* 密教) and the question of what might securely be viewed as “esoteric” in China, Chinese Buddhist practice has since the ninth century become increasingly focused upon the bodhisattvas, who have the means to help avoid disasters and acquire good fortune (*chuzai zhaofu* 除災招福), rather than on distant, otherworldly buddhas (Sharf 2002b; McBride 2004, 2005; Gimello 2004; Orzech 2006a, 2006b). Practice, in contrast to philosophy or doctrine, refers to ritual, which forms the foundation of the two great civilizations underpinned by Buddhism in China: India and China. In China, ritual propriety (*li* 禮) means performing the hierarchically determined acts that usually concern family relations; in India, ritual—seen through the Chinese looking glass—is represented by the act of offerings to nourish (Skt. *pūjā*, Ch. *gongyang* 供養) the gods and divinities who regulate the universe around us.

For nearly two millennia, Chinese Buddhists have developed intricate rituals that marry Indian and Chinese forms of veneration, and which cannot be retroactively separated into the cultural categories of “China” or “India.” This is not the case for China’s neighbors, Japan and Tibet, where the introduction of esoteric and tantric Buddhist ritual practices (draped in very Indian guise) thoroughly transfigured both preceding Buddhist and indigenous religious rites. Using the paradigm of esoteric Buddhist transmission from either Japan or Tibet has been one less than ideal method used by scholars to investigate Chinese Buddhist ritual. The other, far from ideal as well, has been to principally excise Chinese Buddhists from the discussion of ritual in China, in favor of locating ritual in imperial, Confucian, Neo-Confucian, Daoist, or local religious circumstances. Therefore, investigating the effects of esoteric Buddhist literature, teachers, and practices in China must occur within the context of both Chinese cultural norms as well as Buddhist rites that pre- and postdate the broad dissemination of esoteric Buddhism in China in the seventh and eighth centuries.

In English-language scholarship, Orzech (2006b) goes the furthest in defining esoteric Buddhism as the product of efforts by the translator Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705–744), and, to a lesser extent, Śubhākarasiṃha (Shanwuwei 善無畏, 637–735), who brought the *Vajraśekhara sūtra* (*Jin'gangding jing* 金剛頂經, T. 865; a.k.a. *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha-mahāyānābhisamaya-mahākālparāja*) and the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (*Dari jing* 大日經, T. 848), respectively, from India and initiated the transmission of what would become both Shingon 真言宗 and Tendai 天台宗 esoteric Buddhism in Japan. Amoghavajra, in particular, is seen by his distant acolytes in Japan—most notably Kūkai 空海 (a.k.a. Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師, 774–835)—as the progenitor of a fundamentally different form of Buddhism focused on the ritual dimensions of Mahāvairocana Buddha. Strong evidence from Japanese pilgrims' diaries, including those written by two Tendai monks who journeyed to Tang (618–907) and Song (960–1279) China, the *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記 (Record of a Pilgrimage to Tang China in Search of the Dharma) by Ennin 圓仁 (794–864), and the *San Tendai Godaisan ki* 參天台五臺山記 (Record of a Pilgrimage to Mt. Tiantai and Mt. Wutai) by Jōjin 成尋 (1011–1081), suggest that Amoghavajra's esoteric practices and rites had established a strong foothold in China at Mt. Wutai by the tenth century (Kamata 2003; Orzech 2006a).

Japanese scholarship has almost unquestionably presented a view of esoteric Buddhism (*mikkyō*) that accords with Orzech (2006b) and Gimello (2004); however, as Sharf (2002b) and McBride (2004, 2005) have recently pointed out, the breadth of the net that can be encompassed by *mijiao/mikkyō* covers virtually all forms of ritual practice in Chinese Buddhism over the past millennium. Strickmann, for example, was keen to see nearly all aspects of Chinese ritual practice, including Daoist, that smacks of Indian ritual, specifically both the *homa* (*humo* 護摩) fire ritual and spell incantation, as esoteric, thereby assigning the adjective “esoteric” in esoteric Buddhism a meaning that nearly means “ritual.” The fact that certain bodhisattvas, most notably Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin 觀音), Mañjuśrī (Wenshu 文殊), and Samantabhadra (Puxian 普賢), are essential figures in Chinese Buddhist liturgy, both within and beyond the esoteric texts, makes the search for the impact of esoteric Buddhism upon Chinese Buddhist practice even more problematic.

Ritual in China, no matter the sectarian, tradition-based, or institutional connection one wishes to take into account, follows certain

carefully proscribed formulae: illness, ill fortune, and all manner of calamity can be explained by a failure to properly *perform* rituals. Failing faithful reproduction of the ritual and obtaining the desired effect, Buddhists, perhaps more than Daoists (their closest rivals), have had access to a pantheon of deities—the Mahāyāna bodhisattvas—who can intervene on a personal basis. The most common means to affect the bodhisattvas has been through the *chanhui* 懺悔 rites of repentance, from the Sanskrit *kṣama* (enduring, suffering) and *āpatti-prati-deśanā* (instructions to alleviate misfortunes). These rites, which have been at the center of Chinese Buddhist liturgical rites since the third century, have only recently attracted interest on the part of Western-language scholars (Kuo, 1994, 1998). Nevertheless, the Tiantai 天台宗 and Huayan 華嚴宗 exegetical traditions, based on the *Lotus* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮花經, T. 262) and *Buddhāvataṃsaka* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經, T. 279) sūtras, respectively, owe their enduring influence on the ritual dimensions of East Asian Buddhism to the successful performance of repentance rites. Furthermore, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*[*uttamarāja*] (*Jingguangming jing* 金光明經, T. 663) and the Chinese *Śūraṃgama* (*Shoulengyan jing* 首楞嚴, T. 945) sūtras, in particular, coupled with the *Lotus* and *Buddhāvataṃsaka*, have provided the Chinese with a stable cosmological system to address the close bodhisattvas, distant buddhas, and myriad Chinese and Indian beings in between to intervene on behalf of the living and the dead when misfortunes inevitably arise.

A common ten-stage rite to propitiate demons—who the Chinese hold responsible for nearly all maladies—through the Mahāyāna Buddhist deities in both Tiantai and Huayan rituals includes: 1) purification of the ritual space; 2) making prostrations (bowing); 3) burning incense and perfuming the area with flowers; 4) recollection (mindfulness); 5) invitations and offerings to the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha); 6) use of poplar branches and purifying water (often perfumed); 7) recitation of spells (*dhāraṇī* or *mantra*); 8) performance of the repentance rite; 9) circumambulation or performance of a ritual; and 10) sūtra recitation or seated meditation (Kamata 1986; Shioiri 2007). From the tenth century, after the introduction and dissemination of esoteric Buddhist practices, these rites changed little, apart from the very striking use of different spells, certain rituals (in the ninth stage), and, most significantly, the fact that so-called esoteric forms of the bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteśvara, increasingly become the focus of the rites (Kamata 1999b; Hirai 1999). It should

be noted that the change in the tenth stage, which in post-tenth-century China included seated meditation, indicates the rise of the Chan school 禪宗, which came to encompass all other sectarian divisions in Chinese Buddhism after the twelfth century.

The answer to the apparent question of what may have influenced these distinct changes in fundamental Chinese Buddhist ritual is the propagation of esoteric Buddhism in China after the eighth century. If we accept the chronology suggested by Orzech and others that esoteric Buddhism entered China in the eighth century and came to exert significant influence on Chinese Buddhist ritual practices, then, at least from a textual point of view, it appears that the marked increase in the number of devotional texts—otherwise ascribed to either Tiantai or Huayan exegetes—might be attributable to Amoghavajra's new ritual forms (Kamata 1986; Shioiri 2007). The category of repentance rites (*kṣama*, *chanhui* 懺悔), often, though not exclusively, using spells and/or incantations (*dhāraṇī* and *mantra*, *tuoluoni* 陀羅尼, *zhenyan* 真言, and *zhoushu* 咒術) to gain assistance with one's this-worldly anguish, rather than to progress toward liberation, definitely predates the arrival of esoteric Buddhism in China.

However, the group of manifestations of Avalokiteśvara often classified as esoteric—including the thousand-hand, thousand-eye Guanyins (Sahasrabhuja-sahasranetra, Qianshou qianyan 千手千眼), he/she who fishes for or lassos beings to bring them to awakening (Amoghapāśa or Amoghavajra, Bukongjuan 不空絹), Tārā (Duoluo 多羅), horse-headed (Hayagrīva, Matou Guanyin 馬頭觀音), wheel of the wish-fulfilling gem (Cintāmaṇicakra, Ruyilun Guanyin 如意輪觀音), eleven-head (Ekādaśamukha, Shiyimian Guanyin 十一面觀音), Cundī (Zhunti 準[准]提), she who knits her brows (Bhṛkūtī, Pijuzhi 毘俱胝), and the green-necked lord (Nilakaṇṭha, Qingjing 青頸)—becomes vital to the increase in the regard repentance rites play in Chinese Buddhism since Song times. For Chinese Buddhists, however, the *Lotus* and *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtras* continued to provide the principle soteriological and ritual contexts for Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and Samantabhadra. Furthermore, the indigenous Chinese development of the ten kings of hell, studied by Teiser (1988b, 1994), reveals an alternate approach taken by Chinese Buddhists toward ritual forms: they also incorporated hybrid Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian systems to address the consequences of death for those in this life and in the afterworlds.

A further minor, though noticeable, shift toward Mañjuśrī in Chinese Buddhist ritual occurs that can be connected to expressly Tibetan-language tantric Buddhist rites at court and among nobles in Ming 明代 (1368–1644) and Qing 清代 (1644–1911) times. But we fail to see extensive mention or implementation of rites involving Vajrapāṇi (Jin’gangshou 金剛手), Vajrasattva (Jin’gang saduo 金剛薩埵), or other tantric deities across China on any comparable scale with those involving Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and Samantabhadra. It is possible that such texts as the [Avalokiteśvaragūṇa-]Kāraṇḍavyūha sūtra (*Dasheng zhuangyan baowang jing* 大乘莊嚴寶王經, T. 1050) and the [Ārya-]Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa (*Dafangguang pusazang wenshushili genben yiguijing* 大方廣菩薩藏文殊舍利根本儀軌經, T. 1191), both translated in Song times and representative of a later stage of tantric Buddhist ritual manuals (*kalpa, yigui* 儀軌) in India, had some affect upon the longstanding Chinese interest in Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī. Though this remains to be studied, this line of research may provide a vital link between Chinese and esoteric (or tantric) rituals.

A final and intriguing development that may be connected with the broader dissemination of esoteric Buddhism in China is the practice of chanting Sanskrit texts (*fanbai* 梵唄), usually in transliterated form, which entered wide use in Chinese Buddhist liturgical rites from the Song period (Yoritomi 1999b, Demiéville, 1929b). This development is also mentioned in Japanese travel diaries and carried back to Japan, and it signals a renewed, if concurrent, interest in Indic-language ritual language that may have been sparked by the implementation of esoteric Buddhist rites within a Chinese Buddhist context. It is clear, however, that esoteric Buddhism did not disappear from China when Amoghavajra’s efforts faded with the persecutions of the Huichang 會昌 (841–846) era, an event that has been seen as the “nail in the coffin” of Chinese esoteric Buddhism for far too long.

## 49. SONG Tiantai Ghost-Feeding Rituals

Hun Y. Lye

Among the different rituals dealing with both the benign and dangerous dead in Chinese Buddhism, rituals for feeding hungry ghosts (*shi egui* 施餓鬼) are often associated with the esoteric rubric. While most of these rituals operate under the normative understanding of merit-transfer—often mediated by monastics—translations of the *Foshuo jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* 佛說救拔餓口餓鬼陀羅尼經 (Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on the *Dhāraṇī* that Rescued Flaming-mouth Hungry Ghost, hereafter *Flaming Mouth Sūtra*, T. 1313.21:464b–465b) in the eighth century introduced the Chinese to a different Buddhist motif and method for human-ghost interactions.<sup>1</sup> This sūtra teaches the use of an incantation (*dhāraṇī*) for transforming ordinary food and drink into nourishment capable of satisfying innumerable hungry ghosts. Thus, added to the belief in merit-transfer is this more direct and immediate way of satiating the hunger of the dead. Inspired by the *Flaming Mouth Sūtra*, various types of ghost-feeding rituals of varying lengths and complexity later developed and proliferated in China and other areas within its cultural orbit. These ghost-feeding rituals still figure prominently in the ritual lives of many Buddhists in East Asia today.

As important as the translations of this sūtra eventually became, it is unclear if they made any immediate impact on Tang Buddhist communities. Evidence regarding initial reception of the translations is surprisingly sparse. Although the *Flaming Mouth Sūtra* contains

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<sup>1</sup> There are two translations of this text: the *Foshuo jiu mianran egui tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 佛說救面燃餓鬼陀羅尼神咒經 (Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on the *Dhāraṇī*-spell that Saved Scorched-face Hungry Ghost), T. 1314.21:465c–466b, translated by Śikṣānanda (652–710) between the years 700–704; and the *Foshuo jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* 佛說救拔餓口餓鬼陀羅尼經 (Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on the *Dhāraṇī* that Rescued Flaming-mouth Hungry Ghost) T. 1313.21:464b–465b, translated by Amoghavajra (705–774) half a century later. Amoghavajra's version clarifies some ambiguous parts in Śikṣānanda's translation and has some added material. Since the latter translation became more widely used, for the remainder of this article I will refer to this sūtra as the *Flaming Mouth Sūtra*. For a translation of T. 1313, see Orzech 1996b.

simple instructions on how to put the incantation to use, it lacks the qualities of an esoteric-type *vidhi/kalpa*, liturgies or ritual manuals for the performance of esoteric practices. The sole notable exception, which likely originated in the Tang and has been identified with Amoghavajra, is the *Shi zhu egui yinshi ji shui fa* 施諸餓鬼飲食及水法 (Bestowing Drink and Food to all Hungry Ghosts and the Water Method, hereafter *Bestowing Drink and Food*, T. 1315.21:466c–468b).<sup>2</sup> Though the Tang provenance of this text is unproblematic, its connection to Amoghavajra is tenuous. Neither the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (T. 2154.55:477a–723a), completed in 730, nor the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄, completed in 800, lists this text. Furthermore, there are no references to the performance of any ghost-feeding rituals in the collection of important documents on Amoghavajra's activities in China compiled by Yuanzhao 圓照 (d. 800).<sup>3</sup> If Amoghavajra and his immediate disciples did perform ghost-feeding rituals based on the *Flaming Mouth Sūtra*, they were at best only ancillary to other rituals deemed more central and noteworthy.

While Tang evidence for ghost-feeding rituals are scant, the picture changes when we enter the Song period. The earliest Chinese evidence of the practice of the *Flaming Mouth Sūtra* comes from Song Tiantai communities in the form of two collections: the *Jinyuan ji* 金園集 (Golden Garden Collection, X. 950: 57.1a–20b), compiled by Ciyun Zunshi 慈雲尊式 (964–1032); and the *Shishi tonglan* 施食通覽 (Survey of Food-bestowal Rituals, X. 961: 57.101b–121a) completed in 1204 by Zongxiao 宗曉 (1154–1214). Unlike the Tang material, these Tiantai texts have clearly identifiable social, historical, and sectarian contexts. Consequently, any attempt to understand this facet of esoteric Buddhism in China has to begin with an analysis of these materials and the people who generated them.

<sup>2</sup> This liturgy was transmitted to Japan and became part of the ritual practices of the Shingon tradition.

<sup>3</sup> *Daizong chao zengsi kong dabianzheng guangzhi sanzang heshang biao zhiji* 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集 (T. 2120.52:826c–860c), completed in 781. Although the provenance of the *Bestowing Drink and Food* remains problematic, Ennin, who traveled in China from 838–847 and returned to Japan with this liturgy, identified it as Amoghavajra's "oral instructions" (*Bukong sanzang koujue* 不空三藏口訣), an attribution repeated in a Dunhuang manuscript of the *Method of Bestowing Drink and Food*. See Nittō shingu shōgyō mokuroku 入唐新求聖教目錄 (T. 2176.55:1080c).



The Song Tiantai revivalist Zunshi emerges in these two collections as a central figure in the spread of ghost-feeding rituals in the Song. His *Golden Garden Collection* contains four ghost-feeding texts, two liturgies and two short essays; while the *Survey of Food-bestowal Rituals* transmits six of his texts. Of the sixteen authors represented in the *Survey of Food-bestowal Rituals*, Zunshi is the most prolific contributor. His advocacy of ghost-feeding rituals is best understood against the backdrop of a trans-sectarian campaign to reestablish elite Buddhist institutions and influence in society, as well as a more specific revival of the Tiantai tradition after a period of decline beginning in the late Tang. As a key figure in this revival, Zunshi evidently advanced ghost-feeding rituals as a powerful resource among the ritual repertoire available to him (Stevenson 1999, 377–78).

While the doctrinal reasons that informed Zunshi's advocacy of ghost-feeding rituals should not be overlooked, it is helpful to note also that by Zunshi's time, many monasteries in his area had chapels reserved for the performance of these rituals (X. 961: 57.107b). Thus, rather than creating and promoting a new ritual program, Zunshi was skillfully building on a tradition already in existence. Zunshi and his followers' success in encouraging these rituals is most telling in the dramatic increase of texts in Zongxiao's *Survey of Food-bestowal Rituals*. This collection consists of thirty-three texts of varying lengths: six Indic texts in translation; three attributed to Nanyue Huisi 南岳慧思 (515–577), Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顛 (538–597) and Zhiyuan 智元 (976–1022) respectively; six by Zunshi; and eighteen identified with twelve Song period figures who post-date Zunshi (X. 961: 57.102a–b).

Focusing on these ghost-feeding traditions brings to light a frequently overlooked aspect of the development of esoteric Buddhism in China: the complex process of “esotericization” that the different traditions of Buddhism in China either participated in or resisted to varying degrees, and this aspect deserves greater focus than has been previously afforded. Although the study of the traditions that coalesced around esoteric savants such as Śubhākarasimha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra remains important, the more enduring impact of esoteric Buddhism on China can be found diffused among other Chinese Buddhist traditions (as well as in Daoism and folk religion).

In the present case of ghost-feeding practices, we can see this issue of esotericization developing in two directions. Even a cursory look at the *Method of Bestowing Drink and Food* quickly reveals that the ghost-feeding motif and method of the *Flaming Mouth Sūtra* is now

embedded within a more fully formed esoteric ritual framework and the liturgy is meant for the use of a trained ritualist. In contrast, in a tract included in the *Survey of Food-bestowal Rituals* urging the replacement of offering blood sacrifices and alcohol with Buddhist-style ghost-feeding, Zunshi implores all persons “whether monastic or lay, male or female, to exhaustively practice this method” (X. 961: 57.111c). In his efforts to extend Buddhist ethical norms and ritual forms from the confines of monastic cloisters into the wider society, Zunshi’s own liturgies were necessarily brief, simple, and thus accessible to everyone. Conversely, *Bestowing Drink and Food* belongs to a genre that makes no apologies for specialization and controlled transmission. And while Zunshi’s liturgies follow the *Flaming Mouth Sūtra* closely, *Bestowing Drink and Food* includes many spells, incantations, and ritual sequences drawn from other sources that are more clearly identifiable as belonging to the esoteric pedigree.

In addition, the spells and visualizations in *Bestowing Drink and Food* have corresponding *mudrās*, but no *mudrā* is used in Zunshi’s ghost-feeding liturgies (since none is given in the *Flaming Mouth Sūtra*). *Mudrās* are also consistently absent in later Tiantai ghost-feeding texts, including the *Shuilu fahui* 水陸法會 (Seven-day Water-land Dharma Assembly).<sup>4</sup> This conspicuous lack further strengthens the thesis that Tiantai ghost-feeding liturgies developed independently from those represented by the *Method of Bestowing Drink and Food*.<sup>5</sup>

This discussion leads us to a noteworthy point regarding the history of esoteric Buddhism in China in general and the development of Chinese Buddhist ghost-feeding practices in particular: There were two discernable directions in regard to the esotericization of Buddhist practices in China. Practices represented by the *Bestowing Drink and Food* were clearly produced within the context of an emerging systematic esoteric tradition rallying around the charismatic Tang

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<sup>4</sup> The absence of *mudrās*, even in multi-day rituals such as the water-land Dharma assembly, further highlights the discontinuities between Tiantai ghost-feeding rituals and those ghost-feeding rituals that are grounded more self-consciously within the esoteric rubric.

<sup>5</sup> Another ghost-feeding liturgy that very obviously belongs to the same line of development as the *Method of Bestowing Drink and Food* and also attributed to Amoghavajra is the *Yuqie jiyao jiu Anan tuoluoni yankou yigui jing* 瑜伽集要救阿難陀羅尼焰口儀軌經 (T. 1318.21:468c–472b). This liturgy clearly postdates the *Method of Bestowing Drink and Food*, turning up for the first time only in the Jin dynasty (1115–1234) section of the Fangshan canon.

esoteric savants; other ghost-feeding traditions, such as those of the Song Tiantai community, resisted or at least avoided any further esotericization.

Although originally arising from different communities with dissimilar ideological commitments, both these ghost-feeding traditions eventually coalesced and shed their differences in the Ming and Qing periods, in the form of liturgies such as the *Mengshan shishi yi* 蒙山施食儀 (Mount Meng Food-offering Ritual)<sup>6</sup> and the *Yuqie yankou shishi yi* 瑜伽焰口施食儀 (Yoga of Flaming-mouth Food-bestowal Ritual), liturgies that continue to be performed regularly in contemporary Chinese Buddhism.

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<sup>6</sup> For a translation of this liturgy, see Stevenson 2004.

## 50. AVALOKITEŚVARA

George A. Keyworth

Determining which characteristics of the bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteśvara (Guanshiyin 觀世音 or Guanyin 觀音), are either esoteric or tantric is not only a matter of serious scholarly debate. Because of the enduring centrality of Avalokiteśvara in China, he/she may also shed light on what both of these terms mean in a specifically Chinese context. Since at least the Tang dynasty 唐代 (618–907), Chinese Buddhists have associated Guanyin with three immensely popular texts in the Chinese Buddhist canon, two of which are neither esoteric nor tantric: the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮花經, T. 262) translated by Kumārajīva (344–413), and the *Heart Sūtra* (*Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya sūtra*, *Bore boluomiduo xinjing* 般若波羅蜜多心經, T. 251) translated by Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664).

The third text, the apocryphal Chinese *Śūraṅgama sūtra* (*Shoulengyan jing* 首楞嚴經, T. 945), was catalogued by the editors of the Sino-Japanese Taishō-era Buddhist canon in the esoteric section (*mikkyōbu* 密教部) only because of its *dhāraṇī* (*Buddhoṣṇīṣa-sitāta-patrāparājītā-pratyāṅgirā-dhāraṇī*, *lengyan zhou* 楞嚴咒). Coincidentally, the categorization of the *Heart Sūtra* as esoteric has been censured by both of the established esoteric Buddhist institutions in Japan, Shingon 真言宗 and Tendai 天台宗, for more than a millennium (Kimura 1998, 3–5).

The *Lotus* and Chinese *Śūraṅgama* present thirty-three and thirty-two manifestations of Guanyin, respectively, while the *Heart Sūtra* has been popularly connected to Guanyin since Tang times (*Miaofa lianhua jing* 25, T. 262.9:56–61; *Shoulengyan jing* 6, T. 945.19:128b26–129a23; Gotō 1958, 167–170; Iyanaga 2002, 292). All three texts present Guanyin as a savior who can address nearly any calamity that might befall a devotee—natural disasters, illnesses, ill fortune, and so on—all of which are caused by demons. The primacy of Avalokiteśvara in Sinitic Buddhist practice is therefore firmly established prior to the introduction of either esoteric or tantric texts into China.

The forms of Guanyin most commonly considered esoteric by scholars, commonly following Japanese paradigms, can be connected

to both Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa and Vināyaka) and Śiva (Maheśvara and Rudra); nearly all demonic forms of Buddhist divinities, malevolent or munificent, have been deemed esoteric or tantric using this approach (Strickmann 1996; Yoritomi 1999). The text that can most closely be connected to the popularization of an esoteric form of Avalokiteśvara in China is the *Nīlakaṇṭha[ka]* (*Qianshouqianyan Guanshiyin pusa guangda yuanman wuai dabeixin tuoluoni jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼經, T. 1060), translated by Qiefandamo 伽梵達摩 (Bhagavaddharma[?]) between 650–660, which presents the Great Compassion Spell (*Dabei zhou* 大悲咒, *Mahā-karuṇika-citta-dhāraṇī*) of the thousand-hand and thousand-eye (Sahasrabhuja-sahasranetra, Qianshou qianyan 千手千眼; sometimes depicted with a thousand eyes and a thousand arms, Qianyan qianbi 千眼千鼻), Avalokiteśvara. This form of Avalokiteśvara parallels Śiva's consort, Umā, in non-Buddhist Indian religious traditions. Over time, the Chinese erroneously identified the interlocuter—the green-necked lord (Nīlakaṇṭha, Qingjing 青頸)—as a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara (Iyanaga 2002, ch. 9; Noguchi 1999; Chandra 1988, 31–32). Scholars have noted the rapid dissemination of this text, and its esoteric form of the Great Compassionate Guanyin, across China by the tenth century to sites ranging from the Mogao caves 摸高石窟 near Dunhuang 敦煌 to Baodingshan 寶頂山 near Dazu 大足, in the present-day municipality of Chongqing 重慶 (Kamata 2003, 212–19).

Several other forms of Avalokiteśvara have been considered esoteric, largely based on the Womb Mandala (*garbhadhātu*, *taizangjie*, *taizōkai* 胎藏界) described in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (*Dari jing* 大日經, T. 848). Avalokiteśvara figures most prominently in the Lotus section (*lianhua buyuan* 蓮花部院), where five forms can be found: Noble (Āryāvalokiteśvara, Sheng guanzizai 聖觀自在); he/she who fishes for or lassos beings to bring them to awakening (Amoghapāśa or Amoghavajra, Bukongjuan 不空羂) (Meisenzahl 1962); Tārā (Duoluo 多羅); horse-headed (Hayagrīva, Matou Guanyin 馬頭觀音) (van Gulik 1935); and wheel of the wish-fulfilling gem (Cintāmaṇicakra, Ruyilun Guanyin 如意輪觀音). Avalokiteśvara also resides among the retinues of Śākyamuni Buddha (Shijia yuan 釋迦院) and Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva (Wenshu yuan 文殊院) (Yoritomo 1999c; Iyanaga 2002).

In China, several other *female* deities have been associated with Avalokiteśvara, including Sitātapatrā (Baisangai 白傘蓋), which figures prominently in the Chinese *Śūraṅgama sūtra* as well as later, tantric

texts of expressly Tibetan provenance (Tanaka Kimiaki 1996). In customary lists that include six or seven esoteric manifestations of Avalokiteśvara, we also regularly find Guanyin with eleven heads (Ekādaśamukha, Shiyimian Guanyin 十一面觀音), Cundī (Zhunti 準[准]提) (Gimello 2004), and she who knits her brows (Bhṛkūṭī, Pijuzhi 毘俱胝) (Stein 1986; de Mallman 1948; Frédéric 1995, 163–82). Each specific form rescues beings from one of the six realms: hells (*narakagati*, *diyudao* 地獄道), hungry ghosts (*pretagati*, *eguidao* 餓鬼道), animals (*tiryagyonigati*, *chushengdao* 畜生道), titans 修羅 (*asura-gati*, *xiuluodao* 修羅道), humans (*manusya-gati*, *renjiandao* 人間道) and gods (*deva-gati*, *tiandao* 天道) (Gotō 1958, 105–58).

Another aspect of Avalokiteśvara in China is that nearly all Chinese Buddhists have viewed Guanyin as female, apparent in the white-robed (Pāṇḍaravāsīnī, Baiyi 白衣) Guanyin, which can be connected to at least two feminine esoteric forms of Avalokiteśvara, Cundī and Tārā, in addition to the salvific nature of Guanyin with eleven heads or a thousand eyes and arms, not to mention the indigenous Chinese water-moon (Shuiyue 水月), fish-basket (Yulan 魚籃); and Miss Malang (Malangfei 馬郎婦) Avalokiteśvara (Iyanaga 2002, ch. 10 and 13; Yü, Chün-fang 1994, 2001). Repentance rites with these forms of Avalokiteśvara became widespread from the tenth and eleventh centuries in China (Reis-Habito 1991, 1994).

There is another aspect of Chinese devotion to Guanyin that reflects tantric, rather than esoteric, influences upon Chinese Buddhism. As Chinese Buddhists increasingly interacted with Tibetans and Mongolians beginning in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the illustrious six-syllable Sanskrit mantra *Oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ* (*an mani bami hong* 唵嘛呢叭咪吽), or *an moni boneming hong* 唵麼拏鉢訥銘吽 in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha sūtra* (*Dasheng zhengyan baowang jing* 大乘莊嚴寶王經 4, T. 1050.20:62c24) became a valuable link between Chinese and Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhists. The *Kāraṇḍavyūha* was translated into Chinese by the Kaśmīri \*Devaśānti (Tianxizai 天息災, d. 1000) during the latter decades of the tenth century, and the text accords in form and function with tantric ritual manuals (*kalpa*, *yigui* 儀軌), the use of which distinguishes Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist ritual from one another (Tucci 1971a). The *Kāraṇḍavyūha sūtra*, however, had been almost completely ignored in the study of Chinese Buddhism until Gimello (2004) took up the Liao dynasty 遼代 (1125–1220) monk Daoshen's 道蝗 *Xianmi yuantong chengfo xinyaoji* 顯密圓通

成佛心要集 (Collection of Essentials for the Attainment of Buddhahood through Complete Comprehension of Both Exoteric and Esoteric Means, T. 1955).

Some Buddhists in China, predominantly, though not limited to, the north, and specifically Mt. Wutai 五台山, employed tantric aspects and forms of Buddhist practice that accord better with Tibetan tantric forms of devotion to Avalokiteśvara (and Mañjuśrī), specifically the eleven-headed and thousand-armed manifestations. In tantric Buddhist practice, it is often the case that fierce, intimidating feminine deities, the *ḍākinī* (*tuzhini* 荼枳尼), are understood to quickly break the passions they control that bind practitioners to the world of samsara. Avalokiteśvara is the ultimate liberating bodhisattva in China whose feminine aspect may indicate the absorption of tantric female potency in a uniquely prominent position within Chinese Buddhist cosmology (Iyanaga 2002).

Tārā, the female form of Avalokiteśvara in Tibeto-Mongolian tantra, plays nearly as significant a role in Tibetan cosmology and soteriology as does Guanyin in later Chinese Buddhism, which begs the questions that scholars are beginning to ask about the implications of the connections between Chinese and Tibetan Buddhists over the last eight hundred years. The fact that the Chinese characters for the six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara can today be seen on the island off the coast of Zhejiang province 浙江省, Putuoshan 普陀山 (Potalaka), considered by the Chinese to be Guanyin's earthly paradise, is strong evidence of the extent to which Avalokiteśvara remains a vital link for all Buddhists living within the borders of the People's Republic and beyond.

## 51. ESOTERIC BUDDHIST ELEMENTS IN DAOIST RITUAL MANUALS OF THE SONG, YUAN, AND MING

Joshua Capitanio

### *Introduction*

During the Song dynasty, a number of new forms of Daoist ritual practice began to gain popularity. Sometimes referred to collectively as “thunder rituals” (*leifa* 雷法) because they often were addressed to a host of different thunder-related deities (such as Duke Thunder Leigong 雷公, the Five Thunders Wulei 五雷, and various deities belonging to the celestial Thunder Bureau Lei bu 雷部), these ritual methods were performed and transmitted by a wide range of practitioners, many of whom were not ordained Daoist priests (*daoshi* 道士) but belonged rather to a loosely defined and often itinerant class of “ritual masters” (*fashi* 法師).<sup>1</sup> There are several relatively distinct textual lineages whose ritual compendia make up the majority of the extant sources for the study of these Song ritual movements; of these, the most widespread are the traditions of the heart of heaven (*tianxin* 天心), divine empyrean (*shenxiao* 神霄), numinous treasure (*lingbao* 靈寶), and pure tenuity (*qingwei* 清微).<sup>2</sup>

The orientation of the rituals found in these sources is primarily apotropaic; exorcism, healing, rainmaking, and the subjugation of demonic forces and licentious cults in particular are common concerns found in the ritual texts of these different movements. While in many ways the ritual practices associated with these newly emergent traditions are contiguous with forms of Daoist ritual practiced in earlier periods, one characteristic that has been nearly universally noted by scholars is that they have incorporated a considerable amount of elements from esoteric Buddhism,<sup>3</sup> and several important studies have demonstrated

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<sup>1</sup> See Davis 2001, 45–66. For an excellent overview of thunder ritual practices, see Reiter 2007a.

<sup>2</sup> See Skar 2004 for a thorough discussion of these movements and textual traditions.

<sup>3</sup> Most notably Michel Strickmann, who has described such ritual traditions as a form of “tantric Daoism” (*un taoïsme tantrique*); see Strickmann 1996, 236–241.



clear links between the two types of ritual. Michel Strickmann and Edward L. Davis have explored the connections between Buddhist exorcistic rituals involving the use of spirit-mediums, known as *āveśa* (*aweishe* 阿尾捨), and the Daoist exorcistic practice of “summoning [demonic spirits] for interrogation” (*kaozhao* 考召) (Strickmann 1996, 213–241; Davis 2001; Strickmann 2002, 194–227). Strickmann (2002) has also analyzed the role of talismans and ensigillation in both Buddhist and Daoist practices. Charles D. Orzech (2002) has shown how the Buddhist ritual of “releasing the flaming mouths” (*fang yankou* 放焰口) was “translated” into the Daoist ritual program of universal salvation (*pudu* 普渡). In another important study, Mitamura Keiko (2002) has demonstrated that the Buddhist ritual use of *mudrā* was assimilated to the Daoist practice of ritual gesticulation.<sup>4</sup> The present essay will focus on the use of Sanskrit and pseudo-Sanskrit incantations, and the presence of esoteric Buddhist deities in these Daoist ritual practices of the Song and later.<sup>5</sup>

### *Mantra*

The use of pseudo-Sanskrit incantations in thunder rites is probably the most readily observable indication of esoteric influence. The general incorporation of pseudo-Sanskrit terms into Daoist literature is a tradition that long predates the Song and has been studied considerably (Zurcher 1980; Bokenkamp 1983). The mantric spells found in these Song ritual texts bear considerable formal similarities to those Buddhist *dhāraṇī* given in Tang esoteric texts. In fact, while for the most part these incantations are referred to in Daoist literature as “spells” (*zhou* 呪), there are even a few instances in which they are explicitly called “mantra” (*zhenyan* 真言) (for example, CT 1220, 67:27b). The majority of the Daoist pseudo-Sanskrit spells are obviously fabricated, consisting of combinations of unintelligible transliteration characters commonly used in Buddhist mantra, often interspersed with regular

<sup>4</sup> On the topic of Daoist hand signs, see also Reiter 2007b, 189–190.

<sup>5</sup> The majority of examples given are taken from the massive compendium *Daoist Methods, United in Principle* (*Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元, *Concordance du Tao-Tsang* [hereafter, CT] 1220), a heterogeneous collection of ritual manuals from the Song period and later, likely compiled in the Ming dynasty. For more on this text, see Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1105–1113. Sources from the Daoist canon will be cited according to the index numbers given in Schipper (1975), *Concordance du Tao-Tsang*.

Chinese characters and/or phrases.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, these Daoist incantations were often composed in a way that retains many of the formulaic aspects of Buddhist *dhāraṇī*. For example, many of the spells found in *Daofa huiyuan* begin with the syllable *om* (an 唵) and end with some variation on the declaration *svāhā* 娑婆訶.<sup>7</sup>

Interestingly, while the majority of these Buddhist-inspired incantations consist of pseudo-Sanskrit combinations of unintelligible syllables with Chinese syllables and phrases, there are also a few authentic Sanskrit mantra that can be found reproduced in their entirety in these Daoist ritual manuals. For example, in a section of a manual included in *Daofa huiyuan* describing rituals devoted to the Dipper Mother, a Daoist version of the Buddhist deity Mārīcī (see below), a complete *dhāraṇī* is included that matches up exactly with one contained in a Buddhist ritual text devoted to Mārīcī.<sup>8</sup> Other examples include the incorporation of a *dhāraṇī* from the Buddhist *Great Cloud Sūtra*, a popular rainmaking scripture, within a Daoist rainmaking procedure,<sup>9</sup> and the inclusion of a *dhāraṇī* found at the end of Kumārajīva's translation of the *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā sūtra* in another Daoist manual, where it is titled the "thirty-six character incantation."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Zürcher 1980, 110–111 and Bokenkamp 1983, 462–465 for other examples of such pseudo-Sanskrit constructions in Daoist texts. Zürcher 1980, 111, in his analysis of Buddhist influence on Daoist practices of the Northern and Southern dynasties, remarked that in the use of pseudo-Sanskrit in texts of this period, "there is...no recognizable attempt to imitate spells of the common *dhāraṇī* type with their typical repetitive structure." Similarly, Bokenkamp 1983, 465 in his analysis of early Lingbao scriptures stated that the "numerous repetitions which characterize Buddhist *dhāraṇī*" are "conspicuously lacking." In light of these two scholars' observations, it is worth noting that many of the pseudo-Sanskrit spells found in, for example, the *Daofa huiyuan*, do in fact exhibit these characteristics of repetition and, as such, can be seen as representing a greater degree of Buddho-Daoist hybridization than found in previous eras.

<sup>7</sup> For example, a short spell for capturing unruly spirits (*zhuo zhou* 捉呪) given in *Daofa huiyuan* reads, "Om; come, *yakṣa*; come, *yakṣa*; come, wild, disheveled, capturing general; come, saber-whirling, sword-brandishing, capturing general; \**suru suru buru buru gataye s[va]hā*" 唵藥叉來藥叉來猖狂散髮捉將來輪力舞劍捉將來蘇嚧蘇嚧部嚧部嚧伽陀耶娑訶. CT 1220, 224:21a.

<sup>8</sup> CT 1220, 83:3b–4a. The original source is *Molizhi pusa lue niansong fa* 摩利支菩薩略念誦法, T. 1258.21:285b2–11.

<sup>9</sup> CT 1220, 6:5a; compare with T. 991.19:497c13–18 and T. 992.19:504b8–15. For more on the *Great Cloud Sūtra* and its influence on Daoist rainmaking practices, see Capitanio (2008).

<sup>10</sup> CT 1220, 229:5a–5b; compare with T. 235.8:752c4–7.

*Esoteric Buddhist Deities*

Along with the usage of Sanskrit and pseudo-Sanskrit incantations, several specific deities of Buddhist origin were incorporated into the pantheon of supernatural beings addressed through these Daoist ritual practices. Below are some examples of such incorporation.

*Acala*

Known in Chinese as the Immovable Luminous King (budong mingwang 不動明王) or the Immovable Worthy (Budong zun 不動尊), Acala is one of the five wrathful *vidyārājas* (wu mingwang 五明王) who figure frequently in esoteric Buddhist ritual manuals of the Tang dynasty. In Daoist texts, he appears variously as the Immovable Worthy Sage (Budong zunsheng 不動尊聖), Immovable Worthy King (Budong zunwang 不動尊王), or Immovable Worthy God Budong zunshen 不動尊神). In one ritual manual, the *Great Methods of Summoning and Investigation of [Mount] Fengdu* (*Fengdu kaozhao dafa* 酆都考召大法),<sup>11</sup> he is included among the “Marshals of Fengdu” 酆都帥班 and described thus: “Song Youqing 宋友卿,<sup>12</sup> styled Yuantong 元通, the Worthy God Immovable of [Mt.] Fengdu 酆都不動尊神: Wearing a six-sided hat 羅帽 embroidered in gold, he grasps a golden halberd in his hand; [he wears] black robes with iron armor, and black boots” (CT 1220, 262:2b). In this particular text he is paired with the three-headed, six-armed Ma Zong 馬宗,<sup>13</sup> and a ritual technique is described that centers around the use of the “talisman for apprehending malicious [spirits] of the two marshals, Ma and Song” 宋馬二元帥捉崇符, in which the ritual master calls upon these two generals to muster up their spirit-army in order to exterminate malignant forces.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See Mollier 1997 for a discussion of the significance of Mt. Fengdu in Daoist exorcistic ritual.

<sup>12</sup> Also Song Wenqing 宋文卿; for example CT 1220, 227:17a.

<sup>13</sup> Also known simply as Marshal Ma (Ma yuanshuai 馬元帥, regarded by scholars as a Daoist assimilation of the Bodhisattva Huaguang 華光菩薩). See von Glahn 2004, 212–221.

<sup>14</sup> For a description of another Daoist exorcistic technique involving Acala, see Strickmann 2002, 209–210 and Davis 2001, 272 n. 30.

## Mahākāla

The Great Black God (da heitian 大黑天), Mahākāla, is also seen occasionally in Daoist ritual texts, where he is known as the Great Black Heavenly God (Da heitian shen 大黑天神), and personified as the Marshal Gou Liuji 苟留吉. In this capacity, he is usually invoked alongside the Great God of Black Mist (Heiwu da shen 黑霧大神), the Marshal Bi Zongyuan 畢宗遠, and the two are jointly referred to as the “two Marshals, Gou and Bi” 苟畢二帥. Their association with the color black puts these divinities, in Daoist ritual cosmology, under the realm of the Northern Emperor (Beidi 北帝),<sup>15</sup> and in one text we see them addressed along with related deities of the Northern Emperor exorcistic tradition, such as Tianpeng 天蓬, Xuanwu 玄武, and the aforementioned Acala, in an exorcistic technique known as the “Black Net” (heizhao 黑罩) (CT 1220, 227:17a).

## Mārīcī

The goddess Mārīcī (Molizhi tian 摩利支天) is commonly referred to in Daoist texts as the Heavenly Mother (tianmu 天母); one text gives her full title as the “Great Sage, the Goddess Mārīcī, Heavenly Consort of Purple Rays, Mother of the Dipper, Mistress of Brahma-Pneumas” 梵氣法主斗母紫光天后摩利支天大聖. Several rituals devoted specifically to her are contained in a text found in the *Daofa huiyuan*, fascicles 83–87, called the “Hidden Writings of the Pre-Heavenly Thunder Crystal” 先天雷晶隱書. Here we find, for example, the following description of her iconography, supplied in order to assist the practitioner in visualizing himself becoming Mārīcī 存自己為天母: “[The Sagely Heavenly Mother] has three heads and eight arms. In her hands she holds up the sun, moon, a bow and arrow, a golden spear, a golden bell, an arrow, a shield, and a sword. She wears clothes the color of blue sky, and rides on a fiery cart, which is pulled by seven white gibbons.”<sup>16</sup> Of particular interest here is the fact that the spell provided in this text, to be chanted by the adept when visualizing his transformation into the goddess, is a *dhāraṇī* taken directly (with even the pronunciation glosses included) from a Buddhist ritual text.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> For more on Beidi exorcistic ritual, see Mollier 1997.

<sup>16</sup> CT 1220, 83:2b. For more on Mārīcī as the Daoist Mother of the Dipper, see Pregadio 2008, 382–383.

<sup>17</sup> See note 8, above.

### *Other Deities*

In addition to these few examples, a number of other deities of Buddhist origin can be found within these ritual manuals, such as Naṭa 那吒 (Davis 2001, 48–49), Ucchuṣma (Huiji jin'gang 穢跡金剛) (Davis 2001, 128–152), Mahāmāyūrī (Kongque mingwang 孔雀明王),<sup>18</sup> Gaṇeśa (Davis 2001, 284 n. 48), and other minor deities such as the Four Heavenly Kings, eight great *vajra* [beings],<sup>19</sup> various Buddhist *nāgarāja*,<sup>20</sup> and the like.

### *Conclusion*

As the above examples indicate, Daoist ritualists incorporated a considerable number of elements from esoteric Buddhist traditions in forming these new styles of Daoist ritual that emerged during the Song dynasty. More work remains to be done in further investigating the nature and extent of the contact between Daoist and esoteric Buddhist ritualists during this period, and in continuing to investigate the specific sources for some of these borrowed concepts. However, it must be emphasized that, despite the presence of such Buddhist-inspired elements, the practices described in the texts under consideration here are not merely Buddhist rituals in a Daoist guise. These ritual practices are still overwhelmingly Daoist in character; that is, at their core lies a certain set of assumptions concerning the nature of humanity and its relationship with the supernatural that is consistent with the earliest forms of organized Daoist religious activity.<sup>21</sup> Thus, just as important

<sup>18</sup> Several individual texts are devoted to the cult of this goddess (*CT* 1433–1435); see Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1233–1234.

<sup>19</sup> Often found together, as in *CT* 1220, 165:15a, in which a ritual method associated with Tianpeng and the Northern Emperor calls on the “Four Heavenly Gate Kings and eight great *vajra* [beings]” 四天門王八大金剛.

<sup>20</sup> For example, *CT* 1220, 61:6b, lists [Va]suki 修吉, Nanda 難施, [Ta]ksaka 父加, [Anava]tapta 達多, Bhadra 跋陀, and others. For more on the incorporation of Buddhist *nāgarāja* into Daoist rainmaking ritual, see Capitanio (2008, 195).

<sup>21</sup> Among other notions, this would include the related concepts of (1) the human body as a microcosm populated by a number of specific deities, and of (2) the priest as an invested member of an extra-worldly bureaucracy. Regarding the first notion, Reiter (2007a, 16) has said that the practitioner of thunder rituals “first addresses divine and transcendent entities that are not at all beyond the confines of his own human body. . . . [The Daoists] developed and fostered specific convictions concerning the divine nature of the human being. . . . [that are] the absolute basis for any ritual activity.” For more on the Daoist notion of the human body as microcosm, see Schipper (1978). The second concept, of the priest as a bureaucrat, encompasses several

as investigating the nature of Buddhist-Daoist cross-pollination during this period is the development of a sufficiently robust and nuanced theoretical framework for characterizing the result of this process.<sup>22</sup>

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important aspects that are central to the performance of thunder rituals; most notably, the use of ritually submitted written petitions (*zhang* 章) as the primary mode of communication with supernatural beings, and the priest's possession of ritually transmitted spirit-registers (*lu* 籙) that provide him with the authority to command the various supernatural forces addressed within the ritual. A specific discussion of the bureaucratic aspects of thunder rituals and other Song dynasty ritual systems can be found in Hymes 2002, esp. 147–205. For a general overview of the bureaucratic foundation of Daoist ritual, see Nickerson 1996.

<sup>22</sup> As Bokenkamp 1990, 119 has flatly stated, “The Daoist appropriation of Buddhist ideas goes beyond simple influence or passive borrowing.” The development of such a methodology is, of course, an ongoing enterprise. The model with which the majority of scholars will be most familiar is the famous “pyramid” metaphor articulated by Zürcher 1980, 146. Since Zürcher’s seminal article, and particularly in recent years, several scholars have offered new approaches. Campany 2003 has called attention to many of the unspoken assumptions inherent in the metaphorical language used to describe the relationships between the different “religions” in medieval Chinese culture. Davis 2001 has applied the concept of a “syncretic field” to his analysis of Song dynasty ritual practices. Orzech 2002, pointing out the reductionist tendencies inherent in the notion of “syncretism,” has characterized Buddho-Daoist interactions as processes of metaphoric translation. Bokenkamp 2004 has seen in Six Dynasties Lingbao Daoism an active effort to “subvert and supplant” Buddhism. Most recently, Mollier 2008 has shown that, occasionally, Daoist scriptures were consciously produced in an effort to “mirror” popular scriptures in the Buddhist canon. Such avenues of inquiry have added a great deal of nuance to the more simplistic notions of “influence” and “syncretism” that prevailed in earlier scholarly discourse.



FROM KUBLAI'S CONQUEST TO THE PRESENT:  
THE IMPACT OF TIBETAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN VAJRAYĀNA IN CHINA





52. TIBETAN BUDDHISM IN MONGOL-YUAN CHINA  
(1206–1368)

Shen Weirong

During the Mongol-Yuan period (1271–1368) Tibetan tantric Buddhism was widespread among the Mongols, and also among the Chinese. In China, Tibetan Buddhist monks, or as they were so called in Chinese sources, “barbarian monks from the West” (*xifan seng* 西番僧) enjoyed great popularity and were enthusiastically admired and supported by their Mongol patrons. Tibetan lamas of the Sa skya pa school became imperial preceptors of the great Mongol Khans. In all provinces they were granted unprecedented status and privileges, such as being enshrined in the temple and offered sacrifices. In Chinese history, such honors were enjoyed only by Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.) and his disciples.

The protective deity Mahākāla was adopted as the country’s tutelary deity by the Mongols, along with various healing and protective cults.<sup>1</sup> The notorious scandal related to the practice of “the secret teaching of supreme bliss” (tantric sexual practice) introduced by Tibetan lamas at the Mongol court provided plenty of ammunition for generations of Chinese literati to demonize Tibetan lamas for engaging in sexualized tantric rituals. The yogic practice of Tibetan tantric Buddhism was said to be one of the causes of the rapid destruction of the Mongol-Yuan dynasty.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, very little is known about what forms of Tibetan tantric Buddhist teachings and rituals spread among and were practiced by the Mongols. Other than mentioning some indecipherable terms of Tibetan origin in Chinese phonetic transcription, contemporary Chinese sources scattered in various types of literary works offer no details in this regard. In recent years, the discovery of a large number of Tibetan tantric Buddhist texts in Chinese translation among the Khara Khoto texts, which are preserved in St. Petersburg, Russia, and which only recently have become widely available, have prompted

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<sup>1</sup> See Wang 1994a.

<sup>2</sup> See Shen 2004.

more systematic surveys of the history of the dissemination of Tibetan tantric Buddhism in the Mongol-Yuan dynasty. The Khara Khoto texts are invaluable sources for reconstructing the Buddhist history of Central Eurasia from the eleventh to fourteenth centuries.<sup>3</sup>

Old sites of *stūpas* and temples in Ningxia, Gansu, and Southern Inner Mongolia continue to yield texts, images, and ritual paraphernalia dated to the Tangut Xia and Mongol Yuan era that supplement the Khara Khoto discoveries.<sup>4</sup> All these sources reveal that Tibetan tantric Buddhism was the dominant religious faith of various peoples in the Central Eurasian region during this period. Tibetan esoteric Buddhism was widespread in all three regimes that successively dominated the region, the Uighur Gaochang kingdom (460–640), the Tangut Xia kingdom (1038–1227), and the Mongol-Yuan dynasty. The Mongol adoption of Tibetan tantric Buddhism had a strong Uighur and Tangut background.<sup>5</sup>

Other sources for reconstructing the Buddhist history of the Mongol-Yuan dynasty include works transmitted and/or translated during both the Tangut Xia and Mongol Yuan periods, and compiled and block-printed in later periods. There is also a group of Tibetan tantric Buddhist texts in Chinese that were compiled and handwritten during the Ming period. Of the former, the *Dacheng yaodao miji* 大乘要道密集 (Secret Collection of Works on the Essential Path of Mahāyāna), a collection of eighty-three tantric texts mostly affiliated with Sa skya *lam 'bras* (path and fruit) teachings, contains works that were translated in the Tangut Xia, Mongol Yuan, and early Ming periods, and these were disseminated among Tibetan Buddhist followers of various ethnic origins in the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1636–1911) periods, and in the Republic of China (1912–1949).<sup>6</sup>

Other texts similar to those included in the *Dacheng yaodao miji* have been recently discovered in the National Palace Museum in Taipei and in the Palace Museum and Chinese National Library in Beijing. The discovery of these texts leads to the following conclusions: First, the actual number of Chinese texts of Tibetan tantric Buddhism transmitted/translated during the Mongol Yuan period was much greater than the number extant today. For instance, the *Collection of Works*

<sup>3</sup> Shen forthcoming.

<sup>4</sup> The Institute of Archaeology and Cultural Relics of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region ed., 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Shen 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Shen 2007b.

on the lam 'bras *Teaching of Virūpa* (Miliwoba daoguo juan 密哩斡巴道果卷) alone consisted of at least ten volumes at the time of its initial compilation, though only two volumes are extant today.<sup>7</sup> Second, almost all major and minor sects of Tibetan Buddhism played a role, whether actively or passively, in spreading tantric Buddhist teachings and practices at the Mongol court. While the Sa skya pa and the bKa' brgyud pa were certainly the two most influential schools, other sects, such as the rNying ma pa, the bKa' gdams pa, the Zhva lu pa, and the Jo nang pa, were able to reach the Mongol court in various ways.

The journey in 1274 of the Sa skya pandita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1252), along with his two nephews, 'Phags pa bla ma Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280) and Phyag na rdo rje (1239–1267), to the camp of the Mongol prince Ködan (1206–1251) in Liangzhou 涼州 (present-day Wuwei 武威 in Gansu province, China) has often been considered the pioneering enterprise that initiated political and religious contact with the Mongols. The Mongols were immediately attracted to Tibetan tantric Buddhism, in no small part due to the skillful means of Sa skya pandita's magical cure of Ködan's illness.

In fact, the Mongols must have already been exposed to Tibetan Buddhism long before the historical meeting between Sa skya pandita and Ködan. The process of conquering the Tangut Xia kingdom (1227) led the Mongols to direct encounters with Tibetan lamas who were serving the Tangut rulers. Sa skya pa lamas were evidently among those active in spreading tantric practices to their Tangut followers. Before Mongol troops reached Central Tibet, they had already been in contact with Tibetans in Eastern Tibet, i.e. mDo khams, for a long time. Some Tibetan lamas lived among the Mongols and attracted followers to the faith by demonstrating their magical powers. Chingis Khan (1162–1227) is alleged to have disliked the state preceptor of Tangut Xia, who was most probably a Tibetan lama, because he always deflowered girls before their marriages.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, Khan's descendants eventually became the most enthusiastic followers of Tibetan lamas.

<sup>7</sup> *Miliwoba shangshi daoguo juan* 密哩斡巴上師道果卷 (Volume of the Path and Fruit Teaching of the Master Virūpa), translated by bSod nams grags 釋莎南屹囉譯. Ming manuscript 明抄本. It is noted that it is the tenth volume of the path and fruit teaching (Daoguo di shi 道果第十). See *Beijing tushuguan guji shanben shumumu* 北京圖書館古籍善本書目, 1604, 1620.

<sup>8</sup> Wang 1936, 108.

When Central Tibet was taken over by Mongol troops during the reign of Möngke Khan (1209–1259), Tibet was divided into various fiefs among the Mongol princes. In the meantime, each Mongol prince had established the so-called *yon mchod* (lay ruler-donor and preceptor-officiant) relationship with a certain Tibetan Buddhist sect. For instance, Möngke Khan was the patron of the 'Bri gun bKa' brgyud pa sect, while the then-prince Kubiai (1215–1294) became the *yon bdag* of the Tshal pa bKa' brgyud pa. In the same way, Prince Ariq-boke (?–1266) became the patron of the Karma bKa' brgyud pa, while his younger brother Hülehü (1217–1265) was the patron of the Phag mo gru bKa' brgyud pa. Accordingly, the bKa' brgyud pa was especially favored by the Mongol Khan and his princes.<sup>9</sup> The second hierarch of the Karma bKa' brgyud pa sect, Karma Pakshi Chos kyi bla ma (1204–1283), was the most popular Tibetan lama among the Mongols and the powerful locus of esoteric power before the rise of the Sa skya pa under Kubiai Khan.

The *yon mchod* relationship between Kubiai Khan and 'Phags pa bla ma served as the classical example of the ideal relationship between a lay ruler-donor and a preceptor-officiant in later periods. 'Phags pa became the first imperial preceptor of the Mongol Yuan dynasty under the rule of Kubiai Khan. Members of the 'khon family of the Sa skya pa inherited the position of the imperial preceptor successively until the end of the Yuan. They headed the Xuanzheng yuan 宣政院, the Bureau for Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs at the central government, and thus took charge of Tibetan and Buddhist affairs of the entire country.

Sa skya pa lamas played a significant role in spreading Tibetan tantric Buddhism at the Mongol court.<sup>10</sup> The Mahākāla cult was essentially introduced to the Mongols by Sa skya pa lamas, preeminently through Dam pa bla ma, the state preceptor sGa A gnyan dam pa Kun dga' grags (1230–1303). According to Chinese sources, Dam pa was able to help the Mongol armies during their military campaigns by evoking the magical power of Mahākāla and by curing the life-threatening diseases of Mongol nobles. For instance, through propitiation of the deity, he helped bring about the eventual surrender of a Song army during the decade-long Mongol conquest of South China.

<sup>9</sup> Petech 1990, 6–31.

<sup>10</sup> Petech 1990, 6–31.

Mahākāla was thus called the Grand Protective Deity of the Country, and Mahākāla temples and statues were scattered throughout the country.<sup>11</sup>

The legendary Nepalese artist Anige (1245–1306) came to Dadu 大都, the Great Capital of the Mongols in 1267, together with 'Phags pa. He was appointed Supervisor-in-Chief of All Classes of Artisans (Zhuse renjiang zongguan 諸色人匠總管) by Kubiai Khan and served the Great Khan and his successor for forty-five years as an architect, statue maker, and producer of “silken paintings.” He was the chief architect of the famed White *Stūpa* consecrated in 1279 in Beijing, and the similarly constructed *stūpa* in its original form from 1301 at Wutai Shan.<sup>12</sup>

According to Chinese sources, Tibetan monks formed an endless stream on their way to China proper. They were clearly not all of the Sa skya pa tradition; Tibetan monks of other sects were present at the Mongol court. Monks of the bKa' brgyud pa tradition were especially favored by the Mongol Khans. For instance, U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230–1309), a great Tibetan yogi, thaumaturge, scholar, alchemist, and traveler from the Mar pa bKa' brgyud pa tradition, a contemporary of 'Phags pa, was active at the court of Kubiai Khan.<sup>13</sup>

By the late Mongol Yuan dynasty, the Sa skya pa domination was disintegrating. Lamas of the Karma bKa' brgyud pa tradition became the locus of religious power and authority, as these had developed between the Sa skya pa and the Mongols. Both the third patriarch, Rang byung rod rje (1284–1339), and the fourth patriarch, Rol pa'i rdo rje (1340–1383), of the Karma bKa' brgyud pa were invited to Dadu and spent considerable time in China proper. Rang byung rdo rje's works on yogic practice and the Avalokiteśvara cult were translated into both Chinese and Uighur during the Yuan period. Rol pa'i rdo rje's relationship with the last Yuan emperor Toyon Temür (1336–1405) was comparable to that between 'Phags pa and Kubiai Khan. The preeminence of the Karma bKa' brgyud pa at the court of Toyon Temür was a leading factor in the Karma pa coming quickly to the attention of the Ming, the Chinese successors to the Mongol rulers of the Yuan.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Shen 2004; see also Franke 1984.

<sup>12</sup> Jing 1994; Franke 1994.

<sup>13</sup> van der Kuijp 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Sperling 2004b.

Although it is very clear that lamas of all Tibetan Buddhist traditions were present at the Mongol court, we know little about the details of the teachings and practices introduced by these lamas at court. The most famous, and notorious practice of Tibetan tantric Buddhism—described in salacious terms by Chinese literati—was the secret teaching of supreme bliss (*bimi daxile fa* 秘密大喜樂法) and involved tantric sexual practice. It is said that during the time of the last Yuan emperor Toyon Temür, strange tantric Buddhist practices were introduced to him and other believers at the court.

The art of directing one's life force had first been introduced by an Indian monk. This practice, called *yan die er fa* 演揲儿法, could cause the life force of one's body either to contract or expand, to stretch out or draw back subsequently. A Tibetan monk then introduced to the emperor the practice of the meditation of the secret teaching of supreme bliss. This practice, similar to an orgy, is also called the practice in pairs (*shuangxiu fa* 雙修法), and is believed to lead to endless bliss. The emperor and his *ainak*, including other members of the imperial family and high-ranking officials,

all engaged in these lewd embraces, the men and women being naked. Sometimes the emperor and his officials slept together in the same bedding and agreed to offer their wives to others. This was called *xie lang wu gai* 些浪兀该, which means in Chinese "everything without obstacle." These *ainak* used Korean women as spies to make secret inquiries for selecting women who were expert in entertaining men—ranging from imperially granted wives of aristocratic families to beautiful spouses from commoner's families. These women were led into the palace. Only after several days could they leave. Women from commoner's families were delighted to gain the money. Women from aristocratic families were filled with joy and said, "Now there will be no obstacles to my husband being selected [by the throne]." When the Mu Qi pavilion in the Summer Palace was completed, several hundred rooms were linked up. There were a thousand doors and ten thousand entrances. Women were brought in to fill [the rooms]. It was constructed just for the practice of the secret teaching of supreme bliss. Rulers and statesmen thus displayed their lewdness, and large crowds of monks went in and out of the palace, and were allowed to do anything they liked. Such bad reputations and abominable behavior became notorious. Even low-class people in the city were disgusted at hearing this. But the emperor and his officials were never bored. By that time the flames of battle were already raging everywhere in the country. Many rebellious forces were pressing in toward the capital. The fall of the Yuan dynasty was expected at any moment. But inside the palace was still filled with the supreme bliss of the secret teachings. At that time, the emperor was just performing the

supreme bliss together with his ten *ainak*. He wore a hat with the golden character of the Buddha on it and held a rosary in his hand. Again there were a hundred beautiful women. They wore rosaries, played instruments, and lined up to sing the song of the *Golden Letter Sūtra* and perform the wild goose dance. Among them the Sixteen Heavenly Devils were selected.<sup>15</sup>

Eminent scholars have often attempted to decipher such Chinese terms as *yan die er fa* and the secret teaching of supreme bliss. Recently Toh Hoongteik has convincingly suggested that *yan die er* might stand for *yantir*, the Uighur form of the Sanskrit term *yantra*, and that the practice of *yantir* refers to the yogic practice of inner heat (*gtum mo'i me*), which is one of six doctrines of Narōpa of the bKa' brgyud pa tradition.<sup>16</sup> In the *Dacheng yaodao miji* there are several texts of actual instruction of the yogic practice of inner heat that are possibly from the Sa skya pa tradition. It is therefore very likely that this practice was popular among Mongol followers of Tibetan Buddhism.

According to the *Yuan Shi*, the official history of the Yuan, "supreme bliss" in Chinese stands for Hevajra or its Tibetan transliteration, *he badzra* 歇白咱刺, 華言大喜樂.<sup>17</sup> The *Hevajra Tantra* was often translated into Chinese as *Daxile benxu* 大喜樂本續, the *Root Tantra of Supreme Bliss*, during the Yuan. Thus, the practice of the so-called secret teaching of supreme bliss can be attributed to the *Hevajra Tantra* and the practice of the path and fruit teaching (*lam 'bras*) of the Sa skya pa, which takes the *Hevajra Tantra* as its principal canonical foundation. In Tibetan historiography we repeatedly encounter the story that Kublai Khan and his wife took the initiation of Hevajra three times from 'Phags pa bla ma. In the past, the political application of the story was often overemphasized, while its religious meaning has been neglected. Indeed, the Mongol Khans must have begun the practice of the *Hevajra Tantra* quite early.

The recent discovery and ensuing studies of Chinese texts of Tibetan tantric Buddhism translated during the Tangut Xia, Mongol Yuan, and also in the Ming period reveal that the path and fruit teaching of the Sa skya pa was widespread during these periods. At least ten volumes of the texts on the path and fruit teaching transmitted by the great Indian

<sup>15</sup> "Jianchen zhuan 奸臣傳, Hama 哈麻," in *Yuanshi* (YS): *juan* 205, 4582–4583.

<sup>16</sup> Toh 2007.

<sup>17</sup> *Shilaochuan* 釋老傳 (Biographies of Buddhists and Daoists), YS, *juan* 221, 4523.



*mahāsiddha* Virūpa 密哩斡巴道果卷 were translated and compiled, though only two volumes survive to today. Three additional texts have been discovered in the Chinese National Library; these texts are of essential significance to the path and fruit teaching of the Sa skya pa, and were translated into Chinese and continuously used until the Qing period. They are Dombiheruka's *lHan cig skyes pa grub pa* 端必瓦成就同生要, Indrabhūti's *Phyag rgya lam skor* 因得啰菩提手印道要, and the *Phyag rgya chen po yi ge med pa* 大手印无字要. These are three of the eight instructional texts of the actual practice of the path and fruit teaching.<sup>18</sup>

All these texts give instruction on practices related to tantric sex, and thus were considered books of the “Indian art of the bedchamber” (*Tianzhu fangzhong fang shu* 天竺房中方术) by the Chinese literati.<sup>19</sup> In sum, the secret teaching of supreme bliss seen in Chinese sources may well reflect, in a distorted way, the popularity of the yogic practice of the path and fruit teaching of the Sa skya pa at the court of the Mongol Khans.

The teaching and practice of Tibetan esoteric Buddhism disseminated in Yuan China were certainly not limited to the Mahākāla cult and the secret teaching of supreme bliss. Both Khara Khoto Chinese and Tangut texts of Tibetan Buddhism and other texts of the same type from the Mongol Yuan period are mostly tantric in nature. They include texts of various genres, such as commentaries on the root tantra of Hevajra, Cakrasamvara and the *Samputa Tantra*, the Vajra verses of the path and fruit teaching, *sādhana*s of various deities, *upadeśa* of yogic practices of the six doctrines of Narōpa, and other ritual texts of consecration, offering, prayer, purification, and praises.<sup>20</sup>

Judging from these texts, it becomes clear that the path and fruit teaching of the Sa skya pa, along with its various rituals and yogic practices, was the most popular teaching of Tibetan tantric Buddhism at the court of the Mongol Khans. The Mongol adoption of Tibetan tantric Buddhism evidently has a deep Tangut background. Sa skya pa lamas actively spread their specific teachings in the Tangut kingdom of Xia before they gained the favor of the Mongol Khans. The Mahākāla cult, as a part of the path and fruit teaching of the Sa skya pa, was

<sup>18</sup> Davidson 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Qian Zeng 钱曾, *Dushu minqiu ji* 读书敏求记.

<sup>20</sup> Shen 2007a.

already popular in the Tangut kingdom.<sup>21</sup> The yogic practices of the six doctrines of Nāropa were likewise extensively disseminated in the Tangut kingdom and were continuously popular among Yuan followers of Tibetan tantric Buddhism in China proper.

The actual instruction for performing yogic practices occupies a substantial part of all extant Chinese texts on Tibetan esoteric Buddhism.<sup>22</sup> Deity yoga, the characteristic feature of Tibetan esoteric Buddhism, was widely practiced by Mongol and Chinese followers. A group of *sādhana* texts of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara was translated during the Yuan period. Several of these texts are attributed to the third Karma pa patriarch Rang byung rdo rje.<sup>23</sup> Next to Mahākāla, Vajravārāhī was the most popular protective deity, especially favored by followers in both Tangut Xia and Mongol Yuan.

The introduction of Tibetan esoteric Buddhism into Yuan China marks a historical turn in the history of cross-cultural interaction between Chinese and Tibetan cultural traditions. Chinese Buddhism made great contributions to the formation of Tibetan Buddhist traditions prior to the rise of the Mongols. Since the Mongol adoption of Tibetan esoteric Buddhism, it became a distinctive element in the Chinese Buddhist world. Although Tibetan tantric Buddhism was often the target of sharp criticism from the Chinese literati, its teachings and practices never ceased being disseminated and it became the mainstream tantric Buddhist tradition in China.

In Yuan China Tibetan esoteric Buddhist practices were not circumscribed within the Mongol court. The existence of numerous Chinese translations of Tibetan tantric Buddhist texts reflects the fact that there were a great number of Chinese practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism. And tantric practices performed at court evidently had an impact on people outside the palace as well. According to Yuan Chinese sources,

[T]o take part in Tantric ritual became popular among the bureaucratic class and even [among] commoners. From imperial concubines to wives of high-ranking officials, time and again [women] invited masters from

<sup>21</sup> Sperling 1994.

<sup>22</sup> Shen 2005.

<sup>23</sup> There are several *sādhana* texts of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in the rare book collection of Chinese National Library in Beijing attributed to either Rang byung rdo rje or Mitrayogin. Rang byung rdo rje was transcribed as Lanrong duerzhi 覽榮朵儿只.

the imperial preceptor's hall to their home for initiation. They received initiation in their tent and recited mantras and performed the ritual.

Concubines and princesses who had already become widows went to the imperial preceptor's hall by themselves every few days to receive initiation and to indulge themselves in licentious pleasure. This was called the "great offering" or "body offering'." Influenced by these conditions, all monks in Hebei (China) proper soon had wives.<sup>24</sup>

Tibetan tantric Buddhism was not only practiced within the great capital but throughout the country. For instance, Hangzhou, the largest city in the Mongol realm and the capital of the Southern Song in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, became an important hub of Tibetan Buddhist activities. A branch bureau of the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs was established there. Tibetan esoteric Buddhism took public or official precedence over Han-style Buddhism in Hangzhou. Tibetan-style *stūpas* and monasteries were built. Some imperial palaces and Confucian and Daoist temples were converted into Tibetan Buddhist monasteries. Tibetan-style sculptures in caves and within temples were created, and Tibetan Buddhist scriptures were printed and distributed there.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Wutai Shan, the sacred site of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and the holy mountain of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, was greatly influenced by Tibetan tantric Buddhism. Tibetan-style sculptures, *stūpas*, and temples were built there and it has been a favorite pilgrimage site of Tibetan lamas ever since.

Despite the popularity Tibetan esoteric Buddhism enjoyed among its Mongol and Chinese followers in Yuan China, the negative portrayals of Tibetan lamas and Tibetan Buddhism written by contemporary Chinese literati left extremely unfavorable images of the tradition. The success of Tibetan monks and the popularity of their religious practices in the Mongol court were viewed as the cause of the failure of vigorous attempts made by some Chinese literati to launch a cultural counterattack against the alien rule, to replace barbarian with Confucian rule.<sup>26</sup>

Discrepancies between the words and deeds of Tibetan monks within and outside the court were highlighted by contemporary Chinese literati, with obvious prejudice. Tibetan lamas were often described as endlessly resourceful but evil and despotic monks. Tibetan tantric

<sup>24</sup> Tian 1985, *juan* 27. 2:884–85.

<sup>25</sup> Su 1990, 55.

<sup>26</sup> Langlois 1978.

Buddhism was demonized as pure sorcery that brought calamity to the country and the people, and it was blamed for the rapid destruction of the Mongol dynasty. Because of the secret teaching of supreme bliss, the yogic practice of the path and fruit teaching and that of the six doctrines of Nāropa were viewed simply as “the art of bedchamber.”

These negative images of Tibetan lamas and Tibetan Buddhism left by Yuan Chinese literati have had a far-reaching and lasting impact on Chinese perceptions of Tibetan Buddhism. In late Chinese literary works, Tibetan tantric Buddhist practices lost their religious meaning as a whole. The tantric practices were described as nothing other than a religious excuse for the shameless pursuit of sexual pleasure. Tibetan lamas were said to be skilled only at performing sorcery or selling drugs to stimulate male potency, or for seeking fame and deceiving people. Yet, despite these negative images, the spread of Tibetan tantric Buddhism in China did not abate. The Han Chinese rulers of the Ming were at least as enthusiastic as their Mongol predecessors toward Tibetan tantric Buddhism, and it penetrated much deeper into Chinese society during the Ming dynasty.

## 53. TANTRIC BUDDHISM IN MING CHINA

Shen Weirong

The Ming (1368–1644) was a Han Chinese-dominated regime established by overthrowing a foreign conquest dynasty. Ming authorities supported a policy of “accommodating barbarians from afar” (*huai rou yuan yi* 懷柔遠夷, a strategy devised by past dynasties founded by Han people and once broken by the Mongols) and took this accommodationist strategy as its basic principle in interacting with non-Han peoples. As “barbarians from afar,” thousands of Tibetan monks were invited to the Ming court to present tribute. Although Tibetan monks and the secret teaching of supreme bliss (*bimi daxile chanding* 秘密大喜樂禪定) practiced at the Mongol court were commonly blamed for the rapid demise of the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), the Ming emperors’ enthusiasm for Tibetan monks and their teachings was no less than that of the previous dynasty.<sup>1</sup>

It is well-known that there were eight great “religious kings” (*jiao wang* 教王) and “Dharma kings” (*fawang* 法王) in the early Ming. They were all Tibetan monks from various schools of Tibetan Buddhism, major or minor alike, such as Sa skya pa, Karma bKa’ brgyud pa, Phag mo gru bKa’ brgyud pa, ’Bri gun bKa’ brgyud pa, and dGe lugs pa. They played an essential role in disseminating Tibetan Buddhism within and beyond the Ming court in early period of the Ming.<sup>2</sup> Later, several thousand Tibetan monks took residence in Beijing. There were over twenty monasteries in the Ming capital that were associated with Tibetan monks. The three monasteries of the Great Ci’en 大慈恩寺, the Great Nengren 大能仁寺, and the Great Longshan Huguo 大隆善護國寺 alone had over one thousand Tibetan monks including seven Dharma kings, and dozens of state preceptors (*guoshi* 國師) and Chan masters (*Chan shi* 禪師) in the middle of the Ming period. An even larger number of Tibetan monks were coming and going on tribute missions between China proper and Tibet. Many famous monasteries in Central Tibet (dBus gtsang) had direct connections with the Ming

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<sup>1</sup> Shen 2007e, 37–93.

<sup>2</sup> Satō 1962, 1963.

court. Not only older monasteries such as sNar thang, gSang phu, rTse thang, and Sa skya, but also the newly established four major monasteries of the dGe lugs pa, i.e. 'Bras spungs, dGa ldan, Se ra, and bKra shis lhun po frequently sent tribute missions to the Ming court. With the coming of a large number of Tibetan monks, Tibetan Buddhism naturally spread in China both within the Ming palace and among ordinary people outside the palace.<sup>3</sup>

Most Ming emperors showed enthusiasm for Tibetan Buddhism. Emperor Yongle (r. 1402–1424) has been viewed as the first Ming emperor who not only treated Tibetan monks well but also “extolled their religion.” Yongle himself sponsored two events which were hallmarks in the history of Ming court’s interaction with Tibet and had far-reaching effects for later generations. One of the events was inviting the fifth Karma pa patriarch De bzhin gshegs pa (1383–1415) to the court and ordering him to “lead monks to hold a grand fasting ceremony at the Linggu monastery 靈谷寺 to bless Emperor Taizu (r. 1368–1398) and his empress.” This high-profile event was later interpreted as a successful political show conducted for the purpose of changing Emperor Yongle’s image as a usurper of the throne. At the same time it functioned to legitimate the use of Tibetan Buddhism in state ritual to strengthen imperial authority.<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly, the grand fasting ceremony also provided the main actor, the fifth Karma pa patriarch De bzhin gshegs pa, a stage to fully demonstrate the power and appeal of Tibetan Buddhism. When news about this great Dharma convention and various legendary stories associated with it began to spread, Tibetan Buddhism finally shook off the demonized image of the late Yuan and once again openly spread in China. The other event was the carving of printing blocks of the first Tibetan *bKa' gyur*, which is later referred to as “the Yongle Kanjur.” This block print edition was the earliest and remained most authoritative version of the Tibetan Buddhist canon. The printing and circulation of “the Yongle Kanjur” in China, Tibet, and Mongolia greatly contributed to the dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism in the three regions.<sup>5</sup>

After Yongle, all the emperors of the mid Ming embraced Tibetan Buddhism. During the Xuanzong reign (1398–1435), the early Ming

<sup>3</sup> With regard the tributary system of Ming, see Otosaka 1998.

<sup>4</sup> See Deng 1998; Berger 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Silk 1996.

rule that barred Tibetan monks from entering the palace was broken and Tibetan monks were officially permitted to live in Beijing.<sup>6</sup> Tibetan Buddhist rituals and dances became a regular part of performances in the various seasonal ceremonies and celebrations within the palace. A special sūtra printing workshop (*fanjing chang* 番經廠) was set up in the capital where Tibetan Buddhist texts were printed.<sup>7</sup> Among all Ming emperors, Emperor Wuzong (r. 1491–1521) was the strongest proponent of Tibetan Buddhism. He practiced Tibetan Buddhism and named himself Rin chen dpal ldan. He was notorious for building the “leopard house” (*bao fang* 豹房, his private pleasure house) and for initiating a failed mission to inviting a living Buddha (*huo fo* 活佛) from Tibet. Though the leopard house was built in 1508 by a Muslim official, Tibetan monks soon became the main players in its activities.<sup>8</sup> “The secret play” the emperor performed inside the house reminds us of the secret teaching of supreme bliss practiced in the palace during the late Yuan. Emperor Wuzong failed in attempting to invite a living Buddha from Tibet who supposedly possessed magical power by knowing the “three times.” The mission wasted a great deal of man power and drained the gold reserves in the imperial coffers. The living Buddha, the eighth Karma pa patriarch Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507–1554), rejected the invitation. The Ming envoy along with his subordinates was attacked and robbed. The whole event of inviting the living Buddha was viewed as a farce, and it marked the climax of Ming emperors’ obsession with Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>9</sup>

The extent of the mid-Ming palace’s enthusiasm towards Tibetan Buddhism can be seen in the details of Buddhist persecution after the death of Wuzong. During the reign of Emperor Shizong (r. 1521–1566), who was a fanatical Taoist, monasteries and relics were destroyed, and the remaining records of that destruction indicate the extent of previous enthusiasm for Tibetan Buddhism. Within the Ming Palace alone, in the Dashan Buddha palace 大善殿, there were numerous gilt and silver Buddha statues, as well as Buddha’s bones and teeth that were brought in by Tibetan monks as tribute and encased in gold and silver. Shizong gave the order to demolish all statues and to bury the Buddha

<sup>6</sup> *Ming Shilu* 明實錄 (MSL), 66, Wuzong shilu 武宗實錄, *juan* 108, 8 (2214).

<sup>7</sup> Liu 1994, *juan* 16, pp. 118–119.

<sup>8</sup> *Ming Shilu* (MSL), 66, Wuzong shilu, *juan* 117, p. 2 (2364); MSL, 66, Wuzong shilu, *juan* 121, p. 4 (2435); Otosaka 2000, 247–282.

<sup>9</sup> Satō 1986, 273–286.

bones (relics). Altogether, one hundred and sixty-nine gilt and silver Buddha statues and over thirteen thousand *jin* of Buddha relics, skulls and teeth, were destroyed.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, Tibetan Buddhism was also persecuted outside the palace. The extremely prosperous Da Ci'en monastery, along with its statues of Buddha of Great Bliss and other "barbarian ghosts and evil icons," was destroyed.<sup>11</sup>

About the spread of Tibetan Buddhism among ordinary people outside the court during the Ming, we can only make inferences from some scattered writings of Ming literati. There were certainly Han Chinese who took vows and studied Tibetan Buddhism. Many commoners let their children study Tibetan language and practice Tibetan Buddhism in order to avoid labor service and to seek for status and imperial favor.<sup>12</sup> One report says, "There are Tibetan monks who have short hair, wear tiger skin and call themselves the disciples of living Buddha of the West; men and women in the capital filled the street to worship them."<sup>13</sup> Even Tibetan clerics of obscure origin could have many worshipers, not to mention those Dharma kings and state preceptors officially recognized by the court. The number of commoners who were keenly fond of Tibetan tantric Buddhism was large enough to make it a profitable business to sell Tibetan style Dharma instruments in the capital. There were people who exhumed tombs to take skeletons and skulls for making skullcups, alms bowls and prayer beads, passing them off as having been produced in Tibet.<sup>14</sup> In the late Ming and early Qing, gilt statues of Buddha from dBus gTsang, especially, the statue of the Buddha of Bliss 歡喜佛 that came out of the palace, became attractive items for connoisseurs of antiques in South China.<sup>15</sup>

It is quite obvious that the Buddha of bliss, the practice of tantric sex and other Tibetan Buddhist icons and rituals, notorious at the end of the Yuan, did not vanish from China during the Ming. Rather, these elements of Tibetan Buddhism spread to wider circles in the society. During the early Ming cases were reported in which nuns lured concubines of meritorious ministers to practice the "golden heaven

<sup>10</sup> Yu 1981, 310; Shen 1959, 916.

<sup>11</sup> *Ming Shilu* (MSL), 77, Shizong shilu 世宗實錄, *juan* 121, p. 9; MSL, 83, Shizong shilu, *juan* 272, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> MSL, 51, Xiaozong shilu 孝宗實錄, *juan* 2, p. 11; MSL, 52, Xiaozong shilu, *juan* 59, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> MSL, 37, Yingzong shilu 英宗實錄, *juan* 299, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Yu 1981, *juan* 15, 278–279.

<sup>15</sup> Inoue 2004, 42, note 5.



teaching” with Tibetan monks.<sup>16</sup> By the mid-Ming, it was even harder to prevent the practice of the secret teaching from spreading among ordinary people. The practice of tantric sex by ordinary husbands and wives was not rare, as indicated by cases in both Longqing (r. 1567–1572) and Wanli (r. 1573–1620) periods.

The literatus Tian Yiheng 田藝蘅 (c. 1491–1570) observed the situation during the late Ming:

There are licentious women and shrew wives who worship monks and Taoists as masters and call themselves disciples. They are debauched day and night. Some of their husbands and sons also believe in Buddha and join the practice, and they do not take this as shameful. Although women in noble families do not leave the house, they live as if in a monastery by practicing vegetarianism, keeping prayer beads in their sleeves, chanting Buddha’s name, making statues of gods and making offerings to them. When a woman has no son, some will seduce her by saying that a certain monk is capable and can provide a Buddha seed. This is done through the method of passing *qi* by massaging belly button [*mo qi guo qi zhi fa*] 磨臍過氣之法, which was the so called great offering in the Yuan, that is, to make an offering with one’s own body. Nothing is more evil than this! There are also [women] who seduce young nuns to have sex with their husbands. That is indeed the so called Buddha of bliss.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to these reports of sexual practices, Tibetan-style Buddhist ceremonies became fashionable for weddings and funerals of the rich and powerful both inside and outside of Beijing. The classic of Chinese erotic literature *Plum in the Golden Vase* (*Jinping mei* 金瓶梅), said to have been written during the Wanli period, describes Ximen Qing’s elaborate funeral arrangements for his concubine Li Pinger in the sixty-fifth chapter. At her funeral, a Tibetan lama was to be invited to chant a Tibetan sūtra:

[They] built an altar and danced, sprinkled colorful rice to offer incense, and chanted mantra with their mouths. The food and offerings all used cow milk, tea, and cheese, and the [paintings] that were hung up have extremely ugly demonic images: draped with tassels, wearing necklaces made of skulls, gnawing babies in their mouths, riding on devils, with snakes wrapped around their waists. Some had four heads and eight arms, some hold daggers and halberds in their hands. They had red hair and blue faces and were extremely hideous.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Shen 1959, *juan* 27, 681.

<sup>17</sup> Tian 1992, *juan* 27, 511.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Wang 2000, 270–299.

This episode suggests that Tibetan Buddhist rituals had already seeped deep into the ceremonies of rich and powerful families in Ming China.

Tibetan Buddhism was consistently represented as magic by Ming literati. In the writings of the literati there appear various finely detailed magical stories about Tibetan monks, and these details made the magical image of Tibetan monks left by Yuan Chinese literati still more vivid. The image of magical monks spread throughout the realm along with the “Nanjing miracle” created by the fifth Karma pa in 1407. A Ming writer recorded the story this way:

The Karma pa led monks from the realm to hold the great purification ceremony that lasted for fourteen days. The emperor went to the altar for the ceremony. At the time there appeared auspicious clouds and heavenly flowers, sweet rains and dew, auspicious lights, blue luan birds and white cranes gathered every day. Golden deities and arhats appeared in the clouds with white elephants and blue lions. The magnificent figures came down guided by heavenly lamps and surrounded by banners and umbrellas. One night, golden colored flowers grew on cypress all over the city. One could also hear the sound of mantras and music coming down from sky. Since then, the miracles have often reappeared and it is called magic. [Monks] taught people to chant [six syllables of] O ma ni pad ma hūm, and those believers chanted it day and night. The grand chancellor Hu Guang composed the “Song of the Auspicious Correspondence to Imperial Filial Piety” to present to the emperor. The emperor also concentrated on Buddhist sūtras and composed Buddhist songs and ordered them to be sung and danced in the palace.<sup>19</sup>

This sort of description was very common in the hagiography of Tibetan Buddhist masters, yet it was a rare “miracle” for Han Chinese people.

The other wide-spread miracle story was the legend of living Buddha in Tibet. Besides the eighth Karma pa patriarch whom Emperor Wuzong tried to invite to China in vain, the most famous living Buddha from Tibet known in China and Mongolia at that time was the third Dalai Lama bSod nams rgya mtsho (1543–1588) who once wrote to the prime minister Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525–1582) requesting an imperial reward.<sup>20</sup> The story of living Buddha’s reincarnation had been spread widely in China by Tibetans. The Tibetan monk Byang

<sup>19</sup> Fu 1964–1966, 160, p. 3154.

<sup>20</sup> Zhang 1984, 552.

chub grags pa from dBus gtsang who “came to China on tributary mission in the thirty-eighth year of Wanli reign (1610) told the following story:

The people in that country refer to their king as *bla ma rin po che* who changes every three to five years. When he is about to die, he says to his ministers, “I will be born on such and such day at such and such place, and my parents will be who and who. You should come to welcome me by that time.” Then he indeed died on the said day and was reborn in the said place. He was born from under the armpit and could speak after three days. He told his parents, “I was originally the king of dBus gTsang, when I died I had told officials and they knew to come welcome me.” After he was welcomed back, he grew rapidly into an adult in five to six months. He could ascend altars to preach Buddhist teaching, and there was nothing about past and future that he did not know. He was automatically able to understand Buddhist sūtras. The only distinction was that the new kings’ appearance was different from the old kings’. In less than five years he was again born in another place, mostly he was born in Tibet. Tibetan people call him the living Buddha and they always welcomed and sent him off with respect. Tibetans cannot move when the king chants mantras. Thus do they revere him extremely. When the old king died, he is not buried. It is not until after the arrival of the new king that the old king’s corpse is burned. There are relics in the corpse and precious stones among his teeth. It is so miraculous. But living Buddhas must really have existed, and they still do today.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the fact that Tibetan Buddhism was practiced by many inside and outside the Ming court, Han Chinese literati made every attempt to discriminate against Tibetan monks and Tibetan Buddhism. They often interpreted the court’s favoritism toward Tibetan monks and its endorsement of Tibetan Buddhism as political utilitarianism. They either described Tibetan Buddhism as the secret teaching that “confused the heart of the emperor” or directly labeled it as heresy or demon religion. Their purpose was to deny the religious and cultural significance of Tibetan Buddhism and firmly to position Tibetans as “remote barbarians beyond civilization.”

It was also in the writing of Ming literati that Tibetan Buddhism’s most famous/notorious nick name, *lama jiao* 喇嘛教, i.e. *Lamaism*, appeared for the very first time. The first appearance of the term we have seen so far is in “Tablet for the Tibetan Sūtra Printing Workshop” (*Fanjing chang bei* 番經廠碑), a document composed by the

<sup>21</sup> Shen 1959, *juan* 30, 782.

Ming grand councilor Zhang Juzheng that was dated on the eighth day of the fourth month in the first year of the Wanli 萬曆 reign (1573). Zhang Juzheng's term in itself did not relegate Tibetan Buddhism to heresy. Zhang only meant that Tibetan Buddhism was simply a branch of orthodox Buddhism and different from Chinese Chan Buddhism.<sup>22</sup> However, *lama jiao* in Han Chinese discourse developed connotations far beyond what Zhang had originally intended. The term *lama jiao* represents the typical Chinese misunderstanding of Tibetan Buddhism, i.e., that it is a type of sorcery with mysterious and immeasurable power.

During the Ming period the court was often worried about the infiltration of Tibetan culture into China proper. Chinese people were prohibited from learning Tibetan and practicing Tibetan Buddhism in principle, and infractions carried heavy punishment.<sup>23</sup> Ming literati accused Tibetan monks of "relying on the court's policy of 'accommodating barbarians from afar' and causing disturbance everywhere they went"; such monks were guilty of "presenting skull bones and rosaries, skeletons, and alms bowls, using these dirty things to gain the honor of imperially bestowed rewards." The magic power of Tibetan monks was often questioned and ridiculed by Chinese literati. To present Tibetan monks as magic monks was just another way to banish them to the realm of mysticism and magic. As the whole court was fascinated with the magic power that the fifth Karma pa demonstrated during the purification ceremony held at the Linggu monastery in Nanjing, Li Jiding 李繼鼎, a Hanlin academician and imperial tutor-in-waiting said privately, "If he [the Karma pa lama] has magic power, then he should have command of Chinese. Why is it that he needs interpreters for understanding? Also, his chanting [of Six Syllables] O ma ni pad ma hūm, in fact means 'Let me trick you.' People just do not know that." Those who were wise admired Li's opinion.<sup>24</sup>

Ming literati often equated Tibetan Buddhism with "the secret teaching of supreme bliss" that was spread in the Yuan palace and saw it as sorcery which mislead the emperors. They interpreted Ming emperors' interest in Tibetan Buddhism as indulgence in licentious pleasure. However, they knew little about the secret teaching. The erotic novel

<sup>22</sup> Ying and Zhu 1968, *juan* 6, 8a–b.

<sup>23</sup> Yu 1981, 235.

<sup>24</sup> Fu 1964–1966, *juan* 160, 3154.

*Monks and Nuns in a Sea of Sin* (*Seng ni nie hai* 僧尼孽海), said to be the work of the mid-Ming Jiangnan literatus Tang Yin 唐寅 (1470–1523), provides a good example of Ming literati's ignorance about "the secret teaching." One chapter of this novel, "Western Monks and Tibetan Monks," embellished the debauchery story of Mongol Khan and his ministers in the late Yuan who practiced the secret teaching of supreme bliss taught by Tibetan monks. Ironically, the sexual techniques described in the story as "the secret teaching" in fact had nothing to do with the practice of Tibetan Buddhism. The nine gestures of picking, filling, drawing and replenishing (*cai bu chou tian* 采補抽添, i.e. dragon plying, tiger walking, monkey fighting, cicada resting, turtle flipping, phoenix gliding, rabbit sucking, fish swimming, and dragon copulating) were in fact taken from the Classic of the Plain Women (*Su nu jing* 素女經) and other Chinese classics of sexual practice.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the ignorance of Ming literati, the popularity of Tibetan tantric Buddhist teaching and practice in Ming China is well attested. Recently a larger corpus of Ming Chinese translations of Tibetan tantric Buddhist texts was discovered in the National Palace Museum of Taiwan and the National Library of Beijing. Two lengthy texts preserved in the National Palace Museum of Taiwan were beautifully scribed with liquid gold (*jin ni* 金泥) in the fourth year of the Zhengtong reign (1449) of the Ming dynasty. Both texts were supposedly written by the first Yuan Imperial Preceptor 'Phags pa bla ma (1239–1280) and rendered into Chinese by Shan'an jianzang 莎南屹囉 i.e. bSod nams grags pa in Tibetan. Obviously, they are texts related to the Path and Fruit (*lam 'bras*) teaching of the Sa skya pa tradition. The first one *Jixiang xijin'gang jilun ganlu quan* 吉祥喜金剛集輪甘露泉 (*The Nectar Spring of the Feast Offerings of the Auspicious Hevajra*) is an extensive *sādhana* text of the tantric deity Hevajra, while the other, the *Rulai dingji zunsheng fomu xianzheng yi* 如來頂髻佛母現證儀 (*The Ritual of Clear Realization of the Buddha Mother Uṣṇīṣavijayā*) is a ritual text of the Buddha Mother Uṣṇīṣavijayā. Indeed, both texts are compendia of the same kind as those written by 'Phags pa bla ma and other previous patriarchs of the Sa skya pa school. bSod nams grags's role in the formation of these two texts was not simply that of a trans-

<sup>25</sup> Tang, 1987. Cf. Shen and Wang 2008, 267–300.

lator. Evidently, he did not just rely on one single text, but welded several texts of the same kind into one new text.<sup>26</sup>

Texts discovered in the rare book collection of the National Library of Beijing are of two groups. The first group consists of eight texts which are all related to the Path and Fruit teaching of the Sa skya pa. They are either commentaries on *The Root Text of the Mārgaphala* (*Lam 'bras rdo rje tshig rkang*) or texts concerning the eight subsidiary cycles of practice of the path and fruit teaching. The second group consists of eighteen sādhana texts of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. Several of them are clearly attributed either to the Indian Master Mitrayogi or to the third Karma pa bla ma Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339). Thus, these texts were transmitted by the bKa' rgyud pa. The surprisingly large number of these newly discovered Chinese texts of Tibetan tantric Buddhist scriptures reflects the extent of the dissemination of Tibetan tantric Buddhism in Ming China. It testifies that Buddhist teachings and practices of both the Sa skya pa and bKa' bgyud pa traditions were often spread among Chinese followers in Ming China. It is worthwhile mentioning that the existing Chinese texts of Tibetan tantric Buddhism are evidently only a small part of all texts of the same kind translated during the Ming period. Within the texts preserved in the National Library of Beijing there is a text entitled *Mili woba daoguo juan* 密哩鞞巴道果卷, i.e. *the Volume of the Path and Fruit Teaching of Virūpa*. According to the note of the text it is only the tenth volume of the whole compendium of the Path and Fruit teaching of Virūpa, while most of other nine volumes are unfortunately no longer extant. From this fact alone we can imagine how great was the number of texts of Tibetan tantric Buddhism translated into and disseminated among Chinese.

The Ming origin of these texts can be assured by the fact that the best known translator of the time bSod nams grags must have lived during the Ming. bSod nams grags was the translator of numerous texts including two texts preserved in the National Palace Museum of Taiwan, five of eight texts in the National Library of Beijing and nine other Sa skya pa texts, mostly works of the third Sa skya pa patriarch Grags pa rgyal mtshan, included in *Dacheng yaodao miji* 大乘要道密集. He was often mistakenly considered a man of late Yuan period. However, in both *Jixiang xijin'gang ganlu quan* and *Rulai dingji*

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Shen and An, forthcoming.

*zunsheng fomu xianzhengyi* there are several lists of the transmission lineages. Often the last transmitter of the text in the lineage was the master who lived five generations after 'Phags pa bla ma. For instance, the last transmitter of the text *Jixiang xijin'gang ganlu quan* was called Janaluoshimi (雅納囉釋迷 or Niyanalushimi 尼牙二合拿囉釋彌) which is clearly the Chinese transcription of the Sanskrit name Jñānarasmi.<sup>27</sup> Jñānarasmi was the Sanskrit name of Zhi Guang 智光 who was the most well-known Chinese Buddhist master in Early Ming. Zhi Guang was a follower of the Indian (Kashmir) pandita Sahājaśrī 薩曷拶室哩俱生吉祥上師 and went to Tibet as an official envoy several times to invite Tibetan lamas to the Ming court. Zhi Guang and his followers were called "Xitian seng" 西天僧 (monks from the western heaven) or "Xiyu seng" 西域僧 (monks from the western regions) by their contemporaries.<sup>28</sup> It was a usual practice for them to have a Sanskrit or Tibetan name (*fanyu fa ming* 梵語法名). They translated both Sanskrit and Tibetan Buddhist texts into Chinese. It is thus clear that bSod nams grags should have been one of "the monks from the western heaven" belong to the Sangha community of Master Zhi Guang. He could not be possibly a man of the late Yuan period, but a great translator of the Ming period. Since bSod nams grags was the translator of numerous texts of Sa skya patriarchs including Grags pa rgyal mtshan, Sa skya pandita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251) and 'Phags pa bla ma, it becomes evident that the path and fruit teaching of the Sa skya pa tradition was continuously disseminated and practiced in China proper during the Ming period. The spread of Tibetan tantric Buddhist teachings and practices was not seriously interrupted by the transition from the Yuan to the Ming. It is certain that many more Chinese translations of Tibetan tantric Buddhist texts were created by Zhi Guang and his disciples during the early Ming period.

<sup>27</sup> Shanayiluo 2005, vol. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Deng 1994, 34–43.

## 54. YUQIE YANKOU IN THE MING-QING

Hun Y. Lye

*Yuqie* 瑜伽 was greatly propagated by Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra of the Tang dynasty. These two masters could command ghosts and spirits and move mountains and oceans. The power of their awesome spirit was inconceivable. After a few generations of transmission, there were, however, no capable heirs but the one teaching that remains is this method of food-bestowal. Forming *mudrās* with the hands, chanting spells with the mouth, and performing visualizations with the mind—when these three actions are mutually corresponding (*xiangying* 相應), this is *Yuqie*.<sup>1</sup>

Writing in the late Ming, the revivalist monk Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲祿宏 (1535–1615) simultaneously lamented and acclaimed the *Yuqie yankou* 瑜伽餓口 (Yoga of Flaming-mouth, henceforth *Yankou*) as the only vestige of the Tang esoteric masters to survive the vicissitudes of time.<sup>2</sup> Although the goal of the *Yankou* (i.e., feeding hungry ghosts) can be traced to a minor sūtra translated by Amoghavajra,<sup>3</sup> the full ritual lexicon and syntax of the *Yankou* as known to Zhuhong is derived from a historically and culturally diverse collection of liturgies, ritual traditions, oral instructions, meditative techniques, and operatic devices of Chinese, Indian, and Tibetan provenance spanning a period of at least a millennium. The *Yankou* remains one of the most colorful and complex Chinese Buddhist rituals, one that is simultaneously situated within the rhetoric of esotericism as well as transparently concerned about being accessible and appealing to public audiences.

That practice of the *Yankou* ritual was widespread and common by the beginning of the Ming dynasty is clear from a 1382 edict of the Hongwu 洪武 emperor (r. 1368–1398), which revised a tripartite

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<sup>1</sup> X. 1081.59:300a–b.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the earliest Western-language discussions on this important late imperial Chinese esoteric ritual are in the works of Charles D. Orzech. See Orzech 1989, 1994a, 2002. This essay is also based on material on the ritual discussed in my Ph.D. dissertation; see Lye 2003.

<sup>3</sup> *Foshuo jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* 佛說救拔餓口餓鬼陀羅尼經 (Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on the *Dhāraṇī* that Rescued Flaming-mouth Hungry Ghost), T. 1313.21:464b–465b.



classification of Buddhist monastics that was already in place in the Song. This edict divided monasteries into three types: *chan* 禪 (meditation), *jiang* 講 (expository), and *jiao* 教 (lit., “teaching”).<sup>4</sup> *Jiao* monasteries specialized in ritual performance and, according to the edict, these monks

performed the buddhas’ methods of benefiting and aiding (beings) by eliminating (negative) karma created in the present and purifying the errors of the dead created in the past. In this way they teach (*jiao* 教) people of the world.<sup>5</sup>

Significantly, the *jiao* monastics were also known as “*yuqie* monastics” (*yuqie seng* 瑜伽僧) and we learn from Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546–1623) that “To become a monk of *yü-chia* (i.e., *yuqie*), one must pass the test on the rules concerning the feeding and deliverance of flaming-mouth (i.e., *Yankou*) hungry ghosts.”<sup>6</sup> This is another clear testament to the centrality of the *Yankou* in the ritual program of late imperial Buddhists. Furthermore, records from late Ming also indicate that not only did *jiao*/*yuqie* monastics perform the *Yankou* with great regularity but *chan* and *jiang* monastics did as well. It is worth noting that the popularity of the *Yankou* even prompted the production of several Daoist *Yankou* liturgies that are still in use today.<sup>7</sup>

Though he is most often noted as a promoter of *nianfo* 念佛 practice, Zhuhong also took a special interest in the *Yankou*. He mostly taught *nianfo* as the most effective and appropriate practice for all, but Zhuhong himself performed the *Yankou* for a range of purposes, such as liberating the deceased, praying for rain, and dispelling tiger

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<sup>4</sup> In doing so, the Hongwu emperor was revising a practice that harkened back to the Yuan and Song dynasties by redefining and replacing those categories. Thus, the Song category of *lu* 律 or *vinaya* monastics was dropped, replaced by the category of *jiang*. And while the *jiao* category existed in the Song, in that period it had a clear sectarian reference to Tiantai monastics, as opposed to the way it was defined in the Hongwu emperor’s edict.

<sup>5</sup> *Shishi qigu lue xuji* (釋氏稽古略續集), T. 2038.49:932a.

<sup>6</sup> Hsu 1979, 142.

<sup>7</sup> For examples of Daoist versions of the *Yoga of Flaming-mouth*, see Ōfuchi Ninji’s *Chūgokujin no shūkyō girei*. In this collection of Daoist texts are the *Lingbao pudu keyi* 靈寶普度科儀 used by Daoists in Taiwan and the *Mengshan shishi yi* 蒙山施食儀 used by the San’nai 三奶 Daoists of Hong Kong, which is very similar to the *Huashan Yankou*. See Ōfuchi 1983, 391–403, 799–813. Duane Pang and Judith Boltz have also published articles on the Daoist *pudu* rites. See Pang 1977, 95–122; Boltz 1996, 177–225. For a discussion on the Daoist appropriation and transformation of this ritual, see Orzech 2002, 213–310.

attacks.<sup>8</sup> Zhuhong evidently lived at a time when *Yankou* liturgies were proliferating, although he found most of them to be “needlessly complicated and repetitive to the point of losing the ancient meaning of the rite.”<sup>9</sup> He was also disturbed by what he condemned as abuses of the ritual—the lack of seriousness and training on the part of the performers, and the corrupting commercial aspects of the ritual. These criticisms outlasted Zhuhong and his times and continue to surround the *Yankou* up to the present.

While there were certainly Chinese Buddhists in the Ming, Qing, and Republican periods who questioned the very legitimacy of the *Yankou* itself, the majority regarded it as a powerful esoteric method for liberating the dead and pacifying problems, though susceptible to corruption and compromise. But rather than dispensing with the rite completely, instead we see periodic attempts to redact the liturgies coupled with calls for reformation in motivations and performances of the ritual.

Available evidence suggests that in the Ming-Qing period monks from different traditions were redacting and editing *Yankou* liturgies. Zhuhong, recognized as a monastic reformer and a fervent advocate of *nianfo* 念佛, nonetheless redacted an influential *Yankou* liturgy himself. Zhuhong tells us that his *Yuqie jiyao shishi yigui* 瑜伽集要施食儀軌 (Food-bestowal Ritual Liturgy of the Collected Essentials of Yoga) published in 1606 was a redaction of an older liturgy by Chan master Tianji 天機 (sixteenth century).<sup>10</sup> Besides Tianji’s *Xiuxi yuqie jiyao shishi tanyi* 修習瑜伽集要施食壇儀 (Food-bestowal Altar Rite of the Practice of the Collected Essentials of Yoga), there was also another liturgy by a Ming Tiantai master, Lingcao 天台靈操 (n.d.), known as the *Xiuxi yuqie jiyao shishi tanyi yingmen* 修習瑜伽集要施食壇儀應門 (Correct Method of the Food-bestowal Altar Rite of the Practice of the Collected Essentials of Yoga).<sup>11</sup>

Finally, in the early Qing, two other *Yankou* liturgies were published: one by Hanyue Fazang 漢月法藏 (1573–1635),<sup>12</sup> an important Chan

<sup>8</sup> Yü 1981, 19–20, 23–24.

<sup>9</sup> X. 1080.59:254a.

<sup>10</sup> Zhuhong also wrote an auto-commentary to the liturgy. See *Xiushe yuqie jiyao shishi tanyi zhu* 修設瑜伽集要施食壇儀註 (T. 1081.59:271c–300b).

<sup>11</sup> Zhou 1980, 397–399.

<sup>12</sup> Hanyue’s biography credits an essay by Zhuhong as the initial spark that ignited his desire to become a monk; years later Hanyue sought full ordination from Zhuhong, though unsuccessfully.

monk in the seventeenth-century revival of Linji Chan; and another by Deji Ding'an 德基定庵 (1546–1623), third abbot of a famous Nanshan *vinaya* center. Thus, it is very clear that despite the Hongwu emperor's edict, monastics from various traditions were invested in the *Yankou*, regardless of their formal classification as *chan*, *jiang*, or *jiao* monastics.

Zhuhong's own redaction proved to be an influential text; the liturgies composed in the Qing mostly relied on his redaction. Among these are Hanyue Fazang's *Xiuxi yuqie jiyao shishi tanyi* 修習瑜伽集要施食壇儀 published in 1626<sup>13</sup> and Juche Jixian's 巨徹寂暹 *Yuqie yankou zhuji zuanyao* 瑜伽齋口註集纂要 published in 1675.<sup>14</sup> Not much is known about either Juche Jixian or the currency and impact of his text, but Hanyue's liturgy was transmitted to Japan and continues to be used in the Ōbaku Zen order in Japan. It is ironic that the Ōbaku order uses Hanyue's text since the monks who brought the Mt. Huangbo 黃檗山 (Ōbaku) Chan lineage to Japan were disciples of Miyun Yuanwu 密雲圓悟 (1566–1642) and generally sided with him in his very public dispute with Hanyue Fazang.<sup>15</sup> This is perhaps yet another indicator of the importance of the *Yankou*. Despite the many irreconcilable differences between Hanyue Fazang and Miyun Yuanwu, the latter's successors nonetheless practiced Hanyue's *Yankou* text despite the fact that it was arranged by a controversial figure.

Perhaps the most important of all the liturgies based on Zhuhong's redaction is Deji Ding'an's 1693 *Yuqie yankou shishi yaoji* 瑜伽齋口施食要集 (colloquially known as the *Huashan Yankou* 華山齋口) that comes from the Mt. Baohua 寶華山 monastic tradition.<sup>16</sup> Deji Ding'an elaborated on Zhuhong's redaction, resulting in a liturgy that is twice as long as Zhuhong's—another irony, considering Zhuhong's complaints about the lengthier liturgies in vogue during his time. Thanks to historic circumstances that cannot be addressed here, the *Huashan*

<sup>13</sup> X. 1083.59:303a–323c.

<sup>14</sup> X. 1084.59:326a–349c.

<sup>15</sup> Wu Jiang has recently published an excellent study of this controversy and the “reinvention” of Chan in seventeenth-century China. See, Wu 2008.

<sup>16</sup> The main monastic complex at Mt. Baohua was formally known first as Longchang Monastery (Longchang si 隆昌寺) in the Ming Wanli 萬曆 period (1573–1620) and was later renamed Huiju Monastery (Huiju si 慧居寺) by imperial decree in 1703. However, the name Mt. Baohua (Baohua shan) is more commonly used to refer to this monastery. The Qing emperors lavished special patronage on Mt. Baohua, promoting it as the preeminent monastic center from the early Qing on.

*Yankou* eventually established its hegemony over all the other liturgies and is the liturgy used at all performances of the *Yankou* to this day.

Since the *Yankou* is considered the main esoteric ritual in Chinese Buddhism from the late imperial period on, this essay will conclude with a few observations regarding the content and structure of the *Yankou*, thus providing a window into what Ming-Qing Buddhists saw as a paradigmatic esoteric ritual. As Zhuhong understands it, esoteric practice involves the practitioner's physical, verbal, and mental actions "mutually corresponding" in a specific way: the three actions are engaging in *mudrās*, spells, and visualizations simultaneously.<sup>17</sup> When the "three actions" 三業 (*tridhākarma*) are mutually corresponding in this manner, they turn into "three secrets" 三密 (*triguhya*) that ultimately transform into the "three bodies" 三身 (*trikāya*) of the buddhas. Through the practice of the three secrets, all the perfections (*pāramitās*) can be accomplished and buddhahood is attained in this lifetime. Zhuhong calls this the "direct recompense" (*zhengbao* 正報) of esoteric practice.

Through the three secrets one can also achieve the "circumstantial recompense" (*yibao* 依報), and Zhuhong explains this as when one's self-nature appears as the seed-syllable *hrīḥ* that transforms into "the complete form of the great compassionate king" (i.e., Guanyin), performing the enlightened activities of the buddhas (in this case, liberating hungry ghosts).<sup>18</sup> Thus, in all *Yankou* liturgies, the *vajra* master (*jīng'gang shangshi* 金剛上師) first transforms himself into Guanyin before summoning his ghostly guests to the ritual space (lit., *mandala*). Taking the divine identity of Guanyin (*Guanyin man* 觀音慢, lit., "pride of Guanyin"), the *vajra* master gains the power to ritually expel the ghostly guests' negative karma, cause them to repent and promise to reform their ways, enable them to receive the refuge vows and the *samaya* precepts, and finally nourish them with empowered drink and food that frees them not only from their hunger and thirst but ultimately from their woeful states of existence.

<sup>17</sup> A strict adherence to this definition disqualifies other Chinese Buddhist food-bestowal rituals from being considered as belonging to the esoteric rubric. For example, neither the *Mengshan shishi yi* (Mengshan food-bestowal ritual) nor the food-bestowal rituals discussed in the essay by Lye, "Song Tiantai *Shishi* Tradition," in this volume, include the use of any *mudrās*.

<sup>18</sup> X. 1081.59:271c.

The generous use of spells (with corresponding *mudrās* and visualizations) is yet another marker of an esoteric rite during the Ming-Qing. Although the original sūtra that inspired food-bestowal rites focused on the power and use of just one spell, the *Yankou* contains no less than a hundred different spells, the shortest consisting of only three syllables (aptly named the “three-syllables spell” *sanzi zhou* 三字咒) to the longest of over four hundred syllables arranged in eighty-four phrases (the “great compassion *dhāraṇī*” *da bei zhou* 大悲咒). Many of these spells first appeared in the Yuan-period *Yuqie jiyao yankou shishi yi* 瑜伽集要焰口施食儀, being previously unknown in Chinese sources.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the transcription system used for these spells points to a Tibetan influence.<sup>20</sup> Zhuhong’s liturgy adds more spells that were clearly drawn from Tibetan sources, such as the “hundred-syllable spell of Vajrasattva” (*Jin’gang saduo baizi zhou* 金剛薩埵百字咒) and the spells of *Cakrasaṃvara* and Four-armed Mahākāla (Caturbhūja Mahākāla).<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, if Zhuhong did recognize the identity of these two spells he chose to identify them in very terse terms as spells of the “perfect superior teacher” (*zheng shangshi* 正上師) and “perfect Three Jewels” (*zheng sanbao* 正三寶) respectively, with no further explanation.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, we should note that conceiving of the *Yankou* as a paradigmatic esoteric rite in the Ming-Qing period did not in any way limit the rite to any particular sectarian tradition or lineage. As we have seen, monks in the Ming-Qing period who were otherwise more recognized as advocates, revivalists, or reformers of Chan, *nianfo*, Tiantai, or monastic purity were all involved in the perpetuation of the *Yankou*. We thus conclude with words from Hanyue Fazang (one of the key figures in the “reinvention of Chan” in the late Ming) that aptly illustrate this point:

Without investigating *chan*, there is no way to be awakened. Without awakening, there is no way to enter the Dharma methods deeply. If entering the Dharmas is not complete, how can one be free of the Dharmas? If

<sup>19</sup> T. 1320.21:473c–484a. The earliest extant edition of this liturgy is in the so-called *Southern Canon* (*Nanzang* 南藏), published between the years 1372–1403 under the auspices of the Hongwu emperor.

<sup>20</sup> Zhou 1980, 398.

<sup>21</sup> Caturbhūja Mahākāla is considered the main Dharma guardian of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*.

<sup>22</sup> X. 1081.59:278a.

freedom from Dharmas is not thorough, how can there be functioning? If the functioning is not great, there cannot be mutual correspondence (*xiangying* 相應). If mutual correspondence is not ultimate, how do we benefit beings? Although the methods of benefiting beings are numerous, in each of them the above seven points are all present. I will show how these seven can be seen in this one method of *Yuqie yankou*.<sup>23</sup>

And, after a summary explanation of how the *Yankou* visualizations of the Sanskrit seed-syllables appearing on moon disks (*yuelun* 月輪) should be understood and practiced in relation to the circle diagrams (*yuanyang* 圓相) used in certain Chan lineages, he continues,<sup>24</sup>

The principles here are thoroughly the means of the Linji and Yunmen [lineages] and they can benefit expansively those on the hapless paths. Furthermore, these means originated from the various Indian masters who transmitted them until they reached National Master Zhong<sup>25</sup> After three transmissions, they became Yangshan's<sup>26</sup> principles, which consist of the ninety-seven circle diagrams. Thus, we know that in this single method of food-bestowal one can see succinctly the functioning of mutual correspondence and the principle of *chan* investigation. How can this not be the "causes and conditions of the one great matter 一大事因緣?"<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> X. 1082.59:300c.

<sup>24</sup> See Wu 2008, 144–51, for a succinct and clear discussion of Hanyue Fazang's combination of Chan and esotericism.

<sup>25</sup> Chan historiography considers Nanyang Huizhong 南陽慧忠 (675–775) one of Huineng's (638–713) main successors.

<sup>26</sup> Yangshan Huiji 陽山慧寂 (807–883) was a co-founder of the Guiyang Chan lineage and the third generation after Nanyang Huizhong.

<sup>27</sup> X. 1082.59:302b–c.

55. TIBETAN LAMAS IN ETHNIC CHINESE COMMUNITIES  
AND THE RISE OF NEW TIBETAN-INSPIRED  
CHINESE RELIGIONS

David Gray

The long history of interactions between the Han Chinese and Tibetans has recently resulted in a considerable growth of interest in Tibetan Buddhism in Chinese communities worldwide. This has been the case not only in Chinese diaspora communities, but also in mainland China. Although Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist traditions are quite distinct, based on different histories of transmission with different linguistic bases, the traditions have nonetheless overlapped considerably, as evidenced by the presence of Tibetan-style *stūpas* and inscriptions of Tibetan mantras commonly found at many of the great Chinese Buddhist pilgrimage sites, such as Mt. WuTai and Mt. Emei (Tuttle 2006). However, while Tibetan lamas had been interacting with the political elites in China for centuries, it appears that prior to the fall of the Qing dynasty—and with it the collapse of the ceremonial and political ties that linked the Qing court with the Dalai Lamas—interactions between Tibetan Buddhists and the Han Chinese appear to have been largely restricted to court circles, in the eastern Han-dominated regions of China.<sup>1</sup> Although there may have been grassroots interactions during the Qing that are not yet fully understood, it appears that Han interest in Tibetan Buddhism came to fruition during the Republican period, after a long period of dormancy (Kapstein 2009a, 9).

Han Chinese interest in Tibetan Buddhism appears to have been motivated in part by the perception that it is a “powerful” tradition. This perception has a long history. The Mongol adoption of Tibetan Buddhism was apparently motivated, in part, by their favorable impres-

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<sup>1</sup> This, naturally, was not the case in the Tibetan-Han ethnic border areas in the northwest and southwest regions of China, where there has been continuous interaction between Tibetans, Han Chinese, and other ethnic groups for centuries. For discussions of the impacts of these interactions in these regions see Debreczeny (2009) and Nietupski (2009), and Sperling (2009). For more on Tibetan traditions among the Han see Shen, “Tibetan Buddhism in Mongol-Yuan China 1206–1368,” and “Tantric Buddhism in Ming China,” in this volume.

sion of Tibetan magic, and, in particular, war magic (Sperling 1994). This impression is confirmed by Marco Polo.<sup>2</sup> Tibetan lamas were employed by Chinese rulers during the Republican period for their services as war magicians (Tuttle 2005, 79–81). The idea that Tibetan lamas are both powerful yet potentially dangerous figures has persisted in Chinese popular culture up to the present time.<sup>3</sup>

The growth of interest among the Han Chinese during the Republican period was likely stimulated by the collapse of the political barriers to movement between Tibet and China that were in place during the Qing. From the 1890s, when Qing power was in serious decline, up until the victory of the Communists in 1949, increasing numbers of Tibetan lamas traveled to China to teach, and a number of Chinese monks traveled to Tibet to study, most notably the influential monks Nenghai Lama (能海刺麻, 1886–1967) and Master Fazun (法尊, 1902–1980), who played major roles in the spread of Tibetan Buddhism among Han Chinese communities (Tuttle 2005, 87–102).

Nenghai Lama and Master Fazun were the principle figures in the modern Chinese Tantric Buddhist Revival Movement (Mijiao fuxing yundong 密教復興運動). Both were members of the Geluk school of Buddhism, played major roles in the establishment of Tibetan Buddhism within Han Chinese communities, and were involved with serious efforts to translate the major texts of Tibetan Buddhism into Chinese. This was the first major attempt to translate Buddhist works directly from Tibetan to Chinese.<sup>4</sup> Nenghai Lama and a group of disciple translated the *Kālacakra tantra*, several of the *Yamāntaka* and *Vajrabhairava tantras*, and numerous *sādhana*s (Bianchi 2009, 304–305). Fazun translated a biography of Tsong Khapa (1357–1419 C.E.), the founder of the Geluk school, as well as his magisterial *Detailed*

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<sup>2</sup> I refer to the conversation Polo reports with Khubilai Khan, regarding why the Great Khan did not convert to Christianity (Waugh 1984, 68–70). While there are numerous reasons to doubt elements of Polo's narrative, I suspect that this observation, that the Mongols were impressed by Buddhist's magic, was accurate. Note that I find John Larner's 1999 critique of Frances Wood's 1996 argument that Polo had not traveled to China far more convincing.

<sup>3</sup> See Germano 1998, 68. With respect to popular culture, see, for example, the popular Hong Kong film *Chinese Ghost Story II* 倩女幽魂 人間道 (Ching Siu-Tung, Tsui Hark 1990), which featured as its primary villain a vaguely lama-like high priest magician.

<sup>4</sup> There apparently were earlier and much less ambitious attempts to translate Tibetan works into Chinese during the Yuan dynasty. Regarding an extra-canonical collection of works in Chinese attributed to the Tibetan lama Pakpa Lodrö Gyeltsen ('*phags pa blo gros rgyal mtshan*, 1235–1280), see Beckwith 1984.



*Exegesis of the Graduated Mantric Path* (Tuttle 2005, 204). There were also a number of other works translated by other Tibetan masters and their Chinese disciples during this period (Tuttle 2009). Their legacy is ongoing; students of Fazun recently published Chinese translations of the *Cakrasamvara* and *Guhyasamāja tantras*.<sup>5</sup>

Collectively, these teachers successfully established the practice of Tibetan Buddhism in China. However, much of this work was undone by the Cultural Revolution, and some of the works written or translated during this time have apparently been lost (Tuttle 2009, 241). While the Cultural Revolution had disastrous consequences for Buddhist traditions throughout mainland China, including both the Tibetan and Han Chinese traditions, one of its unintended consequences was the diaspora of approximately one hundred thousand Tibetans, including many lamas. Some of these lamas settled in Chinese communities outside of Communist control, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore (Zablocki 2005, 2009). Most settled in Nepal and India, but many Tibetan lamas frequently travel to Chinese communities to teach. The generosity of these Chinese Buddhist communities has seriously contributed to the efforts of these lamas to rebuild their institutions in exile (Kapstein 2009a, xv). Moreover, the relaxation of controls on religion in mainland China in the 1980s and 1990s has led to a revival of Tibetan Buddhism there, which has involved not only Tibetan lamas, but also their Han Chinese students (Germano 1998, 68). However, Tibetan Buddhist institutions remain under serious government surveillance and control, and continue to be subject to crackdowns, as the events of 2008 demonstrated.

There have also been several contemporary Chinese Buddhists masters who claim lineage descent through the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, but are not directly associated with any of the mainstream Tibetan orders. One of the most successful self-proclaimed Chinese masters is Lu Sheng-yen 盧勝彥 (1945–present), who refers to himself as the “Living Buddha Lotus-Born” (Liansheng huo Fo 蓮生活佛), most likely in reference to the great founder of the Nying-ma (*rnying ma*) school of Tibetan Buddhism, Padmasambhava. He founded in Taiwan a new religious movement called the True Buddha School

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<sup>5</sup> These translations, *Jixiangji midaxu wang, shengle luexu* 吉祥集密大續王, 勝樂略續, were published in a two-volume set in Hong Kong and Taipei. See Bao and Renqinquzha, trans., 1997.

(Zhen Fo zong 真佛宗), which identifies itself as a Vajrayāna Buddhist tradition, although it also draws heavily from traditional Chinese popular religion, both Buddhist and Daoist. The school now has numerous temples throughout the world, with the majority founded in areas where there is a sizable Chinese community, such as Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia, and North America. Lu Sheng-yen currently lives in Redmond, Washington, where the main temple of this school is based. He is a prolific author, and has written, according to one source, one hundred and ten works in Chinese, several of which have been translated into English.<sup>6</sup>

Another Chinese master, Yee Wan Ko (Yi Yungao, 義雲高), claims to be the third incarnation of Vajradhāra Buddha, as indicated by the title he has assumed, H.H. Dorje Chang Buddha III, as well as the second incarnation of Vimalakīrti. These claims are made in his widely-distributed<sup>7</sup> book *H.H. Dorje Chang Buddha III: A Treasury of True Buddha Dharma*.<sup>8</sup> He currently resides in the United States, and evidently has established a considerable following.<sup>9</sup> While the claims of figures such as Lu Sheng-yen and Yi Yungao are by no means universally accepted, and are doubted by many Tibetan and Han Chinese Buddhists, their success in attracting disciples and establishing what are almost certainly new Chinese religious traditions is a testament to considerable prestige of Tibetan Buddhism among Han Chinese Buddhist communities.

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<sup>6</sup> See Lu (1995, iii). This work is also the best introduction available in English to the teachings and practices of the True Buddha school.

<sup>7</sup> While I do not know how many copies of this work were distributed, I presume that its distribution was wide, since a copy was sent, without having been requested, to my academic address.

<sup>8</sup> Yee 2008. This is a fascinating work that is largely dedicated to proving the author's claim that he is an incarnation of Vajradhāra Buddha. Evidence offered includes reports of miracles allegedly performed by him, as well as letters from various Tibetan lamas, which are presented as evidence of support for his claims.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the Web site of one of his disciples, Zhaxi Zhuoma Rinpoche, at: <http://www.zhaxizhuoma.net/>. (accessed 19 May 2009).



## ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN KOREA



56. EARLY ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN KOREA:  
THREE KINGDOMS AND UNIFIED SILLA (CA. 600–918)

Henrik H. Sørensen

*Introduction*

Although Esoteric Buddhism as such only played a truly major role in the history of Korean Buddhism during the Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392), it has always been part and parcel of the ritual practices of mainstream Buddhism on the Korean Peninsula, a fact that can even be observed in the Buddhist temples today. Whereas Esoteric Buddhism, both in its early forms as well as in the later institutionalized and systemic incarnations of the late medieval period, played much more pronounced and evidential roles in the Chinese and Japanese Buddhist traditions, its role in Korean Buddhism has always been somewhat circumspect and hard to evaluate mainly due to the nature of the written sources. Our sources for the practice of early Esoteric Buddhism in Korea consist of a motley collection of occasional, scattered historical references, ritual manuals, and random examples from material culture. Bona fide doctrinal works on Esoteric Buddhism are very few and essentially limited to a few commentaries from the period of the Unified Silla (668–918).

*Myths Relating to Esoteric Buddhism in Old Silla*

Before entering a discussion of the history and practices of Esoteric Buddhism on the Korean Peninsula, let us first take a brief look at the traditional myths concerning Esoteric Buddhist practice during the Three Kingdoms period (ca. 300–668) and the early Unified Silla, the period roughly covering a century and a half from ca. 600–750 C.E. These myths have exercised a continued influence on contemporary Korean scholarship, which has persistently treated them as historical events, thereby seriously distorting the issue and preventing us from reaching a more balanced picture of the actual events.<sup>1</sup> For this

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<sup>1</sup> A classic example of this inability to distinguish historical fact from fiction can be found in Sŏ Yun'gil (Suh Yoon-kil) 1994a, 257–306, esp. 259–267. See also Sŏ

reason a good understanding of where and how the myths fit into the larger picture of the history of Esoteric Buddhism in Korea is not only important but also necessary.

There are essentially two sources for these Buddhist tales: the *Hae-dong kosŭng chŏn* 海東高僧傳 (Histories of Famous Monks in Korea; hereafter *HKC*),<sup>2</sup> attributed to a Koryŏ monk by the name of Kak-hun 覺訓 (fl. first half of thirteenth century), and the famous *Samguk yusa* (Of the Three Kingdoms; hereafter *SGYS*),<sup>3</sup> compiled by Iryŏn (1206–1289), a Sŏn 禪 monk and learned literatus. The former work is an attempt at creating a Korean history for its famous Buddhist clerics, in particular for those who went abroad, mainly inspired by the “biographies of famous monks” (*gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳) compilations of China, while the latter is a collection of mainly Buddhist myths and tales taken from a variety of sources including oral traditions, local writings, as well as Chinese sources. Despite the fact that the contents of both of these books are mainly mythological in nature, here and there they contain bits of what appear to be documented, historical fact.<sup>4</sup>

Although the *HKC* frequently touches upon miraculous and supernatural events, it does not contain much in the way of Esoteric Buddhism. On the other hand, the *SGYS* contains several references to it, including some of the earliest dated information, in which it is said that during the reign of Queen Sŏndök 善德 (632–647) a monk by the name of Milbon 密本 (n.d.) appeared. He is described as a thaumaturge who performed various acts of magic based on Esoteric Buddhist beliefs (see *HPC* vol. 6, 355ab). Milbon’s miracles were mainly exorcistic in nature, in connection with which he is said to have used a magic wand (a *khakkara*?) and the recitation of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru sūtra* (probably *T.* 450). Consequently, he has been considered one of the founders of the local Esoteric Buddhist tradition.<sup>5</sup> The account of

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1994b, 12–27. See also the historically absurd section on spells and mantras in Kim Yŏngt’ae (1990, 31–79).

<sup>2</sup> *T.* 2065. See also the translation and study Lee 1969. Recently there have been speculations that the *HKC* is a later fabrication, probably written by Hoegwang Sasŏn 晦光師璿 (1862–1933), the monk who is credited with having found the original manuscript (which has, in fact, never been seen by anybody). Pers. comm., Dr. John Jorgensen, Griffith University, May 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *HPC* vol. 6, 245a–369c. See also Ha and Mintz 1972.

<sup>4</sup> A discussion of the historical value of the *SGYS* can be found in Sørensen 2000b.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Ko 1986, 127–222, esp. 156–160.

Milbon, including his persona, constitutes what may be seen as stereotypical for a Buddhist thaumaturge, in effect a template, and as such fits nicely with standard accounts of other monks found in compilations of the “accounts of great monks” type (see Kieschnick 1997, 67–111). In order to give an idea of how the SGYS has constructed the image of this particular Esoteric Buddhist wonder worker, we shall give a full translation of the section in question as follows:

Queen Söndök [called] Tökman had become terminally ill. The monk Pöpch’ök from Hüngrjön Temple was ordered to stop the disease, but after [having tried for] a long time, there was no result. At that time there was the dharma master Milbon, whose virtuous cultivation was known in the land and praised everywhere. The queen ordered that he be invited to enter the palace. [However, Mil-] Pon remained outside the royal palace, where he recited the *Bhaiṣajyaguru sūtra*. Having recited the entire text, he threw a wand with six rings into the [queen’s] bed-chamber, where it penetrated an old fox and Pöpch’ök. He [then] threw them into the courtyard, whereupon the queen’s disease was cured. At that time there issued forth five-colored spiritual rays from the top of Milbon’s head, and those who witnessed it were all astonished. (*HPC* vol. 6, 355a)

The perceptive reader will note that the above story of Milbon curing Queen Söndök has many points in common with an incident found in the biography of Vajrabodhi (669–741) according to the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Song History of High Monks; *T.* 2061), where he is said to have cured the daughter of the Tang emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756) (*T.* 2061.50:711c). Iryön is known to have utilized the *Song gaoseng zhuan* diligently when compiling the SGYS in order to fill the many lacunae in the early Korean sources. Hence, it is rather obvious that he took the Vajrabodhi story from the Chinese work and transposed the Milbon persona unto it. The fictitious nature of the Milbon story is further underscored by the fact that we encounter it once more in the SGYS, but this time with another thaumaturge, the monk Hyet’öng 惠通 (n.d.), cast in the role as the hero.<sup>6</sup> It is obvious that it

<sup>6</sup> Hyet’öng is another Silla monk associated with Esoteric Buddhist practices. He also figures in the SGYS only, and therefore belongs together with Milbon to the trans-historical category of Korean Buddhist lore. Hyet’öng is supposed to have traveled to Tang China during the middle of the seventh century, where he is said to have cured the daughter of Emperor Gaozong (649–683) by using *dhāraṇīs*. Note again the similarity with the account of Vajrabodhi as mentioned above (cf. *HPC* vol. 6, 344c–356b).



is the same *Song gaoseng zhuan* account that has served as the basis for Iryōng's stories, but of course with different names and dates.

As it is, there are no Silla records of Milbon or Hyet'ōng, no surviving scriptures that bear their names, nor anything that a person trained in textual criticism will be able to accept as viable historical fact. It is not utterly impossible that there could have been such thau-maturgical monks as Milbon, who might have functioned at the Silla court during the first half of the seventh century, but there is nothing with which we can possibly substantiate him as a historical figure, much less gain insight into whatever Esoteric Buddhist teaching he might have taught. A Korean scholar has postulated a connection between the Esoteric Buddhist feats of Milbon and the version of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru sūtra* constituting the twelfth chapter of the apocryphal *Guanding jing* 灌頂經 (Consecration Scripture), which contains many Esoteric Buddhist and Daoist elements (see Sō 1994b, 13–14). Had the *Consecration Scripture* actually been in Korea at such an early time, it might have added some degree of credibility to the Milbon tale. However, there is no historical evidence for this claim either.

The SGYS also contains a few passages on a monk by the name of Myōngnang 明郎 (n.d.), who, like Milbon, is credited with the performance of magic feats (*HPC* vol. 6, 356b–357a). Like Hyet'ōng, he is said to have gone to China, and later, the SGYS claims, he participated in Silla's struggle against the Tang invasion in the aftermath of the war of unifying the Korean Peninsula. In connection with this event, Myōngnang is credited with conjuring up a storm said to have sunk the invading Chinese fleet.<sup>7</sup> This is said to have been done through a ritual that involved the “images of the spirits of the five directions 五方神像.”<sup>8</sup>

Lastly, the SGYS mentions an *Inwang toryang* 仁王道場 (Benevolent Kings' Bodhimaṇḍa) supposedly sponsored by the Silla king

<sup>7</sup> It is not unlikely that Iryōn used the event of the sinking of the invading Mongolian fleet sent against Japan in 1274 by the “divine wind” (*kamikaze*) as a model for this story. After all, this important historical event took place during his own lifetime.

<sup>8</sup> *HPC* vol. 6, 288a. The spirits of the five directions are the Red Rooster or Phoenix of the South; the White Tiger of the West; Zhenwu, the Black Lord of the North (symbolized by tortoise and snake); the Blue Dragon of the East; and the deity of the Yellow Earth of the center. Despite their Daoistic sounding names, these deities had been incorporated into Chinese Buddhism as early as the fourth century, whence the tradition was carried to the Korean Peninsula.

Sōngdōk 聖德 (r. 702–737). For this ritual, the *Renwang jing*<sup>9</sup> is said to have been employed. This may be yet another example of Esoteric Buddhism functioning as protector of the kingdom (*hoguk pulgyo* 護國佛教),<sup>10</sup> but as this piece of information is also based on the *SGYS*, we should be wary to accept it as historical fact. While rituals of this type were very frequent during the Koryō, it is not possible to verify its performance under the Silla.<sup>11</sup>

*Traces of Early Esoteric Buddhism on the Korean Peninsula*

As to when Esoteric Buddhism, or rather Esoteric practices, were first introduced to Korea, we can only speculate. Buddhism is traditionally thought to have entered Korea in 372 C.E., and although this figure may or may not be historically precise, in any case Buddhism was present on the Korean Peninsula by the end of the fourth century at the very latest.<sup>12</sup> It is common knowledge that many canonical sūtras of the Mahāyāna persuasion,<sup>13</sup> including of course those belonging to

<sup>9</sup> T. 245. This is an apocryphal scripture produced in China during the late fifth century. For a detailed discussion of its history and doctrinal contents, see Orzech 1998, 69–97.

<sup>10</sup> A discussion of the many theories and views concerning Korean Buddhism as characterized by the concept of *hoguk pulgyo* are far beyond the scope of this presentation. For the sake of clarification my view is that within a short period after its arrival on the Korean Peninsula, Buddhism was indeed used to bolster the secular and spiritual authority of the monarchs of the Three Kingdoms, in particular those of the Paekche and the Silla. Moreover, Buddhist monks were from early on called upon to pray for the divine protection of the kingdoms in times of danger. As time wore on Buddhism became increasingly connected with the fortunes of the successive dynasties, and thereby unavoidably came to serve as the promoter and legitimizer of the kingdom—hence the phrase “Buddhism as protector of the kingdom.” In more recent times the concept of *hoguk pulgyo* was appropriated and misused by the militarist regimes of the post-war period as a means to coerce the Korean Buddhist community into submission and collaboration. See Sørensen 2004b and Sørensen 1999a.

<sup>11</sup> Another source on the Three Kingdoms, namely the important *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (Historical Records of the Three Kingdoms), compiled by the Koryō literatus Kim Pusik 金富軾 (1075–1151), mentions that *Renwang* rituals were performed as early as 551 C.E. under the Old Silla (cf. Chōsen shigaku kai 1928–1944, 445). Provided this information can be trusted, it would mean that the *Renwang jing* was available in Silla less than three decades after Buddhism was officially accepted in that kingdom and promoted at the royal court in Kyōngju. For the late-fifth-century dating of the *Renwang jing*, and the socio-religious context in which it was produced, see Orzech 1998, 74–79, 116–121.

<sup>12</sup> For a useful discussion of the introduction of Buddhism in Korea, see Tamura 1985.

<sup>13</sup> This includes such sūtras as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* (T. 262 and 263), the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* (T. 670 and 671), and the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa sūtra* (T. 663 and 664).

the *dhāraṇī* class, contained elements of Esoteric Buddhist beliefs and practices.<sup>14</sup> Hence, although there is very little in the way of actual proofs, it makes good sense to consider that Esoteric Buddhist practices, in particular the use of spells and other types of magical incantations, in all likelihood arrived in the Korean Peninsula as part of the general introduction of Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition in the course of the fifth to sixth centuries.

For Korea there is virtually no information to be had concerning the number and types of canonical Buddhist scriptures that were available in the country before the early seventh century, and even then, it is not until well into the eighth century that a clearer picture of what the early Korean *Tripitaka* actually looked like emerges.<sup>15</sup> In any case, sūtras such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra*, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa sūtra*, the short *Renwang jing*, and the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-vaidūryaprabhāsa pūrvapraṇidhāna-viśeṣavistara*,<sup>16</sup> as well as a number of the *dhāraṇī* sūtras mentioned previously, were among the earliest known scriptures containing Esoteric Buddhist elements to be widely circulated in Korea during the late Three Kingdoms period.

In terms of cultural material, archaeological findings have revealed that the erection of *stūpas* was from early on related to the doctrines of *hoguk pulgyo* in the history of Korean Buddhism (Sö 1994b, 81–91). Hence, it seems highly plausible that the early practice of erecting *stūpas* was somehow connected with Esoteric Buddhist teachings as it was indeed known to be later. In any case, the existence of cults dedicated to the worship of the so-called “eight classes of divine beings” (*palbu ch’önyong* 八部天龍), the twelve spirits of the zodiac (*sipyi sin* 十二神), and assorted *vajrapālas* (*kūmgang* 金剛) are clearly indicated by the numerous reliefs found on stone *stūpas* from the

<sup>14</sup> Including scriptures such as the *Avalokiteśvara-ekādaśamukha-dhāraṇī* (T. 1070), *Mārīcī-dhāraṇī* (T. 1256), *Mahāmāyūri-vidyārājñī sūtra* (T. 984, 986, 987, and 988), *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī sūtra* (T. 967), etc.

<sup>15</sup> Even so, our knowledge about the actual form and content of the Silla *Tripitaka* leaves much to be desired. In contrast to both China and Japan, only a few fragments of Buddhist manuscripts from the period have survived—not enough to provide us with even the barest hint of what the Silla canon would have looked like. Hence, most scholarly estimates are based on inference and more or less qualified speculation. A useful overview, including a historical listing, can be found in Yi Chigwan 1992.

<sup>16</sup> T. 449. As already mentioned, an earlier version of this sūtra was included in the *Guanding jing*, T. 1331, fascicle 12.

seventh to eighth centuries.<sup>17</sup> Despite the material evidence for the prevalence of Esoteric Buddhist practices or rituals in Silla before the unification in conjunction with the *Bhaiṣajyaguru sūtra* and the spirits of the zodiac, we still do not know how widespread they were, how they were performed, or how they related to the rest of Korean Buddhism. However, we may surmise, on the basis of the general indications as provided by the extant material, that Esoteric Buddhist practices and beliefs were not seen as something different or distinct from mainstream Buddhism at that time.

### *Textual Evidence for Early Esoteric Buddhist Practice in Silla*

A number of Korean commentaries on important Buddhist scriptures were written during the second half of the seventh century, and among them three stand out as evidence of the presence of the growing interest in Esoteric Buddhist practices. The commentaries in question include the *Inwang kyōngsō* 仁王經疏 (Commentary on the Sūtra of Benevolent Kings; cf. *HPC* vol. 1, 15b–123c) written by Wōnch'uk 圓測 (613–696), a Korean disciple of the famous Chinese pilgrim and translator-monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664).<sup>18</sup> Although the apocryphal scripture for which Wōnch'uk's commentary was written is not an Esoteric Buddhist scripture per se, the commentary itself is interesting for anticipating some of the ritual elements that were later developed in Amoghavajra's extended version of the text.<sup>19</sup>

Then there is the *Taesōng taechip Chijang sip non kyōngsō* 大乘大集地藏十輪經序 (Preface to the *Daśacakra-kṣitigarbha Sūtra*)<sup>20</sup> by Sinbang 神昉 (fl. seventh century),<sup>21</sup> which was written for an important

<sup>17</sup> See Chang 1987, 170–194. See also Hwang 1979. This report deals with the discovery of what is believed to be a Silla relief of one of the spirit generals of the *Renwang jing* carved on a stone slab.

<sup>18</sup> Although Xuanzang does not appear to have been especially interested in Esoteric Buddhism, he is nevertheless known to have translated a number of sūtras in which Esoteric Buddhist practices and rites are major features. Cf. the *Amoghapāśahṛdaya* (T. 1094), *Avalokiteśvara-ekādaśamukha* (T. 1071), *Zhou wushou* 咒五首 (Spells under Five Headings; T. 1034), *Dhvajāgra-keyūrā-dhāraṇī sūtra* (T. 1363), *Buddhahṛdaya-dhāraṇī* (T. 918), etc.

<sup>19</sup> It was first with Amoghavajra's extended and revised version of the *Renwang jing* that it became a truly Esoteric Buddhist scripture. See Orzech (1998, 169–206).

<sup>20</sup> *HPC* vol. 1, 479ac. The ten-chapter *Daśacakra-kṣitigarbha sūtra* is another of the translations by Xuanzang of an Indian Buddhist text in which Esoteric Buddhist practices have a certain prominence.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Han'guk pulgyo inmyōng sajon* (hereafter; *HPIS*) 167a.

and lengthy *dhāraṇī* sūtra. Although only a preface without much direct reference to Esoteric Buddhist practices, it nevertheless indicates that the scripture itself and the rites it teaches were in vogue in Silla towards the end of the seventh century.

Next we have the significant commentary *Kūmgwang myōngch'wi sūngwang kyōngsō* 金光明最勝王經疏 (Commentary on the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra*; *HPC* vol. 2, 181b–232a) by Sūngjang 勝莊 (n.d.) (*HPIS* 163a). This commentary is interesting for what its author has to say about the Esoteric Buddhist elements that the sūtra contains, that is, its three *dhāraṇī* chapters, the lore surrounding the divine protection of the realm (including the cult of the Four Heavenly Kings), and the two chapters on the *raṅsasa*-demons who render protection. Incidentally, this text also mentions the *Mahāmāyūrī-vidyārājñī sūtra*,<sup>22</sup> a major Esoteric Buddhist scripture, in its chapter on how to summon the twenty-eight classes of great *raṅsa* generals (cf. *T.* 985.19:227b). The reference to the *Mahāmāyūrī-vidyārājñī*, with its copious register of names of demons and spirits, could indicate that the beliefs and practices surrounding the invocations of various classes of demons for protection, as taught in this scripture, was in vogue among Korean Buddhists by the time Sūngjang wrote his commentary.<sup>23</sup>

Finally there is the *Yaksa ponwōn kyōng kochōk* 本願藥師經古跡 (Record of the Old Methods [Pertaining to] the Sūtra of the Original Vows of Bhaiṣajyaguru; *HPC* vol. 3, 409b–418b) by T'aehyōn 大賢 (fl. eighth century) (*HPIS* 66b–67a). This text, which is not a commentary in the traditional sense, features such Esoteric Buddhist elements as the worship of the twelve spirit generals, each of which represents one of the animals in the zodiac.<sup>24</sup> A discussion of the powerful spells

<sup>22</sup> In principle the commentary could refer to any of the early versions of the *Mahāmāyūrī-vidyārājñī* such as *T.* 988 or 984, but Sūngjang is more likely to have made use of Yijing's 義淨 (635–713) translation from the early eighth century, i.e., *T.* vol. 19, no. 985. For a study of the early versions of the *Mahāmāyūrī sūtra*, see Sørensen 2006b.

<sup>23</sup> We also have reference to a text called the *Kūmgwangmyōng ch'wisūng wang kyōng yakch'an* 金光明最勝王經略贊 (An Outline of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra*), attributed to Kyōnghūng 憬興 (n.d.). This work is no longer extant, but is mentioned in both *T.* 2184.55:1107b and *T.* 2183.55:1153b.

<sup>24</sup> The worship of these spirits of the zodiac was relatively common under the early Unified Silla, and images of them, carved in low relief on stone, have been found on *stūpa* and pagoda foundations. In the earliest representations, these images have been depicted as human figures with animal heads, and only later are they depicted as fully human, but with the zodiac-animal symbols in their caps or headgear. For Silla examples, see Kyōngju Pangmulgwan 1989, pls. 140–143, 309–314. A discussion of the

associated with these twelve spirit generals can be found in the commentary, as well as a discussion of protection from various kinds of evil, including black magic. Interestingly, the text specifically mentions of the use of *vetāla* demons for raising corpses to harm others.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to this material we know that there were a considerable number of Buddhist works, now lost, that are believed to have contained Esoteric Buddhist teachings and ritual methods. They include the *Kwanjong kyōngsō* 灌頂經疏 (Commentary on the *Guanding Jing*); three works on the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, all ascribed to Kyōnghūng 憬興 (fl. seventh century); two commentaries on the *Ekādaśamukha sūtra*, one by Chi'in 智仁 (fl. late seventh century) and one by Toryun 道倫 (fl. early eighth century; *HPIS* 70a.); a commentary, also on the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa sūtra*, attributed to Wōnhyo 元曉 (617–686); and the *Panja nich'wi pun kyōngsō* 般若理趣分經疏 (Commentary on the *Prajñā-naya sūtra* [?]) by T'aehyōn (see U Chōngsang and Kim Yōngt'ae 1970, 57–59).

Korean monks affiliated with the Chinese Tiantai school 天台宗 have been documented in the Chinese sources of the early Tang, and it is not unlikely that some of these monks brought Esoteric Buddhist scriptures and practices of the Tiantai brand with them back to Silla in the course of the seventh century.<sup>26</sup> It is even possible that it was through these monks that the Koreans first came into contact with the *Renwang jing*.<sup>27</sup>

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symbolism and belief behind placing these zodiac figures on *stūpas* and pagodas can be found in Chang 1987, 166–169.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *HPC* vol. 3, 417c. According to traditional Esoteric Buddhist (and Hindu) lore *vetāla* demons are invoked in order for a practitioner of the arcane arts to raise a corpse and use it in the manner of a zombie to cause the death of an enemy. For additional information, see Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism and Magic in China,” in this volume.

<sup>26</sup> Esoteric Buddhist practices within the Tiantai School occur already in the *de facto* founder Zhiyi's 智顚 (538–597) teachings. See for example his *Fangdeng sanmei xingfa* 方等三昧行法 (Method of the Constant Samādhi), *T.* 1940.46:945a. This work in turn is based on the Esoteric Buddhist sūtra, the *Pratyutpanna-buddhasammukhāvasthita-samādhi sūtra*, *T.* 1339. For an illuminating study on this type of practice, see Stevenson 1986. A list of the early Korean monks who went to China to study Tiantai Buddhism can be found in Sørensen 1986.

<sup>27</sup> The *Renwang jing* is known to have been used extensively by Zhiyi 智顚 (538–597), the *de facto* founder of the Chinese Tiantai tradition. Also the Sanlun 三論 specialist Jizang 吉藏 (549–623) was interested in this apocryphon and wrote one commentary on it. See Orzech 1998, 121–125.

*Myōnghyo and the Amoghapāsakalparāja*

The Chinese sources contain references to a Silla monk by the name of Myōnghyo 明曉 (fl. second half of the seventh century)<sup>28</sup> and his link with the rise of Esoteric Buddhism (*milgyo* 密教) in Korea. The chief source on Myōnghyo is the Chinese canonical catalogue, the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (Catalogue of the Buddhist Teaching from the Kaiyuan [Reign Period]; hereafter *KYL*; T. 2154), which dates from 730 C.E. (T. 2154.55:566b). The account of the Korean monk is found embedded in the short biography of the Indian translator-monk Li Wuchan 李無詔 (fl. seventh century), where we read:

There was a Silla monk by the name of Myōnghyo who beheld Tang culture from afar and wanted to journey there. [Having arrived], it was the gate of *dhāraṇīs* (*chōngjimun* 總持門)<sup>29</sup> to which he first paid attention. Consequently, he diligently and persistently implored for a translation of the mantra [i.e., the mantra of the *Amoghapāsakalparāja*]<sup>30</sup> so as to cause those on the other side<sup>31</sup> to also hear the secret teaching (*bijiao* 祕教). Thereupon in the cloister of the Foshouji Temple 佛授記寺 he [Li Wuchan] translated for him the *Amoghapāsakalparāja* in one section.<sup>32</sup> The *śramaṇa* Polun 波崙 [fl. late seventh to early eighth centuries]<sup>33</sup> wrote it down. In the eighth month in the first year of the Jiushi reign period [700 C.E.] they took the translated sūtra to Kubhā [in modern Kashmir]... (T. 2154.55:566b)

On the basis of this brief account we are given the following information on Myōnghyo: (1) he lived during the late seventh century; (2) he was a native of Silla; (3) as a Buddhist practitioner he was

<sup>28</sup> Myōnghyo is not unknown to Korean scholarship and is actually included in the *HPIS* 87a.

<sup>29</sup> Meaning the methods of using *dhāraṇīs* and mantras. This is another way of saying Esoteric Buddhism. Later, during the Koryō, the term *ch'ongji* 總持 was used as a name for one of the Esoteric Buddhist traditions active then. See Sørensen 2005.

<sup>30</sup> Although the text only reads “*zhenyan* 真言” here, we should read in the meaning of “the entire scripture.”

<sup>31</sup> I.e., Myōnghyo’s fellow countrymen in Silla.

<sup>32</sup> This refers to the version of the *Amoghapāsakalparāja* as represented in T. 1096.

<sup>33</sup> Polun was a scholar-monk and active on various translation teams during the reign of Empress Wu (r. 685–704). He appears to have had considerable knowledge of Esoteric Buddhism and is also known to have authored a preface to the *Nīlakaṇṭhaka sūtra* (see T. 1057.20: 83bc). He figures prominently in the *KYL*. Cf. T. 2154.55:566ab–567a, 568a, etc. See also the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061.50:710c. He also wrote the text for the dedication of a niche with Buddhist images in the Longmen Caves 龍門窟.

attracted to mantras and spells; (4) he took a special interest in the *Amoghapāśakalparāja*; and (5) he was associated with Li Wuchan and Polun, both of whom are known to have translated Esoteric Buddhist scriptures. Although the text does not mention it, we can only speculate as to the possibility of Myōnghyo having eventually returned to Silla in order to spread the Esoteric Buddhist teachings of the *Amoghapāśakalparāja*.

As regards the cult of Amoghapāśa in early Unified Silla we have unfortunately no extant images with which to establish it as a historical reality. However, we do know that the cult of another of Avalokiteśvara's transformations, namely that of Ekādaśamukha, the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, was thriving in Silla during the middle of the eighth century. Among the carved reliefs at Sökkuram 石窟庵 in the mountains beyond Pulguk Temple 佛國寺, we find a well-sculpted image of Ekādaśamukha, in effect the only bona fide Esoteric Buddhist image to be seen in this famous sanctuary. As the introduction and popular rise of the cults of Ekādaśamukha and Amoghapāśa in China took place more or less contemporaneously during the late seventh century, it is not unlikely that they were also introduced to the Korean Peninsula more or less simultaneously. Given that we do not know if Myōnghyo ever returned to Silla, we cannot say for certain whether the cult of Amoghapāśa actually did take hold in Korea during his own lifetime, the early eighth century. However, the chances that it did are certainly there.

#### *On the Transmission of Zhenyan Buddhism to Korea*

As has been shown in the preceding chapters on Esoteric Buddhism in China, a more systematic and orthodox form came into being in Tang China during the first half of the eighth century. The arrival in 718 C.E. of the *ācārya* Śubhākarasiṃha (637–735), followed by Vajrabodhi (669–741) and Amoghavajra (705–774), signals the beginning of a truly systematic and well-defined type of Esoteric Buddhism. Monks from Silla eventually became interested in the “new” brand of Esoteric Buddhism and gathered in Ch'angan to study under the Indian *ācāryas* and their Chinese disciples.

One of the most important sources on the Silla monks who took up the study of Esoteric Buddhism in Tang China is the *Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi fufa ji* 兩部大法相承師資付法記 (Record of Successive Masters Transmitting the Methods of the Great Dharma



Characteristics of the Two Classes [of Mandalas]; T. 2081), from 834 C.E. Here it is recorded that Śubhākarasiṃha had one Korean disciple by the name of Hyōnch'o 玄超 (fl. eighth century), to whom he transmitted the methods of the Garbhadhātu Mandala (T. 2081.51:786c). Another Silla monk, who is said to have studied under him, was Yirim 義林 (702-?).<sup>34</sup> This monk is found neither in the Chinese nor in the Korean material, but is referred to in the Japanese record, the *Naishō hōssō ketsumiaku* 內證佛法相血脈譜 (Record of the Blood Line of the Inner Realization of the Signs of the Dharma)<sup>35</sup> by Saichō 最澄 (767–822), the founder of the Japanese Tendai school 天台宗.<sup>36</sup> This work dates from 819 C.E. Here it is said that Yirim received the teachings of the Garbhadhātu Mandala and subsequently spread the dharma, that is, the Esoteric Buddhist teachings, in Silla.<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to note that Yirim also figures in the lineage of patriarchs presented in the Buddhist picture scroll, the *Kōsō zō* 高僧像 (Images of the High Monks) (TZ vol. 11, 56, pl. 18).

The most important of Śubhākarasiṃha's Korean disciples, however, was Pulga Sauti 不可思議 (fl. eighth century; MDJ vol. 4, 1895c). The reason for his importance resides not so much in the position he may have had among the disciples of the Indian master, but in the fact that he is the only Korean monk who has produced a substantial work that gives clear evidence of the doctrinal transmission of Zhenyan Buddhism to Silla. The work in question is the *Tae Piroch'ana kyōng kongyang ch'adung pōp so* 大毘盧遮那經供養次第法疏 (Outline of the Progressive Methods of Making Offerings [Based on] the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*), an extensive exposition in two chapters (HPC vol. 3, 383a–409a). This lengthy work is a combination of a ritual manual and a commentary on the last five ritual sections (*pin* 品) of the *sūtra* in question. It contains several quotations from the *sūtra* focusing on how to make offerings with mantras and hymns (*chisōng*

<sup>34</sup> For a study of this monk and an attempt at identifying his lineage of transmission and Esoteric Buddhist teaching, see Sō 1994b, 103–147. Although the information contained here is useful and constitutes a serious attempt at uncovering the historical truth about Yirim, it has been greatly inflated with material that cannot be directly connected with him. Interestingly, Sō consistently refers to Yirim as a “Master of Sōn” rather than an *ācārya*, thereby indicating that he may originally have had a different Buddhist affiliation.

<sup>35</sup> *Nippon daizōkyō* 日本大藏經 (Japanese *Tripitaka*), *Tendai shū kenkyū shōso* 天台宗研究書叢 (Collected Books of Tendai Studies), ch. 1, 17a–19b.

<sup>36</sup> For Saichō see Dolce, “Taimitsu, The Esoteric Buddhism of the Tendai School,” in this volume.

<sup>37</sup> *Nippon daizōkyō*, *Tendai shū kenkyū shōso*, ch. 1, 20b.

持頌) (cf. *HPC* vol. 3, 385b–387c). Some parts of the text are in the form of a dialogue between the author and an imaginary interlocutor. Furthermore, the text is important for its detailed inter-linear comments on the meaning of the major mantras of the sūtra (*HPC* vol. 3, 399b–401a, 403c–404a, 405c, 407ab, and 408c). Special attention is given to the mantras associated with the worship of Vajrasattva, one of the central divinities of the Zhenyan brand of Esoteric Buddhism (*HPC* vol. 3, 400a–401a). Details on Saüi's activities in Korea are not known, except the name of the temple in which he is said to have dwelt after he returned to Silla.<sup>38</sup>

Vajrabodhi and later Amoghavajra are known to have had a Korean disciple in common, namely the celebrated pilgrim-monk Hyech'o 慧超 (fl. eighth century), who is famous for his journey to India as told in the *Wang ö Ch'önch'uk kuk chön* 往五天竺國傳 (An Account of a Trip to the Five Regions of India).<sup>39</sup> The Chinese records referring to Hyech'o's connection to the Zhenyan tradition are extremely brief, and generally do not provide much more than his name. However, we have two short works from his hands, the *Taesöng yuga kŭmgang sönghae Munsusiri ch'önbi ch'önbal taegyo wang kyöngsö* 大乘瑜伽金剛性海曼殊室利千臂千鉢大教王經序 (Preface to the *Mahāyāna-yogavajra prakṛtisāgara Mañjuśrī-sahaśrabahusahaśrapatra mahā-tantrarāja sūtra*; *HPC* vol. 3, 3381b–3382b), written for one of the major scriptures belonging to the cult of Mañjuśrī with a thousand arms and a thousand hands,<sup>40</sup> and the *Ha Ogyö tamgi u p'yo* 賀玉女潭祈雨表 (Presenting the Jade Woman with a Fervent Prayer for Rain to Fall).<sup>41</sup> The preface does not provide us with further information on Hyech'o's connection to the Zhenyan tradition, but simply affirms his affinity with Vajrabodhi. The second piece is a short tract in the form of a petition to the Jade Woman, a Daoist divinity, asking that

<sup>38</sup> In a note placed at the end of the text he is described as a Silla monk from Yöngmyo Temple 零妙寺/靈妙寺 (cf. *HPC* vol. 3, 409a). There are two known temples with this name in North Kyöngsang province, both ruined. One is near Kyöngju, and another in Kimch'ön. Due to the relative proximity of the first temple with Kyöngju, the Silla capital, it is most likely that it is the first of these temples in which Saüi lived. See Tüi gyöngdang ch'önsö kanhaeng wiwönhoe 1994, 1275. See also Yi Tongsul 1997, 297a.

<sup>39</sup> *HPC* vol. 3, 374b–381a. See also Yang Han-sung, Jan Yün-hua, Iida Shotaro, and Laurence W. Preston 1984.

<sup>40</sup> *T.* 1177a.

<sup>41</sup> *T.* 1177a.20:382c. As the title indicates, this work reveals influence from Daoism. It is dated 774 C.E., the same year Hyech'o's master Amoghavajra passed away.

she will allow rain to fall.<sup>42</sup> Both texts provide us with enough information to establish Hyech'o in the orthodox line of Zhenyan Buddhism. Finally, we may add that his achievements as a disciple of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, and as the author of the celebrated travelogue to India, have tended to overshadow his importance for Buddhism in Korea as such.

The great master in the orthodox Zhenyan transmission, Huiguo 惠果 (?–805), the teacher of the celebrated Japanese founder of the Shingon school, Kūkai 空海 (774–835), is recorded to have had two Korean disciples, Hyeil 慧日 (n.d.)<sup>43</sup> and Öjin 悟真 (n.d.) (T. 2057.50:295a). To Hyeil, Huiguo is said to have transmitted the methods relating to both the Vajradhātu and the Garbhadhātu Mandalas in 781 C.E., and to Öjin he only transmitted the Garbhadhātu Mandala, an event that took place in 789 C.E. (T. 2057.50:295a). Hyeil is stated to have returned to Silla upon the completion of his studies in Tang, whereas Öjin is said to have continued to India. None of these monks appear in the contemporary Korean records, and at least in the latter case we can be fairly certain that he never returned to Silla.

The last Silla monk with direct spiritual affinity to the Zhenyan school is one Kyünyang 均亮 (n.d.). He is said to have been a second-generation disciple of Huiguo and a dharma-brother of Haiyun 海雲 (n.d.), the compiler of the important chronicle *Liangbu dafa xiang cheng shizi fufa ji*.<sup>44</sup> There are no other records on Kyünyang, and there is no way to know whether he remained in Tang or eventually returned to Silla. He is also not mentioned in the contemporary Korean records.

Here it is important to note that whereas there are no contemporary Korean records available on these monks, both contemporary Chinese and Japanese sources mention the names of the Korean monks who were among the followers of the “three *ācāryas*” as well as Amoghavajra’s disciple Huiguo. All in all this would seem to indicate that the majority of the Korean monks affiliated with Zhenyan Buddhism did not return to Silla, but either remained in China or perhaps went on pilgrimage to the holy sites of India. In this connection it is interesting to note that most of these Esoteric Buddhist monks are rarely, if ever,

<sup>42</sup> The Jade Woman is connected with longevity and good fortune. See *Zhonghua dao jiao da cidian*, 781b.

<sup>43</sup> T. 2057.50:295a. He went to China in 781 C.E. and is later said to have returned to his native country where he spread the Esoteric Buddhist teaching.

<sup>44</sup> T. 2081.51:784b. Kyünyang is simply mentioned as part of the lineage.

mentioned in the later Korean records, but that their names and brief accounts either come from Chinese or Japanese sources. This may be taken as an indication that direct influence from orthodox Zhenyan Buddhism on Buddhism in Silla was probably rather insignificant.

*Esoteric Buddhist Practices and Early Korean Sōn Buddhism*

The impact of Esoteric Buddhist practices and beliefs on the various doctrinal schools of Silla Buddhism has already been discussed, but we still need to account for its influence on early Korean Sōn Buddhism (Ch. Chan 禪). More or less contemporaneous with Amoghavajra and his Korean disciples, Sōn Buddhism was starting to become popular in the Unified Silla. Contemporary records inform us of the large numbers of Korean Sōn pilgrims who went to Tang China in search of an enlightened master under whom to train (see Sørensen 1988). One of the most prominent of these Korean Sōn monks was Hyeso 慧昭 (774–850), who on his return to Silla settled in Mt. Chiri 智理山, where he founded the renowned Ssangye Temple 雙溪寺 around 835 C.E. (CKS I, 66–72). Hyeso’s epitaph, which is dated to 887 C.E., mentions that the master introduced the use of *pōmp’ae* 梵唄 (ritualized chanting in Sanskrit) in the liturgy, and that he used “secret methods handed down by Śubhākarasiṃha as protection against wild animals” (CKS I, 69). Although the inscription is not clear as to which Esoteric Buddhist methods Hyeso employed, we must assume from the context that the secret methods referred to were various *dhāraṇīs* and mantras probably used as part of a larger ritual. Hyeso’s Esoteric Buddhist connection in China is not mentioned explicitly in the account of his period of training, but he probably came into contact with Esoteric Buddhism while studying in 810 C.E. at the famous Shaolin Temple 少林寺 on Mt. Song 嵩山. Shaolin had been a center of *dhyāna* practices since the late Northern Wei (386–535), and during the early Tang became linked with the northern lineages of Chan Buddhism (cf. McRae 1986, 43–44, 56–59, 63–69). In addition we have documentation from the first half of the eighth century that Esoteric Buddhism was cultivated by the Chan adepts living there (McRae 1986, 68).

Another tradition within Korean Sōn postulates a connection between the culture hero Tosōn 道誥 (827–897),<sup>45</sup> another Sōn monk who is credited with introducing the *p’ungsu* 風水 geomantic system

<sup>45</sup> HPIS 71ab. For his epitaph, see CKS I, 560–562.

and the founding of numerous temples based on the principles of this system. Tosŏn is said to have received instructions in *p'ungsu* practice from the Chinese Esoteric Buddhist master Yixing 一行 (673–727),<sup>46</sup> who is also credited with imparting Esoteric Buddhist teachings to him.<sup>47</sup> However, much of the written material on Tosŏn and his achievements is fictitious and of a much later date, something that took place during the middle of the Koryŏ dynasty when he had attained the status of cultural hero.<sup>48</sup>

*Esoteric Buddhism and the Practice of Empowerment in Korea*

After the unification of the realm by Silla in 668 C.E., Esoteric Buddhist materials appear to have become increasingly prevalent in the kingdom. This trend is clearly reflected in the tradition of making *stūpas* and pagodas in Korea. Given its ancient origin, *stūpa* worship and its empowerment is of course not a practice exclusive to Esoteric Buddhism, but the way it developed in East Asia from the seventh century onwards shows that an increasing number of the ritual elements, and the overall lore surrounding the construction and worship of these structures of power gradually caused it to become so.<sup>49</sup> The key word to this practice is “empowerment,” understood as a ritual method of invigorating an ordinary building, of infusing it with divine power. In addition to the ritual process itself, the officiating monks also needed various objects of power, such as relics, and various holy items, such as images and Buddhist books. Among the latter, written

<sup>46</sup> For a classic study on this important master of Chan and Esoteric Buddhism, see Osabe 1963. Incidentally, there is no mention in this work of any connection between Yixing and Korean Sŏn monks. For Yixing see Keyworth, “Yixing,” this volume.

<sup>47</sup> Given the great discrepancy in the dates of these two monks, actually over one hundred years, it is obviously impossible to give any credibility to the supposed link between them. We are clearly dealing with a pious Korean tradition, a myth, which seeks to lend authority to the Esoteric Buddhist lineage of Tosŏn. For a discussion of the Esoteric Buddhist elements in Tosŏn’s teaching, see Sŏ 1993, 32–67. See also the more recent study by Sŏ 1999.

<sup>48</sup> Reference to geomantic practices by other Sŏn monks can also be documented in the epitaph raised for Tosŏn’s disciple Kyŏngbo 慶甫 (868–948), where there is evidence that he too was an adept of *p'ungsu* (see CKS I, 189, 193). However, this practice was not limited to monks from the Mt. Tongni school 桐裡山門 of Korean Sŏn, but was also practiced by monks from the Mt. Hŭiyang school 曦陽山門, e.g., by Kŭngyang 統讓 (878–956) and possibly his disciples as well (CKS I, 204).

<sup>49</sup> See Orzech and Sørensen, “*Stūpas* and Relics,” in this volume.

or printed *dhāraṇīs* would appear to have been especially important (cf. Chang 1987, 195–222).

One of the most important early items directly connected to Esoteric Buddhism is the woodblock print of a *dhāraṇī* sūtra, namely the scroll of the *Raśmivimalaviśuddha-prabhā-dhāraṇī sūtra*,<sup>50</sup> which was found in the Śākyamuni Stūpa (Sökka T'ap 釋迦塔) in Pulguk Temple on the outskirts of the old Silla capital, Kyōngju, in 1966.<sup>51</sup> The *Raśmivimalaviśuddha-prabhā* is a classical *dhāraṇī* sūtra that sets forth the various kinds of merit and benefits a person will achieve in connection with the erection of a *stūpa*. Due to the power of the scripture (and in particular its *dhāraṇī*), the maker of the *stūpa* will be protected by a host of Buddhist divinities including the Four Heavenly Kings, Brahma, Indra, Maheśvara, Nārāyaṇa, *yakṣas*, and *vajrayakṣas*. The presence of the copy of this *dhāraṇī* inside the *stūpa* is evidence of the belief in the divine protection of *dhāraṇīs* in conjunction with *stūpa* worship, and is an important example of the functioning of Esoteric Buddhism as national protector in Unified Silla.<sup>52</sup> The continued importance of the *Raśmivimalaviśuddha* during the Unified Silla is documented in the *Kuk wang Kyōnūng cho Muguchōng t'ap wōngi* 國王慶膺造無垢淨塔願記 (Record of Prayer [Made on the Occasion of] Kyōnūng, King of the Nation, Making the *Raśmivimalaviśuddha Stūpa*).<sup>53</sup> The Kyōnūng 慶膺 referred to in the text of the inscription is the Buddhist name of King Munsōng 文聖 (r. 839–857). The other important scripture on *stūpa* worship and empowerment was Amoghavajra's translation of the *Sarvatathāgatā-dhīṣṭhāna-hṛdaya-guhyadhātukaraṇḍa-mudrā-dhāraṇī sūtra*.<sup>54</sup> Here it is taught that it is the scripture's own inherent, divine power that

<sup>50</sup> T. 1024. This scripture is reported to have been translated into Chinese in 704 C.E., which means that it was brought to Korea not long afterwards.

<sup>51</sup> This woodblock print is dated to 751 C.E. and is considered the oldest extant woodblock-printed sūtra in the world. For additional information, see Chang 2004, 264–265.

<sup>52</sup> In the course of the Unified Silla a trend in Buddhist belief developed in which the construction of *stūpas* was understood as enhancing the “vital forces” (*ki* 氣) of a given locale. This development may have taken place due to a combination of geomantic principles (*p'ungsu*), inclusive of the lore of the five elements (*ōhang* 五行) and *yin-yang* philosophy, as well as Esoteric Buddhist beliefs relating to empowerment and the ritual augmentation of inanimate objects (see Yang Unyong 1999).

<sup>53</sup> For the full text of the inscription, see Hwang Suyōng 1976–1981, 147–150.

<sup>54</sup> T. 1022ab. The earliest surviving version of this *dhāraṇī sūtra* found in Korea dates from 1007 C.E. This printed version is of the typical small-scroll form, as is

empowers the *stūpa*. In other words, the empowerment is being effectuated by placing a copy of the *Sarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhāna* together with a Buddha image inside it, which constitutes the transformation of the *stūpa* into an actual “tower of power.”

The empowerment of *stūpas* was replicated in the making of Buddhist images, which also underwent a ritual process in order to be animated, i.e., to be ready to house the “spirit” of the divinity and thereby be considered suitable and worthy of worship. Also, in this case instructions were based on the Esoteric Buddhist scriptures used. In the case of the Unified Silla it would appear that the practice of empowering Buddhist images began in earnest during the early eighth century.<sup>55</sup>

### *Esoteric Buddhism: Its Art and Material Culture under the Silla*

As mentioned above, the earliest traces of Esoteric Buddhism on the Korean Peninsula belongs to material culture and can be found in the form of *vajra*-yielding guardians (*vajrapālas*) and protectors carved on the stone panels of pagodas and *stūpas*. Indra, Brahma, and the Four Heavenly Kings occur frequently, as well as the eightfold group of gods and dragons (*ch’ōnryong palbu* 天龍八部). Among these Buddhist guardians we also find the twelve *rakṣa* generals, who form Bhaiṣajyaguru’s retinue. Likewise, images of the twelve spirits of the zodiac carved in stone can be seen. In the Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures these minor gods are also associated with Esoteric Buddhist practices, and their presence in the Silla Buddhist architectural material would seem to indicate that they were accredited with protective powers.<sup>56</sup>

There has been some speculation as to the sectarian affiliation of the Sökkuram 釋窟庵 sanctuary, the artificial Buddhist cave sanctuary on Mt. T’oham 吐含山 above Pulguk Temple in Kyōngju, completed in 750 C.E.; it could be a product of Esoteric Buddhism. However, the general outline of the shrine as well as its iconography signals neither an Esoteric Buddhist context nor affinity. The main Buddha in the shrine

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the case with the copy of the *Rāsmivimalaviśuddhaphrabhā* from the Sökka *Stūpa* in Pulguk Temple.

<sup>55</sup> As far as can be ascertained, it was scriptures such as Śubhākarasiṃha’s translation of the *Vajraśekhara sūtra*, among others, that served as the basis for these beliefs.

<sup>56</sup> For examples, see Kyōngju Pangmulgwan 1989, 150–151.

undoubtedly represents Śākyamuni as Vairocana in accordance with the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*, which is why the iconography of this image is distinctly exoteric in nature. The only carving that is clearly an Esoteric Buddhist figure, both from the point of view of its textual background and iconography, is the relief of the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, Ekādaśamukha, mentioned previously.<sup>57</sup> The appearance of this form of the bodhisattva is in itself not sufficient proof that the cave shrine was inspired by Esoteric Buddhism, and in lieu of historical sources we must consider it a bit far-fetched to see Sökkuram as such.<sup>58</sup> However, given that the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* and the Hwaōm school was prevalent in the Kyōngju area during the mid-eighth century, it is highly likely that Sökkuram and its iconic arrangement reflects the Avataṃsaka cult with some influence from Esoteric Buddhism. Incidentally, the same situation can be found in Nara Buddhism in Japan prior to the return of Kūkai from China (Ryūichi Abé 1999, 154–176).

A small, gilt-bronze image of the important *vidyārāja* Mahāmāyūrī, said to date from the late Three Kingdoms period or the early Unified Silla (i.e., the seventh century), has recently been identified. However, given the iconography of the piece in question, which matches the iconographical descriptions in Yijing's translation, such an early dating is in my view rather doubtful. Hence a mid-Unified Silla dating of ca. 800 C.E. would appear more likely.<sup>59</sup> Even so, this image offers us with important evidence as regards the presence of the Mahāmāyūrī cult under the Unified Silla.

Another early image of a *vidyārāja* inside a stylized gate building on a small, gilded-bronze plaque has been identified by the Korean scholar Yi Ho'gwan 李浩官 as depicting the protector Vajrayakṣa, and in his estimation it dates from the Unified Silla.<sup>60</sup> In my view this image dates from the late eighth century at the earliest, at the time when the teachings and ritual practices of Zhenyan Buddhism were being introduced to the Korean Peninsula from Tang China. As

<sup>57</sup> For a trans-cultural study of this important aspect of Avalokiteśvara, see Wong and Field 2008, 176–180.

<sup>58</sup> One of the most useful studies of the numerous studies on the shrine is Mun 1987. This work does not refer to Esoteric Buddhism in connection with the carvings here, but correctly associates them with Hwaōm Buddhism.

<sup>59</sup> See Yi Hogwan 1985, 335–336, pl. 40. The image is currently in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Yi Hogwan 1984, 227–342 and Yi Hogwan 1985, 313–369. Also kept in the Tokyo National Museum.



for the identification it would appear to be a representation of the *vidyārāja* Kuṇḍali rather than Vajrayakṣa.<sup>61</sup> However, what is most important to note is that we here have a full-fledged Esoteric Buddhist image, the iconography of which matches closely that associated with established Zhenyan Buddhist iconography from the second half of the Tang.<sup>62</sup> Although admittedly a fairly modest image, the very fact that such a piece of Korean Buddhist art has been found indicates that certain elements of this developed form of Esoteric Buddhism were present in Korea during the second half of the Unified Silla (cf. *MDJ* vol. 1, 339, pls. on p. 366).

Buddha images that can be readily identified with Esoteric Buddhism are rare and only occur in the material from the late Unified Silla. Interestingly enough, it is chiefly within the context of Sōn Buddhism that images of the Esoteric Vairocana Buddha has been found.<sup>63</sup> Iconographically, these images do not deviate significantly from standard Buddha images from the late Silla except that they hold their hands in the characteristic *vajramuṣṭī-mudrā* (alt. *śrī-bodhi-mudrā/jñāna-mudrā* 智拳印) in which the left hand grasps the upright index finger of the right hand (see Mun 1992, 55–89). It is significant that no crowned Vairocana images from the Silla have so far been found. This fact, when seen in light of the general absence of Buddhist sculptures made in accordance with the iconographic lore of Esoteric Buddhism, in particular the mature Zhenyan tradition of the second half of the Tang, indicates that a formal and full transmission to Silla of this form of Esoteric Buddhism never took place.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> This is mainly due to the positioning of the central pair of arms crossed over the chest and the hands forming the *Kuṇḍali-mudrā* in combination with the staff and wheel attributes, standard characteristics of this protector. For images with similar iconography, see *TZ* vol. 6, 257–262. See also *MDJ* vol. 1, 424c–226. This would also indicate that the image may have been one of a pair, the other one being the *vidyārāja* Ucchuṣma. It is common in Esoteric iconography to have this pair of protectors flank a main deity such as the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara. It is of course also possible that the present image originally formed part of a group of five *vidyārājas*, depicting the main group of Esoteric protectors of the Mandala of the Benevolent Kings in accordance with the Zhenyan tradition.

<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of the development of Zhenyan see Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra (653–780),” and “After Amoghavajra: Esoteric Buddhism in the Late Tang,” in this volume.

<sup>63</sup> For a list of these images as well as the relevant texts of dedication, see Mun 1980, 233–251, 278–283.

<sup>64</sup> This view stands in rather sharp contrast to that of most Korean scholars who maintain that Esoteric Buddhism of the Zhenyan brand was transmitted to Unified

### Conclusion

Summing up the above, it is obvious that the early history of Esoteric Buddhism in Korea is sketchy and full of holes. Beyond the archaeological material, which itself is rather meager (at least from the period before the second half of the seventh century), there is in fact very little substantial material on which to establish a viable historical development for the tradition in question. If we choose not to dismiss the information from the *Samguk yusa* entirely but accept its tales as “pointers,” then we may tentatively consider that Esoteric Buddhist practices of the unsystematic kind became gradually popular on the Korean Peninsula from the seventh century onwards, possibly reaching some level of importance by the late eighth to early ninth centuries, but only to achieve spiritual prominence under the succeeding Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392).

On the basis of what has been shown as constituting the sources for the presence of Esoteric Buddhist practices on the Korean Peninsula during the seventh to eighth centuries, it is obvious that they were not understood as belonging to a distinct form of Buddhism. Moreover, they were not dominant features in Korean Buddhism at that time either. That Esoteric Buddhist lore and beliefs were essentially confined to mainstream ritual practices is underscored by the fact that all the authors, most of whom were important scholar-monks who wrote about and commented on it during this early phase, belonged to one of the important doctrinal schools of Korean Buddhism, including the Pŏpsang 法相/Yuga 瑜伽, the Hwaŏm 華嚴, and the Ch’ont’ae 天台 schools of Buddhism.

Esoteric Buddhism under the Unified Silla would seem to have been an undercurrent in Silla Buddhism, rather than an independent tradition. The Zhenyan tradition of Tang China obviously did play an important role in the transmission of Esoteric Buddhist practices to the Korean Peninsula. However, even though a number of Korean monks studied under masters of Zhenyan Buddhism (i.e., the tradition associated with Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, et al.) in

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Silla, including the tradition of the Dual Mandalas, i.e., those of the Dharmadhātu and the Vajradhātu (see Ko 1986, 127–221; and Sō 1994b, 67–102). Part of the problem with this is that we do not have sufficient information on the activities of the Korean disciples of the great *ācāryas* active in Tang China. Especially reliable information on their later years and whether or not they returned to Silla is completely wanting.

the Tang, it is uncertain to what extent the teachings they inherited from their Chinese masters ever became current in Silla. In any case, their activities would seem to have had more impact in China than in their native country, as next to no evidence can be found in the contemporary Korean sources. To the extent that the surviving scriptures written by Esoteric Buddhist monks from the Silla had an impact on Buddhism in their own country, it is not unlikely that this first took place under the Koryŏ after the first printed *Tripitaka* was imported from Song China.

In addition to the minor deities adorning the foundations of pagodas and *stūpas*, Esoteric Buddhist elements in the Buddhist art of Unified Silla are meager. However, while crowned buddhas are not known, images of buddhas with their hands held in the *vajramuṣṭī-mudrā* are fairly common from the early ninth century onwards. Interestingly, most of the extant examples are associated with temples of Sŏn Buddhism, which may be seen as an indication that Sŏn monks journeying to Tang China were exposed to Esoteric Buddhist teachings and practices.

## 57. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM UNDER THE KORYŎ (918–1392)

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

Although part and parcel of the greater East Asian Buddhist tradition, the forms of Buddhism that evolved on the Korean Peninsula reveal certain characteristics that are in a number of ways different, if not unique, from the Buddhist developments in both China and Japan. These differences, or rather local characteristics, were caused by a wide range of factors such as past history (in particular the ancient, tripartite division of the peninsula), overall geo-political issues such as Korea's role as a "transit culture" between China and Japan, geography, clan divisions and social ranking, local power structures, and most importantly a marked tendency to adopt, transform, and integrate new cultural imports from abroad, including religious and philosophical influences. These characteristics are especially pronounced during the Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392), a period in which Buddhism enjoyed an unprecedented influence and popularity in all walks of life in Korean society. The Koryŏ was also a time when developments inside Buddhism itself contributed to new developments in literature, religious practice, and various fields of science and the arts.<sup>1</sup>

Koryŏ Buddhism was divided into a number of major schools or denominations, including the Chaŭn 慈恩, the Hwaŏm 華嚴, the Sŏn 禪, and the Ch'ŏnt'ae 天台. In addition to these formally established schools there were several minor denominations, such as the Nam-san 南山宗, the Sihŭng 始興宗, and the Chungdo 中道宗.<sup>2</sup> The two

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<sup>1</sup> The best overall treatment of Koryŏ Buddhism is still Hō 1986.

<sup>2</sup> For a survey of these lesser Buddhist schools, see Sō 1993, 251–297. Although a very visible component of Koryŏ Buddhism, the Pure Land (Chōngt'o 淨土) tradition does not appear to have existed as an independent sectarian organization during the Koryŏ. Related practices were mainly carried out within the Ch'ŏnt'ae and, paradoxically enough, the Sŏn schools Sō 1985, 143–179; Kwŏn 1985, 117–142. The great importance of Pure Land Buddhism during the Koryŏ can be testified to in the surviving Buddhist art from the period. Significantly, more than half of the surviving votive paintings can be directly associated with Pure Land beliefs and rituals. See Yamato 1978, pls. 1–2, 6–22.

Esoteric Buddhist denominations, the Ch'ongji 總持宗 and Sinin 神印宗, can be added to these lesser schools, some of which may have been very small and short-lived as independent denominations. Although on the surface it can be argued that sectarian divisions were rather strict, at least during the first half of the dynasty, they were never so strict as to exclude the borrowing of certain doctrines and practices from the other Buddhist denominations. During the time of the military dictatorship of the Ch'oe 崔 clan, starting during the middle of the twelfth century (a period when the Sŏn tradition was formally in dominance), we begin to see a freer, even ecumenical spirit having prevailed among the various Buddhist denominations.<sup>3</sup> Not only was there a sort of *rapprochement* between Ch'ŏnt'ae and Sŏn, especially after Ŭich'ŏn 義天 (1055–1101), but also between Sŏn and Hwaŏm and even the followers of the Pure Land tradition. While this new tendency found its most prominent spokesman in Chinul 知訥 (1158–1210), the founder of the Susŏnsa 修禪社 brand of Sŏn,<sup>4</sup> there were other monks, such as Wŏnmyo Yose 圓妙了世 (1163–1245)<sup>5</sup> and Ch'ŏnch'aek 天頌 (1206–?), both belonging to the Ch'ŏnt'ae school, who also contributed to the development of a more trans-sectarian and harmonizing spirit in Korean Buddhism.<sup>6</sup> In this religious environment Esoteric Buddhism came to play a significant role as the single most important factor in the trans-sectarian development of Buddhist ritual practices on both the local and national levels.

### *The Significance of Imported Esoteric Buddhist Scriptures*

Through massive import of the printed Buddhist canon and other Buddhist writings from the Northern Song (960–1127), the Liao (916–1124), and the Jin (1115–1234), as well as through the project of producing their own *Tripitaka*, a wide range of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures became available in Korea for the first time. It is assumed that many of the important Esoteric Buddhist scriptures contained in the first Korean *Tripitaka*, carved during the years 1029–1089 (cf. *KS*

<sup>3</sup> For a study of Buddhism during the period of military dictatorship, see Kim 1986, 59–72.

<sup>4</sup> For his contributions, especially in the areas of Hwaŏm and Chŏngt'o, see Buswell 1983.

<sup>5</sup> Biographical details on his life can be found in *HPIS* 193b–194b.

<sup>6</sup> For additional information on the activities of these two monks, see Yi 1988, 187–262. See also Hō 1995.

ch. 5, 111a; ch. 10, 206a), were used as textual authorities for the performance of many of the Esoteric Buddhist rituals. It remains a fact that most of the Esoteric Buddhist scriptures translated and composed by the three *ācāryas* of Tang China (Śubhākarasimha [637–735], Vajrabodhi [669–741], and Amoghavajra [705–774]) were included in the two Korean *Tripīṭakas*. In addition, all the later Song translations of Esoteric Buddhist works by Dharmapāla (963–1058), Dānapāla/Shihu 施護 (fl. tenth century), and Fatian 法天 (?–1001) were included there as well.<sup>7</sup> Among the latter scriptures are the *Guhyasamāja tantra* (T. vol. 18, no. 885) and the *Śrīvajra-maṇḍalaṃkāramahā tantrarāja* (T. vol. 18, no. 886), works that belong to the later Indian developments of tantric Buddhism. In 1328 C.E., a special compilation of Esoteric Buddhist works were written in gold according to the *Kūmsō milgyo taejong sō* 金書密教大[眾]序 (Preface of the Golden Books<sup>8</sup> of the Esoteric Tripīṭaka)<sup>9</sup> written by the official Yi Chehyōn 李齊賢 (1287–1367).<sup>10</sup> This preface shows that at that time Esoteric Buddhist scriptures were understood as belonging to a distinct class of Buddhist texts.<sup>11</sup>

Although extant examples of Esoteric Buddhist literature written by Korean Buddhists during the Koryŏ are very few, at least one extant ritual manual, the *Pōmsō ch'ōngji chip* 梵書總持集 (Ch'ōngji Collection of Sanskrit Books),<sup>12</sup> has survived. It was compiled by the monk Hyegūn 惠謹 (fl. late eleventh century, after 1228) in 1218 C.E. The manual is organized around the contents of the two major Esoteric Buddhist sūtras, the *Mahāvairocana* (T. 848) and the *Vajraśekhara* (T. 865), both of which were included in the first Koryŏ *Tripīṭaka*, and is therefore likely to have been used in conjunction with rituals involving the Vajradhātu and Garbhadhātu Mandalas.<sup>13</sup> Many of the

<sup>7</sup> For these monks see Orzech, “Translation of the Tantras and other Esoteric Buddhist Scriptures,” in this volume.

<sup>8</sup> This refers to Buddhist scriptures written with gold. Several such books dating from the second half of the Koryŏ have been preserved (see Chang 2004, 283–311).

<sup>9</sup> For the text of this preface, see Yi 1918–1979, 161–162.

<sup>10</sup> A highly influential scholar at the close of the Koryŏ dynasty (*HPIS* 723ab).

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the presence of Esoteric and tantric Buddhist texts in Koryŏ, see Pak 1975, 45–62.

<sup>12</sup> A copy of the original book is presently kept in the library of Tongguk University in Seoul. For a descriptive article regarding this compilation, see Chōn 1990, 47–64. See also the brief bibliographic note in Sørensen 1991–1992a, 159–200, §37.

<sup>13</sup> According to Chōn Tonghyōk it was the *She da Piluzhe'na chengfo shenbianjiachi jing ru lianhua tai zanghai hui beisheng manchaluo guangda niansong yigui gongyang fangbian hui* 攝大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經入蓮華胎藏海會悲生曼荼羅廣大念誦儀軌供養方便會 (T. 850) ascribed to Śubhākarasimha (637–735); its derivative,

*dhāraṇīs* in the *Pömsö ch'öngji chip* can also be found in other canonical scriptures.

Furthermore, we have material evidence to the effect that the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī* 大佛頂大陀羅尼 (T. 944ab) was commonly engraved on octagonal stone pillars for the protection of sanctuaries (probably also in connection with Buddhist burials).<sup>14</sup> As we shall see below, rituals centering on this *dhāraṇī* are recorded as having taken place at the royal court with relative frequency throughout the dynasty.<sup>15</sup>

### *Esoteric Buddhist Schools*

One of the major problems of the study of Esoteric Buddhism under the Koryō concerns its history as institutionalized sects. The SGYS claims that there were two schools of Esoteric Buddhism in Korea as early as the Silla: the Ch'öngji school, which arose around the middle of the dynasty, and the Sinin school, said to have been formally established during the reign of King T'aejo (918–943), the founder of the Koryō (*HPC* vol. 6, 357a). However, as the data found in the SGYS is often untrustworthy, and as there are in fact no other primary source materials to support these early dates, it is highly doubtful that these two denominations can be placed so early in the history of Korean Buddhism. Textual evidence of a more reliable nature actually indicates that both the Ch'öngji and the Sinin rose later in the Koryō than indicated by the SGYS.

The earliest historical evidence on the Sinin and Ch'öngji schools is found in the *KS* in an entry dating from the twelfth century (Hö 1986, 305–312). Probably Hyegün, the monk who compiled the *Pömsö ch'öngji chip* mentioned above, was somehow connected to the

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T. 853, by Faquan 法全 (fl. eighth century); the *Da Piluzhena jing guangda yigui* 大毘盧遮那經廣大儀軌 (T. 851), also by Śubhākarasimha; and the *Jin'gangding lianhua buxin niansong yigui* 金剛頂蓮華部心念誦儀軌 (T. 873) by Amoghavajra (705–774), which served as the basis of the *Pömsö ch'öngji chip*. However, in the light of the fact that none of three first works were included in the first Koryō *Tripitaka*, I am somewhat reluctant to accept this. Probably some other work related to the *Vajraśekhara* cycle of texts may have been used by Hyegün, the compiler of the ritual manual in question.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *CKS* I, 540–550. The practice of erecting *dhāraṇī*-pillars was also common in China, and can be traced back to the middle of the Nanbeichao period (386–589). See also Ch'oe 1978–1979, 128–135.

<sup>15</sup> All in all twenty-seven such rituals are recorded as having taken place from the reign of Hyōnjong (1084–1094) to that of Wōnjong (1259–1274). See Sö 1977.

Ch'ŏngji school (the name of which is indicated in the title of the book), although his true sectarian affiliation seems to have been with the Chaün school 慈恩宗 (see Sørensen 2005, 49–84). It is known that both the Sinin and the Ch'ŏngji still existed during late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn period, and in 1407 C.E. they were absorbed into the reformed denominations of Sŏn 禪宗 and doctrinal Buddhism 教宗.<sup>16</sup> However, there is very little concrete, textual, and/or physical evidence to be had regarding their place in Korea's Buddhist history. This is somewhat peculiar in light of the otherwise rich sources and physical material standing as testimony to the greatness of the other aspects of Koryŏ Buddhism.<sup>17</sup>

Tibetan Buddhist lineages were introduced to the Korean Peninsula shortly after the Koryŏ court returned to Kaesŏng from its self-imposed exile on Kanghwa Island in 1270 C.E. From that time onwards a cordial relationship existed between the Mongol powers in Dadu 大都 (Beijing) and the Korean royalty, resulting among other things in intermarriage between the Mongol imperial family and members of the Koryŏ royalty (see Puggioni 2004). As a common denominator Buddhism was an obvious choice as conveyor of spirituality, political alliances, and shared aspects of cultural development for both the Mongols and the Koreans. Tibetan Buddhism was therefore used by the Mongol side to enhance the intercultural relationship between Yuan and Koryŏ. In this new era a harmonious relationship developed between the Korean nobility and their Mongol overlords.

Tibetan and Tangut Buddhism as represented by the bKa'-brgyud-pa and later Sa-skyapa schools had been influential at the Mongol court in Dadu since the middle of the thirteenth century, and in 1271 C.E. the first lamas arrived in Kaesŏng as part of the diplomatic exchange of religious personnel (KS ch. 27, 548b). Since the lamas enjoyed a high degree of respect in Yuan China, they were at first treated with the utmost reverence and respect by the Koreans. However, as time passed and more lamas arrived in Koryŏ, it gradually dawned on the Koreans that the tantric brand of Buddhism the lamas brought with

<sup>16</sup> *T'aejong sillök* 太祖實錄, ch. 28 (T'aejong fourteenth year). See also *Sejong sillök* 世宗實錄, ch. 24 (Sejong sixth year). For further information on the merger of the Buddhist denominations during the early Chosŏn dynasty, cf. Hō 1986, 522–35.

<sup>17</sup> In this respect it is especially noticeable that there remain no identified stele inscriptions for any of the native Esoteric Buddhist *ācārya*, who were supposedly both prominent and influential.



them was not easy to integrate into the local culture and religion. It would seem that tantric Buddhism of the Tibetan variety appeared strange and perverse in the eyes of both the Confucian government officials as well as to the local Buddhists. The *KS* contains a number of references to Tibetan lamas and their activities in Kaegyöng during the late thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries that are enlightening for our understanding of the way that Koreans saw this “new” form of Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>18</sup> By the time Mongol power in China began to crumble during the middle of the fourteenth century, there were no more lamas in Korea, and their influence on Korean Buddhism as a whole was negligible with the exception of late Koryö Buddhist art.

### *Esoteric Buddhist Rituals*

As we have seen in the previous chapter on Esoteric Buddhism under the Silla, the use of *dhāraṇīs* and mantras was widespread in Korean Buddhism beyond sectarian limits, and this trend can be observed as having continued during the following dynasty. In addition to the use of spells and ritual magic, a whole new range of Esoteric Buddhist rituals was introduced and developed by the receiving culture in the course of the Koryö.<sup>19</sup> Many of these rituals formed part of the *hoguk pulgyo* 護國佛教 ideology (Buddhism as protector of the kingdom) and were directed against a wide range of dangers perceived as being a threat to the kingdom.<sup>20</sup> The *KS* contains much information on the types, occasions, time and numbers, and locations for the

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<sup>18</sup> For a study of the Tibetan lamas in Korea, see Sørensen 1993a. The *KS* contains a lengthy account of a Tibetan lama who arrived in Kaegyöng in 1276 C.E. That the lama in question, who is recorded as having enjoyed women, meat, and wine, did not meet with great understanding from the Korean courtiers is no wonder. The extensive and undoubtedly costly ritual he performed was so alien to or different from the Buddhist rituals to which they were accustomed that nobody was able to relate to it. In the end he was forced to leave, and although other lamas arrived in Kaegyöng later, Tibetan tantric Buddhism never really caught on in Korea (*KS* vol. 3, ch. 89, biographical section, ch. 2, 20b–21a). See also *CPT* vol. 1, 287–288. In the *Yuan shi* 元史 (History of the Yuan), in the section describing the tantric rituals practiced at the court of Emperor Shun (r. 1333–1367), we find a similar critical and moralistic tone.

<sup>19</sup> A detailed discussion of religious, social, and historical aspects of these rituals can be found in Kim Chongmyöng 2001. See also Kim Hyöng’u 1992; this study is important for its useful statistics. See Sørensen 1997a.

<sup>20</sup> For an overall discussion of the concept of *hoguk pulgyo* during the Koryö, see Höng 1977, 11–32 and Ko 1977, 33–60. Note that both contributions are somewhat tendentious and have strong nationalistic undertones that reflect the political reality of South Korea during the 1970s.

performance of these rituals (see Kim Hyŏng'u 1992, 200–312). Some of these fully belonged, of course, to Esoteric Buddhism, including the rites dedicated to various wrathful divinities (*vidyārājas* such as Aparājitā, Āṭavaka, Mahāmāyūrī, and Mārīcī),<sup>21</sup> the host of spirits, and so on, whereas others such as the Buddhhoṣṇīṣa, the Inwang 仁王 (based on the *Renwang jing*), the Heavenly Kings ritual, and worship of the planets and constellations contained extensive Esoteric Buddhist parts without being wholly so.

The bestowal of the bodhisattva precepts (*posal chae* 菩薩戒) on the Koryŏ kings, together with an Esoteric Buddhist initiation (*kwanjŏng* 灌頂; *abhiṣeka*), was an important ritual in the royal cult that served to cement the relationship between the rulers and Buddhism. Almost all of the Koryŏ kings are recorded as having received these precepts and accompanying initiation at least once during their respective reigns. However, we do know that the more devout ones had these rites carried out several times during their respective reigns.<sup>22</sup>

When looking closely at the information on the Buddhist rituals mentioned in the *KS*, it soon becomes evident that a significant number of them were concerned with propitiating divinities in heaven. In fact, one may argue that the chief concerns of the Buddhist ritual specialists working on behalf of the Koryŏ court, sought to manipulate what may be called “heavenly forces.”

Foremost among the deities believed to dwell in the heavenly abodes is Indra, the lord of the gods in heaven. As an assimilated Hindu god Indra is among the oldest protectors in Buddhism, and can be found as such in the earliest Indian scriptural sources. In Korea this cult,

<sup>21</sup> As warfare and invasions plagued the Koryŏ throughout most of the dynasty's existence, it is not surprising to find the goddess of war, the martial goddess Mārīcī, whose abode was believed to be the Pole Star, among the Esoteric Buddhist deities to which rituals were frequently directed. In fact, she was one of the most popular deities worshipped in connection with appeal for assistance from the astral powers in cases of armed conflict as well as for prayers for a more individual, auspicious destiny. One case mentioned in the *KS* informs us to the extent that:

On the *mihaeng* day [in the sixth month of 1151 C.E.] a Mārīcī ritual was held in Myŏt'ong Temple 妙通寺. On this day in the Suchang Palace sacrifices were made to the seventy-two stars [i.e., the stars making up the twenty-eight lunar mansions] in the Myŏngin Hall 明仁殿. Furthermore, sacrifices were made to the Heavenly Sovereign, the Great Emperor Taiyi 太乙, and to the sixteen spirits with prayers [against] epidemics. (*KS* I, ch. 17, 361a)

<sup>22</sup> Such as during the reigns of kings Uijong and Mŏngjong. For this data see Kim 1992, 270.

which probably came into being during the Silla kingdom, became very important during the Koryŏ dynasty. In Korean Buddhist iconography, Indra, as the leader of the gods, is placed at the head of a divine army of spirit generals that protects Buddhism. Rituals dedicated to the worship of Indra were performed frequently within the grounds of the royal palace where a special Indra shrine was erected. The *KS* informs us that rituals were performed there or sometimes in the open space outside this building (see *KS* I, ch. 9, 184a). It is clear from the *KS* that Indra rituals, or the worship of Indra as such, were carried out in conjunction with other Esoteric Buddhist rites, including the ritual for the removal of calamities (i.e., seeking protection from heavenly transformations). Hence it formed part of the worship of the divinities of the asterisms and constellations, as well as rites for the prevention of natural disasters such as drought and flooding. In his function as heavenly sovereign, Indra was believed to be in control of dragons and other elemental beings, and was often invoked in connection with natural disasters relating to the water element.<sup>23</sup> The sources also mention that in order to attain longevity King Uijong 毅宗 (r. 1146–1170) was encouraged by the palace official Yŏng Yi 榮儀 (?–1170; *HITS* 469b) to have numerous images of Indra and the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara painted and distributed to the various temples near Kaesŏng, including the important Anhwa Temple 安化寺.<sup>24</sup> In this manner we see how Indra, who was in charge of the heavenly bureaucracy, was much like the Jade Emperor (Yu Di 玉帝) in Chinese Daoism.

It is interesting to note that the Indra cult enjoyed a special popularity under the Koryŏ, a popularity that was not matched by contemporary Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. The reason for this is not immediately known, but it is not unlikely that this may have rested on an imagined connection between Indra as the sovereign of the gods in heaven and the Koryŏ kings as sovereigns of the Korean people, that is, the rulers on earth. Undoubtedly due to the fact that Indra was considered the king of the gods, we sometimes find the heavenly luminaries and the other constellations worshipped in conjunction with the Indra rituals.

<sup>23</sup> Sŏ Yun'gil has identified the *Mahāmegha sūtra* (T. 989), an important Esoteric Buddhist scripture, as one of the primary sources for Indra worship. See Sŏ 1993, 89–90.

<sup>24</sup> *KS* III, ch. 123, 671b–672a (biographies, ch. 36).

As mentioned above, worship of the constellations and planets played an important role in the ritual complex at the Koryŏ court. Almost yearly the court arranged ceremonies for the worship of the heavenly bodies, that is, the nine planets and the twenty-eight lunar mansions. Although the degree of Buddhist influence in these rites is not always clear, the *KS* offers sufficient information to establish with certainty that at least several of them were directly connected with Esoteric Buddhism.

The worship of the nine luminaries, actually the seven major heavenly bodies and two lunar nodes (i.e., Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Mercury, the Sun, and the Moon, plus Rāhu and Ketu, the gods of eclipses), formed a central part of Buddhist rituals held at the Koryŏ court. In accordance with ancient Chinese beliefs—which the Koreans probably inherited as early as the founding of Han 漢 dynasty colonies in the northern part of the Korean Peninsula—the planets and the constellations were the seats of divinities or spirits that were not always disposed to friendliness towards humans. In actual fact, by the time of the Koryŏ it appears that the planetary and astral divinities were mainly seen as malevolent or at least as potentially dangerous. Hence, the chief purpose of worship or of having rituals dedicated to these heavenly bodies was to avert the eventual danger that their movements heralded.<sup>25</sup>

For the year 1212 C.E., the *KS* informs us that a ritual based on the *Yansheng jing* 延生經 (Scripture on Longevity)<sup>26</sup> was held over a period of three days in the Inner Palace (*KS* I, ch. 21, 435a). Rituals of this type are likely to have been based on the *Sumuk-hanāma-dhāraṇī*

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<sup>25</sup> Sacrifices to the planets and astral powers occurred frequently as part of a cluster of rituals. Thus we find that on a *ch'ŭksa* day (twenty-third year of Uijong, i.e., 1169 C.E.) sacrifices were made to the (gods) of the twenty-eight constellations and to the Northern Dipper. In the second month sacrifices were again made to the eleven planets and the twenty-eight constellations, this time in the Inner Palace. Shortly after, the same ritual was repeated in the Sumun Hall. This time sacrifices were made to the eleven planets, the Southern Dipper, the Northern Dipper, the twenty-eight constellations, and the twelve spirits of the zodiac (cf. *KS* I, ch. 19, 383ab). In relation to these rituals it is interesting to note that there was a special Nine Planets Hall in the royal palace as early as under the reign of the first Koryŏ king (cf. *KS* I, ch. 1, 42a). For evidence of this hall from the middle of the dynasty, cf. *KS* I, ch. 23, 476b (x 2), 477b, and 478a. It is also known that sacrifices to the Northern Dipper were sometimes performed by the king himself. Cf. *KS* I, ch. 24, 484b (x 2).

<sup>26</sup> Most likely this refers to *T.* 1307. However, this could indicate a ritual based on the *Yanshou jing* 延壽經 (Scripture on Longevity), another apocryphal work (cf. *T.* 2888).

*sūtra*<sup>27</sup> and the apocryphal *Beidou qisheng yanming jing* 北斗七星延命經 (Scripture of the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper Extending Life),<sup>28</sup> in which the seven stars of the Great Dipper are invoked.<sup>29</sup>

Probably the most important ritual meant to dispel the influence from the planets and the other astral spirits was the so-called *Sojae toryang* 消災道場, or ritual for averting calamities. It is not clear what exactly this ritual involved in terms of actual proceedings, but it is clear that it was performed in response to signs and omens in the sky, that is, it was directly connected with the movements of the planets and the constellations.<sup>30</sup> Korean scholars have argued that the cult of the stellar Buddha Tejabrabha,<sup>31</sup> or Buddha of the Golden Wheel, based on the *Da weide jinlun foding Chishengguang rulai xiaochu yiqie zainan tuoluoni jing* 大威德金輪佛頂熾盛光如來消除一切災難陀羅尼經 (Sūtra of the Great Majestic and Virtuous Golden Wheel Uṣṇīṣa Tejabrabha Tathāgata Averting All Calamities and Hardships *Dhāraṇī*) and the *Chi shengguang da weide xiaozai jiyang tuoluoni jing* 熾盛光大威德消災吉祥陀羅尼經 (Tejabrabha Great Majestic and Virtuous Averting Calamities Auspicious *Dhāraṇī* Sūtra; T. 963),<sup>32</sup> constituted the textual basis of this ritual.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> T. 1140. This scripture was one of many translated by Faxian 法賢 under imperial auspices in the Northern Song. See Orzech, "Translation of Tantras and other Esoteric Buddhist scriptures," in this volume.

<sup>28</sup> T. 1307. It is not known when this scripture was first introduced to Korea. In any case it was not included in any of the Korean *Tripitakas*, and may have been introduced separately. The earliest extant version of this scripture dates from the middle of the Chosŏn dynasty.

<sup>29</sup> The Seven Stars as a special longevity cult in Korean Buddhism probably goes back to the late Unified Silla. During the Chosŏn dynasty it became very popular, and remains so even today. See Sørensen 1995c. For a study of the scripture see Franke, "The Taoist Elements in the Buddhist Great Bear Sūtra (Pei-tou ching)," 1990: 75-111.

<sup>30</sup> The *Sŏngbyŏn soje so* 星變消除疏 (Prayer for Averting Calamities [Caused by] the Planetary Transformations), a panegyric composed on the occasion of a Buddhist ritual to be held at the Koryŏ court, provides some insight into the practical aspects of the Tejabrabha cult during the second half of the dynasty (cf. *HPC* vol. 6, 892a).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. T. 964. The version of T. 963 was supposedly translated by Amoghavajra. For examples among the Dunhuang manuscripts, cf. P. 2194 and P. 2382. This apocryphal scripture was known in Korea, at least from the eleventh century onwards, and is included in Lancaster et al. 1979, entry K 1171. For more on astral cults see Sørensen, "Astrology and Worship of the Planets in Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang," in this volume.

<sup>32</sup> See Sørensen, "Astrology and Worship of the Planets in Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang," in this volume.

<sup>33</sup> According to the statistics based on data compiled from the *KS*, the ritual for averting calamities was one of the most frequently performed rituals at the Koryŏ court. See Sørensen 1997a, 7-9 and Chŏng 1986, 298-299.

Rites performed to prevent natural catastrophes such as flooding or drought were also common. Usually rain-making (or rain-stopping) rituals were directed towards the dragon kings. These beings were conceived of as dwelling in the ocean, lakes, and rivers of the realm, and were held to be in charge of the natural forces that depended upon water as their main ingredient. There are several Esoteric Buddhist rituals for rain-making in the Sino-Korean Buddhist canon, but it is uncertain which ritual the Korean court Buddhists employed.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the more commonly held rituals, there were several other types that were performed less frequently, at least in connection with the royal palace. Among these was the worship of the thousand-armed, thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara.<sup>35</sup> Rituals of this type were most likely based on the *Nilakanṭhaka sūtra* (T. 1060) and its ritual compendia. There were also rituals dedicated to the Four Heavenly Kings (KS I, ch. 22, 444b) and to the *vidyārājas* Yamāntaka (KS I, ch. 23, 471b), Aparājitā, and so on.<sup>36</sup> Especially the latter two of these protectors were popular during the first half of the thirteenth century, as indicated by the many entries in the KS.

The popularity of the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī* during the Koryŏ has been referred to above, and it is not surprising that we also find it prominently represented among the Buddhist rituals held at the royal palace. Again, the KS provides no details on the actual performance of the ritual but limits itself to information on when and where it was held.<sup>37</sup>

### *The Influence of Esoteric Buddhism on other Koryŏ Buddhist Schools*

In addition to the declared schools of Esoteric Buddhism, the Sinin and the Ch'ŏngji that were active under the Koryŏ, Esoteric Buddhist practices appear to have been widely used by the other denominations of Buddhism as well (cf. Sŏ 1993, 251–297). It has already been mentioned that the compiler of the *Pömsŏ ch'ŏngji chip* was a monk

<sup>34</sup> The KS records one such dragon king ritual that is said to have lasted for seven days (cf. KS I, ch. 17, 360b). It also refers to a “five hundred *arhat* feast” in connection with a prayer for rain held in Poje Temple (KS I, ch. 17, 360b).

<sup>35</sup> One such formal ritual by King Kongmin (1351–1374) is recorded as having taken place in the Inhui Hall of the royal palace (cf. KS III, ch. 2, 34b).

<sup>36</sup> KS I, ch. 21, 429a (Sinjong 6); KS I, ch. 22, 442a, 442b, and 444a. Kojong 4 (1217 C.E.), Kojong 14, 2 rituals in the ninth and tenth months; KS I, ch. 22, 453a.

<sup>37</sup> One such ritual is recorded as having lasted five full days (cf. KS I, ch. 17, 345b).

from the Chaün school, which indicates that the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* enjoyed popularity and use beyond a strictly Esoteric Buddhist context.

Esoteric Buddhist influence on the Pure Land tradition and the cult of Avalokiteśvara took a variety of forms during the Koryō. An important work is Wōnjong's 元昂 (fl. thirteenth century; *HPIS* 207a) *Hyōnhaeng sōbang kyōng* 現行西方經 (On the Cultivation of the Scripture on the Western [Paradise]; *HPC* vol. 6, 860b–877a), which combines doctrinal explanation and methods for practice relating to rebirth in Sukhāvati. The practices described include the use of spells/mantras and *bija* visualization. We also have the *Paegwi hae* 白衣解 (The White-Robed Liberation)<sup>38</sup> composed by the scholar-monk Hyeyōng 惠永 (1228–1305).<sup>39</sup> This work is a ritual text concerned with repentance in order to rid oneself of evil karma and disease and features mantras lifted from the *Vajrasekhara* (*STTS*) and other Esoteric Buddhist sūtras (cf. Sō 1993, 208–241).

In the written sources relating to the Ch'ōnt'ae school, in particular during the latter half of the Koryō dynasty, we find several examples of the use of Esoteric Buddhist practices. Yose, the founder of the Paengyonsa on Mt. Mandōk, was a practitioner of the *fahua sanmei chan yi* 法華三昧懺儀 (ritual of repentance according to the lotus *samādhi*; *T.* 1941), which recommends the use of mantras as part of its ritual proceedings. A further indication of the repertoire of Esoteric Buddhist texts, as well as concepts of teaching and transmission used by the Ch'ōnt'ae monks during the period in question, can be found at the very beginning of Ch'ōnch'aek's *Sōnmun pojang nok* (*HPC* vol. 6, 469c–484a). Here we find reference to the “*yoga-abhiṣeka* of the five divisions” (*yuga kwanjōng ōbu* 瑜伽灌頂五部), “*homa* of the three mysteries” (*homa sammil* 護摩三密), and “*mandala methods*” (*mannara pōp* 曼拏羅法).<sup>40</sup> In any case, the extant sources provide enough information for us to ascertain that Esoteric Buddhist rituals

<sup>38</sup> *HPC* vol. 6, 411b–417. See also Sørensen 1991–1992a, 182–83.

<sup>39</sup> For biographical details on his life, cf. *CKS* I, 596–598; and *HPIS* 347ab.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *HPC* vol. 6, 470bc. Ch'ōnch'aek is here saying that he is quoting from the Song work, the *Sengshi lüe* 僧史略 (Abbreviated History of Monks) compiled by Zanning 贊寧 (919–1002; cf. *T.* 2126). However, a comparison between this work and the passage from the *Sōnmun pojang nok* shows that this is actually not the case. Most probably Ch'ōnch'aek was referring to the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, which was also compiled by Zanning.

formed part and parcel of Ch'önt'ae practices, at least after the middle of the Koryŏ.

When turning to Sŏn Buddhism, the case is slightly different. If we set aside the cult of Tosŏn that gained popularity during the early part of the Koryŏ (cf. Sö 1993, 32–67), there is no strong evidence for the influence of Esoteric Buddhism on the Sŏn tradition during the first century of the dynasty. Actually it is not until the end of the Koryŏ when we find more solid traces of this influence. Sŏn Buddhism of the late Koryŏ was dominated by monks such as T'aego Poŭ 太古普愚 (1301–1382), Naong Hyegŭn 懶翁惠勤 (1320–1376), and Paekun Kyŏngghan 白雲景閑 (1299–1374), all of whom transmitted some form of orthodox Linji Chan 林濟禪 (Imje Sŏn), which they had imported from Yuan China during the first half of the fourteenth century.<sup>41</sup> In China there had been very little if no connection between that school of Chan and Esoteric Buddhism; however, in Korea the development took a somewhat different turn. While there is no (or very little) evidence of Esoteric Buddhist influence in the writings of both T'aego nor Paekun, in the case of Naong a few minor pieces can be found among his writings, which indicate an interest in Esoteric Buddhism as well as a relatively high degree of proficiency in its related ritual practices.<sup>42</sup> It would appear that Naong's acquaintance with the Indian monk Dhyānabhadra (1236–1363)<sup>43</sup> was a major inspiration for him and stimulated his interest in Esoteric Buddhism and rituals (cf. Sö 1984, 299–347).<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> For a study of this phase in the history of Korean Sŏn Buddhism, cf. Sö 1984, 201–244; see also Han 1991, 434–504.

<sup>42</sup> *HPC* vol. 6, 717c–718b. There exist two other short pieces by Naong on the six *gāti* (*HPC* vol. 6, 719a–720a and 720c–721a; see also Kim Hyöt'an 1999). It is known that Naong wrote a few addresses to Esoteric Buddhist rituals of the *suryuk che* 水陸 type (water and land ritual), which are performed in order to seek the liberation of the ghosts of the dead that have not been able to be reborn. Rituals of this type require a complex procedure in which altars, mantras, invocations, and offerings are extensively used. For a highly useful discussion of the *shuilu* ritual in Chinese Buddhism, see Stevenson 2001.

<sup>43</sup> For a complete study of Dhyānabhadra and his relationship with Koryŏ Buddhism, see Hö 1997.

<sup>44</sup> This is according to Dhyānabhadra's stele inscription, the *Söch'on Chenambakt'a chonja pudo myŏng* 西天提納薄陀尊者浮圖銘 (Pudo Inscription of the Indian Ven. Dhyānabhadra). Cf. *CKS* vol. 2, 1283–1289; and *T.* 2089 (4).51:982c–985c. This inscription is composed so as to emulate an autobiography. Here we learn that Dhyānabhadra was well versed in the *vinaya*, the teachings of *prajñā* (Mādhyamika philosophy), and that he mastered the whole range of Esoteric Buddhist teachings including the various *dhāraṇīs* (*T.* 2089.51: 983a–984b). However, he was clearly opposed to the practice



*Empowerment of Buddhist Images during the Koryŏ*

The practice of empowerment of Buddhist images in Korea can be documented as far back as the early Unified Silla.<sup>45</sup> However, at that time there were evidently no fixed or uniform rules laying down the exact ritual procedures for empowerment. It would appear that various types of relics were used, scriptures as well, but as far as we can tell there were no orthodox textual guidelines for how this was to be done. This means that rites of empowerment were carried out unsystematically and with great variance. In the course of the Unified Silla this changed, probably with the arrival of Amoghavajra's translations towards the end of the Tang dynasty. From that time onwards, the empowerment of Buddhist images came to be entirely based on Esoteric Buddhist lore and beliefs going back to the texts of the mature Esoteric Buddhist tradition of the mid-Tang.

Under the Koryŏ the ritual procedures used in the empowerment of Buddhist images would appear to have been quite varied: as far as we can tell, they followed a variety of scriptural sources. This becomes evident when comparing the extant *pokchang* 腹藏, the abdominal stuffing of images, all dating from the second half of the Koryŏ.<sup>46</sup> The *pokchang* were ritually created through the use of printed mandalas and *dhāraṇī*-charts, as well as through relics (*śarīra*), holy scriptures, and other precious objects empowered through the ritual. Although part of the physical objects placed inside a given image, the mandalas and *dhāraṇī*-charts used in these rites constituted a sort of micro-cosmic element, in effect an internalized or incorporated representation of the Dharmadhātu, the Buddhist sphere of universal enlightenment.<sup>47</sup>

As far as we can gather from the Koryŏ material at our disposal, there was no standardized or uniform ritual guiding the making of

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of sexual yoga (*karma-mudrā*), which he evidently considered a perversion (see *T.* 2089.51:983b). From his hand we have two short texts; the popular *Nilakaṇṭhaka-dhāraṇī* and an appendix entitled *Kwanseūm posal sisik* 觀世音菩薩施食 (Offering Food to Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva), both of which consist entirely of *dhāraṇīs* in transliterated Sanskrit (cf. *T.* 1113a.20:497c–498c).

<sup>45</sup> See Sørensen, "Early Esoteric Buddhism in Korea: Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla (ca. 600–918)," in this volume.

<sup>46</sup> I have been unable to locate the use of this term in Chinese Buddhist lore, and suspect that its use may reflect a Korean Buddhist tradition. For a discussion of the general use of *pokchang* in Korean Buddhism, see Sørensen 2003. Information on the *pokchang* from the Koryŏ can be found in Hō 1994, 212–51; and in Kang 1975.

<sup>47</sup> See Sørensen forthcoming.

the *pokchang*. In contrast to this situation we find that by the middle Chosŏn a clear-cut and fairly uniform method of empowering Buddhist images had become the norm through the use of the important *Chosang kyŏng* 造像經 (Scripture on Image Making; hereafter CSK).<sup>48</sup> While this main textual authority on empowerment practices under the Chosŏn cannot be taken as evidence for Buddhist practices under the Koryŏ (or at least it can be taken only as indirect evidence), its contents nevertheless reflects on Esoteric Buddhist beliefs and ritual practices in vogue during the later part of that period. This is most evident in the embedded and co-opted textual passages from Esoteric Buddhist scriptures popular during the Koryŏ, including works such as the *Cundīdevī-dhāraṇī sūtra*,<sup>49</sup> the *Sarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhāna-hṛdaya-guhyadhātu-karaṇḍa-mudrā-dhāraṇī*,<sup>50</sup> the *Fomu boruo boluomiduo daming guanxiang yigui* 佛母般若波羅蜜多大明觀想儀軌 (Ritual Proceedings of Contemplating the Great Splendor of Buddha-Mother Prajñāpāramitā),<sup>51</sup> the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*,<sup>52</sup> and so on. Hence, the CSK reveals that most of the material forming its core is based on practices and beliefs current in Korean Buddhism prior to the Chosŏn. Nevertheless, the kind of standardization of which the CSK is excellent proof is a relatively late phenomenon that was surely not applied during the Koryŏ. As stated previously, the CSK can only be taken as indicative, and not as representative, of the use of mandalas and *dhāraṇīs* in the creation of *pokchang* for Buddhist images during the Koryŏ. This is clear from a number of reports on the analysis of the contents and composition of *pokchang* taken from a number of images that were empowered during the late Koryŏ. This material shows on the one hand less systematization and standardization than the information we have on the creation of *pokchang* from the CSK (and as documented in Chosŏn Buddhist material), while on the other hand it appears to be closer to the Esoteric Buddhist tradition from Song China than the data we encounter in the latter text

<sup>48</sup> Despite its title this is not a proper sūtra, but a composite work including textual elements from both Esoteric Buddhism as well as the mainstream exoteric tradition. Two editions are presently available, a reprint of the 1824 edition from Yuch'ŏm Temple 楡岾寺 (Poryon'gak ed.), and a modern, bilingual edition in both Hanmun and Chinese, the *Che pul posal pokchang tan ūisik* 諸佛菩薩腹藏壇儀式 (1992).

<sup>49</sup> See T. 1076. The corresponding passage is in the CSK 40a–43a.

<sup>50</sup> T. 1022ab. The passage is in CSK 46b–48b.

<sup>51</sup> T. 1152. The passage is in CSK 43b–46b.

<sup>52</sup> T. 848. The passage is in CSK 49a–50a.

(see Chön 1990, 47–64). In any case, the printed mandalas that have been recovered from a number of Koryŏ images functioned foremost as powerful, spiritual symbols in which the entire Buddhist cosmos, the Dharmadhātu with all its divinities and protective spells, are integrated. In this way the mandalas served as a sort of “compressed” talisman, in effect a chart of power. Similar “compressions” were used in cases where, instead of placing holy scriptures inside a given image, a contents list of the entire Buddhist canon could also be put inside a *pokchang*.<sup>53</sup> In contrast, the mandalas and *dhāraṇī*-charts used in the CSK’s pentad format reveal an integrated and highly structured type of empowerment ritual.

### *Esoteric Buddhist Art and Material Culture under the Koryŏ*

Despite the fact that Esoteric Buddhist rituals were performed with a relatively high frequency at and for the Koryŏ court throughout the dynasty, extant examples of Esoteric Buddhist art from the period in question, especially votive images and paintings, are generally wanting. When compared with the court of Heian Japan, where Esoteric Buddhism and its rituals enjoyed an equally prominent status and from which period a rich heritage of Esoteric Buddhist art has survived, the situation for the Koryŏ is peculiar indeed. This anomaly is not easy to explain; however, a survey and analysis of the surviving material may go some way towards a plausible explanation for this situation.

Koryŏ sculptures with a clear Esoteric Buddhist affiliation are very small in number and generally do not feature a particularly distinct Esoteric Buddhist iconography. Images of the unadorned Vairocana Buddha with his hands held in the *vajramuṣṭī-mudrā* are known, but often their contexts are exoteric in nature, that is, the images in question were made for one of the other schools of Korean Buddhism such as the Sŏn or Hwaŏm denominations (Hwang 1988, 71, 74, 217–218). During the fourteenth century, towards the end of the dynasty, the influence from Sino-Tibetan art from Yuan China was felt in Korea, and for obvious reasons these reveal a more distinct Esoteric Buddhist iconography as well as style.<sup>54</sup> Even so, no examples of tantric images

<sup>53</sup> For the role of talismans in Esoteric Buddhism see Robson, “Talismans in Esoteric Buddhism,” in this volume.

<sup>54</sup> For these images cf. Hwang 1988, 76, 84, 218, 219. See also *Koryŏ mal Chosŏn cho ūi misul* 1996, 35, pls. 41–43. A general description of these images can be found in Chin 1997, 530–44.

of the *yab-yum* variety, such as Hevajra or Cakrasaṃvara, have so far been found.

Extant Esoteric Buddhist paintings from the Koryŏ are even less in evidence than surviving examples of sculptural art. Out of more than one hundred documented Buddhist paintings, including records of those that no longer exist, only one single work belongs to Esoteric Buddhism, namely, a painting of the goddess of war, Mārīcī.<sup>55</sup> Records of paintings that are no longer extant mention Esoteric Buddhist divinities such as the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara and Ekādaśamukha (the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara), but little else (see Chin 1992, 341–342).

In contrast to the lack of sculptures and paintings, quite a number of ritual implements reflecting Esoteric Buddhist iconography and practices have survived. This material includes reliquaries (Chin 1997, 595–649), hand bells (*ghaṇṭā*) and *vajras* (*Koryŏ mal Chosŏn cho ūi misul* 1996, pls. 69, 70), chimes, gongs (*Koryŏ mal Chosŏn cho ūi misul* 1996, pls. 67, 68), and incense burners.<sup>56</sup> Bells and *vajras* are of course some of the most common ritual implements used in Esoteric Buddhism.

In light of the fact that rituals related to Esoteric Buddhist beliefs and practices were central to court Buddhism in the capital Kaegyŏng (Kaesŏng) during most of the Koryŏ, it is difficult to come to terms with the acute lack of extant examples of related objects of art. Is it likely that Esoteric Buddhist art originally existed inside the sanctuaries of the royal palace as well as in the large Buddhist monasteries around the country, but that warfare and historical decay are to blame for its almost total disappearance? Such an understanding of the problem is of course plausible were it not for the fact that many other pieces of “high class” Buddhist art from the period in question have indeed survived. It is rather unlikely that only Esoteric Buddhist art should have disappeared while that of the exoteric Buddhist traditions, such as that of the Pure Land or Hwaŏm, are still extant in a relatively great number.

A more logical way of explaining the “missing” Esoteric Buddhist art is to consider the possibility that Esoteric Buddhist rituals may

<sup>55</sup> Now in the collection of the Shōtaku-in in Kyōto. See Yi 1974, 100–106. See also Yamato 1978, 71, pl. 16.

<sup>56</sup> For examples, see *Koryŏ mal Chosŏn cho ūi misul* 1996, pls. 64–66. These incense burners are usually decorated with seed-syllables (*bīja*) written in Siddham script, either as mantras or as representing Esoteric Buddhist divinities.

have been performed within the context of exoteric Buddhism and possibly without the elaborate rituals that characterized traditional Esoteric Buddhism as practiced under the Tang and the Heian. In other words, it is not unlikely that the traditional Esoteric Buddhist art, including its developed iconographical language as we know it from Tang China, was actually never a reality under the Koryŏ. If this holds true, it would indicate that an actual historical transmission of Esoteric Buddhist lore, including ritual art, never took place, or at least did so only in some limited form, and that the Koryŏ Buddhists in all probability performed their Esoteric Buddhist rituals on the basis of the scriptural sources only.

### *Conclusion*

With the introduction of the printed Buddhist canon from China during the early Northern Song, the Koreans became exposed to an extensive collection of books relating to Esoteric Buddhism. This material included some of the most recent and developed scriptures, including tantric Buddhist texts. There can be little doubt that this massive influx of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures from China greatly stimulated the development of new Buddhist rituals and the rise of a local tradition of Esoteric Buddhist practitioners. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that very few Esoteric Buddhist texts of purely Korean provenance have survived. This is probably due to the fact that most of the current Esoteric Buddhist beliefs, practices, and rituals were based on canonical scriptures that had originally been imported from China. The names and types of the rituals that were performed at the royal court or in the major temples would seem to support this hypothesis.

The question of the existence and historical reality of independent Esoteric Buddhist schools under the Koryŏ is still rather blurred, although we now have a much clearer picture of it. It can be established that both the Ch'ŏngji and Sinin schools existed during the middle and later half of the dynasty, but concrete historical information is hard to come by. It is possible that the monks, who were affiliated with both of these denominations, were actually recruited from the major schools of Koryŏ Buddhism and merely served as a kind of ritual functionary.

Information on a great number of Esoteric Buddhist rituals is our best source of knowledge regarding the role and importance of Esoteric Buddhism during the Koryŏ. The sources indicate that virtually

all public Buddhist rituals were either full-fledged Esoteric Buddhist rituals or at the very least contained parts that were so. The royal cult would appear to have been partly upheld through the performance of Esoteric Buddhist rituals. In particular the concept of “Buddhism as protector of the kingdom” was a dominant feature throughout the dynasty.

Esoteric Buddhism influenced Koryŏ Buddhism as a whole, and its ideas and beliefs would appear to have shaped Buddhist ritual throughout the dynasty and beyond. Although we cannot say so for certain, it would appear that Esoteric Buddhism was most prominent during the middle and second half of the dynasty.

Practices of empowerment were widespread in Koryŏ Buddhism and were used for the creation of Buddhist images, reliquaries, and *stūpas*. It is evident that these practices were in large measure based on instructions coming from Esoteric Buddhist scriptures, and it would appear that translations ascribed to the three *ācāryas* from Tang China formed the core of these sources.

Surviving examples of Esoteric Buddhist art from the Koryŏ are few in number and may be taken as a sign that the Koreans never developed the same rich and complex iconography that characterizes Shingon Buddhism in Japan. It would appear that the reason for this was that the Koreans never received a full transmission of Esoteric Buddhist lore. It is likely that much of their Esoteric Buddhist rituals and associated paraphernalia were created locally on the basis of Buddhist scriptures imported from Song China and probably also the Liao. Nevertheless, the use of Siddha was widely practiced by the Koryŏ Buddhists, and graphic mandalas and *dhāraṇīs* have been documented in great numbers.

## 58. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM UNDER THE CHOSŎN

Henrik H. Sørensen

### *Introduction*

Korean Buddhism as it unfolded in the course of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910) has often been considered an inferior and degenerated form of Buddhism—a tradition that on the one hand was blemished by superstitious beliefs and practices, and on the other hand a religion that was becoming steadily impoverished and weak due to dwindling support from the country's elite and other members of the wealthy classes. This popular and distorted view should be seen against the backdrop of late nineteenth to early twentieth century observations by both Western and Japanese missionaries, who of course had their own private agendas to promote.

Contrary to this simplistic and superficial view, it is a proven fact that Buddhism, despite the many setbacks it suffered, was relatively vital during long periods of that dynasty, with the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries constituting the most flourishing phase.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the Buddhist communities enjoyed many of their old privileges and continued to be an active and important player in the spiritual life of the Koreans. The bleak picture sometimes painted of dilapidated and poor temples with derelict monastic populations is only valid for the period immediately following the Imjin War of 1592–1598 and in the final decades of the nineteenth century when the political apparatus fell apart in the face of large-scale natural disasters, massive civilian unrest, and foreign incursions. During certain reign-periods Buddhist rituals were performed at the royal court, and the religion also commanded a steady following among the nobility.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The rebuilding and restoration of most of the temples that had been ravaged by the Japanese during the Imjin War, the continued production of high-quality religious artifacts, as well as the numerous new editions of Buddhist books that were printed after 1600 reveal that the Buddhist monasteries on the whole were neither poor nor without access to resources.

<sup>2</sup> For an excellent survey of the Buddhō-Confucian conflict, see Jorgensen 1998, 189–242. See also the excellent paper by Pu 2005, 25–46.

It was mainly in the second half of the fifteenth century, especially during the tyrannical reigns of Sŏngjong (r. 1469–1494), Yŏnsan'gun (r. 1494–1506), and Chungjong (r. 1506–1544), that the social standing of Buddhism, including its ability to influence the higher strata of Chosŏn society, was effectively broken.<sup>3</sup> Later, many of the restrictions placed on Buddhism by the Confucian bureaucracy, although they nominally remained in effect, were in practice relaxed and rarely upheld.

As the dominant and culturally most influential of all the various forms of Korean Buddhism during the Chosŏn, the Sŏn 禪 tradition has tended to overshadow the other Buddhist traditions, even to the point of being identified with Korean Buddhism as such. This is of course an incorrect view of the actual situation, but it cannot be denied that Sŏn Buddhism was by far the most vital and influential Buddhist tradition throughout the Chosŏn dynasty. However, it is also clear that Korean Sŏn during this period, in particular after 1500 C.E., was neither exclusivist and purist in orientation nor particularly burdened by concerns of orthodoxy (see Sørensen 1993a, 521–546). From this perspective Chosŏn Sŏn was relatively ecumenical in its orientation towards other forms of Buddhist practices and beliefs, and as such much closer to Chan Buddhism of the Ming than to the Rinzai 臨濟 and Sôtō 曹洞 schools of Japanese Zen, which are known for upholding strict orthodoxy and sectarian purity (even though these were, and still are, more questions of outward formality than actual reality). Both Pure Land beliefs and practices as well as Ch'ŏnt'ae 天台 and Hwaŏm 華嚴 doctrine were integrated parts of Chosŏn Sŏn. Likewise, Esoteric Buddhist lore continued to play an important role in Sŏn temples, especially in the performance of many rituals. Hence, the tendency towards syncretism between dominant lineages of Sŏn and the various traditions of doctrinal Buddhism (Kyo 教), including their doctrines and practices, was a primary characteristic of Chosŏn Buddhism. Furthermore, we also find evidence in the Buddhist literature from this period of a considerable interest in harmonization with Confucianism and the classical Daoist philosophy of the Lao-Zhuang 老莊 variety.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A highly useful survey of this situation is given in Han 1993, 273–363. See also Yi Pongch'un 1992, 355–376. See also the excellent study by Han 2000.

<sup>4</sup> See the anonymous and apologetic *Yūsök ch'ilwi non* 儒釋質疑論 (Treatise on the Clarification of Doubts on Confucianism and Buddhism) in *Hanguk pulgyŏ*



As far as we can tell, Esoteric Buddhism of the Chosŏn period continued the practices of the Sinin 神印宗 and Ch'ongji 摠持宗 schools of the Koryŏ (see Sørensen 2005, 49–84). However, in order to fully appreciate the Esoteric Buddhist tradition that existed under the Chosŏn, it is important to note that it existed as a phenomenon transcending sectarian boundaries and in essentially non-denominational contexts despite the fact that the Sŏn tradition was the dominant form of Buddhism.

After the old Koryŏ schools of Buddhism were forced to merge during the early fifteenth century, the two Esoteric Buddhist schools were incorporated into the new dual structure of Sŏn and Kyo.<sup>5</sup> This meant that monks trained in Esoteric Buddhist lore came to function primarily as ritual specialists within this new institutional structure. In fact, there is good reason to see the transmission of ritual practices and the associated practices such as Buddhist music, painting, and knowledge of spell-writing in Sanskrit to have been the province of monks trained in Esoteric Buddhism.

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*chŏnsŏ* (hereafter *HPC*), vol. 7, 252b–279a, as well as Hyŏjŏng's *Samga kugam* 三家龜鑑 (Magic Mirror of the Three Families) (*HPC* vol. 7, 616a–634b). For a discussion of the doctrinal and philosophical issues at stake, see Han 1981, 78–124.

<sup>5</sup> By the time that the Koryŏ ended, Korean Buddhism consisted of eleven schools or denominations, including two branches of Sŏn (Chogye 曹溪 and Imje 臨濟), and the Ch'ŏnt'ae, Ch'ongji, Pŏpsa 法事宗, Sŏja 疏疏宗, Hwaŏm, Tomun 道門宗, Chungdo 中道宗, Chaŭn 慈恩宗, Sinin, Sihŭng 始興宗, and Namsan 南山宗 schools. According to both traditional Buddhist sources and historical records, the two Esoteric Buddhist denominations, the Sinin and the Ch'ongji, were absorbed into the Chungdo and Chogye schools of Buddhism, respectively, during the first attempt at reforming that religion. This merger took place in 1407 C.E. on the basis of a decree that ordered the Buddhist denominations to merge into seven denominations: the Chogye (Sŏn), Ch'ŏnt'ae, Hwaŏm, Chaŭn, Chungsin 中神宗 (Chungdo and Sinin schools), Ch'ongnam 摠南宗 (Ch'ongji and Namsan schools), and Sihŭng schools. In 1424 C.E. (the sixth year of King Sejong's reign), only eighteen years later, the Ch'ŏnt'ae, Ch'ongnam, and Chogye schools were finally merged into the school of Sŏn, while the other (mainly doctrinal) schools of Buddhism (i.e., the Chungsin, Hwaŏm, Chaŭn, and Sihŭng) were merged into the school of Kyo ("doctrinal Buddhism"). Officially the Kyo tradition was dominated by Hwaŏm Buddhism, but in reality it encompassed a wide range of diverse practices and cults, all equally important. The dual division of Sŏn and Kyo followed the norm set for Buddhism under the Ming, and it lasted the remainder of the dynasty. To some extent this division may still be perceived in today's division between the Chogye and the T'aego 太古 traditions. For a detailed discussion of the mergers and the creation of the dual denominational structure of Chosŏn Buddhism, see Hŏ 1986, 522–548.

In terms of Chosŏn Buddhist culture, its literature, art, and architecture are extremely rich with a deeply rooted and multi-faceted tradition. Especially in the field of literature Buddhism was highly prolific during this period and shows a far greater compatibility with secular learning and lore than would seem to have been the case during the preceding Koryŏ dynasty when Buddhism dominated the intellectual and spiritual arena. It cannot be denied that Chosŏn Buddhism was considerably humbler than that of the Koryŏ in terms of diversity of practices, hermeneutics, philosophy, cultural developments, political power, and economic strength, but that it was much more than a degenerated and declining religion is abundantly clear from the rich and diverse materials still available to us today.

Although there has been some debate recently as regards the position of Esoteric Buddhism as a separate or distinct form of Mahāyāna, it is clear from the Korean sources from the Chosŏn period that Esoteric Buddhism, or *milgyo* 密教, was indeed considered as such. Evidence from 1423 C.E., the fifth year in the reign of King Sejong (r. 1419–1450), mentions that the entire collection of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures from the canon were carved and printed together with the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* (Kwŏn 1988, 1:297–304, 342). Later during the same reign there is a reference to the carving and printing of the “Esoteric Buddhist *Mahāprajñā sūtra* [otherwise unidentified]” (Kwŏn 1988, 1:312, kw. 2). Again the *Sejong sillŏk* 世宗實錄 (Veritable Records of the Reign of Sejong) provides information to the effect that “the wooden blocks containing the Esoteric Buddhist scriptures of the *Tripitaka* written in Siddham were printed and compiled into one section” (Kwŏn 1988, 300, kw. 2). These references indicate beyond any trace of doubt that Esoteric Buddhism was understood as a distinct form of Buddhism with its own set of scriptures.

### *Esoteric Buddhist Literature*

The Esoteric Buddhist literature of the Chosŏn can be divided into four kinds: canonical Buddhist texts, doctrinal tracts and other writing composed by Chosŏn monks, spell collections and manuals, and ritual texts and manuals. As far as we can tell, the canonical texts, consisting of the major Mahāyāna texts and a number of later tantric works, were inherited intact from Koryŏ Buddhism without any significant losses in the transmission. This material constituted the link with the earlier Korean Buddhist traditions, as well as with that of China. In

the course of the dynasty a number of canonical scriptures, including a significant number of apocrypha, underwent modification, becoming Esoteric Buddhist books with added ritual parts and sometimes even containing illustrations or charts.<sup>6</sup>

The second kind of literature included doctrinal tracts and other writing composed by Chosŏn monks. Although very small and highly diverse, this material is sufficiently important to merit our attention. Moreover, much of it was written in order to encompass Esoteric Buddhist beliefs and ritual within traditional, exoteric Buddhist practices.

In the course of the Chosŏn dynasty the Korean practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism compiled a number of spell collections and manuals. As far as we can tell the materials they contain consist mainly of *dhāraṇīs* and mantras lifted from the canonical literature (i.e., from scriptures in the Korean *Tripitaka*). In the course of the Chosŏn, Buddhists also produced more than twenty books of spells, including many reprintings of *dhāraṇī* sūtras and abbreviated versions of these. Their popularity was extensive, something that can be deduced from the many times they were reprinted or their blocks re-carved. The most important of these spell-manuals include the *Chinŏn chip* 真言集 (Collection of Mantras) (cf. Höng 1986, 417–454; and Sørensen 1991–1992a, 169–170), the *Pi milgyo chip* 秘密教焦 (Collection of the Secret, Esoteric Teaching),<sup>7</sup> and the *Chinŏn kwŏn'gong* 真言勸供 (Instructions on Making Offerings [with] Mantras) (Sørensen 1991–1992a, 170–171). Common to most of these manuals is that their contents have been lifted from canonical, Esoteric Buddhist scriptures. Moreover, many of them have been rendered trilingually in Chinese, Han'gŭl, and Sanskrit. While the majority of these compilations of spells have very little or no commentary in the way of practical instructions, a few, such as the *Chinŏn chip* and the ritual compendium *Chakpŏp kugam*, feature lengthy doctrinal explanations as well as instructions on ritual usage.

Finally, the Chosŏn literature contains ritual texts and manuals. On the basis of an extraordinarily large amount of primary sources that still survive, we know not only that Buddhist rituals were highly popular during the Chosŏn (and therefore frequently performed), but also what they may have looked like and how they were performed, even

<sup>6</sup> For a relatively comprehensive list of this material, see Pulgyo munhwa yŏn'gūwŏn 1986, 637–43.

<sup>7</sup> The copy at my disposal is #289006 in the classical book library of Seoul National University, an edition from Ssangye Temple 雙溪寺 dated 1784.

down to the smaller details. This rich textual material, which consists mainly of ritual manuals and handbooks, provides us with an insight into a highly diverse world of ceremony and liturgy in which Esoteric Buddhism and its arcana played a central part. Not only were many standard Chinese Buddhist works on ritual practices printed in several editions down through the centuries, but many new and original Korean compositions and compilations were produced as well. In fact, the local texts appear to have been the most important, at least after the middle of the Chosŏn dynasty. The great diversity of the extant ritual works at our disposal reflects both regional as well as local sectarian developments. Moreover, they also demonstrate the important role rituals played in the overall structure of Buddhism under the Chosŏn.<sup>8</sup> There are essentially two kinds of ritual manuals: (1) those devoted to a specific ritual and (2) more general ones that include texts for several rituals. The *suryuk* texts are examples of the former, while the *Ŏ tae chinŏn chip* is an example of the latter type. Some scholars have seen this proliferation of rituals as a form of decadence influenced by folk religion. However, such an interpretation is based on a biased and superficial view of Buddhist doctrine and practices, and does not appreciate the historical development of the religion in Korea.

In the course of the fifteenth century the first compendia or ritual manuals were compiled and many soon followed. These manuals reflect a growing uniformity and standardization of Buddhist rituals, something that is particularly obvious toward the end of the dynasty. At the same time, the ritual manuals also show an increasing trend towards indigenization, a process that allowed for more Korean cultural forms to be introduced into the ritual procedures at the expense of traditional Chinese Buddhist practices and beliefs. This trend is both evident in the manner in which originally Chinese Buddhist rituals were modified and re-arranged as well as in the development of original Korean ritual forms and types. As an example of the former kind we may refer to the abbreviated *suryuk* type of rituals as reflected in the *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chammun* 天地冥陽水陸

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<sup>8</sup> For a descriptive list of the Buddhist manuals and ritual texts from the Chosŏn period, see Sørensen 1991–1992a. This survey is now a bit outdated as well as incomplete. For a more recent Korean study, see Nam 2004. The many tables contained here are very useful. Moreover, this study adds new information on material related to Esoteric Buddhism. An important collection of ritual texts from the Chosŏn period is the *Han'guk pulgyo ūri charyo ch'ongsŏ* (Collection of Books and Materials on Korean Buddhist Rituals) Pak 1993.

雜文 (Miscellaneous Texts of the *Ch'ŏnji myōngyang suryuk*),<sup>9</sup> the *Suryuk much'a p'yōngdūng chaeüi ch'waryo* 水陸無遮平等齋儀撮要 (Abbreviated Ritual for the Water and Land Unobstructed, Equal Feast),<sup>10</sup> the *Ch'ŏnji myōngyang suryuk chaeüi mun* 天地冥陽水陸齋儀文 (Text for the Ceremony of the Heaven and Earth, Day and Night, Water and Land Feast),<sup>11</sup> and the voluminous, but relatively late, *Ch'ŏnji myōngyang suryuk chaeüi pŏmŏn chip* 天地冥陽水陸齋儀梵音集 (Collection of Sanskrit Sounds for the Ceremony of Heaven and Earth, Darkness and Brightness, Water and Land Feast; hereafter *Pŏmŏn chip*) (see *HPC* vol. 11, 458c–523b), all of which became very popular.

Large, comprehensive ritual manuals (i.e., collections of several ritual texts) occur in increasing numbers from the end of the sixteenth century and feature such works as the *Chinŏn kwŏn'gong* 真言勸供 (Instructions on Making Offerings [with] Mantras),<sup>12</sup> the *Ŏ tae chinŏn*

<sup>9</sup> Extensive parts of this compilation are based on Chinese *shuilu* 水陸 works. Refer to the block printed edition kept in the library of Sōnggwang Temple 松廣寺 from 1531. It is obvious that the *suryuk* type of rituals were originally based on Chinese Buddhist traditions. In particular, Zhipan's large-scale text, the *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui* (hereafter *FSSY*), can be seen to have played an important role in the creation of the rich literature concerning the water and land rituals that we find in Chosŏn Buddhism. Even so, Zhipan's manual was not the only such text that circulated in Korea. Already during the middle of the Koryŏ, well before the existence of Zhipan's manual, water and land rituals were being performed in the kingdom. Moreover, it would appear that the Chosŏn *suryuk* manuals came about on the basis of a variety of textual sources. Interestingly, a Ming edition of the *FSSY* dating from 1470 C.E. is known to have been circulating in Korea during the reign of Yŏnsangun (r. 1495–1506). This means that the Chosŏn Buddhists had direct access to Zhipan's text prior to the extensive revisions and emendations made by Zhuhong 株宏 (1535–1615). See Nam 2004, 57–68. See also the edition dated 1573 C.E. in the library of Seoul National University, # 奎 12223. However, in order to fully appreciate the similarities and differences between the Chinese and Korean water and land traditions, a detailed and comprehensive comparative analysis would first have to be undertaken.

<sup>10</sup> Also called *Kyŏlsu mun* 結手文 (Text for [Making] Hand Gestures; *KS* 18, 22). Additional information on this manual can be found in Sørensen 1991–1992a, 191–92. It is interesting that the compiler of the *Sōngmun üibŏm*, the most important twentieth-century Buddhist ritual manual, chose to let this text represent the ritual of water and land. Cf. Sørensen 1991–1992a, part 1, 240–68. Note that this modern edition of the text does not contain the *mudrā* illustrations as found in all the old editions.

<sup>11</sup> *KS* 21. A copy of the edition from Yongbok Temple 龍腹寺, 1635, is kept in the University library of Seoul National University, # 古 1750/2.

<sup>12</sup> Dated 1496 C.E., this ritual manual is one of the earliest documented in Korea. Its rarity is further underlined by the fact that it is written in early Han'gul with only

*chip* 五大真言集 (Collection of Five Great Mantras),<sup>13</sup> and the comprehensive *Chakpöp kugam* 作法龜鑑 (Magic Mirror of [Ritual] Proceedings; *HPC* vol. 10, 552b–609b), which was compiled as late as 1826. Not only do these manuals present the lengthy text(s) of the water and land ritual, they also include texts on the proceedings of cremation, sacrifice to the hungry ghosts, confession of transgressions, praise of and invocation to the great masters of the Buddhist tradition, and so on. Nearly all these rites feature *dhāraṇīs* and mantras and, directly or indirectly, link the individual rituals with the earlier Esoteric Buddhist tradition from China.

The late Chosŏn ritual manual, the *Pulga iryöng chakpöp* 佛教日用作法 (Methods of the Daily Activities of the Buddhists),<sup>14</sup> features a highly interesting section on Esoteric Buddhist ritual practice, in fact an enhanced version of Amoghavajra's translation of the *Jin'gangding yuqie nianzhu jing* 金剛頂瑜伽念珠經 (Vajraśekhara Yoga Scripture on Prayer Beads; *T.* 789, Haein Temple edition, 77a–78b). Moreover, the manual contains directions for Esoteric Buddhist meditation in a section entitled *Ch'önsu sabang kwan* 千手四方觀 (Contemplation of the Four Directions by Thousand Hands).<sup>15</sup> Here the instructions on *bija* visualization are given. Despite the title of this section, the text actually follows the fivefold division of the buddha families according to the *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha*. Given the overall Sŏn Buddhist orientation of the *Pulga iryöng chakpöp*, the high degree of mainstream Esoteric Buddhist thought it contains is a good indicator of the degree to which these two brands of Buddhism were integrated during the period in question.

During the Chosŏn there was also a whole range of minor rituals concerned with the ritual empowerment of Buddhist images. Foremost among these was the *ch'öm'an* ritual 點眼式 (ritual for dotting

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a few Chinese characters to indicate overall themes. For additional information, see Sørensen 1991–1992a, 170–71. Cf. Seoul National University Library, #288031.

<sup>13</sup> *KS* 9. Discussed briefly in Sørensen 1991–1992a, 181–82.

<sup>14</sup> The version used here is the edition from Haein Temple dated 1869. Cf. *KS* 54 (printed in 1882). It was evidently compiled sometime during the last two decades of the Chosŏn dynasty. A brief discussion of the contents of this work can be found in Sørensen 1991–1992a, 177–78.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Pulga iryöng chakpöp*, 79a–79b (in the Haein Temple edition actually three sets of double pages). A note below the heading of this section informs us that this meditation is to be used in conjunction with the Yongsan assembly 靈山會, a major Buddhist ritual still performed in Korea by followers of the T'aego school (cf. Mun 1997).

the eye), in which images and votive paintings are empowered, and the related making of the intestinal “bag” (*pokchang* 腹藏) made for Buddhist votive images. The *pokchang* consists of holy objects placed inside images and relic containers for paintings. In the course of the second half of the Chosŏn, the primary manual for both the *ch’ŏm’an* ritual and the making of the *pokchang* was the important *Chosang kyŏng* 造像經 (Scripture on the Creation of Images),<sup>16</sup> a compilation partly based on canonical sources with links to Esoteric Buddhist practices current the Koryŏ.

In conclusion we may say that the ritual manuals of the Chosŏn dynasty reflect the norms of a syncretic and essentially non-sectarian Buddhism in which the practices and doctrines of the dominant Sŏn tradition were fully integrated with those of mainly Pure Land and Esoteric Buddhism. The ritual manuals are significant as an original type of Korean Buddhist composition, tailored to suit the spiritual and ritual requirements of the local Buddhist tradition. Although these works are unique to Korea, they are of course still linked with the larger East Asian Buddhist tradition in so far as they draw on the same textual sources and ideologies. This is directly observable, as the ritual manuals often incorporate passages and ritual elements from the Buddhist ritual literature of China, especially that associated with the form of Esoteric Buddhism as transmitted via the *Tripitaka* available in Korea from the eleventh century onwards.

### *Esoteric Buddhist Rituals during the Chosŏn*

The *suryuk* feast 水陸齋 or water and land type of rituals were arguably the most important and significant of all the many Buddhist rituals performed under the Chosŏn.<sup>17</sup> This is not only evident from the

<sup>16</sup> The edition at my disposal was published at Yuch’ŏm Temple 楡岾寺 and is dated to 1824. There is also a modern edition of the same text entitled *Che pul posal pokchang tan ūsik* (1992).

<sup>17</sup> These rituals, actually grand-scale ceremonies lasting several days, were designed to liberate the spirits of those who had died violent deaths at sea and on land. For a highly perceptive study of the *shuilu* tradition in China, whence this ritual originated, see Stevenson 2001, 30–70. The way these rites were performed in Chosŏn Korea did not correspond exactly to the way the Chinese performed them. One example of this difference is the organization and arrangement of the ritual space, which was considerably more elaborate and, we must presume, more costly to set up than those of their Korean counterparts. One example of this difference is that the Korean water and land rites do not feature the same impressive sets of votive paintings known from the Chinese Buddhist tradition.

numerous ritual manuals dedicated to it, but is also reflected in the primary Buddhist as well as the official sources.<sup>18</sup> These rites proliferated from the very start of the dynasty, and a significant number of them were held on behalf of or directly sponsored by the royal court. In the course of the fifteenth century the water and land feast declined temporarily as court rites in tandem with the increasing Confucianization of Chosŏn society. At the same time, however, they seem to have increasingly gained in popularity among the common people among whom Buddhism, and its rituals in particular, was still an important spiritual force. As far as the sources allow us to conclude, we may distinguish between two kinds of water and land rituals performed during the Chosŏn period: the large-scale, communal type comparable to those known from China; and the private, small-scale type performed by a few people or even by an individual. In fact the *suryuk* rite was probably the most important of all the public Buddhist rituals, and they continued to be performed until the very end of the Chosŏn period.<sup>19</sup> Although the water and land ritual is a purely Chinese invention, it incorporates and borrows many elements from the Esoteric Buddhist tradition including an extensive use of mantras and spells, *mudrās*, and overall ritual concepts (figure 1) (see Stevenson 2001, 33–38).


Although many modifications and augmentations were introduced into the ritual by the Koreans in the course of the Chosŏn, the core of all the *suryuk* rites would seem to follow the overall structure and directions of the Chinese manual, the *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui* 法界生凡水陸勝會修齋儀軌 (Rules of the Excellent Assembly for the Observation of the Feast for the Dharmadhātu's Holy and Worldly in Water and on Land).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The *Chosŏn shillok* contains numerous references to the (mainly official) performances of *suryuk* rituals that took place in the course of the dynasty's history. Likewise, the compilations of important monk's literary works, such as those of Hyūjōng and his immediate followers, feature the texts of formal addresses given on these occasions.

<sup>19</sup> For such a description from the late Chosŏn period, see the *Ch'ŏnbyŏn suryuk sajŏk pimun* (Stele Inscription Recording the Affairs of the Ch'ŏnbyŏn Water and Land [Ritual]). It took place in Yŏnghyŏn-ri, Anju-myŏn, Anju-gun, in South P'yŏngan province during the early eighteenth century. This inscription itself dates from 1731 (cf. CKS vol. 2, 1121–1123).

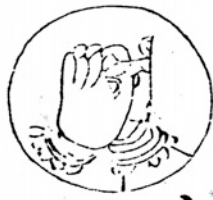
<sup>20</sup> ZZ (1975–1989) 1497.74, 784b–823a. As this is the version that was augmented by Zhuhong, it is of course of a later date than the one used by the Korean Buddhists during the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries.





金剛部召請真言  
印法二手右押左內相又作拳右大  
指屈入掌左大指曲如鉤向身勢

莎賀。



蓮華部召請真言曰  
印法二手右押左內相又作拳左大  
指屈入掌右大指曲如鉤向身勢之

曼荼羅三滿哆沒馱喃唵阿路力迦伊吽曳吽




Figure 1. Water and Land mudrās from the *Ch'ōnji myōngyang suryuk chwi ch'anyo*.

Another important ritual that is full of Esoteric Buddhist elements is the *sip wang chae* 十王齋 (ten kings feast).<sup>21</sup> The ritual itself is based on the *Yesu sip wang saeng ch'il chae üi chanyo* 預修十王生齊儀纂要 (Essential Compendium for Arranging the Seven Feasts Ritual of the Ten Kings for Rebirth; cf. *HPC* vol. 11, 427a–45b), compiled by the ritual specialist Pyökha Taeü 碧霞大愚 (1676–1763). The text consists of thirty-one sections of which the *Ch'öng myöngbu* 請冥府 (Imploring the Bureaucracy of the Netherworld; *HPC* vol. 11, 430b–434a) constitutes the central part of the rite. Mantras are used throughout the rite, including mantras for empowering the offerings, the mantra of all buddhas, mantras of Yama and the other nine kings of hell, mantra for the breaking of the hells, and so on. These are to be pronounced together with formal prostrations in front of the altar holding the images of the Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha and the ten kings.

Although Esoteric Buddhism stresses rites and faith in the supernatural effect of spells, mantras, and other magical formulas, it should not be seen as an expression of folk religion. Even the rituals connected with the worship of the seven stars of the Great Dipper (*ch'ilsöng* 七星) and the Mountain Spirit (*sansin* 山神) should not be understood as examples of shamanistic influence on Buddhism. Both are in fact part and parcel of traditional Esoteric Buddhist lore as practiced on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>22</sup>

Rites of empowerment dealing with the practice of “opening the light” (*kaegwang* 開光), also known as *chöm'an sik* 點眼式 (ritual for dotting the eye), are entirely Esoteric Buddhist rituals. In connection with the dotting of the eyes, the ritual leader writes the Siddham letters *om*, *āḥ*, and *hum* for body, speech, and mind on the back side of the image (or painting) in question in a manner similar to that found in Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>23</sup> The *chöm'an* ritual is closely related to making and installing the *pokchang*, and it was traditionally performed as

<sup>21</sup> Rituals of this type were originally based on the apocryphal Chinese scripture, the *Shiwang jing* 十王經 (Scripture on the Ten Kings), in which the deliverance of those unfortunate spirits caught in the Buddhist hells is discussed (ZZ 21.1). This work has been found in several manuscript copies in Dunhuang. For a solid study of this important text, see Teiser 1994. Several editions of this apocrypha were printed in Korea during the Chosön, including fully illustrated versions. For the reproduction of one such apocrypha, see “Yösu Hüngguk sa üi pulgyo misul” 1993, 129–47.

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed discussion of these phenomena, see Sørensen 1995c, 71–105.

<sup>23</sup> All the details on this rite are provided in the *Öjong põmüm chip* 五種梵音集 (Collection of the Five Kinds of Sanskrit Sounds). Cf. *HPC* vol. 12, 180a–181c.

the culmination of the empowerment of a given Buddhist image or votive painting. Although the origin of this practice has been lost in the mist of history, it can at least be documented as far back as the Tang dynasty in China.<sup>24</sup>

### *Esoteric Buddhist Arcana*

While Esoteric Buddhist practices and beliefs dominated Chosŏn dynasty ritual texts as we have seen above, we find that exoteric Buddhist rites, such as those centering on Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara, or the Sŏn patriarchs, continued with unabated vigor. On the basis of sources going back to the early Koryŏ (and probably earlier), the empowering of Buddhist cult images and paintings was effectuated through a ritual in which a conglomeration of objects (including precious substances, painted or printed mandalas, grain, holy scriptures, etc.) were gathered together to form a *pokchang*, the “abdomen” (literally, “intestines”) of the object. The ritual process through which an image is empowered is described in detail in the important ritual manual, the *Chosang kyŏng*, discussed above. A survey of this text reveals that the underlying beliefs and practices it endorses revolve around a number of canonical, mainly Esoteric Buddhist scriptures from Tang China. Hence it is not surprising to find the fivefold ritual structure associated with the five buddha families set forth in this text as part of the creation of the *pokchang*. Spells were used throughout the empowerment and sometimes written on the *pokchang* as well as on the image itself. The *pokchang* used for images vary according to the size of the image in question, but is usually made by filling the hollow inside of the image made of wood

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<sup>24</sup> Although we do not know for certain how the earliest form(s) of the rite was performed, it is certain that the ritual was systematized during the first half of the eighth century in the context of the evolved type of Indo-Chinese Esoteric Buddhism as taught by the three *ācāryas*, Śubhākarasiṃha (637–735), Vajrabodhi (669–741), and Amoghavajra (705–774). See Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūta to Amoghavajra (651–780),” and Pinte, Orzech, and Lehnert on the three *ācāryas* respectively, all in this volume. The ritual for “opening the light” was transmitted to the Korean Peninsula by pilgrim-monks from early on and was probably known in the Silla kingdom as early as the mid-eighth century. In any case, textual evidence from the following Koryŏ dynasty reveals that the rite in some form was practiced there during the tenth century. However, we have to proceed further on in the history of Koryŏ Buddhism in order to have solid evidence for the prevalence of the *chŏm’an* ritual. Henceforth, the manner in which the ritual was performed during the Chosŏn followed more or less the instructions left behind by the ritual specialists of the Koryŏ.

or bronze. Inside we find among other things the five mirrors, the five precious substances, the five types of grains, printed mandalas, and prayer text.<sup>25</sup> Among the important items included with the *pokchang*, the prayer text or record of the event usually states the reason for the making of the image in question, what religious merit the donor(s) hope to gain from their pious work, who participated and when, as well as a complete list of all the holy items placed inside the image.<sup>26</sup> During the Chosŏn the process by which a given *pokchang* was made reveals a certain structural uniformity, although some regional varieties have been reported.

It is interesting to observe that the votive paintings made during the Chosŏn were subjected to the same ritual proceedings of empowerment as that which took place for “vitalizing” images. The *pokchang* used for paintings comes in two varieties. One, the most common type, is made of silk or some other kind of fabric, which is in fact a large-sized, tortoise-shaped purse of the kind traditionally worn by women in dynastic Korea.<sup>27</sup> The second type consists of a flat, circular box made of wood or papier-mâché covered with a canvas-like fabric on which the Siddham letter *ā* is written. These *pokchang* to empower paintings contain more or less the same items as the larger ones made for the three-dimensional images.

Again it is in the context of empowerment and related practices that we encounter graphic mandalas, talismans, and other magical charts. In a sense most of these items are ritualistic in nature—if not in origin—and should therefore be foremost understood in the context of Buddhist practice.

The *Chosang kyŏng* discussed above contains graphic representations of mandalas and mantric diagrams, including the *Paryŏp tae hongryŏn chi t’o* 八葉大紅蓮之圖 (Chart of the Great Red Lotus

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of this practice, see Sørensen 2003.

<sup>26</sup> That the size and contents of a given *pokchang* is relative to the size of the image in question is obvious. However, the relative sizes do not signify a degree in the empowerment of the image. Recently a large set of images of the Four Heavenly Kings from Porim Temple 寶林寺 in South Chŏlla province empowered during the mid-Chosŏn was found to contain very substantial *pokchang*s, including 146 volumes of Buddhist scriptures. For a report of this find, see Ch’ŏi 1995.

<sup>27</sup> For these purses, see Whang 1987, 114, pl. 90. For a representative photo of a *pokchang* from the Chosŏn to be hung on a painting, see Sŏngbo munhwa chaepo chun yŏn’guwŏn 1995, 118. General information on Buddhist ritual implements can be found in Tongguk taehakkyo p’anmulgwan, T’ongdo sa, and Kungnip minsok p’anmulgwan 1995.

with Eight Petals) and the *Oryun chongja t'o* 五輪種子圖 (Chart of the Five Types of Wheels). Interestingly, the dual mandalas of the Dharmadhātu and Vajradhātu known from Esoteric Buddhism during the Koryŏ period here have been exchanged with the diagrams *Cundī's Nine-Letter Heavenly Circle* (*Chunje kuja ch'ŏnwŏn t'o* 准提九字天圓圖), and the *Vajra Earthly Square* (*Kŏm'gang chibang t'o* 金剛地方圖), ritual structures that originated in the Chinese *shuilu* material such as Zhipan's *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui*, mentioned above.

Another important type of graphic diagram employed by the ritual specialists of Korean Buddhism was the *dhāraṇī* chart.<sup>28</sup> The printed *dhāraṇī* charts are dominated by spells and mantras associated with the cult of Avalokiteśvara (see below), among which we find the *Sinmyŏ changgwi tae tarani* 神妙章句大陀羅尼 (Divine and Wondrous Sections of the Great Spell),<sup>29</sup> actually the *Nilakaṇṭhaka-dhāraṇī*. The popularity of the spell from the *Pseudo Śūraṅgama Sūtra* is also documented in the Chosŏn material, where we find it in the form of a printed sheet to be placed in a *pokchang* or carried as an amulet on the person for protection (figure 2).

The use of talismans in Chosŏn dynasty Buddhism was fairly widespread and popular as well. Not only did the Buddhists inherit the talismanic tradition from the Koryŏ, they were also influenced by the large number of Chinese texts that were imported during most of the dynasty. In addition to Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian scriptures, this imported material included astrological texts, works on divination, historical works, as well as books on geomancy (*p'ungsu* 風水) and standard *yin-yang* theories. It is not unlikely that tracts originating in popular Chinese religion also found their way to Korea in the period under discussion. In any case the amount of foreign literature containing talismans was rather voluminous, something that is reflected in the Buddhist scriptures available in Korea throughout the Chosŏn.

Talismans are found in a number of Buddhist scriptures and ritual texts dating from the middle Chosŏn onwards, including illustrated

<sup>28</sup> For an introduction to this material with special focus on the Koryŏ period, see Sørensen forthcoming.

<sup>29</sup> Many types of this spell exist, including prints in Siddham and in pure Chinese. It can also be found as an elaborate wheel-shaped spell-chart combined with the *Ṣaḍakṣaravidyā* and other symbols of power (cf. Prunner 1991, 161–62).



versions of apocryphal Chinese Buddhist works such as the *Yuxiu shi-wang shengqi zhai jing* 預修十王生七齋經 (Scripture on the Ten Kings; ZZ 21.1), the *Beidou qixing yanming jing* 北斗七星延命經 (Scripture on the Seven Stars of the Great Dipper Extending Life; T. 1307), and the popular *Foding xin Guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni jing* 佛頂心觀世音菩薩陀羅尼 (Scripture on the Buddhōṣṇīṣa Heart Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva *Dhāraṇī*; see KS 7). In addition, talismans are found in ritual works such as the *Pulga iryöng chakböp* 佛家日用作法 (Methods for Daily Use by Buddhists),<sup>30</sup> which contains a talisman entitled *Wangsaeng chöngt'o pu* 往生淨土符 (Talisman for Going for Rebirth in the Pure Land) (figure 3) (see *Pulga iryöng chakböp*, 49b).

During the Chosön the Koreans modified and re-compiled many Chinese Buddhist texts, including the important *Ṣaḍakṣaravidyā sūtra*,<sup>31</sup> about which more shall be said below. This reformed version of the sūtra features three graphic talismans of unusual types. The first is the *Jie yuanjia fu* 解冤家符 (Talisman for Removing Oppressive Enemies), the second is the *Hu shenming fu* 護身命符 (Talisman for Protecting the Body's Span of Life), while the third is named *Shijia rulai huaya fu* 釋迦如來華押符 (Śākyamuni Tathāgata's Flower Seal Talisman) (*Pulga iryöng chakböp*, 18b–19a). The shapes of the first two of these talismans point to an affinity with Tibetan Buddhism whereas the third bears a closer resemblance to the symbolic and scriptless type of talismans, such as those representing the five holy mountains of Chinese Daoism. A comparison with Tibetan mantric symbolism such as the ornamental seed-syllables of the integrated-script type known from the *Kālacakra tantra* (among other sources) reveals that the Talisman for Removing Oppressive Enemies and the Talisman for Protecting the Body's Span of Life are structurally similar.<sup>32</sup> The perceived stylistic discrepancies are undoubtedly due to the fact that the Korean

<sup>30</sup> This manual was probably compiled during the seventeenth century. For additional biographical information, see Sørensen 1991–1992a, 177–78, n. 24.

<sup>31</sup> Presently in the collection of Seoul National University in the special library for rare printed books and manuscripts, no. 1739/16. Although masquerading as a Buddhist sūtra, this scripture is in fact a ritual text devoted to the promotion of the mantra *Om maṇi padme hum*. I have been unable to trace this text in the standard East Asian Buddhist canons, and I wonder if it might be a Chinese translation from Tibetan, possibly done during the Yuan dynasty whence it was exported to Korea. The plates for the present 1908 edition of the text have integrated Han'gul letters, which makes it obvious that we are dealing with a Korean edition of the text.

<sup>32</sup> Examples of this type of Tibetan script-symbolism can be found in Douglas 1978, pls. 29–34.



Figure 3. Talisman for attaining rebirth in the Pure Land. *Pulga iryŏng chakbŏp.*



way of writing the symbols/talismans in question degenerated over the years. The fact that the Korean practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism understood these symbols as talismans or magical diagrams also indicates that their original meaning as mantric symbols of spiritual power had been partly lost in the course of the Chosŏn dynasty. In fact, it is obvious from the accompanying text that whoever compiled the Chosŏn version of the *Ṣaḍakṣaravidyā sūtra* did not understand that these symbols originally derived from Tibetan tantric Buddhism.

Proficiency in the writing of Sanskrit and Siddham is a tradition that came down from the Koryŏ. In light of the many sources in the form of spell collections and other documents, we know that the mastery and knowledge of Sanskrit, at least as far as the writing and transcription of *dhāraṇīs* goes, was relatively high during the Chosŏn and continued to be in vogue until the very end of the dynasty. Thus we find Siddham used both for ritual and ornamental purposes. Printing blocks for Sanskrit *bīja* have been found in several temples, which indicates that they were used as templates for decorations and embellishments of religious objects (figure 4).

How and in which contexts the knowledge of Siddham was transmitted is still unclear. However, in light of the fact that it was closely related to the use of spells and mantras, we must surmise that it was a certain type of ritual specialist monk, probably including professional monk-painters, who taught it. Given that only a few monks were able to write Siddham it would appear that the knowledge of this specialized form of Sanskrit was taught only in the temple schools of certain monasteries.

### *Esoteric Buddhism Reflected in the Writings of the Sŏn Masters*<sup>33</sup>

At the beginning of the Chosŏn dynasty Sŏn Buddhism was divided into two separate lineages or traditions. The first was the orthodox Imje Sŏn following Chinese Chan Buddhism of the Yuan, with its stress on sudden enlightenment (*tono* 頓悟) according to so-called Patriarch Sŏn (Chusa Sŏn 祖師禪). The second was the earlier ecumenical and local tradition tracing itself back to Chinul (cf. Buswell 1983). Eventually the Imje interpretation came to dominate Korean Sŏn and the manner in which practitioners came to perceive the path

<sup>33</sup> This part is a modified version of a section originally published in Sørensen 1993c, 529–37.



Figure 4. Printed sheet with Sanskrit *bija*. Songgwang Temple, ca. 1650.

to enlightenment. However, at the same time, the Sŏn tradition paradoxically was increasingly influenced by doctrinal and devotional forms of Buddhism. It is somewhat difficult to establish to what degree elements of orthodox Ch'önt'ae Buddhism influenced Sŏn practice during the Chosŏn,<sup>34</sup> but as we shall see below, practices related to both Esoteric Buddhism and the Pure Land tradition would eventually leave their visible marks on the Korean Sŏn tradition. Esoteric Buddhist elements show up in Sŏn Buddhist writings from the fifteenth

<sup>34</sup> There is virtually no trace of Ch'önt'ae practice in Korean Sŏn from the fifteenth century onwards. However, it is known that individual monks within the school of Sŏn continued to study the major works of that tradition. The continued importance in Chosŏn Buddhism of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra* should probably be seen in the light of this.

century onwards, something that undoubtedly reflects the influence of the integration between the Chogye school and the Ch'ongji school (one of the two Esoteric Buddhist schools of the Koryŏ dynasty). As time wore on the contact between the Sŏn and Kyo traditions became quite intimate, and it is more than likely that the practices of the Chungsin school, which had been merged with the other Esoteric Buddhist school, the Sinin, gradually became accepted by the Sŏn tradition as well. In any case, there is little reason to doubt that both of the old Esoteric Buddhist denominations were relatively vital by the time of the mergers during the first three decades of the fifteenth century. That Esoteric Buddhist ritual practices would become a very prominent aspect of this syncretic form of Korean Buddhism from the early fifteenth century onwards is, as we shall see below, fully documented in the extant sources.<sup>35</sup>

The extant writings from the hands of several Sŏn masters from the Chosŏn period reveal that they were also adepts of Esoteric Buddhist lore. Among the most important of these we find Hŏng Pou 虛應普雨 (1510?–1566; see Pou sasang yŏn'gu hoe 1993), a leading figure in the short-lived Buddhist restoration that took place during the reign of the dowager Queen Munjŏng 文定王后 (?–1565).<sup>36</sup> Scattered throughout Pou's writings we find evidence of Esoteric Buddhism mainly in the form of *dhāraṇīs* and mantras. Due to the leading role he played as royal advisor to Queen Munjŏng during her fifteen years in power, he had to preside over a number of important ceremonies at the royal palace and wrote the texts for the ritual proceedings of two major *suryuk* rituals dedicated to the two former kings Chungjong 中宗 (r. 1506–1544) and Injong 仁宗 (r. 1544–1545).<sup>37</sup> There is extensive use of mantras evident in the accompanying ritual text. However, Pou also wrote smaller occasional tracts and addresses for a variety of ritual functions such as the “eye-opening” ceremony (*kaegwang*

<sup>35</sup> The Sinin school, together with the Chungdo school (which was a minor denomination), is stated to have controlled thirty temples by the time of the merger. The Ch'ongji school, together with the Chogye school (which was a major tradition), is said to have controlled as many as seventy temples (cf. Hō 1986, 522–535).

<sup>36</sup> Pou's reputation as a Buddhist leader came to the attention of the dowager queen in 1548, and shortly thereafter they met in person. This event is mentioned by Pou in a poem in his *Hŏng tang chip* 虛應堂集 (Collected Writings of Ven. Hŏng). Cf. *HPC* vol. 7, 548a.

<sup>37</sup> Pou was also the author of the ritual text used at these occasions. Cf. *HPC* vol. 7, 599a–609a.

開光; literally, “opening the light”) for the inauguration of Buddhist images and paintings, the carving of scriptures, etc., all of which involved elements of Esoteric Buddhist lore and practice.<sup>38</sup> However, the most clear-cut example of Esoteric Buddhist practice set within the teachings of Pou is found in the important *Suwŏl toryang konghwa pulsa yŏhwan binju mongchung mundap* 水月道場空花佛事如幻寘主夢中問答 (Questions and Answers in a Dream between Guest and Host [Concerning] the Imaginary Water-Moon *Bodhimaṇḍa* and Illusory Buddhist Affairs).<sup>39</sup> This work, which is written in the form of a dialogue with an imagined questioner, is basically a discussion of the true meaning and value of Buddhist rituals. In the text Pou integrates the fundamental Sŏn Buddhist doctrines on non-dualism and focusing on the mind with Esoteric Buddhist practice. While the general trend of this work is in line with Sŏn Buddhist thought, there is at the same time a serious attempt at encompassing within it ritual concerns including both theory and practice. In line with this, Pou discusses a wide range of topics related to Esoteric Buddhist lore, including the establishing of the altar with offerings. The text also shows extensive use of mantras and *bijas* written in Siddham script. The opening section reads:

In an imaginary location among the white clouds there is a guest. One day he asked the Mindless Man of the Way on Mt. Dharma Nature, saying: “I have heard that commoners arrange maigre feasts (*chae* 齋) when worshipping the Buddha. As a further mystery they rely on mantras, which certainly is far from abiding by the complete vision (*wŏngwan* 圓觀).<sup>40</sup> Is it so?”

The Man of the Way said: “It is so! Those of the four classes of *dānapati* with very sincere minds establish dharma assemblies and create *bodhimaṇḍas* (*toryang* 道場), noble and pure. They make altars, precious and clean [literally, “white”]. With incense, flowers, lamps, and candles they join in the arrangements. Tea, fruit, rare foods they arrange

<sup>38</sup> For a contents list of the relevant texts in the *Kwŏnyŏm yorok*, see *HPC* vol. 7, 576ab.

<sup>39</sup> *HPC* vol. 7, 594b5–599a. This work is one of the earliest Korean Buddhist texts dealing with ritual practices to use Han’gul. It gained considerable popularity and continued to be re-printed during the following centuries. For a brief discussion of the historical data surrounding it, see Sørensen 1991–1992a, 159–200, entry no. 56.

<sup>40</sup> This would seem to refer to the highest non-dual insight as gained by adepts of Sŏn. It may also refer to the *yuandun zhiguan* 圓頓止觀 (complete and sudden ceasing and contemplation) that was developed in the Tiantai school, but this is less likely given the present context.

in order, including the thousand-pendant silken streamers. The multitude of immortal music is arranged on the side. A hundred thousand kinds of music, and limitless, wonderful offerings, nothing which cannot be imagined, widely and orderly arranged. If this is not the complete vision, how can it carry out the ten thousand dharmas, and yet illumine the One Mind? [How can it] abide in one thing, and yet manifest the multitude of principles? Through the offerings it transforms the few and changes the many, and with nothing it makes something, causing the impure to become pure. This mind-dharma is unobstructed, phenomena (*sa* 事) and principle (*ni* 理) are completely fused, large and small are harmonized, existence and non-existence are not two, and the impure and the pure have the same essence. Do not think that the great assemblies are [just] superior feasts, but participate in them from this day on. For this reason it is necessary to rely on the complete vision so that you will be able to adorn the worldly truth [i.e., the relative plane] and [thereby] complete the offerings of the wonderful dharma.” (*HPC* vol. 7, 595a)

After this lengthy explanation, Pou goes on to discuss the importance of the buddha-nature (*pulsŏng* 佛性) or buddha-mind (*pulsim* 佛心), the origin and foundation for all phenomena. This constitutes his point of departure when arguing for the mutual non-obstruction between the mind’s two aspects, its essence (*ch’e* 體) and function (*yŏng* 用). The text reads:

Now, as regards the One Mind (*ilsim* 一心), it is the wondrous essence of the ten thousand phenomena. The ten thousand phenomena [in turn] are the spiritual activity of the One Mind. Outside the mind there are no phenomena, and outside phenomena there is no mind. Hence mind is phenomena, and phenomena are mind. Essence and function are completely fused. Since the Mind Mirror is without obstruction, the spiritual activity of the three wisdoms (*samban* 三般) accords with the complete vision of the One Mind. (*HPC* vol. 7, 596c)

The most noteworthy passage makes a full identification between mind and phenomena. In effect this means that physical appearances are actually mind-made. Such an understanding takes the original Yogācāra tenet of “mind-only” (*yusim* 惟心/*yusik* 惟識) to its logical extreme, well beyond its original meaning in Indian Mahāyāna. However, to a Korean Sŏn Buddhist of the sixteenth century, it is precisely such a doctrinal reduction, no matter how simplistic, that makes the identification between the mind cultivation of Sŏn and Esoteric Buddhist ritual possible. The text goes on to say:

The mind-dharma is non-dual, wondrously transforming and eternal, and therefore it cannot be grasped by the intellect. One-pointedly hold

and intone the *dhāraṇī* called “limitless majestic virtue, self-so brilliance and victorious wonder and strength” as taught by our Śākyamuni.<sup>41</sup> What are the three virtues that this one food-transforming mantra commands? The “limitless majestic virtue of the self-so” is the liberating virtue. “Brilliance” is the virtue of *prajñā*, and, as for “victorious wonder,” it is the virtue of the *dharmakāya*. “Strength” is the strength and function of these three virtues [together].<sup>42</sup> *Dhāraṇī* means to maintain and to hold (*ch’ongji* 摠持). The maintenance and holding of the three virtues simply rests on the One Mind. The three virtues of the One Mind, the dharma, and the Complete Wonder (*wōnmyō* 圓妙) are not different in essence. Hence the mind is the mantra, and the mantra is the food. (*HPC* vol. 7, 598a–599b)

Following the same logical reduction as we saw above, Pou here explains how the practitioner’s focused mind and the mantras he intones are not separate. Hence the mind of the practitioner and the mantras he intones are not only unified through the sharing of the same essence, they are actually identical. In this way Pou succeeded in establishing a viable, doctrinal fusion of Sōn soteriology and Esoteric Buddhist practices.<sup>43</sup>

Chōnghō Hyujōng 清虛休靜 (1520–1604), better known as Great Master Sōsan 西山大師, and one of the most highly venerated Sōn monks in the history of Korean Buddhism, was also an adept of Esoteric Buddhist practice and liturgy, perhaps more so than Pou. The Esoteric Buddhist “side” of Hyujōng’s personality is not so well known, and has in any case been largely neglected.<sup>44</sup> One possible reason for

<sup>41</sup> This *dhāraṇī* is taught by Śākyamuni Buddha to Ānanda in the important *Foshuo jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* (*Dhāraṇī* Scripture on Feeding the Hungry Ghosts). Cf. *T.* 1313.21:464c. See also Orzech 1994a, 51–72. The reference to the *dhāraṇī* from this scripture may be taken as an indication that Pou was discussing the ritual procedures of a *suryuk* or Kamnō type of ritual.

<sup>42</sup> This constitutes a Sōn Buddhist interpretation of the three mysteries (*sammil* 三密) expounded in Zhenyan Buddhism of the Tang. See Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang: From Atikūṭa to Amoghavajra (651–780),” in this volume.

<sup>43</sup> It is probably correct to say that Esoteric Buddhism was not a major feature in Hōng Pou’s teachings, but its presence can nevertheless be felt in much of his writings. Hence, we may conclude that during his time Esoteric Buddhist practice was in the process of becoming fully absorbed into Sōn Buddhism to such a degree that it was no longer seen as an “external” element or in any way incompatible with accepted doctrine. This development of course reflects the general harmonization and compatibility that was achieved with the integration of doctrinal studies and Sōn practice during the second half of the Chosōn, a feature that was in fact further strengthened as the dynasty wore on. See, for example, Kim 1992, 623–80. See also U 1985, 139–82.

<sup>44</sup> For one of the first papers of significance devoted to this aspect of Hyūjōng’s teachings, see Sin 1984, 744–46.

this neglect may be connected with the high status he has enjoyed, and to some extent still enjoys, as a leading figure in the Korean Sōn tradition. However, by taking a closer look at his writings, it soon becomes obvious that Hyujōng was not a Sōn master in a narrow sectarian or exclusivist sense of the word, but a rather broad-minded person, whose interests in Buddhism encompassed both Esoteric Buddhist and Pure Land practices as well as Sōn. Nevertheless, it is correct to argue that Sōn practice remained the dominant Buddhist element in his teaching and writing.

Hyujōng's interest in Esoteric Buddhist practices is evident in his most celebrated Sōn work, the *Sōnga kugam* 禪家龜鑑 (Magical Mirror of the Sōn Family),<sup>45</sup> where we find the following statement regarding the necessity of using mantras:

[The reason why] we recite mantras is that although present karma can be regulated and avoided through self-cultivation, former karma is difficult to cut off. Therefore it is necessary to avail oneself of spiritual power.

Commentary: Mātāṅga obtaining the fruits [of her cultivation of mantras] is true and not false. Those who do not recite spiritual mantras will not be able to remove themselves from the affairs of Māra. (*HPC* vol. 7, 640ab)

Here Hyujōng gives a standard explanation based on the traditional Buddhist view of karma as to why mantras are indispensable tools. In other words, the individual patterns of karma accumulated by sentient beings over many lives are so deeply ingrained that even self-cultivation in the present life is likely to fail in rooting out the retribution. Hence, the practitioner of Sōn will need divine assistance, which the mantras are said to generate, in order to overcome the obstacles from previous karma. The reference to Mātāṅga in the commentary of course relates to the celebrated passage found in the *Da foding rulai miyin xiu chengliao yi zhu pusa wanxing shoulengyan jing* 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經 (Pseudo-Sūraṅgama Sūtra; *T.* 945), where Śākyamuni Buddha saves his disciple Ānanda from the prostitute Mātāṅgī, who had employed a magic spell to ensnare him (*T.* 945.19: 106c).

<sup>45</sup> *HPC* vol. 7, 634c–647b. An extensive study of this important work can be found in Sin Pöp'in 1983. For a brief introduction to the *Sōnga kugam*, see Sørensen 1985, 273–86.

Elsewhere in the *Sōnga kugam* Hyujōng goes into detail with the use of a certain class of mantras. It is found in a rather curious section on personal hygiene, which mainly deals with the correct behavior of a monk while in the communal latrine. Although the practical aspects such as washing one's hands are dealt with, it is obvious that the metaphysical purification is even more important. To this end Hyujōng recommends the use of a set of five mantras as a means of purification and for controlling various evil spirits, which are traditionally thought to lurk in latrines.<sup>46</sup> In the *Sōnga kugam*, Hyujōng is actually quoting verbatim from the *Deng si guishi* 登廁規式 (Regulations for Entering the Latrine; *T.* 2023.48:1091c–1092b) as contained in the Chinese Chan manual, the *Zimen jingxun* 緇門警訊 (Admonitions for the Black-Robed Fellows).<sup>47</sup> Hence we find that in early Ming China, the traditional regulations of the *vinaya* had been supplanted by a mixture of Esoteric Buddhist practices, folk customs, and beliefs concerning toilets, combined with the ever-prevailing fear of ghosts, which had become accepted within Chan Buddhism. Eventually these beliefs were introduced to Chosŏn, undoubtedly in conjunction with the *Zimen jingxun*, and there accepted as an integrated part of the general Korean Buddhist make-up.

Among the other works authored by Hyujōng, which show direct evidence of Esoteric Buddhist practices and beliefs, both the *Sōlsŏn ūi* 說禪儀 (Ritual for Explaining Sŏn; *HPC* vol. 7, 737b–743b) and the *Unsŭ tan* 雲水壇 (Cloud and Water Altar; *HPC* vol. 7, 743c–752a), which are ritual and liturgical works, contain numerous mantras as an integrated part of their respective ceremonial proceedings. The ritual of the former work is a distinct Sŏn Buddhist ceremony carried out in order to commemorate the “holding of the flower,” the wordless

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<sup>46</sup> The belief in evil spirits was an integrated part of the life and customs of people under the Chosŏn, and the communal latrine in the Buddhist monasteries was considered a particularly unclean place for more than one reason. In the Buddhist *vinaya* as followed in East Asia there are numerous and elaborate rules on the conduct for monks and nuns in connection with the easing of nature. For example, in the writings of the Japanese Zen master Dōgen 導源 (1200–1253) we find descriptions, down to minor details, on how to wash one's hands with various substances after having been to the toilet. Cf. *Shōbōgenzō* 真法眼藏 (Storehouse of the True Dharma Eye), ch. 50. A translation of this chapter can be found in Nishiyama and Stevens 1977, 87–93. See also Leighton and Okumura 1996, 63–81. However, as we have seen above, in Korean Sŏn temples during Hyujōng's time, a modified and localized form of the traditional *vinaya* rules on hygienic matters in the latrine was taught.

<sup>47</sup> *T.* 2023. It was compiled during the second half of the fifteenth century.



teaching said to have been given by Śākyamuni Buddha to his senior disciple Mahākāśyapa, an event that has traditionally been considered the origin of “the transmission of the mind,” the very foundation of Sōn/Chan orthodoxy.<sup>48</sup> The ritual as set forth in the *Unsū tan* is in the form of a more general ceremony of the *suryuk* type, including the invocation of the three jewels, the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions, and the Sōn patriarchs; the offering of food; feeding the *pretas*; and so on, as well as a section on repentance (*ch’amhūi* 懺悔). The ritual of the *Unsū tan* was meant to be held as a recurring ceremonial event for the monastic community, and each of its sections contains mantras to go along with the prayers. Common to both rituals is the establishment of a special altar used as the focus of the spiritual power invoked. The extent of Hyujōng’s Esoteric Buddhist practice even included the worship of the seven stars of the Great Dipper (see Sørensen 1995c, esp. 84–90), a practice normally carried out as a means of attaining worldly blessings and the prolongation of one’s lifespan.<sup>49</sup> The *Unsū tan* may in fact be seen as a *suryuk* ritual that has been modified to fit the spiritual requirements of a more narrowly defined Sōn tradition.

*Sōn and Esoteric Buddhist Meditation according to the Chinōn chip*<sup>50</sup>

In addition to Pou’s exposition in the *Suwōl toryang konghwa pulsa yōhwan binju mongchung mundap* discussed above, one of the most

<sup>48</sup> The earliest account of this incident is contained in the second chapter of the *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* 天聖廣燈錄 (Extensive Lamp Record from the Tiansheng Period) from 1036 C.E., i.e., the early Northern Song. Cf. Yanagida 1983, 365b–66a. See also Foulk 1999, 220–94.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Sørensen 1995c, 71–105. The worship of the seven stars of the Great Dipper is based on the apocryphal scripture, the *Beidou qixing yanming jing* (Sūtra of the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper Extending Life), T. 1307, a scripture with roots in Esoteric Buddhism of the late Tang. Hyujōng’s text in question is the *Ch’ilsōng chōngmun* 七星請文 (Text for Invoking the Seven Stars), which is appended to the *Unsū tan*. Cf. *HPC* vol. 7, 751ac. At the end of the invocation it is stated that “[after] the offerings and other meritorious activities, [such as] chanting of the scriptures, they are followed by prayers, and [the recitation of] the *Yanming jing* [i.e., the *Seven Stars Sūtra*]” (*HPC* vol. 7, 751c). The ceremonial scenario of Hyujōng’s ritual text matches closely the structure of the *Puktu ch’ilsōng chōng ūmun* 北斗七星請儀文 (Ritual Text of Inviting the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper) as found in the *Cheban mun* 諸盤文 (Miscellaneous [Ritual] Texts). Cf. Sørensen 1991–1992a, 159–200, and 167–168, entry no. 7.

<sup>50</sup> This is a modified version of a section originally published in Sørensen 1993c, 539–43.

convincing attempts at establishing doctrinal common ground for Sŏn and Esoteric Buddhist practice can be found in the comprehensive manual on the correct usage and pronunciation of mantras, the *Chinŏn chip*.<sup>51</sup> This manual has long since captured the interest of Western philologists working on the medieval Korean language, including the use of the early version of Han'gul, the Korean alphabet. However, very few have noted the highly illuminating introduction attributed to Yongam Chŭngsuk 龍岩增肅 (fl. eighteenth century).<sup>52</sup> As we shall see below, this introduction, including the postface and preface, are particularly illuminating in relation to the practical harmonization of Esoteric Buddhism and Sŏn during the later part of the Chosŏn dynasty.

The primary intent of the introduction to the revised edition of the *Chinŏn chip* is to provide a discussion and formulation of what may be called “the science of sound and letters,” a Buddhist hermeneutic presentation of the significance and usage of mantras, *dhāraṇīs*, and Siddham script. Although the focus of this introduction is on the spiritual meaning of the “true words” (the mantras), including their relation to the canonical scriptures, we find lengthy passages in which the relationship and correspondence between mantric lore and Sŏn practice are set forth. Here it is interesting to note that the overall tone of the introduction is replete with Sŏn, Chŏngt'o, and Hwaŏm terminology such as “One Mind” (*ilsim* 一心), “accomplishing awakening” (*yoŏ* 了悟), “empty stillness” (*kongjŏk* 空寂), “*bodhi* of great emptiness” (*taegong poje* 大空菩提), “the complete and sudden gates” (*wŏndon mun* 圓頓門), “mind contemplation” (*sim-gwan* 心觀), “the sixteen wonderful visualizations” (*sipyuk myŏgwan*

<sup>51</sup> The original preface of the 1569 edition from Ansim Temple can be found in the *Chosŏn pulgyo t'ŏngsa Yi* 1918–1979, 3:162–63. The edition referred to is the one with a colophon by the monk Sŏrun 雪書 (n.d.), first published at Ansim Temple in 1569. See Sørensen 1991–1992a, 159–200, entry no. 9. See also the facsimile of this edition, which was re-published some thirty years ago in Seoul. It is now extremely rare and the reader may choose to consult the modern, revised, but hand-written version with romanization of the Sanskrit as published by Poryŏngak in Seoul, 1987.

<sup>52</sup> Details on his life are wanting. From the preface to the Manyŏn Temple edition of the *Chinŏn chip* (1777) we are told that he lived in Manyŏn Temple in Hwasŭn-gun, South Chŏlla province, and that he transmitted the Esoteric Buddhist teachings to his disciple, the Sŏn master Paek'am 栢庵 (n.d.). *Chinŏn chip*, pp. 1–2.

十六妙觀),<sup>53</sup> and so on. A central passage from the introduction entitled “Aja non 阿字論” (“A Discussion of the Letter A”) reads:

The verse on the letter *a* in the *Vairocana sūtra*<sup>54</sup> says:  
 “An eight petaled, white lotus flower suddenly opens,  
 brightly manifesting the letter *a*,  
 its color [being of] a white brightness.”<sup>55</sup>

When contemplating the form of this character, wisdom will make one realizes that *bodhi* is fundamentally unborn. Complete and perfect, it is similar to a moon-disk. This is the meaning of contemplating the letter [*a*]. Only those who cultivate yoga [i.e., Esoteric Buddhism] [may] contemplate the moon-disk of the *bodhi*-mind. Inside the moon-disk, arranged in revolving order from the right, are the forty-two Sanskrit Siddham letters, all being of a golden color with a brightness extending to the ten directions. From this, one will be able to realize Vairocana’s body of wisdom, which is the perfection of the contemplation of the letter *a*. Tripiṭaka [Master] Amoghavajra instructed his followers, saying: “You should all contemplate the *bodhi*-mind of the Original Worthy [Vairocana], the great being. This is the *bodhi*-mind of the Original Worthy, the great being!”<sup>56</sup> Having [himself] accomplished the dharma of the unborn and realized the great enlightened body he [Amoghavajra] handed down the [method] of the contemplation of the letter *a* to his followers.<sup>57</sup> The above way of contemplation is not different from the Sön path outside the established norm (*kyōgoe sōnmun* 教外禪門). In the path of Sön they teach men through the wordless *kongan*, which is similar [in essence] to the letter *a*. The dharma method of contemplating the mind is not apart from the detailed investigation of the principle of the abstruse [whereby] the evident and the mysterious are completely fused. By constantly contemplating the letter *a*, one is fundamentally working on the *hwadu* 話頭<sup>58</sup> [literally, “head of the word”]. (*Chinön chip/Aja non*, 5b–6a)

<sup>53</sup> This practice is based on the *Guan wuliang shou jing* 觀無量壽經 (Sūtra on Contemplating Amitāyus; also known as the *Amitāyus dhyāna sūtra*). Cf. T. 365.

<sup>54</sup> Actually not the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (T. 848), but T. 876. The full title of this scripture is *Jin’gangding jing yujia xiuxi pilushena sanmodi fa* 金剛頂經瑜伽修習毗盧舍那三摩地法. It was translated by Vajrabodhi between 731–736 C.E.

<sup>55</sup> T. 876.18:5b. For the original passage, see T. 876.18:328b.

<sup>56</sup> T. 876.18:5b. I have been unable to identify the source of this passage.

<sup>57</sup> There are several translations of Esoteric Buddhist texts on the contemplation of the letter *a* attributed to Amoghavajra. Cf. T. 953, 954a, 955, and 957.

<sup>58</sup> The *hwadu* is the essential part of the *kongan* 公案, upon which the Sön adept focuses his entire attention. For a standard discourse on this practice, see Hyūjōng’s *Sōnga kugam* (HPC vol. 7, 636b–638a). For an overall discussion of *hwadu* and *kongan* practice in the context of Korean Sön during the mid-Koryō, see Buswell 1988, 231–56.

Of immediate interest here is that the author invokes the authority of an important Esoteric Buddhist scripture, the *Jin'gangding jing yujia xiuxi pilushena sanmodi fa* 金剛頂經瑜伽修習毗盧舍那三摩地法 (*Vajraśekhara Sūtra's Methods of Yoga Practice [for the Achievement of] Vairocana Samādhi*; T. 876.18:328b), as well as Amoghavajra and the classical Zhenyan tradition of Tang China. This shows that the traditional Zhenyan texts were still in vogue in Korea at this time, and that it was being actively propagated within a Sŏn context. The meditation on the letter *a* is of course one of the most common forms of contemplation within the Esoteric Buddhist tradition of East Asia.<sup>59</sup> In his recommendation of the contemplation of the letter *a* the author endeavors to show its identity and compatibility with the *hwadu/kongan* practice common in Korean Sŏn. His rationale for this is that the *kongan* is fundamentally identical with the character *a*, or as he stated “the essence of the *prajñāpāramitā*.”

Further on in his discussion of the value of the contemplation of the letter *a* we read:

It is like the [method] of *chegwan* 止觀 (Ch. *zhiguan*) [in the Ch'ŏnt'ae school], which teaches people [by] saying that when they are in deep absorption, they should visualize the letter *a* in front of their nose. The beginning of the visualization of the round disk with [the character] *a* is just like the way the Sŏn school instructs people to contemplate the white-colored *a* character in the center of the disk, and then to enter *samādhi*.<sup>60</sup> This is also called to visualize in the mind a moon-disk with the letter *a*. [Then] with the thought visualize the letter *kwa*, intone the mantra, whereupon you will obtain the three mysteries (*samhyŏn* 三玄).<sup>61</sup> They mutually correspond like the out- and in-breath, and the matching halves of a talisman. All the seventeen hundred-odd *kongans* of the Sŏn school, moreover, do not go beyond the one letter *a*, and hence they [i.e., these two kinds of practices] are unified as the shortcut method. (*Chinŏn chip*, 6ab)

In this passage we find Chŭngsuk including the *zhiguan* (*chegwan*) practice of Ch'ŏnt'ae Buddhism in his apologetic for the Esoteric Buddhist practices of the *Chinŏn chip*. As will be remembered, the

<sup>59</sup> For a description of this practice as carried out in Japanese Shingon Buddhism, cf. Goepper et al. 1988, 47–48.

<sup>60</sup> Probably the “Sŏn school” mentioned here indicates meditation as practiced in the Ch'ŏnt'ae tradition. In any case I have never come across this practice in any material related to the school of Korean Sŏn.

<sup>61</sup> I have been unable to identify the source of this interesting quotation.

Ch'önt'ae school was the other important denomination of Korean Buddhism that had become absorbed into the Sön school at the time of the merger in 1424 C.E., and it is likely that specific practices related to this tradition were still in vogue in Sön circles during Chüngsuk's time. In any case, it should be borne in mind that Esoteric Buddhist practices had been part of the general curriculum of Ch'önt'ae Buddhism long before it was formally introduced to Korea, so it is not so surprising to find great similarities between esoteric Ch'önt'ae and Esoteric Buddhism. Again the identity between the *kongan* practice and the contemplation of the letter *a* is brought up, and both are fused into the "shortcut method," a designation usually reserved for the *kongan* or *hwadu* practice of Sön Buddhism.<sup>62</sup>

The introduction to the Manyön Temple edition of the *Chinön chip* offers, as we have seen, a highly interesting perspective on the relationship between the *kongan* practice of Sön and traditional, Esoteric Buddhism as seen in a seventeenth-century Korean Buddhist context. Whether the practical grounds for making the contemplation of the letter *a* and *hwadu* practice compatible are present or not, it is a clever move on the part of the author of the introduction to utilize the doctrine of universal emptiness symbolized by the letter *a* as the link to the "wordless" Sön meditation. Through this hermeneutical feat he succeeds in establishing a plausible ideological basis for both types of practice. Hence we may see Chüngsuk as following in the footsteps of Hōng Pou in the process of making Esoteric Buddhist practices compatible with, and eventually identical to, Sön meditation.

#### *Esoteric Buddhist Cults*

In addition to the more common, exoteric forms of Avalokiteśvara, such as Suwöl Kwanūm 水月觀音 and Paegwi Kwanseūm 白衣觀世音, a number of Esoteric Buddhist forms of the bodhisattva were also in vogue in Korea during the Chosön. Among these were of course that of the thousand-armed, thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara; Ekādaśamukha; and that of the *Ṣaḍakṣaravidyā*, the four-armed form of the bodhisattva that also became popular in Tibet from the medieval period onwards.

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<sup>62</sup> A discussion of this can be found in Buswell 1987, 321–80.

The *Kwanseüm posal yŏnghŏm yakch'o* 觀世音菩薩靈驗略抄 (Abbreviated Text on the Divine Response of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara)<sup>63</sup> is an important text of the Avalokiteśvara cult and features an illustrated, cartoon-like version of the *dhāraṇī* of the *Nilakaṇṭhaka sūtra* (T. 1059, etc.), the chief scripture on the worship of the thousand-armed, thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara.<sup>64</sup> Here the sentences of the *dhāraṇī* have been broken down into separate parts, one for each of the fifty manifestations of the bodhisattva. Each part of the spell is given in trilingual text (Chinese, Han'gul, and Sanskrit) together with an explanation of the meaning (figure 5).<sup>65</sup>

The cult of *Ṣaḍakṣaravidyā* was introduced to Korea during the late Koryŏ and some aspects of the related practices would appear to have been at least partly influenced by Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>66</sup> During the Chosŏn the primary Chinese sources on this cult underwent considerable modification, resulting in works such as the *Sŏng Kwanjachae kusu yukcha sŏnjŏng* 聖觀自在求修六字禪定 (Holy Avalokiteśvara Cultivation of the Meditation on the Six-Character [Mantra])<sup>67</sup> and the *Yukcha tae myŏngwang tarani kyŏng* 六字大明王陀羅尼經 (Scripture of the Six-Character Great *Vidyārāja-dhāraṇī*)<sup>68</sup> written in bilingual

<sup>63</sup> The edition used here was printed in 1728 (sixth year of Yongzheng) at the Pohyŏn Temple 普賢寺 in Mt. Myŏhyang 妙香山. Songgwang Temple Library, no. 1138. An older version printed at Kamnŏ Temple 甘露寺 in 1712 also exists. A large, printed sheet featuring the illustrated *dhāraṇī* can also be found. See Institute for Korean Buddhist Studies 1978, pl. 35.

<sup>64</sup> See Sørensen, "Central Divinities in the Esoteric Buddhist Pantheon in China," in this volume.

<sup>65</sup> The original sūtra does refer to many gods and protectors being "activated" through the use of its powerful *dhāraṇī*, but it does not give any iconographic instructions (see T. 1060, 108bc). T. 1064 is an illustrated text of the *Nilakaṇṭhaka-dhāraṇī* attributed to Amoghavajra based on a Japanese version dated 1801. It has illustrations of Avalokiteśvara's forty-two hands, and while it has a near-identical text as the *Kwanseüm posal yŏnghŏm yakch'o*, it does not provide the images of the bodhisattva's manifestations. Cf. T. 1060.20:116b–117a. Note that a late Chinese equivalent exists in a rather fanciful version, similar to the Korean text.

<sup>66</sup> For a discussion of the *Ṣaḍakṣaravidyā* in the context of Chosŏn Buddhism, see Kim 1986, 551–608.

<sup>67</sup> Neither author nor compiler is given. However, the earliest edition of this text, possibly a private print of the *Ṣaḍakṣaravidyā*, is said to have been made in 1560. (Cf. Kim 1986, 16ab).

<sup>68</sup> This work was edited and augmented by Pak Sŏnmuk 朴銑默 (fl. nineteenth century), a Buddhist layman from Tongun 東耘 together with Yi Sŏkkyu 李錫圭 (n.d.), both of whom were members of the Kamno Buddhist association 甘露社. The version used here is a wood block edition from the collection of the Kyujanggak Library at Seoul National University, no. 1730/16. It is dated 1908. It features a completely



Figure 5. Printed illustration from the *Kwanseüm posal yŏnghŏm yakchŏ*.

Sino-Korean. This small book is partly a doctrinal work and partly a ritual text, the chief purpose of which is to instruct in the use of the famous mantra for worshipping *Ṣaḍakṣarī-Avalokiteśvara*: *Oṃ-maṇi-padme huṃ*. Siddham is used for the mantra throughout this work. It also features a unique mantra chart (figure 6)<sup>69</sup> that includes three Buddhist talismans.<sup>70</sup> The popularity of the six-character mantra also found a more decorative expression as adornment on bronze bells, on ceiling panels in buildings, on screens, and on stone *stūpas*.

different text from the *Ṣaḍakṣaravidyā sūtra*, T. 1047, and may be considered an original Korean composition.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. *Yukja myŏngwang tarani kyŏng*, 11b.

<sup>70</sup> *Yukja myŏngwang tarani kyŏng*, 18ab.

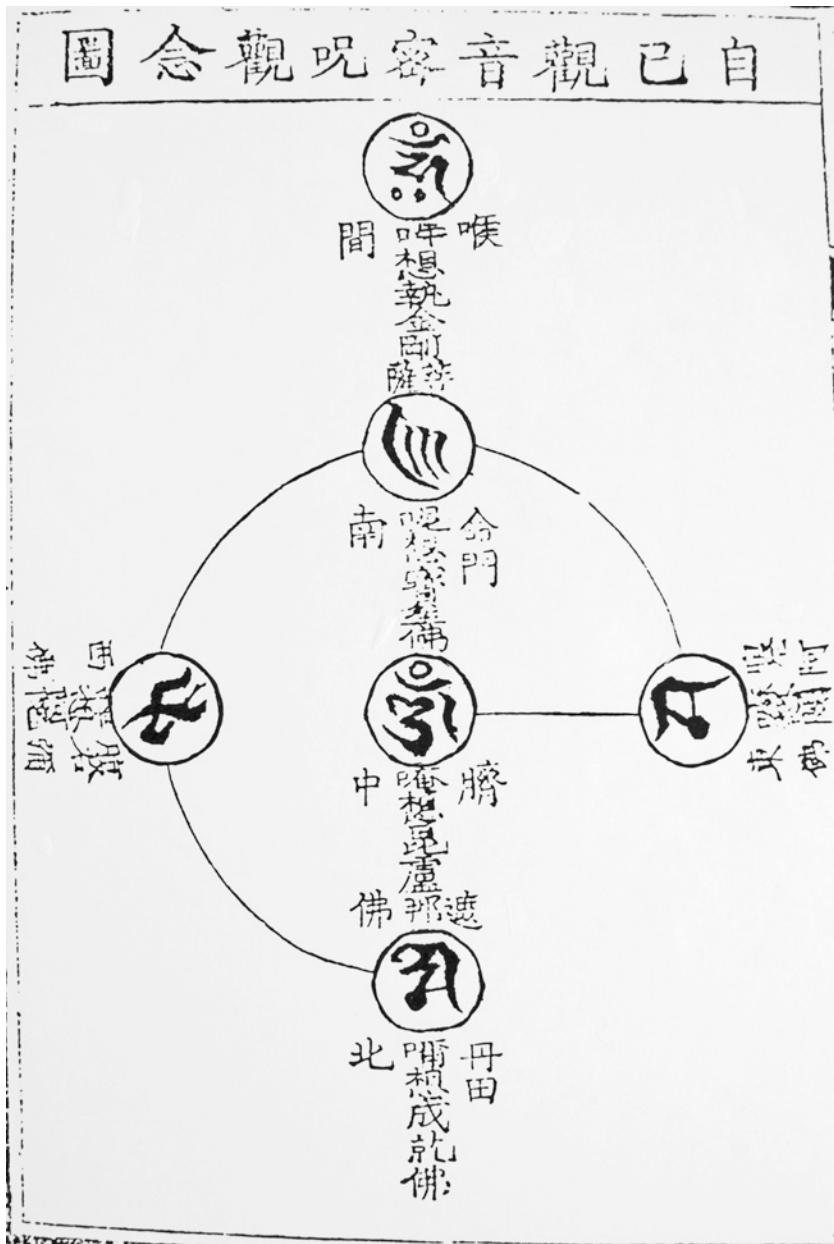


Figure 6. Mantra-chart from the *Yukcha myōngwang tarani kyōng*.



Although the worship of Cundī is known to have been fairly widespread during the Koryŏ, it became very popular during the Chosŏn, probably under sustained influence from Buddhism in Ming China.<sup>71</sup> The importance of Cundī outside the narrow confines of her cult can be seen in the material connected with practices of empowerment such as that we encounter in the *Chosang kyŏng*, mentioned previously, which features Cundī's mirror-wheel with the appropriate *bīja*, referred to as "Cundī's Nine-Letter Heavenly Circle Chart," for inclusion in the *pokchang* to be placed inside Buddhist images (figure 7). Cundī worship is also testified to in the *Pulga iryŏng chakpŏp* discussed above.<sup>72</sup>

As part of the general worship of the planets and asterisms, the cult of the Great Dipper (*ch'ilsŭng paektu* 七星北斗) enjoyed widespread popularity among the Buddhists of Chosŏn Korea as the place where the fate and lifespan of human beings were decided. Originally a Daoist cult, which the Chinese Buddhists took over and adapted to their own uses, the gods of the seven stars making up the Great Dipper underwent a transformation, or cultic restructuring, as emanations of a group of seven buddhas under the Tathāgata Tejaprabha.<sup>73</sup> The Chosŏn Buddhists were deeply engaged in longevity practices, among which the worship of the Great Dipper was preeminent. The popularity of this cult in the Buddhist context is evident in most temples from the period where special *ch'ilsŭng* halls 七星殿 can be found.<sup>74</sup>

### *Esoteric Buddhist Art under the Chosŏn*

With the possible exception of the *ch'ilsŭng* hall for the worship of the stellar divinities of the Great Dipper, specific halls for Esoteric Buddhist practices are not known from the Chosŏn period. However, the ceilings of many old halls feature the Siddham letters of the six-character mantra, indicating that Esoteric Buddhist practices and rituals were indeed common in Korean Buddhism. Several pagodas and *stūpas* from the Chosŏn have survived, but with the exception of a rare

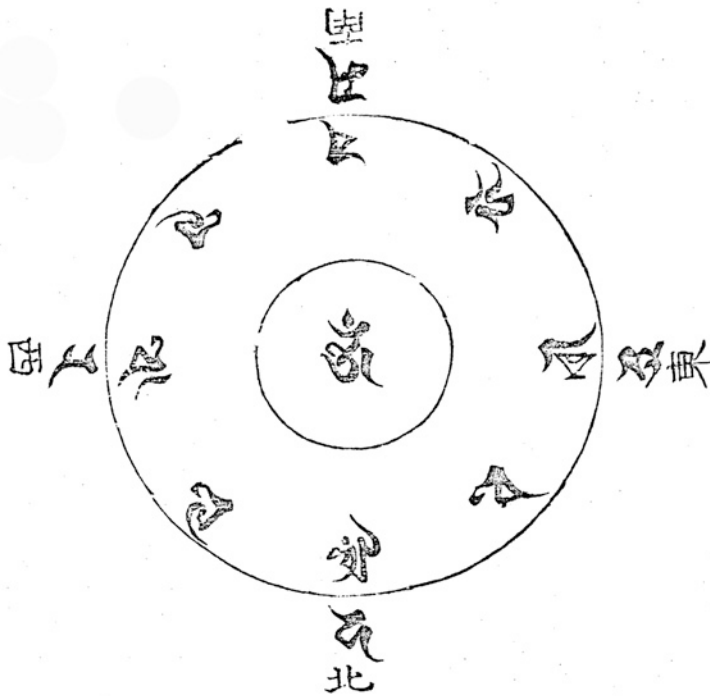
<sup>71</sup> For detailed information on the Cundī cult in Ming China, cf. Tada 1989, 1990.

<sup>72</sup> Haein Temple edition 1869, 21a–22b.

<sup>73</sup> See Sørensen 1995c, 71–105. For astral divinities and the Great Dipper in the context of Esoteric Buddhism in China, see Sørensen, "On the Worship of the Planets and Asterisms in Esoteric Buddhism in Tang China," elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>74</sup> For a brief description of these halls and their role, see Sørensen 1995c, 71–105.

准提九字天之圖也  
 有九乾天之圖也



今載位圖也天方方天之理抱覆則地而既  
 改之不定前圓則之圓法此地地彼方有順  
 之異辯其人之入外抱必封外載有之天俗  
 也故衆方之內於地地以覆之天天說圖諦

Figure 7. "Cundi's Nine Letter Heavenly Circle Chart." *Chosang kyōng*.

few, none of these can be directly connected with Esoteric Buddhism. Among the few that can are those on which the six-character mantra has been engraved.

Sculptures reflecting a clear-cut Esoteric Buddhist iconography are rarely met within the extant sculptural art from the Chosŏn period. It is of course possible that such images may have existed, as much of the Buddhist art made prior to 1592 was lost in the course of the Imjin War (1592–1598).<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, even if such statues and images were lost, the many written records should still provide us with evidence of their existence if indeed they had been a reality. However, virtually no records can be turned to for such information. It is highly probable that images of the various Esoteric Buddhist forms of Avalokiteśvara existed prior to the Imjin War, but none have in any case survived. As would seem to have been the case with Esoteric Buddhist sculptural art during the Koryŏ, it would appear that the same was the case for the Chosŏn period.

As was the case in China and Korea, the Chosŏn Buddhists produced a vital, but highly localized, tradition of votive paintings (*t'aenghwa* 幀畫) to be hung in the Buddhist halls for ritual use. While extant paintings of Esoteric Buddhist divinities are largely absent for the entire period of the Koryŏ, a fair number of surviving examples from the Chosŏn have been documented. The majority of these paintings feature one of several aspects of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, thus testifying to the continued popularity of this divinity. Esoteric Buddhist forms of this important bodhisattva represented in the *t'aenghwa* include the thousand-armed form, Ekādaśamukha, and Cundī. The cult of Avalokiteśvara is also evident in the early Chosŏn paintings transmitted via the Sŏn master Ch'oŭi Uisun 草衣意恂 (1786–1866) from Taehŭng Temple 大興寺 (figure 8).<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> The general destruction and plundering of Buddhist temples across the Korean Peninsula at the hands of the invading Japanese armies dealt a hard blow to Korean Buddhism from which it took several decades to recover. The destruction of the Buddhist temples was partly caused by the fact that the Korean monastic communities had organized themselves into a virtual monks' army, which, even when greatly outnumbered and out-gunned, fought with considerable courage and determination against the invaders. Cf. U 1985, 255–304.

<sup>76</sup> Some of these paintings are now in the collection of the museum of Taehŭng Temple. Due to its remote location on the southern-most tip of South Chŏlla province, this temple escaped the ravages of the Imjin War. Hence, many Buddhist paintings predating the Japanese invasion of 1581 were preserved there while they were almost all lost elsewhere on the Korean Peninsula.



Figure 8. 16th century painting of Cundi. Treasure of Taehŭng Temple.  
Photo by author.

A very rare eighteenth-century *t'aenghwa* of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara can still be found in the Kungnak Hall 極樂殿 of Koun Temple 孤雲寺 (HPSS 51–52).

Other *t'aenghwa* associated with or reflecting on Esoteric Buddhist concepts and practices include the *samjang* type (*samjang posal t'o* 三藏菩薩圖) of painting and that illustrating the feeding of the hungry ghosts, and the Kamno Wang 甘露王 type of paintings associated with the water and land rituals.<sup>77</sup> The former type deals with the cult of the three bodhisattvas, Ch'ōnjang Posal 天藏菩薩 (Heavenly Store Bodhisattva), Chiji Posal 持地菩薩 (Earth Bodhisattva), and Chijang 地藏菩薩 (Earth Store Bodhisattva, i.e., Kṣitigarbha). They are essentially non-canonical figures who would seem to have developed from the *suryuk* tradition, although the exact historical details are still not clear.<sup>78</sup> In any case these three bodhisattvas are conceived of as heavenly bureaucrats similar to the *sanyuan* 三元 (*sanguan* 三官) of Chinese Daoism, controlling the heavenly realm, the earthly realm, and the netherworld, respectively.<sup>79</sup> As far as we know, their cult can only be documented through ritual manuals and votive paintings.

Another important category of Esoteric Buddhist paintings are those depicting the “host of spirits” (*sinjung* 神眾). There are a number of iconographic models for paintings of this kind, but the standard painting features an entire register of protective spirits, in effect demon-generals, as well as various assimilated Hindu divinities including Indra, Brahma, Skanda, and the many-armed king of *asuras*. These protecting divinities are sometimes referred to as the “eightfold classes of gods and dragons” (figure 9).

One of the central protectors in these paintings is the important god Skanda, a youthful character dressed in a general's armor, who is also a well-known figure in Ming Buddhism.<sup>80</sup> The “host of spirits” were

<sup>77</sup> For these iconographic topoi, see Sørensen 1989b, 16, pls. 26–28; and 17–18, pls. 31–34.

<sup>78</sup> Several Korean scholars have dealt with the iconographical theme of the *samjang*, including Hōng 1980, 121–41; Mun 1981, 92–95; and Kim 1986, 47–50.

<sup>79</sup> For information on this important group of deities, see Hu 1995, 1449b.

<sup>80</sup> In contrast to China where Skanda is common as a sculpture, no comparable figures have so far been documented in the context of Chosŏn Buddhism. All the depictions we have of Skanda are in the form of paintings or woodblock prints.



Figure 9. Votive painting depicting the “Host of Spirits.” Sudök Temple, Chosŏn, 18th cent. Photo by author.

(and still are) invoked in Buddhist temples in conjunction with the recitation of the *Prajñāpāramitā hṛdaya sūtra*.<sup>81</sup>

### Conclusion

Esoteric Buddhism enjoyed a thriving presence during the Chosŏn period as a pan-Buddhist, non-sectarian, and mainly ritual tradition. Its presence permeated virtually all aspects of Buddhist ritual practices including the daily rituals in the temples and larger, communal ceremonies and cultic events such as the water and land rituals and prayers for the auspicious rebirths of deceased members of the royalty.

Esoteric Buddhist literature from the Chosŏn period is highly diverse and consists of a number of traditional sūtras (some in abbreviated form), various apocryphal scriptures, and other minor tracts, as well as occasional addresses. However, generally stated it is dominated by a variety of ritual manuals and spell collections. Both the primary sources, such as the *Yijo sillök pulgyo ch'ŏjon* and the writings of important monks, and the numerous ritual manuals indicate that the *suryuk* type of rituals were very important throughout the Chosŏn period. In fact, the related ritual manuals make up the bulk of the ritual texts and manuals published during the course of the dynasty.

The various practices connected with the empowerment of Buddhist *stūpas*, images, and paintings continued unabated from the Koryŏ, although in the course of the Chosŏn there was a clear tendency towards uniformity and standardization. The concept of empowerment was important throughout the dynasty, as has been documented by the *pokchang* or “magical intestines” retrieved from many images.

During the Chosŏn, Korean Buddhism assimilated many popular Buddhist and Daoist practices from China, including the writing of talismans and magical charts. The ability of many Korean monks to write Siddham script, especially in connection with liturgical texts as well as for ornamentation, continued throughout the dynasty and well into the twentieth century.

Above we have seen that during the middle of the Chosŏn, Sŏn meditation and Esoteric Buddhist visualization were harmonized in connection with various ritual practices. Many leading figures in the

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<sup>81</sup> For a brief description of the rituals as performed in the Korean Buddhist temples today, see Buswell 1992, 39, 229–42. For the visual context, see Sørensen 1989, 19–20, pls. 42–44.

Sŏn tradition were also ritual adepts, and several of them also wrote on various aspects of Esoteric Buddhism. Until recently many Sŏn monks were able to perform a wide range of Esoteric Buddhist rituals, including the elaborate *suryuk* type of rites, and many had detailed knowledge of the traditional practices associated with the empowerment of images and *stūpas*.

Esoteric Buddhist art under the Chosŏn took on special forms that do not really match that of contemporary China and Japan. In many ways the Esoteric Buddhist iconography we find in Korea from the period in question is less obviously “esoteric,” and beyond a few distinct images, such as the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara and Cundī, one has to understand most of the extant Esoteric Buddhist imagery in the context of its rich ritual tradition where the Esoteric Buddhist elements are quite obvious. Otherwise, many of the Esoteric Buddhist figures in the Chosŏn Buddhist pantheon tend to blend harmoniously with the dominant exoteric iconography to such an extent that one has to look closely to identify them.

Esoteric Buddhism no longer has a strong presence in the Korean Buddhist tradition. With the possible exception of the small Chin’gak 真覺 and Chinŏn 真言 sects, both of which in any case do not transmit orthodox forms of Korean Esoteric Buddhism but an adapted form of Japanese Shingon, very few serious practitioners can be found in modern Korea. Most of those met with today are followers of Tibetan Buddhism in some form or the other. This state of affairs is undoubtedly connected with the fact that the general mastery of ritual lore and traditional Esoteric Buddhist doctrines and practices has degenerated greatly in Korean Buddhism since the end of the occupation in 1945. Especially in the Chogye school, Korea’s largest Buddhist order, where meditation practice of the Sŏn variety and scriptural route of learning tend to dominate, many traditional rituals have either been forgotten or only exist in abbreviated and watered-down versions. Consequently, many of those monks who chant mantras and *dhāraṇīs* today often have little understanding of their meanings or even their original purposes. We may here talk about some that are not lost in translation, but lost in context.





ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN JAPAN

ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN JAPAN DURING THE NARA AND HEIAN



## 59. THE DISSEMINATION OF ESOTERIC SCRIPTURES IN EIGHTH-CENTURY JAPAN

Clemente Beghi

Japanese esoteric Buddhism is traditionally associated with the Shingon and Tendai schools, which developed from the beginning of the ninth century, and with names such as Kūkai, Saichō, Ennin, and Enchin, each of whom actively introduced and spread esoteric doctrine. But if we look at historical records such as the *Nihonshoki* 日本書紀 (Written Records of Japan), the *Shōsōin monjo* 正倉院文書 (Documents of the Shōsōin), and the *Shoku nihongi* 続日本紀 (Continued History of Japan), it is clear that many esoteric sūtras were already present in Japan for more than a century.

Among the first examples is the *Sūtra of the Adamantine Platform* (*Vajra-maṇḍa-dhāraṇī*, *Kongō-jō-darani-kyō* 金剛場陀羅尼經 T. 1345), a text translated in the Sui period by Jñānagupta 闍那崛多 (561–592). The Japanese specimen is dated 686, making it one of the oldest hand-copied sūtras extant in the country, and it formed part of the so-called *Gangōji Canon* (*Gangōji-issai-kyō* 元興寺一切經), a collection of scriptures brought back from China in 660 by Dōshō 道昭/道照 (629–700), who is credited with introducing Yogācāra teachings and founding the Hossō school 法相宗 in Japan. He had stayed on the continent for seven years, studying under Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664), who was known not only for his journey to India but also his translations, among which can be found a number of early esoteric sūtras. Dōshō must have been aware of early tantric developments in China.

About half a century later, in 718, Dōji 道慈 (675–744), a Sanron 三論 monk, returned from China after eighteen years, bringing with him a vast collection of scriptures, including esoteric ones. It is said that among his teachers was the tantric master Śubhākarasiṃha 善無畏 (637–735), although this is probably a later fiction, related to the fact that he introduced such esoteric practices as the “questioning ritual” (*gumonji-hō* 求聞持法), which is aimed, among the rest, at increasing memory. Among the texts he brought with him was the *Dhāraṇī of the Space-Store Bodhisattva’s Questions to Seven Buddhas*

(*Sapta-buddhika sūtra*, *Kokūzō-bosatsu-shomon-shichibutsu-darani-kyō* 虛空藏菩薩諸問七佛陀羅尼呪經 T. 1333) (Hamada 1986, 483, Kushida 1964, 11–13).

Nonetheless, it is not until the Tempyō period (天平 729–749) that we see a real growth in the circulation of esoteric texts, mainly due to the intensification of relations with China and increased state sponsorship of Buddhism under Shōmu 聖武 (701–756, r. 724–749). In 735 the Hossō monk Gembō 玄昉 (d. 746) returned from a very successful trip to the continent, where he had studied extensively with various masters. His knowledge and skills did not pass unrecognized in China, and he was given the purple robes by Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (685–762). It is thought that among the gifts he received was a copy of the entire Chinese canon of the day, more than five thousand volumes, although it is unclear if he actually received all the texts or managed to bring them back to Japan.

One year later, in 736, another important monk arrived in Japan, Daoxuan 道璿 (702–760), bringing with him many more recently translated esoteric scriptures. Accompanying Daoxuan was the only Indian to have ever reached Japan in pre-modern times, Bodhisena (Bodaisenna 菩提僊那, Baramon Sōjō 婆羅門僧正, 704–760), who had lived at Wutaishan 五臺山 and who is known for his important role in the ceremony of opening the eyes of the great Buddha of Nara. Included in the texts brought by Daoxuan we find the sūtras that form the base of Shingon and Tendai esoteric teachings, such as the *Diamond Tip Sūtra* (*Vajrasekhara sūtra*, *Kongōchōkyō* 金剛頂經), in the earlier version by Vajrabodhi, translated just fourteen years previously; the *Sūtra of the Manifest Enlightenment of the Grand Resplendent One, His Transformations and Empowering Presence* (*Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-vikurvītādhiṣṭhāna-vaipulyasūtra*, *Daibirushana-jōbutsu-shinpen-kaji-kyō* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經); and the *Sūtra of Wondrous Attainments* (*Susiddhikaramahātantra-sāadhanopāyika-pātala*, *Sōshitsujikara-kyō* 蘇悉地羯羅經), translated in 724 and 723 by Śubhākarasiṃha (Hamada 1986, 484; Kushida 1964, 13–15).

Among others who are known for having imported esoteric texts are the Korean Simsang 審祥 (d. 742), credited with the introduction of the Kegon 華嚴 (Huayan) teachings into Japan; the Chinese Jianzhen 鑑真 (Ganjin, 688–763) founder of the Japanese Vinaya school (Risshū 律宗); and, somewhat later but still before the return of Saichō and Kūkai, Kaimei 戒明 (second half of the eighth century), the Hossō

monk Gyōga 行賀 (729–803), and Eichū 永忠 (743–816) (Hamada 1986, 484). It is not surprising that specialists of different areas of Buddhist thought also introduced esoteric teachings, since tantrism in China was not a school but a movement, and its rituals were widely practiced by monks of various persuasions.

In the early eighth century, Emperor Shōmu not only planned the construction of Tōdaiji 東大寺 and its great buddha figure and established the network of provincial temples (*kokubunji* 國分寺) and nunneries (*kokubunniji* 國分尼寺), he also actively supported the copying of sūtras. His wife, Empress Kōmyō 光明 (701–760), also a devout Buddhist, supervised the newly renamed and revitalized sūtra scriptorium (Shakyōjo 寫經所, originally Shakyōshi 寫經司), probably as a result of the arrival of Gembō and Daoxuan. The aim of its first major project, begun in 741, was to copy and distribute throughout Japan the Buddhist texts that appeared in the *Catalogue of the Buddhist Canon of the Kaiyuan Years* (*Kaiyuan-shijiao-lu* 開元釋教錄 T. 2154) (Inoue 1966, 345–480). Although esoteric texts do not figure as a separate category in this catalogue and were mixed in with Mahāyāna sūtras in general, it does contain a great variety of esoteric scriptures, from the earlier ones of Jñānagupta, Śikṣānanda, Bodhiruci, and the like, including Chinese and Central Asian apocrypha, to the more recent ones of Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi 金剛智 (671–741), and even Amoghavajra 不空 (705–774) (see Table 1).

Altogether, it is believed that in the Tempyō period alone about eighty percent of the texts belonging to what Japanese scholars call “miscellaneous” esoteric Buddhism (*zōbu mikkyō* 雜部密教, shortened to *zōmitsu*), were available; sūtras mainly dealing with *dhāraṇīs* and related to individual deities, such as the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara (Ekādaśamukha Avalokiteśvara, Jūichimen Kannon 十一面觀音), the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (Sahasrabhuja-sahasranetra Avalokiteśvara, Senju (Sengen) Kannon 千手(千眼)觀音), or Avalokiteśvara of the Unerring Noose (Amoghapāśa Avalokiteśvara, Fukūkenjaku Kannon 不空羂索觀音). The most popular text was probably the *Dhāraṇī Collection Scripture* (*Dhāraṇīsamgraha sūtra*, Jpn. *Darani-shū* 陀羅尼集 T. 901) by Atikūṭa/Atigupta 阿地瞿多, on which many practices were based (Hamada 1986, 485; Kushida 1964, 35).

A number of the canonical texts of later Japanese esotericism that Japanese scholars call “pure” esoteric Buddhism (*junsei mikkyō* 純正密教, shortened to *junmitsu*), related to the *Mahāvairocana* and

*Vajraśekhara Sūtras*, were also known. Missing from this list are the voluminous commentaries, mainly composed by Amoghavajra. It was precisely these that Kūkai focused on when he went to China.

### *Esoteric Aspects of Nara-period Buddhism*

The definition of Japanese esoteric Buddhism prior to the Heian period is problematic; although there is much textual evidence, little is known about how these texts were understood and what kind of ritual practices were performed on the basis of such texts. There can be no doubt that esoteric scriptures were widely circulated, the chanting of *dhāraṇīs* was widespread, and rituals with strong esoteric undertones were performed for curing illnesses and securing peace. Esoteric implements such as *vajras* (*kongō*, 金剛) and *vajra* bells were also used. Temples were full of images of esoteric deities and it was widely believed that supernatural powers could be achieved through a combination of spiritual practice and devotion to such deities. What, then, distinguishes tantric practices during the Nara period from those of the Heian period?

Relatively few specialized studies have been done in Japan on this subject, and the existing scholarship is still based on the artificial distinction between *zōmitsu* and *junmitsu*, a strongly sectarian distinction aimed at enhancing the status of the latter, in which only those rituals associated with Heian Shingon and/or Tendai are regarded as “pure.” As a result, *zōmitsu* is seen as having been preached by the Buddha Śākyamuni, lacking proper theoretical structure, and limited to the recitation of *dhāraṇīs*; its aims are worldly (*genze riyaku* 現世利益). *Junmitsu*, on the other hand, is seen as having been preached by the absolute Mahāvairocana Buddha; has a clear structure based on the nondual relationship between the Adamantine Realm (*Vajradhātu*, *Kongōkai* 金剛界) and the Matrix Realm (*Garbhadhātu*, *Taizōkai* 胎藏界); is concerned with a combination of *mudrās*, mantras, and mandalas; and has other esoteric aims, namely enlightenment in this body (i.e., in this lifetime, *sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成佛) (Ōmura 1918, 373–75; Abé 1999, 152–53). *Junmitsu*, in other words, refers to the specific configuration of esoteric Buddhism in the lineage of Amoghavajra and Huiguo, as brought to Japan by Kūkai. This kind of division does not take into account the complex variety of tantric phenomena in East Asia and is inherently contradictory, since Kūkai also imported and valued many so-called *zōmitsu* scriptures and many of the practices he introduced also had this-worldly goals.

This scarcity of scholarship on Nara-period esotericism is, not surprisingly, mirrored in Western languages; the only serious exception being Abé's chapter "(No) Traces of Esoteric Buddhism" in his 1999 book *The Weaving of Mantra*. In this detailed section, he critiques the distinction between *zōmitsu* and *junmitsu*, and shows how esoteric Buddhism during the Nara period was not clearly distinguishable from exoteric Mahāyāna Buddhism. He demonstrates how the general paradigm of the time was mainly an exoteric one, and how, as a consequence, even rituals based on esoteric scriptures were most of the time decontextualized and exotericised. Only after the introduction of tantrism by Kūkai as a separate, independent category do we have a focused interest on esoteric practices *per se*, and the rise of Japanese esoteric Buddhism (Abé 1999, 159–84).<sup>1</sup>

### *Texts and Academia*

Tantric texts were not just available during the Nara period but were also widely read and studied, as demonstrated by the letters of "endorsement for novices" (*ubasoku/ubai kōshinge* 優婆塞/優婆夷 貢進解)<sup>2</sup> presented by Buddhist masters to the agency for Buddhist and foreign affairs (*genbaryō* 玄蕃寮). These documents record how long the novice had been trained, which texts he or she had learned, and which *dhāraṇīs* and parts of sūtras had been memorized for recitation. We not only find mention of exoteric scriptures like the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Saddharma-puṇḍarīka sūtra*, *Hoke-kyō/Hokke-kyō* 法華經 T. 262, 263, 264, 265) or the *Sūtra of the Golden Light* (*Suvarṇaprabhāsa sūtra*, *Konkōmyō-saishō-kyō* 金光明最勝王經 T. 663, 665), but also a great many esoteric texts, mainly dealing with *dhāraṇīs*, such as the *Dhāraṇī of the Jubilant Corona* (*Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī*, *Bucchō-sonshō-darani-kyō* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經 T. 967) by Buddhapāli 佛陀波利 (second half of the

<sup>1</sup> Without wishing to diminish the importance of the founder of Shingon, if we were to neatly define the contours of tantrism in terms of Kūkai's categorization, we might lose out on some of the subtleties present in the Nara context. In China, after all, esoteric Buddhism was not considered as a separate, independent category, and we rarely find specifically esoteric temples, but this does not mean that esoteric teachings did not circulate and that esoteric rituals were not performed. There were actually various competing lineages, as demonstrated by Misaki 1988, 146–52.

<sup>2</sup> The term *ubasoku* (*upāsaka*; fem. *upāsikā*, *ubasoni*) has three main meanings in the Japanese context: novice, lay practitioner, and ascetic. In this case it is the first definition, a novice disciple at a state temple who is in training to become an ordained monk.



seventh century) or the *Essential Incantation of the Eleven-faced One* (*Avalokiteśvara-ekādaśamukha-dhāraṇī*, *Jūichimen-kanzeon-shinjushin-kyō* 十一面神呪心經 T. 1071) by Xuanzang.

It is interesting to note that among the sūtras to be recited we also find texts that would later be important for Shingon and Tendai, such as the *Path of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*Adhyartha-śatikā-prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, (*Dairaku-*)*kongō-fukū-shinjitsu-sanmaya-kyō* 金剛頂瑜伽理趣般若經, often shortened to (*Hannya*)*rishukyō* (般若)理趣經 T. 241) (Horiike 1994, 15–16; Yoshida 1988, 155–68; Abé 1999, 160).

*Dhāraṇī* texts were very much sought after, a fact further confirmed by the circulars (*chō* 牒) between the court and the temples. One dated 751 includes a request from the Palace to the Agency for the Construction of Tōdaiji (Zō-Tōdaiji-shi 造東大寺司) for a copy of the eleventh fascicle of the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra Collection* because it had gone missing. In another letter, Tōdaiji informs the sūtra scriptorium that a copy of the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra of the Six Gates* (*Ṣaṣṭmukhī-dhāraṇī*, *Rokumon-darani-kyō* 六門陀羅尼經 T. 1360) had been made, as it was needed for the assembly reader (*tokushi* 讀師).

The use of esoteric scriptures was in fact not limited to individual training, as we can see from the temple records at Kōfukuji 興福寺, in which it is recorded that in 733, together with the many Mahāyāna texts read, were also the esoteric *Abhiṣeka Sūtra* (*Bussetsu-kanjō-kyō* 佛說灌頂經 T. 1331), the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra of the Great Cundī, Mother of the Seven Koṭīs of Buddhas* (*Bussetsu-shichikutei butsumo shin dai Junde darani kyō* 七俱胝佛母心大准提陀羅尼經 T. 1077), the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Yamāntaka* (Jpn. *Daiitoku-darani-kyō* 大威德陀羅尼經 T. 1341), and the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra of the Great Torch* (*Daihōju-darani-kyō* 大法炬陀薩尼經 T. 1340) (Kushida 1964, 20). Interest was not only on *dhāraṇī* scriptures but also on more complex theoretical texts. In 722 we find an official request from Tōdaiji to the empress's palace (*kongū* 坤宮) to borrow the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, the *Vajraśekhara sūtra*, and some other esoteric sūtras (Kushida 1964, 21). Unfortunately, we do not know why these two sūtras, so fundamental to later Shingon, were requested at this time.

There is a relatively clear picture of the main centers of esoteric knowledge during the Nara period. Before the foundation of Tōdaiji, whose first abbot, Rōben 良辯 (689–773), was very interested in esoteric scriptures and was a renowned practitioner of *dhāraṇīs*, the

most important site was without doubt Daianji. Not only had Dōji lived there, but also Simsang, Daoxuan, Bodhisena, Kaimei, and even Saichō's teacher Gyōhyō 行表 (722–797) and Gonzō 勤操 (758–827), who may have been Kūkai's early teacher. Daianji was one of the biggest temples at the time and the fulcrum of the provincial temple system before the completion of Tōdaiji. Other important centers included Gangōji; Kōfukuji; Hisodera 比蘇寺, a mountain temple connected with Gangōji and Daianji; and, slightly later, the newly built Saidaiji 西大寺.<sup>3</sup> Last but not least, there was also the court, with its sūtra scriptorium and the Shibi chūdai 紫微中臺, the office dealing with the affairs of Empress Kōmyō.

### *Ritual*

Nara Buddhism was not primarily doctrinal, as is sometimes assumed, but also gave a great deal of attention to practice, and in this context esoteric *dhāraṇīs* had a central role. *Dhāraṇī* chanting was common among ordained monastics and lay religious (*shido* 私度), both often referred to as spell masters (*ju[gon]shi* 呪[禁]師), and was mainly used in curing illness. Esoteric texts often clearly stated that the *dhāraṇīs* they contained would heal specific maladies; for example, in the *Amoghapāśa Avalokiteśvara Dhāraṇī Sūtra*, it is said that its spells can cure pains in the eye, ear, nose, teeth, lips, tongue, jaw, heart, stomach, waist, and so on. Other texts, such as the *Buddhoṇiṣa Dhāraṇī Sūtra*, include the following statement: “Even those who are gravely sick, upon hearing this *dhāraṇī*, will be emancipated from all forms of illness and prevented from transmigrating through evil realms” (Abé 1999, 160). Spells were also used for other, less altruistic aims, such as to lay curses on and kill adversaries with the Vetāla (*enmi* 厭魅) rituals, to the degree that the government felt the need to control such practices. The *Regulations for Monks and Nuns* (*Sōni-ryō* 僧尼令) contains articles that explicitly forbid the use of magic for any purpose other than curing illness (Horiike 1994, 10–11).

<sup>3</sup> Although the affiliation was probably not an issue, it seems that the Hossō, Sanron, and Kegon schools had the closest ties with esotericism, probably as a consequence of their main teachings, namely Yogācara, Mādhyamika, and Avatamsaka, that dealt preeminently with practice and soteriology, and to the fact that their Japanese founders had been in China when tantrism was flourishing there.

This general reliance on the potency of *dhāraṇī* spells had serious political implications, as it conferred a great deal of power to those who could master them. There was an area of the palace dedicated to Buddhist practices called the Naidōjō 内道場, where monks would perform rituals necessary for the well-being of the emperor and the nation. Among them were (healer-)meditation masters, (*kanbyō*) *zen-shi* (看病) 禪師, who were held in very high esteem and considered on par with other ministers, if not of even higher status (Horiike 1994, 20–25). The exclusive position enjoyed by these healer-meditation masters allowed them close proximity to emperors and empresses, on whom they were able to exert much influence through their magic. Two of the three greatest rebellions of the Nara period were related in some form or other to such monks. Gembō was involved in the revolt of Fujiwara no Hirotsugu 藤原広嗣 (d. 740); and, most famously, Dōkyō 道鏡 (d. 772) was initially involved in the revolt of Fujiwara no Nakamaro 藤原仲麻呂 (706–764) and later became a central figure in the problems that surrounded Empress Kōken 孝謙 (718–770).

The rituals themselves were often based on descriptions in the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra Collection* and frequently involved dedicated altars (*danjo* 壇所). Another important practice with strong esoteric undertones was the rite of repentance (*keka* 悔過), done at the request of the emperor when famines or epidemics struck, and for a variety of private purposes, such as to restore health or fight maledictions. This ritual was mostly dedicated to certain esoteric deities, such as the transformations of Avalokiteśvara, Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yakushi 藥師), and Lakṣmī (Kichijōten 吉祥天). Although we do not know exactly how these rituals were performed, it is likely that they were exoteri-cised, as Abé has demonstrated in his detailed analysis of the “service of the second month” (*shunie* 修二会). This rite of repentance, still performed today at Nigatsudō 二月堂 of Tōdaiji, evokes the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara as its main deity (Abé 1999, 168–76).

Nonetheless, apart from the recitation of *dhāraṇīs* many esoteric elements can be found in these rituals, such as ringing *vajra* bells, sounding conch shells, sprinkling water, the use of fire for purification of the ritual arena, or the use of round altars (*endan* 圓壇), typical of the later esoteric rituals to avert calamities (*sokusai-hō* 息災法), as in the case of the Bhaiṣajyaguru rite of repentance at Yakushiji 藥師寺 (Misaki 1994a, 42–43; Hamada 1986, 146; Kushida 1964, 34–35).

Among other esoteric practices of the period was the *gumonji-hō*, thought to have been introduced to Japan by Dōji. There are various versions of this rite, but the most well known is that for Bodhisattva Akāśagārbha based on the *Method of the Victorious, Essential Dharāṇi for Having Wishes Heard by Space-store, the Bodhisattva Who Can Fulfill Requests* (*Kokūzō-bosatsu-nōma-shogan-saishōshin-darani-gumonjihō* 虚空藏菩薩能滿諸願最勝心陀羅尼求聞持法 T. 1145) by Śubhākarasiṃha, which was used to attain an infallible memory. Another very popular practice, so much so that it is even described in the *Wondrous Stories of Japan* (*Nihon Ryōiki* 日本靈異記), was the Peacock King ritual (*kujaku-myōō-hō* 孔雀明王法), usually employed to pray for rain. This was probably the “ritual from Buddhists texts” (*naiten-hō* 内典法) conducted in 732 to counter the serious drought afflicting the country (*Shoku nihongi*, fourth year of the Tempyō era, seventh month). Rainmaking rituals were quite common and could be based on various texts. For example, a circular from the Tōdaiji dated 766 says that the *Sūtra for the Rain of the Great Cloud* (*Daiunrinseiukyō* 大雲輪請雨經 T. 991), translated by Narendrayāśas 那連提耶舍 (fl. sixth century), was used for a rain ritual. We cannot know how the rite was actually performed, but if it followed the text, as references to ritual banners in other temple records suggest, it would have included altar offerings with a mandala and mantras.

There were also the life-extending ritual (*enmei-hō* 延命法), which the *Shoku nihongi* tells us was performed in 758 for Emperor Shōmu; altar rituals to Sarasvatī (*benzaiten-hō* 辯才天法); the ritual of the Buddha’s Corona (*daibutchō-hō* 大佛頂法), performed by Jianzhen’s Korean disciple Sata 思訛 (fl. eighth century); and the prayer rite (*Zuigu-hō* 隨求法), a ritual dedicated to Mahāpratisarā (Daizuigu myōō 大隨求明王) for protection against bodily harm. In one of the documents related to this ceremony, the *Shūko jisshu* 集古十種, Amitābha’s Siddham *hrīḥ* 活 (*kiriku*) appears in place of Empress Kōken’s seal, although this may be a later forgery (Mochizuki 1954–1957, 1115b), since there is no other reference to an Indic script at this time. Last, and most surprising, there are also references to a “consecration ritual” (*kanjō-hō* 灌頂法), performed in 793 and again in 805, which predates the return of either Saichō or Kūkai (Kushida 1964, 28–35; Mizaki 1994, 42–49).

*Material Culture: Statuary and Ritual Paraphernalia*

Rituals did not consist only of *dhāraṇī* recitation; many required lengthy preparations; offerings, including some extremely valuable items such as rare incense; a whole range of paraphernalia; and, of course, icons representing the deities. A great amount of statuary as well as ritual implements is still extant.

The most frequently encountered images are those representing Avalokiteśvara, as his cult was very popular at the time due to faith in his ability to protect and heal (Table 2). Of these, images of the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvaras are the most common, with the earliest examples dating back as far as the mid-seventh century, for example, the small bronze statue now kept at the Tōkyō National Museum, which is thought to have been brought back from China in 665 by Jōe 定慧 (643–714); and the fresco that adorned the Golden Hall (*kondō* 金堂) of Hōryūji, which was unfortunately lost during a fire in modern times (Naitō 2005, 132).<sup>4</sup>

The second most popular icon seems to have been the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, such as the one in Nigatsudō, used in 751 in the first recorded repentance ritual to this deity. There are also representations of the deity that follow the iconography of the Garbhadhātu mandala, with forty-two main arms and many smaller ones, as in the statue at Fujiidera 葛井寺. Among other images related to the various transformations of Avalokiteśvara is the Unerring Noose Avalokiteśvara, such as the 748 statue at Sangatsudō 三月堂, thought to have been a portrait sculpture of Empress Kōmyō; the Treasure Wheel Avalokiteśvara (Cintāmaṇicakra-avalokiteśvara, Nyoirin Kannon 如意輪觀音), which followed the older, two-armed iconography; and last, the Horse-headed Avalokiteśvara (Hayagrīva, Batō Kannon 馬頭觀音), such as the image at Daianji (Naitō 2005, 134). With his angry faces and ghastly adornments of snakes and bones, this is one of the few early examples of the wrathful (*funnu* 忿怒) deities that are to become so popular after Kūkai.

While there are many references to paintings, embroideries, and statues, only a few are extant, primarily sculptures.<sup>5</sup> Among the lost images is a Tathāgata Akṣobya (Ashuku Nyorai 阿閼如來) that was

<sup>4</sup> For pictures of all the images and implements cited, see Nara kokuritsu hakubutsukan, ed., 2005.

<sup>5</sup> For an extensive list of the various statues and their original and present locations, see Hamada 1986, 488–91.

once at Ashukuji 阿闍寺; various sets of the Seven Healing Buddhas (Shichibutsu Yakushi 七佛藥師), probably used in rituals for the protection of the nation; a set of the Five Buddhas of the Four Directions (Shihō Gobutsu 四方五佛), namely the five central buddhas of the Vajradhātu realm; and many others. There are also various references to images of Hindu gods and goddesses, such as Nārāyaṇa (Naraenten 那羅延天), Brahma (Bon-ten 梵天), Indra (Taishakuten 帝釋天), and Sarasvatī (Benzaiten 辯才天) (Kushida 1964, 25–27; Sawa 1969a, 66–71). Among the extant images are one of Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha at Gakuanji 額安寺 brought back by Dōji; and a Śrī Lakṣmī and a Sarasvatī at Tōdaiji, where there is also the famous and awe-inspiring Vajrapāṇi (Shukongō 執金剛神), thought to have been the personal deity (*nenjibutsu* 念持佛) of Konju gyōja 金鷲行者, an early eighth-century ascetic.

Missing from lists like these is any mention of deities such as the wrathful Vidyārājas (Myōō 明王), and of the esoteric mandalas that became so common in the Heian period, such as the mandalas of the two worlds (*ryōkai mandara* 兩界曼荼羅), although there are references to some parts of these mandalas and some of the main deities. It is important to recognize that, contrary to what is usually claimed, mandalas such as these were not completely unknown at this time. The clearest examples are the mandala of the Treasure Wheel Avalokiteśvara (*nyoirin-kannon mandara* 如意輪觀音曼陀羅) made by Bodhisena, as can be inferred from his epitaph, and the mandala of the Universal Assembly (*fushūe mandara* 普集會曼荼羅) brought back by Jianzhen (Hamada 1986, 490).

A great deal of paraphernalia also remains from this early period. Implements used during the *shunie* of Nigatsudō and the “amendment ritual” (*shushōe* 修正會) of the Golden Hall of Hōryūji, together with those unearthed at Nantaisan 男体山 in Nikkō 日光, can serve as examples of what were probably common objects at the time. Apart from incense burners, there are hand bells (*nyō* 鐺) with three-pronged *vajra* handles (*sanko'nyō* 三鈷鐺), quite similar to the *vajra* bells (*kongōrei* 金剛鈴) found in later periods, though the bell section is less open and rounder. There are many types of bells with different sounds, meant to be used by different people in various parts of the rituals. There are also wands (*jō* 杖) made of bronze or iron, like the monk's staff (*shakujō* 錫杖), often with metal rings attached at the end; or made of wood, like the incantation wand (*kajijō* 加持杖) that was mostly used to cure illness or to drive away demons.

Even *vajras* can be found, such as the three-pronged *vajra* (*sankōsho* 三鈷杵) from Nantaisan, now in the Nara National Museum, although its points are not placed in a circle but are parallel, so that it more closely resembles a harpoon. However, there do not seem to be any five-pronged *vajras*, which usually symbolize the five buddhas of the *vajra* realm. Finally, although we know of them only through textual references in the *Tōdaiji kenmotsu chō* 東大寺獻物帳 and the *Kokka chinpō chō* 國家珍寶帳, are some of the robes of the famous tantric master Vajrabodhi that were used during the first remembrance ceremony of Emperor Shōmu (Kushida 1964, 2; Kajitani 2008, 28).

### *Peripheral Groups of Practitioners*

One last phenomenon that must be considered is of the issue of heterodox practitioners. Although the Nara government actively tried to keep Buddhism under control by defining strict rules to which monks must submit, and although it wanted to be in charge of all ordinations, there was a proliferation of non-stipendiary practitioners. These are generally referred to as followers (*ubasoku*), either monks who left their home temples or self-ordained monks (*shidosō* 私度僧). These practitioners entered the Buddhist path without asking permission from the authorities, with the primary aim of proselytizing among the masses. They were more interested in spiritual practice than in doctrine, and traveled from village to village to help the populace, performing miracles and exorcisms. Many of these monks were charlatans, as the government was aware, but authentic examples can be found, such as Gyōki 行基 (668–749), a monk from Gangōji who spent most of his life among commoners, helping and guiding them. He initially generated great concern among the authorities but was eventually integrated into the system to the extent that he was asked to help find people and resources for the construction of the great Buddha of Nara.

Another important category of unofficial religious<sup>6</sup> were the ascetics, usually referred to as mountain and forest practitioners (*sanrin gyōja* 山林行者), who were precursors of the *shugenja* 修験者 (see Sekimori, “Shugendō and Its Relationship with the Japanese Esoteric Sects,” in this volume). These practitioners, sometimes affiliated with

<sup>6</sup> Although here separate groups are presented, most of the time the distinction between these groups was not so clear-cut and there are many mixed typologies.

temples, sometimes not, spent their lives in the mountains trying to attain enlightenment and thaumaturgical powers. From time to time they would come down to the villages to perform various religious activities, and were even invited to court or to major temples to perform rituals. It is very hard to clearly define these “mountain and forest” ascetics, as they practiced a mixture of Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and native shamanism, but one primary common feature was their use of magic spells, especially esoteric *dhāraṇīs*. Without doubt, the most famous example is the semi-legendary En no Gyōja 役行者 (also known as En no Ozuno or En no Shokaku 役小角, fl. late seventh to early eighth century), who is said to have lived on Mount Katsuragi 葛城, a very important center for this type of practitioner, especially in later times.

The most important site for this activity was the area of Yoshino 吉野 and its religious center, Hisosanji 比蘇山寺 (Hisodera), otherwise known as Hōkōji 放光寺 or Genkōji 現光寺 (Ōji 1991, 7–39). It served as the headquarters for those trying to attain “natural wisdom” (*jinenchi* 自然智) through purificatory austerities and other religious activities, above all the questioning ritual to Akāśāgarbha (Sonoda 1970, 45–60). It is not exactly clear what the term “natural wisdom” actually meant, but as far as we can infer from texts, including the writings of Saichō and Kūkai, who actually practiced in these mountains, the aim was not simply to develop superhuman memory to retain all the Buddhist teachings but also to recover the so-called innate knowledge (*shōchi* 生知), as opposed to commonplace acquired knowledge (*gakuchi* 學知). After all, the term itself is very specific and appears already in the *Lotus Sūtra* (T. 262.9:31a13) to refer to the wisdom that one possesses innately, which is not the result of conditioning.

The earliest references to people practicing these teachings brings our attention to the Chinese monk Shenrui 神叡 (d. 737), who came to Japan around the time of Dōji’s return; and to Dōji himself and his lineage, with his subsequent disciples Zengi 善議 (729–812) and Gonzō. Then follows Daoxuan, Jianzhen’s disciple Fajin 法進 (709–778), and Doshō’s lineage that, through Gien 義淵 (d. 728), Rōben, and Gyōgi, takes us to Shōgo 勝悟 (732–811) and Gomyō 護命 (750–834), who were renowned members of the group. Initially, Hisosanji was a sort of branch temple of Gangōji, where monks could practice or be trained, but it soon also established strong ties with Daianji, and even monks from Tōdaiji and Kōfukuji can be found. Mountain



practice was indeed very common, even among important monks of the large state temples, who dedicated vast amounts of their time to these activities. Perhaps the most renowned is Gomyō, who is said to have spent his days in Yoshino and his nights at his home temple (Sonoda 1970, 57).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Here again the Sanron, Hossō, and Avatamsaka were the predominating schools. This should be no surprise, since these schools were the most keen on “applied” Buddhism and esoteric teachings.

Table 1. Esoteric texts imported in Japan before Saichō and Kūkai (from Kushida, slightly modified).

Author/translator	Text name	Written in	Imported in
Zhuliyuan and Zhiqian	摩登伽經	230	733
Śrīmitra	佛說灌頂經	317-325	733
Jñānagupta	大法炬陀羅尼經	594	733
Jñānagupta	大威德陀羅尼經	596	733
Xuanzang	十一面神呪心經	656	733
Xuanzang	八名普密陀羅尼經	654	733
Divākara	七俱胝佛母心大准提陀羅尼經	685	733
Ratnacinta	隨求即得陀羅尼神呪經	693	733
Bodhiruci	千手千眼陀羅尼身經	709	735
Zhiqian	無量門微密持經	223-253	736
Buddhabhadra	出生無量門持經	398-421	736
Guṇabhadra	阿難陀目佉尼阿離陀鄰尼經	435-443	736
Guṇāśāla	無量門破魔陀羅尼經	462	736
Saṅghabhara	舍利弗陀羅尼經	506-520	736
Jñānagupta	一向出世菩薩經	591	736
Xuanzang	不空罽索神呪心經	659	736
Xuanzang	持世陀羅尼經	654	736
Xuanzang	勝幢臂印陀羅尼經	654	736
Yijing	曼殊室利呪藏經	703	736
Yijing	一切功德莊嚴王經	705	736
Zhiqian	華聚陀羅尼呪經	Before 253	737
Nandi	請觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼呪經	419	737
Tanwulan	陀鄰尼鉢經	381-395	737
Tanwulan	玄師聽陀所說神呪經	Before 395	737

Table 1 (cont.)

Author/translator	Text name	Written in	Imported in
Tanwulan	摩尼羅疆經	Before 395	737
?	大金孔雀王呪經	350-360	737
?	七佛所說神呪經	317-420	737
?	善法方便陀羅尼經	317-420	737
?	金剛秘密善門陀羅尼經	317-420	737
Kalayaśas	觀藥王藥上二菩薩經	424-442	737
Saṅghabhara	孔雀王呪經	506-520	737
?	牟梨曼陀羅呪經	502-557	737
?	摩利支天經	502-557	737
?	師子奮迅菩薩所問經	Before 420	737
?	華積陀羅尼神呪經	Before 420	737
?	大普賢陀羅尼經	502-557	737
?	大七寶陀羅尼經	502-557	737
?	八字神呪王經	502-557	737
Shengjian	無崖際持法門經	388-409	737
Tanyao	大吉義呪經	462	737
Buddhaśanta	金剛上味陀羅尼經	525	737
Jñānayaśas	種々雜呪經	561-577	737
Yasogupta	種々雜呪經	561-579	737
Wan Tianyi	尊勝菩薩陀羅尼經	562-564	737
Jñānagupta	如來方便善巧呪經	587	737
Jñānagupta	十二佛神呪校量功德除障滅罪經	587	737
Jñānagupta	金剛場陀羅尼經	587	737
Jñānagupta	不空罽索呪經	587	737
Xuanzang	拔濟苦難陀羅尼經	654	737

Table 1 (cont.)

Author/translator	Text name	Written in	Imported in
Xuanzang	諸佛心陀羅尼經	650	737
Xuanzang	呪五首經	664	737
Xuanzang	六門陀羅尼經	654	737
Zhitong	千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神呪經	653	737
Devaprajñā	諸佛集會陀羅尼經	692	737
Devaprajñā	知炬陀羅尼經	692	737
Śikṣānanda	觀世音祕藏呪經	695-704	737
Li Wuchan	不空絹索陀羅尼經	700	737
Ratnacinta	大陀羅尼未法中一字心呪經	705	737
Ratnacinta	不空羅索陀羅尼自在王呪經	693	737
Yijing	大佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經	710	737
Yijing	香王菩薩陀羅尼呪	705	737
Yijing	善夜經	701	737
Yijing	莊嚴王陀羅尼呪經	701	737
Yijing	拔除罪障呪王經	710	737
Bodhiruci	五佛頂三昧陀羅尼經	693	737
Bodhiruci	廣大寶樓閣陀羅尼經	706	737
Bodhiruci	六字神呪經	693	737
Bodhiruci	如意輪陀羅尼經	709	737
Bodhiruci	護命法門神呪經	693	737
Bodhiruci	大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經	725	737
Śubhākarasiṃha	蘇悉地羯羅經	726	737
Śubhākarasiṃha	蘇婆呼童子請問經	726	737
Śubhākarasiṃha	虛空藏菩薩能滿諸願最勝心陀羅尼求聞持法	717	737
Vajrabodhi	金剛頂瑜伽略出念誦經	723	737

Table 1 (cont.)

Author/translator	Text name	Written in	Imported in
Vajrabodhi	七俱胝佛母准提大明陀羅尼經	723	737
Vajrabodhi	觀自在如意輪菩薩瑜伽法要	730	737
?	文殊師利菩薩六字呪功能法經	?	737
Kumārajīva	孔雀王呪經	402-412	738
?	虛空藏菩薩七佛陀羅尼經	502-557	738
Yaśogupta	十一面觀世音神呪經	561-579	738
Zhitong	千轉陀羅尼觀世音菩薩呪	653	738
Zhitong	清淨觀世音菩薩隨呪心經	653	738
Zhitong	觀自在菩薩隨呪心經	653	738
Atigupta	陀羅尼集經	654	738
Sikṣānanda	佛說救面然餓鬼陀羅尼神呪經	695-704	738
Sikṣānanda	百千印陀羅尼經	695-704	738
?	六字呪王經	317-420	739
Bhagavavaddharma	千手千眼觀世音菩薩大悲心陀羅尼經	658-660	739
Yijing	稱讚如來功德神呪經	711	739
Bodhiruci	護諸童子經	508-535	740
Buddhaśānta	阿難陀目佉尼阿離陀隣尼經	Before 539	742
Jñānayasāsa	大方等大雲請雨經	570	746
Jñānagupta	最勝燈王如來經	Before 600	746
Zhiqian	持句神呪經	222-253	747
Ratnacanta	觀世音菩薩如意摩尼陀羅尼經	706	747
Yijing	觀世音菩薩如意心陀羅尼經	710	747
Pāramiti	大佛頂如來密因修證首楞嚴經	705	747
Amoghavajra	金剛壽經	746	747
Kumārajīva	摩訶般若波羅蜜大明呪經	401-412	748

Table 1 (cont.)

Author/translator	Text name	Written in	Imported in
Narendrayāsaś	大雲輪請雨經	585	748
Buddhapāli	佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經	678	748
Bodhiruci	一字佛頂輪王經	709	748
Vajrabodhi	金剛頂五字心陀羅尼品	730	748
?	阿叱責娑拘鬼神大將上佛陀羅尼經	502-557	751
Mitrasānta	無垢淨光大陀羅尼	710	751
Ratnacinta	文殊室利根本一字陀羅尼經	702	751
Yijing	療痔疾經	710	751
Huiji	讚觀世音菩薩頌	693	751
Bodhiruci	文殊師利寶藏陀羅尼經	710	751
Zhiyan	出世無邊門陀羅尼經	720	751
?	六字大陀羅尼呪經	502-557	753
Bodhiruci	不空絹索神變真言經	709	753
Bodhiruci	大乘金剛髻珠菩薩修行分	693	753
Amoghavajra	地藏菩薩陀羅尼經	?	753
Fazhong	大方等陀羅尼經	402-412	755
Tanwulan	佛說呪目經	?	760
?	佛說大金色孔雀王呪經	350-431	763
Yijing	大孔雀呪王經	705	763
Du Xingkai	佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經	678	765
Divākara	佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經	685	767
Divākara	最勝佛頂陀羅尼淨除業障呪經	685	767
?	大乘呪經	?	774
?	佛說三佛陀呪	?	774
?	呪本經	?	774
Dharmarakṣa	舍頭諫太子二十八宿經	266-318	738, 751
?	陀羅尼雜集	502-557	742, 748

Table 2. Esoteric images (statues and paintings) during the Tenpyō period as present in historical records (from Hamada, slightly modified).

Deity name	Date of occurrence	Original location	Present Location
阿閼如來	757-64	阿閼寺	?
七佛藥師	745	Imperial vow to have images built in the capital and throughout the country	?
七佛藥師	751	新藥師寺	?
七佛藥師	763	上山寺	?
七佛藥師	780	西大寺金堂	?
大佛頂	779	東大寺	?
四方五佛	760	東大寺 芝造佛司	?
十一面觀音	714	興福寺金堂	法隆寺金堂
十一面觀音	727	長谷寺	Tōkyō National Museum
十一面觀音	750	服寺	聖林寺
十一面觀音	752	紫微中台	觀音寺
十一面觀音	752	東大寺二月堂	美江寺
十一面觀音	758	大安寺正法藏院	大安寺
十一面觀音	After 776	佐伯院	藥師寺
十一面觀音	778	大安寺	Priv. coll.
十一面觀音	780	西大寺金堂	?
× 4			
十一面觀音	785	子島寺	?
十一面觀音	The <i>Nihon ryōiki</i> mentions images at 栲屋寺, 泊瀨上山寺 and 能應寺		

Table 2 (cont.)

Deity name	Date of occurrence	Original location	Present Location
九面觀音	Imported in 719	?	法隆寺
千手觀音	747	東大寺千手堂	唐招提寺金堂
千手觀音	748	?	葛井寺
千手觀音	749	大安寺	東大寺二月堂
千手觀音	754	Imported by 鑑真	?
千手觀音	755	東大寺講堂	?
千手觀音	758	菅原寺	?
千手觀音	762	石山寺	?
千手觀音	765-66	東大寺西南院	?
千手觀音	The <i>Nihon ryōiki</i> mentions images at 穗積寺 and 藥師寺		
不空罽索觀音	746	興福寺講堂	東寺法華堂
不空罽索觀音	748	?	法隆寺講堂
不空罽索觀音	749	大安寺	大安寺?
不空罽索觀音	754	造東大寺司	興福寺南圓堂?
不空罽索觀音	757	東大寺金堂	?
不空罽索觀音	759	唐招提寺羅索堂	?
不空罽索觀音	Before 780	西大寺藥師堂	?
不空罽索觀音	772	興福寺地藏堂	?
不空罽索觀音	760	東大寺金堂	?
如意輪觀音	After 760	Part of the 如意輪曼陀羅 requested by Bodhisena	岡寺



Table 2 (cont.)

Deity name	Date of occurrence	Original location	Present Location
如意輪觀音	762	石山寺	?
馬頭觀音	780	西大寺金堂	大安寺?
虛空藏菩薩	717	Imported by Dōji	額安寺
大隨求菩薩	760	?	?
金剛藏菩薩	Before 780	西大寺十一面堂	?
x2			
金剛藏菩薩	762	石山寺	?
孔雀明王菩薩	Before 780	西大寺金堂	?
薩 x2			
摩訶薩利菩薩	Before 780	西大寺金堂	?
火頭菩薩 x2	Before 780	西大寺四王堂	?
辯才天	754	?	東大寺法華堂
妙思菩薩	752	?	?
執金剛神	762	石山寺	?
普集會曼荼羅	754	Imported by 鑑真	東大寺法華堂

## 60. ONMYŌDŌ AND ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

Athanasios Drakakis

The term Onmyōdō 陰陽道 generally refers to a divination system based on ancient Chinese thought that also includes other elements such as Indian astrology and Japanese religious rituals. Recent scholarship has shown that Onmyōdō did not exist as a quasi-religious system in China; instead it appears to be a Japanese formation. However, it would be impossible to understand the formation and the role of Japanese Onmyōdō without examining its historical roots in China.

### *Origin of Onmyōdō*

Onmyōdō is based on two major trends of classical Chinese thought: doctrines concerning *yin* and *yang* 陰陽 and those concerning the five agents<sup>1</sup> (*wuxing*; *gogyō* 五行). According to Chinese cosmology, all phenomena are constituted by a primordial breath-like substance called *qi* (氣); *qi* appears either as *yin* (dark, moist, cold, feminine) or *yang* (bright, dry, hot, masculine), or, according to the five agents doctrine, as the five constitutive elements of the world: wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. These two doctrines and their underlying systems were combined by the Chinese natural philosopher Zou Yan 鄒衍 (305–204 B.C.E.). However, it should be noted that a calendar combining the ten heavenly stems (*shigan*; *jikkan* 十干) and the twelve earthly branches (*shierzhi*; *jūnishi* 十二支), which derives from a combination of *yin-yang* and five-phases thought, appears to have been used since the Shang 商 dynasty (ca. 1600–1100 B.C.E.). Subsequently, Dong Zhong Shu 董仲舒 (179–104 B.C.E.), who established Confucianism as China's state ideology, further incorporated Zou Yan's thought, along with other doctrines, into his own version of Confucian thought. Thus, we can say that the combined doctrine of *yin-yang* and the five agents is not a characteristic of a particular

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<sup>1</sup> Properly speaking, these are “agents” and not “elements,” because they are not differentiated elements (as in the Aristotelian sense), but rather different variations of *qi*.

philosophical school; rather it is an intellectual system that pervades ancient Chinese thought.

According to Dong Zhong Shu, there is a relationship between heaven (*tian* 天) as macrocosm and humanity (*ren* 仁) as microcosm; thus, peculiar natural phenomena were believed to affect human lives, especially that of the ruler. This connection was further justified by the fact that the Chinese emperor was envisioned as the Son of Heaven (Tianzi 天子). Dong Zhong Shu believed that no dynasty can last forever, and attempted to explain changes in dynasties as parallel to the changes in the five phases. Systems were devised in order to prevent, as much as possible, such changes. In particular, any strange natural occurrence could be a clue to a possible uprising. Thus, in China, Onmyōdō-related thought was used mainly in order to predict rebellions possibly leading to dynastic changes. This aspect was also introduced to Japan.

Indian astrology and divination methods were parts of Indic knowledge later transmitted to China together with Buddhism. In particular, the *mikkyō* patriarchs Śubhākarasimha and Amoghavajra brought to China a well-developed form of traditional Indian astronomy (in turn influenced by Hellenistic astronomy) as part of their new esoteric Buddhist teachings. The *Sukuyōkyō* 宿曜經 (full title *Monjushiri bosatsu kyū shosen shosetsu kikyō jijitsu zen'aku sukuyō kyō* 文殊師利菩薩及諸仙所說吉凶時日善惡宿曜經, T. 1299) is its most representative text, and Indian astrology came to be known in Japan as Sukuyōdō 宿曜道. Sukuyōdō is based on the twenty-seven or twenty-eight positions of the moon in the sky (*xīu*; *suku* or *shuku* 宿, “lunar mansions”), and also refers to days of the week with the same names that are still used in modern Japanese.<sup>2</sup> Sukuyōdō can be divided into three parts: calendar, divination, and related rituals; this tripartite division is also common to traditional Onmyōdō. Sukuyōdō intermingled with the already existing forms of Chinese astrology based on *yin-yang* and five-agents doctrines, but also with Daoist thought and practices. It is in this form that this complex of doctrines and practices was transmitted to Japan, where it was further developed.

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<sup>2</sup> It refers to the sun, the moon, and the five planets known in antiquity: 月火水木金土日.

*The Transmission of Onmyōdō Teachings to Japan and the Onmyōryō*

The Korean Buddhist priest Kwallūk 觀勒 (Kanroku) is credited with the introduction of Onmyōdō teachings to Japan around the seventh century. Kwallūk stayed at the Asukadera 飛鳥寺 Temple in present-day Nara prefecture and taught a number of students. However, during the same time immigrants to Japan from the continent may also have brought with them *yin-yang* ideas as part of their intellectual and religious backgrounds. In addition, numerous Japanese scholars and priests went to China to pursue advanced studies, including Kibi no Makibi 吉備真備 (695–775), an influential intellectual who acquired a deep knowledge of *yin-yang* philosophy, calendrical science, astronomy, and divination during his long sojourn in China.<sup>3</sup>

From the beginning of the eighth century, Buddhist priests were prohibited from practicing divination or other activities performed by the Onmyōryō 陰陽寮, thus forcing many of the Buddhist priests who had studied Onmyōdō to disrobe in order to accept a position in the country's bureaucracy. Onmyōdō thus came to be officially practiced by *onmyōji* 陰陽師 (*yin-yang* specialists) at the Onmyōryō (Bureau for Yin-Yang Affairs), which was part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Nakatsukasa-shō 中務省).

The Onmyōryō was divided into four departments. The Yin-Yang (On'yō) Department had to do with divination and geomancy (*feng shui*; *fūsui* 風水); the Astronomy (Tenmon 天文) Department had to detect anomalies of *qi* concerning meteorological phenomena and notify the emperor about them; the Calendar (Reki 曆) Department was responsible for the production of the calendar; and the Water Clocks (Rōkoku 漏刻) Department was charged with ringing bells to indicate the passage of time by relying on water clocks. It must be noted that in Japan the Onmyōryō focused on divination, whereas in China the main subject of these governmental agencies was astronomy. Divination performed in the Yin-Yang Department was based on natural phenomena, and its results were treated as state secrets.

There was, at least in principle, a distinction between Onmyōdō and Buddhist divination; this difference was the basis of the need

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<sup>3</sup> A medieval legend recounts that the most famous Onmyōdō specialist, Abe no Seimei 安倍晴明 (清) 明, also went to China to study, but this tale is not based on historical facts. It does indicate, however, the importance of this in medieval Japan.

for a Buddhist priest to disrobe in order to become a member of the Onmyōryō bureaucracy. An analogous distinction (Buddhist as opposed to Daoist teachings) seems to have been applied also to Jugondō, a system of protective rituals and exorcisms performed at the Ten'yakuryō 典藥寮 (Bureau of Medicine) by specialists known as *jugonji* 呪禁師. According to the *Nihonshoki* 日本書紀, Jugondō 呪禁道 was introduced to Japan in the sixth century from Korea. After the establishment of the Onmyōryō, Jugondō lost its *raison d'être* and disappeared from state agencies.

During the Heian period, Onmyōdō was a *de jure* monopoly of the Onmyōryō, but the activities of folk *onmyōji* are mentioned frequently in contemporary sources. Toward the end of the Heian period, the need for *onmyōji* increased because aristocrats began to demand exorcisms and divination for personal purposes. During the Nara and the early Heian periods, Onmyōryō activities were mostly related to the emperor. The Onmyōryō was also in charge of some exorcisms performed by the Jingikan 神祇官 (Bureau for Kami Affairs), because the latter was concerned about the possibility of acquiring impurity (*kegare* 穢れ) through the performance of purification rituals.

#### *Onmyōdō and Mikkyō*

During the Nara period, *onmyōji* started to perform rituals in order to pacify the spirits of the earth. These kinds of rituals were also common to Buddhism; in fact, such ritual activity can be considered the first practical combination of Buddhism with Onmyōdō in Japan. Furthermore, New Year protective rituals performed by *onmyōji* were also common to *mikkyō*. Toward the beginning of the Heian period, *onmyōji* began to perform rituals to ward off evil spirits (*onryō* 怨靈 or *goryō* 御靈) and natural calamities, again for individual aristocrats. Thus, in a little more than a hundred years the *onmyōji* changed from being scientists of a sort during the Nara period to magico-religious figures. This transformation can actually be considered a return to their original form, since Onmyōdō-related thought was originally part of the knowledge of Buddhist monks. The role of *onmyōji* was usually to detect the cause of abnormalities concerning natural phenomena. Even though *onmyōji* also occasionally performed exorcism rituals, exorcism was usually considered the job of esoteric Buddhist priests. In any case, many esoteric Buddhist elements were absorbed into Onmyōdō rituals, and many Onmyōdō-related philosophical aspects were introduced into esoteric Buddhist rituals.

Esoteric Buddhist rituals can be divided into rituals for becoming Buddha and rituals for worldly benefits. The latter can be further divided into protective rituals, blessings, rituals for having good relations with other people, and exorcisms against evil spirits. Esoteric Buddhist rituals were often used along with Onmyōdō rituals in a synthetic way, but sometimes they shared the same purpose. For example, the *goryūsai* 五龍祭 (ritual of the five dragons) is a type of rainmaking ritual (*amagoi* 雨乞い) commonly known in esoteric Buddhism as *shōu* 請雨. Other rituals common to both Onmyōdō and esoteric Buddhism include protective rituals against evil spirits and New Year rituals.

### *The Interaction of Onmyōdō and Sukuyōkyō*

Another significant development in the interactions between *onmyōji* and Buddhist priests concerned Sukuyōdō. Since 717, Buddhist priests were allowed to serve at the imperial court as diviners and healers without entering the Onmyōryō; later, priests with knowledge of Onmyōdō came to be called *sukuyōji* 宿曜師 (specialists in Sukuyōdō-related disciplines). Sukuyōkyō was introduced to Japan by Kūkai 空海, and while it did not survive for long in China, in Japan it continued to exist for many centuries. It is interesting to note that while in India Sukuyōdō is primarily used to define the personality of someone, as in modern Western horoscopes, in Japan it was basically a guide for selecting auspicious days.

Sukuyōdō is a significant case of interaction between Onmyōdō and the Buddhist temples. Especially during medieval times, it was difficult to distinguish between Onmyōdō proper and Sukuyōdō. One example of the combination between Onmyōdō and Sukuyōdō is a medieval Japanese text called the *Hoki naiden* 篋篋内伝. Written around the fourteenth century, the *Hoki naiden* is considered to be the most important text of medieval Onmyōdō; it includes elements from Buddhism and Japanese *kami* 神 cults (especially those that subscribed to *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 theory). It is composed of five chapters; the first four deal primarily with Onmyōdō teachings, while the last is an exposition of Sukuyōdō. However, the Sukuyōdō part has been influenced by Onmyōdō thought, and the Onmyōdō part shows strong Buddhist influences. The mixture of Onmyōdō and Sukuyōdō is even clearer in the *Hokishō* 篋篋抄, a commentary on the *Hoki naiden* probably composed between the end of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries. For example, in the *Hokishō* every year is characterized not

only by one of the twelve earthly branches (*jūnishi*), but also by one of the twenty-eight lunar mansions (*suku*). Each of the branches and the mansions are transformations of one of the five agents; thus, every year is ultimately characterized by the relationship of these three classificatory principles. The following passage from the text exemplifies this system: “The year of the Rat belongs to the lunar mansion of the Girl. The Rat derives from the *qi* of Water. The Girl mansion derives from the *qi* of Wood. Thus, we have a Water-creating-Wood year.”

### *Onmyōdō and the Cult of Gozu Tennō*

The terms “folk Onmyōdō” (*minkan onmyōdō* 民間陰陽道) and “folk onmyōji” (*minkan onmyōji* 民間陰陽師) are commonly used to refer to forms of Onmyōdō and *onmyōji* specialists outside the Onmyōryō. Folk *onmyōji* were usually Buddhist priests or quasi-priests, but they differed from *sukuyōji*, who had official status and training. Since *onmyōji* performed protective rituals, it is not by chance that they established a connection with the cult of Gozu Tennō 牛頭天王.

The *Hoki naiden* is also related to the cult of the deity Gozu Tennō centered at Gionsha 祇園社. In the introductory chapter we find a detailed origin narrative (*engi* 縁起) concerning this god and his exploits, and this story reveals Onmyōdō influence. For example, there are references to the Taizan Fukun *sai* 泰山府君祭 (the ritual celebrating the Chinese god Taizan Fukun 泰(太)山府君), one of the most important Onmyōdō rituals, and to the rituals of the five periods of the year (*gosetsu* 五節). Elements from the story of Gozu Tennō define most of the divination described in the *Hoki naiden*. The first chapter of the text provides a guide to choosing the appropriate direction (and avoiding the unlucky one) based on the positions of eight princes, the children of Gozu Tennō. Those eight princes are also identified with various beings from the Buddhist pantheon according to *honji suijaku* theory and with the seven planets (with Saturn related to two different princes).

The center of the Gozu Tennō cult, Gionsha, present-day Yasaka 八坂 Shrine in Kyōto, was formerly a shrine-temple affiliated with Enryakuji 延暦寺; it developed an original combination of Onmyōdō, Sukuyōdō, and esoteric Buddhism. Gozu Tennō is a pestilence god from a foreign land, probably India, who came to be worshiped as the protector of Kyōto; in the *honji suijaku* pantheon of premodern Japan, this figure was identified with Susano no Mikoto 須佐之男命/素盞鳴尊. According to a legend, Kibi no Makibi originated the cult of

Gozu Tennō in Japan at Hiromine 広峰 in Harima 播磨 (present-day Hyōgo prefecture), but it is difficult to accept this as historically accurate. It is likely that the prestigious name of Kibi no Makibi was added later in order to enhance the status of this cult by religious specialists who traveled around the country and distribute protective talismans. The Harima area is considered to be the center of folk Onmyōdō. From the sixth to seventh centuries many foreigners resided in Harima and brought with them forms of continental folk religiosity. In fact, the cult of pestilence-gods is probably related to the pestilence brought to Japan by such foreigners. We may recall that Ashiya Dōman 蘆屋道満, Abe no Seimei's greatest rival and the most famous folk *onmyōji*, was from Harima.

### *Shugendō and Onmyōdō*

Among the ritual specialists related to Onmyōdō we find not only the various types of *onmyōji* and the *sukuyōji* but also other folk religious figures, such as the *shugenja* 修験者, practitioners of Shugendō 修験道. Shugendō, a system combining Japanese mountain ascetics and esoteric Buddhist elements, has been also influenced by Onmyōdō, especially in the important role it attributes to the five agents and the use of written magical formulas based on Daoism but also by esoteric Buddhism—in Shugendō, these formulas are written in Indian letters rather than Chinese ideograms. Moreover, the use of *kuji* 九字 (nine characters), a mystical protective gesture, is common to both Shugendō and Onmyōdō. *Gobōsei* 五芒星, the magical pentagram and emblem of Abe no Seimei, is also usually drawn by *shugenja* in talismans for protection. In Onmyōdō, *gobōsei* and *kuji* are usually taken together as a set called *seiman dōman* セーマン ドーマン and are believed to have been authored by Abe no Seimei and his rival Ashiya Dōman, respectively.

All these ritual similarities are based in the common *honji suijaku* system, which supports both Shugendō and medieval Onmyōdō thought. *Shugenja* were also said to have spiritual servants, similar to those of the *onmyōji*. It is possible that Onmyōdō practices were spread throughout Japan by itinerant *shugenja*, along with other religious figures. *Shugenja* also practiced astrology and divination, which were the monopoly of the Abe family. During the Edo period, the Tsuchimikado 土御門 family (the later name of the Abe family) took under their control many *shugenja*, along with other religious specialists who were not affiliated with Buddhist or Shintō institutions. The



relationship between Shugendō and Onmyōdō is deep, and it is difficult to study those two systems separately.

*The Legend of Abe no Seimei and the Recent Onmyōdō Boom*

Abe no Seimei was perhaps the most famous *onmyōji*, thanks to the myths about him that began to circulate after his death. In Japanese, the names of the historical Seimei and the legendary Seimei are written with different characters. The present-day Onmyōdō resurgence in Japan is largely centered in the interest surrounding the figure of Abe no Seimei. The historical Seimei was born in 921 and died in 1005 and served as a low-level government official at the Onmyōryō, in the Department of Astronomy. He took this job at the late age of forty, when he became an assistant to the famous *onmyōji* Kamo no Yasunori 賀茂保憲. After Yasunori's death, the calendar became the monopoly of the Kamo family, while the Abe family gained control of divination matters. As can be seen in Heian-period diaries, Seimei's services were performed for the sake of the emperor and the Fujiwara family, and included advice about auspicious days, divination to identify the cause of an illness, and rituals against evil spirits.

About a century after his death, legends concerning Seimei began to appear, describing him as a wizard capable of resurrecting dead people, seeing demons, and manipulating supernatural servants known as *shikigami* 式神. In fiction, Seimei is said to be the son of a fox and a man, which explains his extraordinary powers. Astrologers and diviners, in order to raise their prestige, claimed to be descendants from Seimei. Diviners, wandering priests, *shugenja*, and other religious personalities spread the cult of Seimei throughout Japan.

During the Meiji Restoration Onmyōdō was banned as an evil custom but it was revived in the second half of twentieth century. Especially during the 1980s, mass-culture interest in monsters (*yōkai* 妖怪) lead to a boom in Seimei/Onmyōdō-related texts, which resulted in the production of many novels, manga, TV series, and films, along with many astrological guides bearing the name of Seimei. All these works present Seimei as a superb magician and astrologer capable of exorcising evil spirits or demons.

## 61. KŪKAI AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHINGON BUDDHISM

Elizabeth Tinsley

Mythology, canonization, and sectarian concerns have done much to delineate the contours of Japanese religious history in both the popular and scholarly spheres, and this is no more so the case than in portrayals of the priest Kūkai 空海 (774–835), celebrated as the founder of the Shingon 真言 (lit., “true word”; *zhenyan*; *mantrayāna*) school of esoteric Buddhism (Jpn. *mikkyō* 密教) in Japan. He is also known as Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師 (“Great Teacher [who] spread the Dharma”), a posthumous title conferred in 921. Kūkai came to occupy the realms of legend and folktale as a multitalented miracle-worker endowed with soteriological powers.<sup>1</sup> For its part, sectarian scholarship has cast him as representative of the Buddhism of the Heian period (794–1185), which is contrasted to, and perceived as displacing, the Buddhism of the Nara period (710–794).

Inasmuch as the myths, sectarian laudation, and popular adulation reveal much about the ideological projects of the cultures that shaped them, they have also generated and reinforced misunderstandings of Kūkai’s activities, and of the configuration of religious practices in Japan’s history as a whole. In order to clarify the significance of the development of Shingon in Japan, recent studies have tended to focus on Kūkai’s interactions with the imperial court and the clergy, and on his cooperation with and deviation from orthodox Buddhist thought and praxis.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the legends and hagiography, see Hinonishi, ed., 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Ryuichi Abé 1999 and Jun Fujii 2008 have done much to emphasize the importance of contextualizing Kūkai’s achievements within the historical context, and to shift the approach away from idealizing, sectarian portrayals. Abé reassesses Kūkai’s achievements, proposing that he had developed in Shingon a politically and culturally influential Buddhist discourse. Fujii examines the influence of the Nara schools and Saicho on the development of Kūkai’s Shingon philosophy. Studies of Kūkai in English remain rather limited, but biographical accounts are available in Hakeda 1972, and Kitagawa 1987: 182–202.

*Kūkai's Early Career and Interest in Esoteric Buddhism*

Elements of esoteric Buddhism were already present in Nara- and early Heian-period Japan, albeit in disparate form (Horiike 1982, 22–39; Miyagi 1986, 75–91; Nara National Museum 2005). Many esoteric Buddhist texts had already been imported from China (Matsunaga 1969, 160–61), and esoteric *dhāraṇī* incantation and deity worship had been subsumed into “exoteric” (*kengyō* 顯教) rituals of eighth-century Nara Buddhism. This incorporation of esotericism has often been characterized by sectarian scholarship as “miscellaneous esotericism” (*zōmitsu* 雜密), in contrast to the “pure esotericism” (*junmitsu* 純密) of the imported Shingon and Tendai schools. These categories are, however, problematic (Abé 1999, 152–54). Contemporary practitioners were not likely to have themselves characterized their practices as “exoteric.”

The two scriptural texts central to the esoteric tradition that Kūkai was to inherit and develop were also available, copied, and lectured on in Japan by this time. The *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (*Dainichikyō* 大日經, *Dari jing*; *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi vikurvitā adhiṣṭhāna vaipulya sūtra*; T. 848) was translated into Chinese in 726 by Śubhākarasimha (Shanwuwei; Zemmui 善無畏; 637–735) and Yixing (Ichigyō 一行; 684–727), and a copy had been made in Japan by as early as 737. An abbreviated version of the *Tattvasaṃgraha sūtra* (*Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha nāma mahāyāna sūtra*, also called *Vajrasekhara sūtra*; *Kongōchōkyō* 金剛頂經; *Jin gang ding jing*; T. 865) had been translated into Chinese in 753 by Amoghavajra. However, it is highly doubtful that there was any awareness in Japan of esotericism as a discrete set of beliefs and practices.

A significant aspect of Kūkai's role in the development of esotericism in Japan was his provision of a theoretical grounding for the esoteric elements that had hitherto been unexamined by the “Six Schools” (*rokushū* 六宗).<sup>3</sup> These schools, based in Nara, constituted the officially recognized Buddhism, which was controlled by the Sōgō 僧綱 (Office of Priestly Affairs) of the Ritsuryō 律令 state; the *ritsuryō* were

<sup>3</sup> Hossō 法相 (Yogācāra), Kegon 華嚴 (Avatamsaka), Kushi 俱舍 (Abhidharmakośa), Sanron 三論 (Mādhyamika), Jōjitsu 成実 (Satyasiddhi), Ritsu 律 (Vinaya).

a series of legal and penal codes modeled on the Chinese system.<sup>4</sup> The state ideology was a *mélange* of Confucianism and Buddhism, utilized to protect the nation. It fulfilled this requirement through the performance of rituals for the court and aristocracy. However, during the late Nara period, the clergy's increasing political influence prompted Emperor Kanmu (桓武 737–806; r. 781–806) to transfer the capital from Nara to Nagaoka in 784, and in 794 to Heiankyō (Kyoto).

Much of Kūkai's written works and activities were responses to the Nara Buddhist community, and are also indicative of his critical attitude toward the ruling system and its stance regarding Buddhism. It has been argued that the displacement of the Confucian ideology that anchored this system was among Kūkai's major achievements (Abé 1999). In establishing Shingon in Japan, Kūkai employed a strategy of cooperation. He systematized the teachings he had imported from China with existing esoteric elements, and defined a position for them in relation to other religions and other forms of Buddhism. He also created alliances with the clergy and court. Thus, his career was driven by a well-tuned combination of ideological dissent from and cooperation with religio-political society. Nonetheless, his personal writings suggest perhaps less successful attempts to balance the maintenance of his public role with a yearning to practice and study in retreat.

Kūkai was by all accounts a precocious and erudite young man. He was born in 774<sup>5</sup> into the aristocratic house of Saeki, a branch of the Ōtomo clan in Sanuki province on Shikoku. At the age of fifteen he was taken by his maternal uncle and tutor, the Confucian scholar Atono Otari, to the capital to be educated; at age eighteen he was admitted to the State College to study Chinese poetry and the Confucian classics. Unlike its Chinese equivalents, the college was an elite institution open only to young men of prominent families, and the education Kūkai received there was to prepare him for a prestigious bureaucratic government post. However, at the age of twenty-four he left without completing his course and renounced the world to become an

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<sup>4</sup> On the political aspects of Nara Buddhism see Inoue 1971; Matsunaga and Matsunaga 1974, 115–18; and Hardacre 2006, 277–78.

<sup>5</sup> There are two theories as to the year of his birth, see Fujii 2008: 19. The day and month are unknown. Although it is celebrated on June 15th, this date emerged long after Kūkai's life probably to coincide with the date of Amoghavajra's death in relation to theories of reincarnation.

*ubasoku* 優婆塞 (*upāsaka*; privately ordained mendicant).<sup>6</sup> Kūkai's apparent disenchantment with his university education should be considered indicative of not only his spiritual pursuits and the desire for retreat to nature but of his fundamental "disengagement from the normative discourse of Nara culture" (Abé 1999, 101).

Although the precise reasons for his withdrawal from university are unclear, the earliest record of Kūkai's interest in Buddhism can be found in his first work, *Indications of the Goals of the Three Teachings*, hereafter *Indications* (*Sangō shiiki* 三教指歸, 797; KZ (Teihon, 1991–1997) 7: 39–86; Hakeda 1972, 101–40). The first version of this work was entitled *Demonstrating the Goals for Those who are Deaf and Blind to the Truth* (*Rōko shiiki* 聾瞽指歸; KZ 7: 1–38).

The unstable political position of the Saiki clan during this time has also been proposed as a reason that Kūkai relinquished a prospective bureaucratic career, but there is little sense of resignation; rather, a deep, considered conviction in Buddhism and a sense of spiritual searching pervade the *Indications*. The text is prefaced with a biographical account and it is generally agreed that the author intended the character of a mendicant Buddhist monk to represent himself. A declaration of the superiority of Buddhism to Daoism and Confucianism, the text displays a remarkable breadth of cognizance with literature related to the three religious traditions. It was likely intended in part as an apology, directed at relatives and teachers, for the author's decision to become a privately ordained monk, *shidosō* 私度僧. Kūkai records that they had disagreed with his choice and perhaps not unreasonably, given the strict measures that had been taken by Kanmu between 797 and 799 against unofficially ordained monks and nuns as part of an attempt to reform Nara Buddhism. Both the content of the work and Kūkai's *ubasoku* status suggest a position of precarious dissent vis-à-vis the official Buddhist world and the government. His assertions of the superiority of Daoism to Confucianism, and of Buddhism as above both and inclusive of all that was valid in them would surely have amounted to heresy (Abé 1999, 88; Yoshioka 1960, 114–18).

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<sup>6</sup> Various theories have been posited regarding the situation and year of his initiation (Hakeda 1972: 17 and Fujii 2008: 27–8). For an explanation of the meaning of *ubasoku* in Kūkai's time, see Abé 1999: 76–83.

Kūkai describes a key encounter during his university career with a monk<sup>7</sup> who introduced him to an esoteric practice, and the mystical experiences he underwent while performing it in secluded parts of Shikoku. The practice was the *Kokūzō gumonji no hō*, (Mantra of Ākāśagarbha),<sup>8</sup> a devotional meditation practice which was believed to enable the practitioner to memorize and deepen understanding of scripture. Although this was an esoteric practice, it is unlikely to have been the motivation for Kūkai's interest in esotericism. First, it was not unknown among the Nara clergy; and second, in the *Indications* Kūkai does not demonstrate the awareness of esoteric thought and practice that are evident in later works.

There is little information available about the Kūkai's life between 797, when he completed the *Indications*, and 804, when he left for China, and this lacuna has been filled with a host of legends about his supposed travels around Japan and miracle-working, some of which contributed to the later development of the eighty-eight temple pilgrimage circuit on Shikoku. It is highly probable, however, that along with periods of wandering and ascetic practice in the forests and mountains mentioned in his later reminiscences, there were visits to the Nara temples for study, as the *Indications* contains references to texts kept in their libraries (*KZ* 7: 153). At some point during this period, Kūkai discovered the mid-seventh-century *Mahāvairocana sūtra* and his determination to comprehend this esoteric text, the ritual instructions it contained, and its Sanskrit content was very likely to have been the primary motivation for his journey to China in 804.

### *Kūkai's Voyage to China*

It may be said that Kūkai's participation in the government envoy to Tang dynasty China (618–907) at the age of thirty-one marks a turning point from dissent to cooperation with courtly and clerical authority. In order to qualify for the journey, Kūkai was officially ordained at

<sup>7</sup> It has been suggested that this unnamed monk was Gonsō 勤操 (758–827) or Kaimyō 戒明 (d. 806?) both of Daianji in Nara.

<sup>8</sup> The ritual text was *Xukongzang pusa nengman zhuyuan zuishengxin tuoluoni qiwen chifa*, (*Kokūzō bosatsu nōman shogan saishōshin darani gumonjihō* 虛空藏菩薩能滿諸願最勝心陀羅尼求聞持法; *T.* 1145). Translated in 717 by the first patriarch of esoteric Buddhism in China, said to have been a student of esoteric Buddhism at Nalanda, Śubhākarasiṃha (Zenmui 善無畏; Shanwuwei 637–735) and imported to Japan by Daianji Sanron monk Dōji 道慈 (675–744).

Tōdaiji, the headquarters of Nara Buddhism, shortly before departure, and Emperor Kanmu granted him a period of twenty years to study in China. The circumstances surrounding his selection as part of the envoy are obscure; nothing certain about it is known but a recommendation by a court contact must have been made. It has been speculated that Ato no Otari or another monk recommended him to imperial contacts, that he was favored by ambassador Fujiwara no Kadonmaro, or that he was chosen by Kanmu himself (Hakeda 1972, 28). It does seem probable that he was a replacement—monks who were part of a previous, unsuccessful voyage had been prohibited from this voyage. The failure of the journey and the fatalities involved cast suspicion on the purity of the monks, suggesting insufficient observance of precepts. Part of the same envoy (traveling on a different ship) was the better-known priest Saichō 最澄 (767–822, see below).

As a student, Kūkai was of lower status, but due to changes in Chinese language education for bureaucrats and monks that had been instated just prior to his period of education, his skills in contemporary conversational and written Chinese would have been useful (Fujii 2008, 24), and no doubt distinguished him from older fellow travelers. Indeed, Kūkai was entrusted by the Japanese ambassador, Fujiwara no Kadonmaro 藤原葛野麻呂 (d. 818), with handling correspondence with the Chinese authorities during the stay.

#### *Contact with Esotericism in China*

Kūkai's ship set sail from Kyushu on the sixth day of the seventh month of Enryaku 23 (804). After some complications regarding the procedure for landing in Fuzhou (Fukien 福州) province, and an imposed waiting period of some months, a select entourage was permitted to proceed to Chang'an 長安, the capital. Kūkai was not among those initially chosen, but was able to secure special permission from the magistrate of the province to accompany the group. The envoy was housed in a residence provided by the Tang court where they stayed until they left for Japan early the following year. After their departure, Kūkai was permitted by the court to reside Ximing monastery (西明寺) northwest of the city.

Chang'an, with its many Buddhist and Daoist temples and its Muslim and Nestorian Christian presence, was a lively, cosmopolitan center and the newly imported esoteric Shingon Buddhism was popular at court. Ximing had hosted a number of foreign monks, including the Japanese Sanron school monk Eichu 永忠 (d. 816), and was a center of

academic and intellectual activity, particularly of scriptural translation and bibliographical studies. It must have provided Kūkai with a wealth of study material. After becoming a resident at the monastery, Kūkai records that he “visited and searched among eminent masters in the city” (KZ 1: 3; translated by Abé 1999, 120). He received instruction in South Indian Brahmanical philosophy from Prajñā (734–810?), a North Indian Tripiṭaka master then residing in the city. It is highly likely that Prajñā, a noted teacher and translator, also taught Kūkai Sanskrit, and he later presented Kūkai with a copy of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* in the original Sanskrit along with other Sanskrit texts. Kūkai placed great importance on understanding Sanskrit in order to correctly comprehend esoteric Buddhism.

Four months after entering Ximing, Kūkai met the teacher from whom he was to inherit the Shingon teachings, Huiguo (Keika 惠果, 746–805; cf. Katsumata 1981, 317–324) at Qinglong monastery (青龍寺) in the capital. Huiguo was a disciple of Amoghavajra (Bukong jin’gang; Fukūkongō 不空金剛; 705–774), whose own master was the Indian esoteric master and translator Vajrabodhi (Kongōchi 金剛智; Jin’gangzhi; 671–741). These three masters are identified in Kūkai’s *Record of the Dharma Transmission on the Secret Mandala Teaching* 秘密曼荼羅教付法伝 (*Himitsu mandarakyō fuhōden*, hereafter *Record*; KZ 1: 63–116, written by 821 at latest), as the fifth, sixth, and seventh patriarchs of esoteric Buddhism (KZ 1: 68). According to Kūkai’s account, Huiguo determined to make Kūkai his disciple upon their first encounter (KZ 1: 35), and after receiving full *abhiṣeka* (*kanjō* 灌頂; esoteric ordination), Kūkai became one of six official Dharma successors to his teacher and one of only two disciples to receive the teachings of the two mandalas central to Shingon Buddhism, making him the eighth patriarch.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Question of Transmission*

Huiguo’s transmission of teachings to Kūkai is remarkable for its rapidity. Shortly after his first meeting with Huiguo, Kūkai received *abhiṣeka* ritual of mastering the Dharma (*jimyo* 持明, or *gakuho*

<sup>9</sup> The other was I-ming 義明 who was entrusted with propagating in China. I-ming and Kūkai’s legitimate successions are recorded by Wu-yin in the 806 biography of Huiguo (*Datang qinglongsi dongta yuan guanding guoshi Huiguo aduli xingzhuang; Daitō shōryūji tōtōin kanjō kokushi keika ajari gyōjō* 大唐青龍寺東塔院灌頂國師惠果阿闍梨行狀) quoted in *Record* (KZ 1: 63–116).



学法, *kanjō* 灌頂) in the Garbhakoṣadhātu (*taizōkai* 胎藏界; Womb World) Mandala, based on the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (color plate 1). This was followed by the *gobu kanjo* (五部灌頂, fivefold *abhiṣeka*), and the same *abhiṣeka* of mastering the Dharma in the Vajradhātu (*kongōkai* 金剛界; Diamond World) Mandala, based on the *Vajraśekhara sūtra*, the following seventh month. The *abhiṣeka* to qualify as a Dharma transmission master (*denbō kanjō* 伝法灌頂) was conferred in the eighth month. Kūkai reports that he received instruction on ritual manuals, mantras, *mudrās*, and *kaji* (see below) (*KZ* 1: 35–36; Hakeda 1972, 147–48). He also studied Sanskrit under Huiguo and, at his teacher's behest, copies of sūtras were made for him along with paintings and ritual tools (*KZ* 1: 36–38; Hakeda 1972, 148–49).

In total, Kūkai studied for only six months with Huiguo. Various theories for the exceptional speed of transmission have been proposed. It may be surmised that Kūkai had already spent time cultivating his mind and intellect during his “wandering years” and likely had some knowledge of Sanskrit from his study under Prajñā. The account of Huiguo's transmissions to his disciples given in Wuyin's biography relates that the teachings conferred upon Kūkai were deeply secret, and the passage suggests that was Huiguo held Kūkai in high esteem, perhaps more so than other students.

In the *Indications*, Kūkai suggests a parallel between Huiguo's high expectations of him with Amoghavajra's special affinity with Huiguo as his disciple (*KZ* 1: 36–37; Hakeda 1972, 148). The honor of being entrusted with writing the epitaph for Huiguo's tomb also indicates that the relationship between Kūkai and his teacher was a special one. However, the conventional explanation for the hasty initiations is that Huiguo was aware of his approaching death and was anxious to designate a worthy successor, an explanation Kūkai himself gave. He also describes Huiguo as giving him specific instructions to return to Japan and propagate the teachings there (*KZ* 1: 37; Hakeda 1972, 149). Huiguo died shortly afterward, in the twelfth month of 805.

The tradition received by Kūkai was the strand of Mantrayāna that had originated in mid-seventh-century India and was transmitted to China, which is traditionally interpreted as having declined after 774 and stunted by the persecution of Buddhism in 845. Another branch was transmitted from India to Tibet during the eighth century. The process of its assimilation in Japan, as well as the active methods Kūkai employed to develop and disseminate it, were to distinguish Shingon

in Japan from its Indian and Chinese predecessors as well as from its Tibetan cousin.

*Kūkai's Return to Japan and the Political Situation*

Kūkai spent a total of thirty months in China, returning to Japan before his three-year term in 806 with a collection of sutras, commentaries, ritual implements, paintings, and other items, including non-sacred texts.<sup>10</sup> One hundred and ninety-two of the two hundred and sixteen texts he imported were esoteric. New to Japan were Sanskrit texts, ritual manuals, the five-pointed *vajra*, and the Diamond and Womb World mandalas. Through Takashina no Tōnari, leader of the return envoy, Kūkai submitted to the court of Emperor Heizei 平城 (774–824; r. 806–809) a report with an inventory of these objects and explanations of them, and an account of his studies entitled *Catalogue of Imported Items* (*Go Shorai Mokuroku* 御請来目録, hereafter *Catalogue*), dated the twenty-second day of the tenth month of Daidō 1 (806) (KZ 1: 1–40; Hakeda 1972, 140–50).

In the *Catalogue* Kūkai emphasized, in particular, the prestige and legitimacy of the lineage into which he had been received, the popularity of the school at the Tang court, and the advantages its doctrine offered in the process of attaining enlightenment. It represents an appeal to the Japanese court and affords valuable insight into his philosophy and aims at that time. However, it was three years before the court granted him a response, and during this time Kūkai remained a marginal figure based in Dazaifu, Kyushu. It is often supposed that the period of waiting had been imposed for political reasons (Fujii 38; Inoue 1971, 109, 127): Kūkai's uncle was tutor to Prince Iyo, who was exiled in 807. This seems an unlikely reason for preventing Kūkai from proceeding to the capital, however, because the incident happened after his return from China (Groner 1984b, 77; Takagi 1999, 107). A more likely explanation for the court's disinterest in Kūkai was Heizei's attitude toward new forms of Buddhism.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Bogel 2008: 142–178 focuses on the objects listed in the *Catalogue* and examines, specifically, the visual culture that Kūkai imported as part of his transmission of *mikkyō* to Japan.

<sup>11</sup> The right to two annual ordinands (*nenbundosha* 年分度者) that had been awarded during the previous reign to Saichō's Tendai Lotus school was also withdrawn during Heizei's reign (Fujii 2008, 38). Heizei's attitude may have been a result of financial restrictions (Groner 2000, 72), but Fujii attributes it to temperament.

It has also been proposed that Kūkai remained in Kyushu voluntarily because he was not yet prepared to make available to other temples the works he had imported (Akamatsu 1973, 9–11). It should be noted that Saichō had already been acknowledged by Kanmu's court as an authority on esoteric Buddhism because he had returned from China equipped with knowledge of it in 805, before Kūkai. *Mikkyō* was first recognized in Japan in connection with Saichō's Tendai Lotus school (Tendai hokke shū 天台法華宗). The tide turned in Kūkai's favor with the enthronement of Emperor Saga 嵯峨 (786–842; r. 809–823), who had an interest in Chinese culture, and he then entered the capital.

### *Saichō's Involvement with Esoterism*

Because Kūkai and Saichō (767–822) traveled with the same embassy to China and both introduced esoteric Buddhism to Japan, their achievements have often been compared and their relationship sometimes characterized as one of rivalry. Saichō entered a monastery at the age of twelve and shortly after ordination at age nineteen he retreated to a small hermitage on Mount Hiei 比叡山. He was dispatched by Kanmu to China in 804 to bring back the Tendai 天台 (Tiantai) teachings. He spent eleven months there, studying under Daosui 道邃, the seventh patriarch of Tiantai, and Xingman 行滿, and learning meditation under Xiujuan 脩然.

Saichō's encounter with esoteric Buddhism in China appears to have been unanticipated; he met Shunxiao 順曉 of Longxing temple 龍興寺 in Yue province shortly before his departure. Shunxiao conferred esoteric *abhiṣeka* on Saichō, but the exact nature of the esoteric transmission he received remains unclear. It was probably a mixture of various elements of the Diamond World and Womb World traditions (Groner 1984b, 52–61; Abé 1995, 105–107; Chen 1998). His later initiation by Kūkai and requests for reading matter from him also suggest that his knowledge of esotericism was limited and that the primary purpose of his voyage to China had not been to pursue esotericism. Prior to the journey, Saichō had read a commentary by Yixing on the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* and was cognizant of esoteric rituals (Groner 1984b, 51–52), but it is unlikely that he saw esoteric Buddhism as a tradition independent of exoteric Buddhism (Groner 1984b, xiii).

Upon his return to Japan, Saichō received the patronage of Kanmu and conferred *abhiṣeka* on several Nara priests in a state-sponsored

ceremony in 805. It is not known when Kūkai and Saichō first met. Surviving letters between them, however, convey something of their personal relationship and its deterioration, and indicate differences in their attitudes to esotericism (DZ 5: 441–72). (The later editing of these letters was undertaken by a Shingon monk in the context of rivalry between Tendai and Shingon, and may therefore not offer an accurate representation of the relationship; see Takagi 1999.)

Saichō steadfastly held that Tendai and Shingon were equal. He stated in an 812 letter to Kūkai that “there exists no difference between the One Unifying Vehicle [of Tendai] and Shingon” (DZ 5:4 56, trans. Abé 1999). He set up a study center at Mount Hiei with a two-part curriculum for his students, one part focused on study of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, and the other on that of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which is indicative of his effort to incorporate esoteric teachings into his school. In contrast to Saichō’s approach, Kūkai uncompromisingly emphasized the superiority of Shingon over all other forms of Buddhism.

By letter, Saichō frequently requested esoteric scriptures, commentaries, and Sanskrit textbooks from Kūkai to copy. In 813, Saichō asked to be loaned a commentary Kūkai had imported, the *Rishushakukyō* 理趣釋經 (*Liqu shi jing*; T. 1003). Kūkai refused, reprimanding Saichō for relying on textual study alone in an attempt to attain understanding of Shingon without the master-student transmission, an approach he considered a violation of the precepts. This was another of the differences that led eventually to a rupture between them, perhaps precipitated by Saichō’s disinclination the previous year to devote the three years of study Kūkai required of him for the conferral of the *denbō kanjō*. Saichō had received earlier initiations in 812, but, occupied with organizing his own monastic complex at Mount Hiei, it seems he could not afford the time to study under Kūkai. Instead, Saichō dispatched some of his disciples to do so, and to bring back the esoteric teachings to be incorporated into his school.

A further source of discord was the defection of Saichō’s named successor Taihan to Kūkai’s order, despite Saichō’s petitions for his return. It appears that Kūkai and Saichō’s relationship ended in 816 as a result of their differences.<sup>12</sup> (Between 818 and his death in 822, Saicho was engaged in extensive disputations with the Hossō school

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<sup>12</sup> For more extensive examinations of the relationship between Kūkai and Saichō, see Abé 1995; Groner 1984b, 77–87; Akamatsu 1973; and Chen 2009.

scholar-monk Tokuitsu 徳一 (781?–842?) and the Nara clergy over the right to establish an independent ordination platform at Mt. Hiei and to replace the *vinaya* (律 *ritsu*; *si fen lū*) with the *śīla* (菩薩戒 *bosatsu kai*; *fan wang*) precepts. In contrast, Kukai supported the *vinaya* and continued to build relations with the Buddhist community, eventually completely eclipsing Saichō as the authority on esotericism.

### *The Establishment of a Shingon School*

Kukai's systemization of Esoteric Buddhism: Although Kūkai sought formal recognition of Shingon, it would be inaccurate to interpret this as recognizing a distinct sect that was in competition with other sects; such an organizational framework is inapplicable to the Japanese Buddhism of the period. Monks were affiliated to temples but would study the teachings of various schools (*shū* 宗). Yet although Shingon did not become officially recognized as a school until it was accepted into the annual ordinand system in 835, a mere two months before Kūkai's death, it was often referred to as such. Kūkai himself seemed to have been reluctant to define his order in this way, and used such terms as “vehicle” or “treasury” to define the teachings, perhaps reflecting a wish to be perceived as fundamentally different from the established schools (Abé 1999, 193–204).

Nevertheless, Kūkai strove to legitimize the new teachings and did so in part by setting them forth in written works (summaries of which are given in Matsunaga 1976). Important among these are the following:

- *Distinguishing the Two Teachings of the Exoteric and Esoteric* (*Benkenmitsu nikyōron* 弁顯密二教論, 2 vols., 814–815, hereafter *Distinguishing*; KZ 3: 73–110; partial translation in Hakeda 1972, 151–57)
- *Transforming One's Body into the Realm of Enlightenment* 即身成佛義 (*Sokushin jōbutsugi*, 1 vol., hereafter *Transforming*; KZ 3: 15–32, Hakeda 1972, 225–234; Inagaki 2005, 99–118)
- *Voice, Letter, Reality* (*Shōji jissōgi* 声字実相義, 1 vol.; KZ 3: 33–50; Hakeda 1972, 234–246)
- *On the Sanskrit Letter Hūṃ* (*Unjigi* 吽字義, 1 vol.; KZ 3: 51–72; Hakeda 1972, 246–62)

The first three of these were produced over a period of four years (821–824), and constitute what is known as the “Three Writings” (*sanbu-sho* 三部書). These dealt with the metaphysics of Shingon, including linguistic analyses concerning cosmic phenomena and signs. The monumental *Ten Abiding Stages of Mind According to the Secret Mandalas* 秘密曼荼羅十住心論 (*Himitsu mandara jūjūshinron*, 10 vols.; KZ 2: 1–326; hereafter *Ten Abiding Stages*), was produced in 830. Its abbreviated version, *Jeweled Key to the Secret Treasury* 秘藏宝鑰 (*Hizō hōyaku*, 3 vols.), followed in the same year (KZ 3: 111–76; Hakeda 1972, 262–75).

A significant aspect of Kūkai’s systematization of Shingon was his understanding of the esoteric elements extant in Nara Buddhism. He claimed that their incorporation and definition in exoteric ritual were the result of misunderstanding. He wrote in *Distinguishing*:

Now and again the sutras and commentators refer to this preaching [of the *dharmakāya* Buddha]. Misled by their biased preconceptions, people overlook these pertinent passages.... The masters of the Dharma who transmitted the Exoteric Buddhist teachings interpreted the [passages of] profound significance [appearing in the Exoteric Buddhist texts] in the light of their shallow doctrines and failed to find any Esoteric import in them (KZ 3: 77; Hakeda 1972, 154–55).

Kūkai considered the correct recognition of these elements to be a matter of perception and of a clear reading, undistorted by sectarian biases. The parts of exoteric texts he identified as esoteric were the *dhāraṇī* (*darani* 陀羅尼) and mantra (*shingon* 真言), and the parts that demonstrated that the *dharmakāya* could preach. Because the esoteric system was to be perceived within the exoteric, at once both hidden and transparent, there was no simple dichotomy in Kūkai’s understanding between exoteric and esoteric. Providing theory for extant elements and practices made Shingon meaningful to the Nara community, and made it possible for Kūkai to ostensibly cooperate with the Nara schools, rather than to appear to compete with them by introducing what could only be perceived as radically different doctrine and new forms of worship. However, while Kūkai’s attitude to Nara is notable for the willingness to form alliances, a willingness he displayed throughout his career, his texts display a strong resistance to maintaining the status quo. He consistently maintained the precedence of Shingon over all other forms of Buddhism and did indeed introduce radical theories.

Kūkai's understanding of existent esotericism facilitated his classification of other religions and the officially recognized forms of Buddhism in Japan into a sequence of levels, or "ten stages of the mind." This system culminated with Shingon, encompassing all the other levels, at its peak. This hierarchical yet synthetic approach was applied most thoroughly in the *Ten Stages*, but appears in a number of his other works as well. Kūkai's location of the esoteric in relation to the exoteric is a strategy that does not appear in the works of his Indian predecessors. Furthermore, the establishment of esoteric texts as a bibliographical category is not found in Chinese catalogues of Buddhist works. These taxonomic strategies allowed esoteric Buddhism to become a distinct category in Japanese Buddhism (Abé 1999, 176–84).

In his *Letter of Propagation* (*Kan'ensho* 勸緣疏, 815; *Zoku henjō hakki seireishū hoketsushō* 続遍照発揮聖靈集補闕抄, 9 fascicles; KZ 8: 173–76), Kūkai writes, "The Exoteric Teaching and the Esoteric Teaching are distinguished from each other in their methods of leading beings to enlightenment" (KZ 8: 173–74; trans. Abé 1999, 207). He goes on to explain that the exoteric teachings were tailored to the capability of the audience and preached, for example, by the *nirmāṇakāya* buddha (Śākyamuni), in contrast to esoteric teachings that are preached by the *dharmakāya* (法身; "Dharma body"), and were timeless and unchanging.

Accordingly, the progenitor of the genealogy to which Kūkai ascribed was the *dharmakāya* and did not include Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha to whom the Mahāyāna schools traced the scriptures. This understanding posited an irreconcilable difference between Shingon teaching and the teachings of the Nara schools. One of the concerns of the Nara clergy regarding this claim was the legitimacy of Shingon teaching, which could be qualified only by a verifiable transmission lineage. Kūkai responded to this in both the *Distinguishing* and the *Record*, interpreting scripture to present a legitimate genealogy.

A related issue that he addressed in response to issues raised by Tokuitsu in his *Unresolved Issues on the Shingon School* (*Shingon shū miketsumon* 真言宗未決門, T. 2458, written in 815 at earliest), was the claim that the *dharmakāya* could preach the Dharma (*hosshin seppō* 法身說法). According to Mahāyāna interpretations of scripture, the *dharmakāya* was beyond conceptualization and transcendent of language. That is to say, even if the process of attaining enlightenment could be explained, the realm of it was indescribable. In the *Distin-*

*guishing*, Kukai utilized passages from sūtras already familiar to Nara priests to demonstrate that the truth could be expressed in words and that the *dharmakāya* was capable of preaching (which he defined as all communicative acts of the *dharmakāya*). The esoteric truth was propounded by the *dharmakāya*'s preaching via all sensible media. In a further departure from conventional Mahāyāna understanding, he followed his teacher Huiguo's identification of the *dharmakāya* with Mahāvairocana (*Dainichi Nyorai* 大日如来), as explicated in the *Distinguishing* (Hakeda 1972, 81).

A major, and radical, characteristic of Kūkai's Shingon was his understanding of the doctrine of *sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成佛 (becoming a buddha in one's very body),<sup>13</sup> explained in the *Transforming*, which proposed that it was possible to attain buddhahood (enlightenment) in one's embodied existence. This contrasted with the orthodox Mahāyāna stance that held ineluctable a long process of rebirths prior to the attainment of enlightenment. *Sokushin jōbutsu*, however, could be achieved through utilization of the "three mysteries" (*samitsu* 三密; *sanmi*; *triguhya*), the functions of the body, speech, and mind of the practitioner, which allowed the practitioner, through *kaji* 加持 (*adhiṣṭhāna*; empowerment), to participate in the *samādhi* (meditation) of Mahāvairocana in a process of mutual interpenetration called *nyū ga gan yū* 入我我入 (lit., "entering me, me entering", *ahaṅkāra*).

Mahāvairocana was identical with enlightenment inherent within the practitioner. Kūkai explained in the same text that Mahāvairocana consisted of the six great elements (*rokudai* 六大; earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness), its forms were the mandalas, and its functions were the "three mysteries", and through this explanation he was able to show that mind and body, human and universe, were non-dual. The focus on embodiment in the *sokushin jōbutsu* doctrine is characteristic of Kūkai's approach to Buddhism in its emphasis on the experience of esoteric truth through embodied ritual practice (Yamasaki 1988; Payne 1996; Sharf 2003).

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<sup>13</sup> Translation of this term is problematic and varies according to slight differences in interpretation.



*Kūkai's Religio-political Career*

Kūkai's thought was explicated in a number of major written works produced at Takaosanji (later renamed Jingōji), a Heiankyō temple where Kūkai was sent by Emperor Saga in 809 and was based until 823. In addition to organizing his monastic order at Takaosanji, he began a career of administrating various other temples and officiating at performances of esoteric ceremonies for the court. Soon after his appointment to Takaosanji, he requested permission to perform a ceremony to benefit the state (*Henjo hakki seireishū* 遍照発揮性靈集 4: KZ 8: 53–54). It was a time of upheaval and bloodshed in the wake of a usurpation attempt by the retired emperor Heizei. Saga's patronage was extremely advantageous to Kūkai, but it was also, it seems, a distraction from his religious practice. In his correspondence with Saga, with whom a close relationship had developed built upon shared interests in Chinese culture, calligraphy and poetry (see *Henjo hakki seireishū* 3, 4: KZ 8: 39–75), indications of a frustrated longing for seclusion to practice are perceivable. However, Kūkai's activities and alliances with the court and clergy from this time onwards are evidence of his skills of cooperation and reconciliation with authority which were crucial for the establishing of Shingon. Saga appointed him administrator (*bettō*) of Tōdaiji temple, the headquarters of Nara Buddhism, in Kōnin 1 (810) (the veracity of this claim has been questioned, Fujii 2008, 44), and of Otokunidera 乙訓寺 the following year. Six years later, Kūkai submitted a request to be granted land for a monastery, Kongōbuji 金剛峯寺, at Mount Kōya 高野山 in the present Wakayama prefecture. He saw Kōya as a place of peaceful retreat and consecrated the land, invoking the protection of the mountain deities in 819 (Nicoloff 2007, Gardiner 2001, Matsunaga 1984). The issues surrounding the “opening” of the mountain—its utilization as a site for Buddhist practice—especially those concerned with mountain deities and spiritual practices, and the residents of the area, were elaborated in the legends of the origins of Kongōbuji, as found for example, in the *Kongōbuji konryū shugyō engi* 金剛峯寺建立修行縁起 (968), thought to be the earliest origin tale of Kongōbuji. (On the merging of mountain ascetic and “Shinto” practices with Shingon at Mount Kōya and their literary expressions see Gorai 1976, Hinonishi 2004). The project was beset with financial obstacles and required years of visits from the capital for the supervision of its construction. Kūkai died before it was completed.

In 824, Kūkai was made administrator of Tōji 東寺 in Kyoto and given complete control of it by Emperor Junna (r. 823–33). Other titles were to follow: in the same year he was made Lesser Sangha Administrator (*shōsōzu* 小僧都) in the Sōgō and in 827 was promoted to the rank of Sangha Administrator (*daisōzu* 大僧都), though both titles he seems to have accepted with some reluctance, citing poor health. Having completed construction of an *abhiṣeka* hall at Todaiji in 822, he also conferred *abhiṣeka* on many, including, it is said, the retired Emperor Heizei. Recent research has, however, raised doubts about the authenticity of the *Heizei tennō kanjō mon* document which purports to be a record of this *abhiṣeka* which in turn prompts questions about the construction of the *abhiṣeka* hall (Fujii 2008: 44). These prestigious posts represent Kūkai’s full acceptance by the Nara Buddhist community and the imperial court, while the practice of *abhiṣeka* helped him to popularize Shingon and establish it as a school; the practice of *abhiṣeka* was absent from Nara Buddhism and was critical to the acceptance of *mikkyō* in Japan as it produced the genealogy that could validate it. In 835 he instituted the Mishuhō (御修法; “the Imperial Rite”, also known as *Goshichinichi Mishuhō* 後七日御修法; “The Latter Seven-Day Rite”), an esoteric Buddhist ritual for protection of the nation that accompanied the Misaie rite (lectures and recitation of the Golden Light sūtra, *Konkyōmyō saishōkyō* 金光明最勝王經, *Jinguangming zuishengwang jing*; *Suvarṇaprabhāsa sūtra*; T. 665.16:427b–430b) held at the imperial palace as a New Year rite. The Shingon-in, an esoteric hall, was constructed in the imperial palace the following year and was the first permanent structure ever built for esoteric rituals in the palace. This was a clear indication that official approval of Shingon had been attained. He died at Mount Kōya in 835 having achieved the integration of his school within the religio-political world of early Heian Buddhism.

The legend and cultural icon that Kūkai posthumously became tend to obfuscate both the historical conditions into which Shingon was introduced and disseminated as well as the significance of its development in Japan. But while both the course of his career and the development of his philosophy were inextricably bound up with the cultural climate and changes in the religio-political world, he also actively influenced that world in ways that were to reverberate up to the present day. The *abhiṣeka* he introduced and employed provided the model for a variety of secret initiations used beyond the world

of religion (Klein 2003; Scheid and Teeuwen, eds., 2006), and the Kongōbuji temple complex he established transformed Mount Kōya's spiritual landscape. The visual arts, too, were indelibly impacted by esotericism, in the development, for example, of numerous variations of mandalas (Gardiner 1996; ten Grotenhuis 1999), and the mandala-related theories Kūkai introduced inspired practices of land sacralization in the medieval period, while the new interpretation of *dhāraṇī* influenced the functions of poetry in later ages (Kimbrough 2005). The concept of *kaji* that Kūkai introduced is still applied today in some healing practices (Winfield 2005). As much as Kūkai's achievements in his lifetime were historically contingent, they were generated by the mind of a highly intelligent, creative, and spiritual figure whose personality emerges from his writings and the documentary sources as ambitious and charismatic—such qualities the very stuff of the later devotional cult that could expand to answer a plurality of needs.

## 62. ESOTERIC BUDDHISM, MATERIAL CULTURE, AND CATALOGUES IN EAST ASIA

Ian Astley

This contribution examines a representative selection of East Asian Buddhist catalogues, taking the formative phase of esoteric Buddhism in Japan as its fulcrum and with a view to establishing what information they can furnish about the adoption of this new and distinctive form of Buddhism, which came to be integrated into the prevalent *ritsuryō* system of early Heian Japan.<sup>1</sup> This phase is crucial for our understanding of the early development of the Shingon and Tendai traditions, which in turn are central to a full understanding of Japanese religion and politics and the attendant material culture. A prominent source for understanding this complex is the *Jō shin shōrai kyōtō mokurokuhyō* 上新請來經等目錄表 by Kūkai (774–835).<sup>2</sup> The most recent modern edition of Kūkai's complete works begins with the *Catalogue*, even though it is not his first composition.<sup>3</sup> We may take this as an indication of how crucial this relatively unexciting piece is for the contemporary Shingon tradition: though not the beginning of Kūkai's writing career, it represents the point in Japanese religio-political

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<sup>1</sup> Modern Japanese scholarship on *ritsuryō* Japan is extensive. There is a useful English summary by the doyen of the field, Inoue Mitsusada 1977; and 2001. Also very useful, not least for its reference to Chinese antecedents, is Miller 1971. However, Abé 1999 is the most authoritative study of the *ritsuryō* system in English. Other useful works in Japanese include Futaba 1962 and two extensive collections: Asaeda Zensho, ed. 1994 and Yoshikawa and Ōsumi, ed. 2002.

<sup>2</sup> More generally known as the [*Go-*]Shōrai mokuroku [御]請來目錄 (inclusion of the honorific is dictated by sectarian sentiment). Either this form or the English *Catalogue* will be used here. Y. S. Hakeda 1972a translated this work as *A Memorial Presenting a List of Newly Imported Sūtras and Other Items*. Hakeda's work presents an abbreviated English translation (i.e., the listings of the imported items are omitted) but it has useful notes. Also of interest is the fact that copies of this and other *mokuroku*, e.g., the manuscript by Saichō (767–822) now held at Tōji in Kyoto or the one by Enchin (814–891), are now classed by the Japanese government as *kokuhō* 国宝 (National Treasures).

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this discussion I have used the latest, *Teihon* (definitive) edition of Kūkai's complete works, Mikkyō Bunka Kenjyūjo 1991–1997; the *Shōrai mokuroku* is in vol. 1. The most readily available edition of the original text (composed in 806) is included in *T.* 2161.55:1060–1066. Indeed, volume 55 of the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* contains all the important catalogues for our purposes.

and cultural history when the esoteric Buddhist culture on the Chinese mainland had the greatest impact on Japanese history.

However, to place Kūkai's *Catalogue* in context it is necessary to examine the role of catalogues and similar documents in eighth- and ninth-century East Asia; and to give an indication of the significance of his achievements, it is instructive to look at some of the work of later monks who, like Kūkai and Saichō, made the voyage to Tang China to seek the teaching of the Buddha (*nittō guhō shamon* 入唐求法沙門, in Japanese terminology).<sup>4</sup> This essay thus seeks to give an indication of the way in which an understanding of the many and various catalogues that were composed within the ambit of eastern Buddhism can supplement our understanding of the role of Buddhism in general and of esoteric Buddhism in particular.

Inasmuch as these catalogues were generally compiled at imperial behest, such understanding will largely be restricted to Buddhism's role in the fabric of national interests, rather than its popular significance.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, cataloguing implies that there is an institutional need to account for what is being catalogued. As such, in ancient Japan, catalogues of Buddhist items are also found embedded in the plethora of *monjo* 文書 that account for the use of materials, whether in statuary or mandalas, or of relatively sundry items such as sheets of paper, brushes, and ink.<sup>6</sup> One can hardly imagine that the scribes who recorded the details of materials used for copying and so on regarded their work as anything more significant than simple accounting. It is a

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<sup>4</sup> These eight monks were Saichō 最澄, Kūkai 空海, Jōgyō 常暁 (n.d.–866), Engyō 円行 (799–852), Ennin 円仁 (794–864), Eun 惠運 (798–869), Enchin 円珍 (814–91), and Shūei 宗叡 (809–884); accessible and useful details may be found under the relevant headings in Ishigami and Nagahara 1999. A convenient listing of the extant works acquired by these monks can be found in Sawa Ryūken 1975, s.v. *Nittō hakke shōraibon*.

<sup>5</sup> The focus here is thus much narrower than in Kieschnick 2003. While Kieschnick's work embraces much more popular material, we do have in common an urge to ensure that our understanding of these cultures is rounded out by considering the role that material culture played in defining political, religious, and philosophical parameters.

<sup>6</sup> These *monjo* are the subject of the comprehensive edition begun in 1901 and still being published by the Historical Institute at Tokyo University, Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, ed. 1901–. This is an indispensable collection of these ancient documents. Volume 12, for example, starting in 751 (Tempyō shōhō 天平勝宝, 3), contains quite a range of evidence pertaining to the copying of esoteric scriptures and the construction of esoteric artifacts. It reflects both the concerns of a well-developed statutory state based in Nara and the situation on the continent.

different matter, though, when we look at major catalogues such as the *Kaiyuan lu*, which contain much of rhetorical significance and which also harbor ideas about the proper management of state affairs.

Once Buddhism became part of the political fabric of China, it was necessary for rulers to account for their commitment of resources to Buddhist institutions, including personnel and attendant paraphernalia. This was partly for internal reasons of accounting, partly to provide an external display. The latter was, in turn, related to the general concern with protection of the state ([*zhen*]*huguo*, [*chin*]*gokoku* [鎮護國], a common prefix for major state-sponsored temples carried over to Japan and Korea).<sup>7</sup> It was also related in part to rulers' concern to gather merit, both for their own pride, perhaps, but more crucially because such merit was also part of the guarantee of protection afforded by the power of Buddhism.<sup>8</sup>

As has been observed in respective studies by Abé (1999) and Bogel (2010), although esoteric texts were listed in the Zhenyuan-era catalogues (to which we will turn first), there was no specific identification of them as pertaining to a particular school or tradition. It should be noted, however, that they are distinguished from established textual or scholastic traditions, for example those of the Huayan tradition.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, they are also listed in subordinate positions, suggesting that the purposes they served were peripheral to those of the major scholastic traditions. Such peripheral concerns may be seen as proto-scientific attempts to control forces with which contemporary technology could not cope.

### *China: The Kaiyuan and Zhenyuan Catalogues*

The Kaiyuan and the Zhenyuan catalogues, both compiled under the Tang, run to twenty and thirty fascicles respectively—two to three

<sup>7</sup> Cf. also the term *zhenhu guojia* (*chingo kokka* 鎮護國家), which says much about the particular role of Buddhism in protecting the national polity.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Orzech 1998 for a comprehensive treatment of the manner in which Chinese rulers adopted Buddhism for its transcendental support in the task of government.

<sup>9</sup> See C. Bogel 2009, 69ff, which provides an extensive summary and analysis; see also Bogel 2004 and 2008. Abé 1999, 156–59, makes similar points in his analysis of the major Chinese catalogues of the era. A more traditional art-historical perspective is given by Sawa Ryūken 1982; while Tokyo National Museum, ed. 2005 gives an idea of the outstanding quality of the artifacts that were in circulation in East Asia at that time.

hundred pages in the modern *Taishō* edition<sup>10</sup>—which gives an idea of the wealth of Buddhist material extant in China by the eighth century and the close involvement of the state in accounting for it. Here, we shall highlight a few passages in the *Da Tang Zhenyuan xu Kaiyuan shijiao lu* in order to present some of the salient themes of relevance to the esoteric tradition.

The initial items listed are replete with collections of *dhāraṇī* and ritual manuals (incantations, *nenjuhō* 念誦法) as well as later, more systematic works such as the *Rishukyō* (*Liqu jing* 理趣經) and its commentary, the eighteen assemblies and the thirty-seven deity configuration of the Vajradhātu; as well as Five Mysteries texts.<sup>11</sup> It includes many sources that over time came to be counted as prominent parts of Kūkai's Shingon corpus: important, composite derivatives such as the *gobu shingan* 五部心觀 and the *Rishukyō*, its commentary, and mandala.<sup>12</sup> In general, this catalogue attests to a remarkable number of ritual manuals and supporting texts, as one might expect of a work compiled after the activities of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra.<sup>13</sup> In fact, material associated with the activities of these two scholar-monks figures prominently in the esoteric texts enumerated: Vajrabodhi is described as having “received *shingon*” as a distinct initiation, his consecration standing out as a certain method of esoteric transmission, rather than a rite meant to enhance the ability to influence the material world through the technology of magical incantations.<sup>14</sup>

There is also an extended section on the *Renwang jing*, which deals with securing the temporal and spatial supremacy of the state through both the superior career (*dacheng*, *daijō* 大乘) and the *zhenyan* (*shingon*), i.e., it combines Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna approaches to enlightenment.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, much of the rhetoric takes the *Renwang jing* as its

<sup>10</sup> T. 2155, 2156, 2157, respectively.

<sup>11</sup> T. 2156.55:753b18–20.

<sup>12</sup> For example, the passage at T. 2156.55:748c25–749c08. Not unexpectedly, most of the texts are of the *Vajradhātu* type, though *Mahāvairocana sūtra* lineage texts feature too, albeit much less prominently, e.g., T. 2156.55:753c16–18. See the introduction in Astley 1991 for details on the textual basis of this strand of esoteric Buddhism in China and Japan.

<sup>13</sup> The terms used include 儀軌 (*yigui*, *giki*), 念誦儀軌 (*niansong yigui*, *nenju giki*) and 念誦法 (*niansong fa*, *nenju hō*); 瑜伽 (*yujia*, *yuga*), 供養法 (*gongyang fa*, *kuyō ho*); 真言 (*zhenyan*, *shingon*) 陀羅尼 (*tuoluoni*, *darani*) and 陀羅尼釋 (*tuoluoni shi*, *darani shaku*).

<sup>14</sup> T. 2156.55:754a23, 28.

<sup>15</sup> T. 2156.55:750a08–16.

starting point, and the esoteric rituals associated with this scripture are treated as an integral part of the corpus.

*Japan: The Transition to Esoteric Buddhism*

The important documents in the crucial phase of the introduction of esoteric Buddhism into Japan, i.e., the early ninth century, are the catalogues composed by Saichō and Kūkai. A distinguishing element of Kūkai's *Shōrai mokuroku* is its integration of material objects into the ambit of what is to be accounted for, clearly showing that they are to be seen as an integral part of the tradition's corpus. Significantly, Kūkai held back a number of items, undoubtedly as a kind of insurance policy should his petitions to the court not bear fruit.<sup>16</sup> It should be remembered that the death of Emperor Kanmu, who supported Kūkai's inclusion in the embassy of 804, brought about a change of atmosphere at court.

Saichō's catalogues are quite different documents. They were ostensibly composed as inventories, presumably exhaustive, presented to the Chinese authorities, recording what he was exporting and the requisite permission granted by Chinese customs officers. His record of his sojourn in Yuezhou<sup>17</sup> shows a clear understanding of the relative importance of the items—he lists sūtras and major ritual texts before miscellaneous *dhāraṇīs*, non-esoteric materials, and paraphernalia—but it does not have (and was never intended to have) the same significance as Kūkai's catalogue, which was composed with one eye very much on the religio-political situation of the early Heian court. Indeed, Saichō regarded this form of the tradition as simply incantatory, calling what Kūkai would later label esoteric the *nenju hōmon* 念誦法門, with

<sup>16</sup> See Ishida 1988b, the chapter on *mikkyō* art (193–232), esp. his remarks on the *Sanjūjō sakushi*, e.g. 228f. His comparative tables, 197–207 (Chinese catalogues and those of *nittō sō*; Kūkai's and Saichō's catalogues) are also extremely useful. Bogel 2009 deals with this in the context of an extended treatment of the content of Kūkai's *Catalogue*, see esp. Ch. 5, 112–38. Note also that Kūkai did not include the materials which eventually went into his compendium of Tang poetics, *Bunkyo hifu ron* 文鏡秘府論, *Teihon*, Vol. 6. This is a further indication of the religio-political intent in Kūkai's catalogue.

<sup>17</sup> Known as the *Dengyō Daishi shōrai Esshū roku* 傳教大師將來越州錄, T. 2160; this supplements his core inventory, the *Dengyō Daishi shōrai mokuroku* 傳教大師將來目錄, T. 2159. For essential supplementary information on Saichō's encounter with the esoteric materials in China, see also his *Kenkairon engi* (Dengyō Daishi zenshū 1), of which there is a modern, annotated Japanese edition in Andō and Sonoda, ed. 1974, 163–92.



its attendant incantatory paraphernalia *nenju kuyō gu* 念誦供養具.<sup>18</sup> In short, Saichō's background and purpose differed significantly from Kūkai's, a fact underlined by subsequent, well-documented exchanges between the two concerning the much richer and complete corpus of esoteric materials that Kūkai brought back to Japan.

Although we do not have detailed accounts of the funds available to him, we must assume that Kūkai used his government stipend for study- and living-related expenses and, more important, to commission scribes to copy the two hundred and forty-seven fascicles that comprise the one hundred and forty-two Buddhist sūtras, the forty-four fascicles of the forty-two Sanskrit texts, and the one hundred and seventy fascicles of the thirty-two scriptural commentaries he presented to the court. The Sanskrit items, more specifically the mantras in Siddham script (*bonji shingon* 梵字真言), while fewer in number, constituted an ideologically significant part of his offering. Their novelty, their appeal to the calligraphic bent of court society, and their adumbration of an unfamiliar and mysterious path to enlightenment would all have lent an unmistakable mystique to this new corpus, not least because Kūkai announced them directly after the new Chinese translations of sūtras that he was itemizing.<sup>19</sup> Further expenses would have been the labor of the specialist craftsmen he employed to make the five large-scale (and expensive) mandala images in polychrome pigments on silk.

Less crucial to the doctrinal and ritual core of esoteric Buddhism, but still of major significance to the corpus as an integrated whole, were items such as portraits of the five patriarchs of the Zhenyan tradition, nine ritual implements, and thirteen keepsakes that were presented to him by his Chinese mentor, Huiguo 惠果. Indeed, this list affirms the sense of tradition—not least because eight of these items actually belonged to Huiguo's master, including a robe (an item that often figures as proof of legitimization throughout the various schools of East Asian Buddhism), ritual vessels fashioned of lapis lazuli and amber, and ritual chopsticks. Prominent among Huiguo's own contribution were eighty grains of relics of the Buddha himself, ensconced in a miniature stūpa, and a portable sandalwood shrine, along with other paraphernalia, both esoteric and generic. Kūkai remained in the

<sup>18</sup> This is borne out in his mention of the initiations, e.g., *T.* 2160, 55:1059c10–25.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Shōrai mokuroku*, *Teihon* 1, p. 5.

magnificent government complex at Dazaifu until 809, ignorant of the court's response to his submission.

Portraits indicate the importance of transmission in distinctive ways: first, as became crucially evident in the later dispute with Saichō, the direct esoteric transmission from master to acolyte is at the core of Kūkai's novel system. Second, the portraits were intended to be part of the ordination hall where consecration (*abhiṣeka*) took place. Also, the integration of sovereigns in the passages that account for these portraits is a further indication of the way in which esoteric themes were seen as crucial to the religio-political base of the state.<sup>20</sup>

One of the tangled threads that recent scholarship is attempting to untangle is the confusion caused by the different contexts in which the term *mikkyō* 密教 is used. The *Shōrai mokuroku* is relevant to this discussion because it is clear evidence of the importance of the term *mitsuzō* 密藏 (rather than *mikkyō*), where *zō* refers quite clearly to *piṭaka*, thereby presenting to the court a supplement to the established Tripiṭaka of scripture, monastic regulations, and exegesis.<sup>21</sup> The situation has not been helped by a tradition of sectarian scholarship that came to the fore during the *mikkyō* boom of the mid-1970s onward (flourishing especially in the 1980s). One example is the helpful summary provided by Katsumata Shunkyō in the historical volume of the *Mikkyō Kōza* series.<sup>22</sup> Distilling the 1930 findings of Ishida Mosaku,<sup>23</sup> he extracts those texts that, in the modern understanding of “pure esotericism” (itself a problematic term),<sup>24</sup> are clearly of an esoteric nature.

Unfortunately, the imposition of a post-facto taxonomy distorts the nature of the esoteric tradition in the Nara period, and by extension gives us a misleading idea of what Kūkai was doing when he

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, *Shōrai mokuroku*, *Teihon* 1, p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Abé 1999, 189–204, esp. 191ff, gives a full analysis of the various terms Kūkai used to describe his tradition. Kūkai uses *mitsuzō* quite frequently and *mikkyō* only once in his *Catalogue* and related works. Current translations of *zō* as “treasure house” and the like obscure this crucial connection.

<sup>22</sup> Katsumata Shunkyō 1977, 168–83.

<sup>23</sup> Ishida Mosaku 1930. Ishida's work was also used by Kushida Ryōkō 1964, a masterful study of esoteric Buddhism in Nara and Heian Japan. Katsumata Shunkyō and many others have used Kushida's analysis of the esoteric scriptures available to the Nara clergy when highlighting Kūkai's contribution and its context. See also Inaya Yūsen 1965.

<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the term *junmitsu* 純密 may be traced back only as far as Ōmura Seigai 1972 (originally published 1918).

introduced his revisions and innovations at the beginning of the ninth century. This reflects the prevailing role of esoteric materials, against which Kūkai eventually came to set his esoteric system—namely, that they were regarded as a part of the technology required to come to terms with forces and needs with which more prosaic forms of technology were not capable of dealing or were unable to satisfy. Being part and parcel of a wide-ranging set of requirements for the conduct of the business of state and the satisfaction of individual needs, they did not require separate treatment in the contemporary taxonomy until Kūkai's introduction of esoteric Buddhism as a coherent religio-political system. His *Shōrai mokuroku* is historical evidence of this crucial development.

Kūkai's inclusion of extended passages, at once rhetorical and discursive, on the religio-political significance and the potential of his esoteric *piṭaka* is a significant development that reveals the necessity of submitting an inventory of materials collected in response to the imperially decreed task of researching the Buddhist teachings. Saichō's catalogues constitute more or less simple accounts of his activities; Kūkai's *Catalogue* harks back to the elaborate rhetoric of the Kaiyuan catalogues but presents a more tightly focused program of religio-political intent. A superficial reading is unspectacular, but closer analysis reveals that both in its structure and in Kūkai's addenda, the *Catalogue* is in fact a manifesto for a new religio-political foundation for the nation-state.

### *The Travels of Tendai and Shingon Monks in Late-Tang China*

The ninth century C.E. saw telling changes in the religio-political situation in Japan as well as in China. Serious political instability was beginning to tarnish the glories of Tang rule, which in turn led to Japan's suspension of official relations with China. Notably, the first five of the eight *nittō guhō* monks (who all had crucial interests in China's esoteric traditions) to make the voyage to Tang were part of official embassies (*kentōshi* 遣唐使),<sup>25</sup> while the final three (beginning with Eun 惠運 in 842) traveled with merchant missions.<sup>26</sup> Inasmuch as

<sup>25</sup> Ishida Hisatoyo 2004 deals with Ennin and Enchin in chapters 7 and 8, respectively. The last of these embassies returned in 839, as the instabilities of Wuzong's 武宗 suppressions rumbled in the distance.

<sup>26</sup> See *Iwanami Nihon shi jiten*, s.v. *nittō hakke* 入唐八家. The prime Western-language source is von Verschuer 1985, but see also Borgen 1982.

the corpus of esoteric materials imported by 865, when Shūei returned, comprised a complete system upon which the esoteric schools could base their ritual, exegetic, and pastoral activities, we can safely say that the mature foundations of Japanese Buddhism were well and truly established by the late ninth century. This was particularly important in view of the rise of the *shōen* from the early tenth century, which would mark the gradual decline of the central power of the Heian court.

The catalogues composed by the monks who followed Kūkai, along with their narrative accounts, tell us what kinds of lineage they were concerned to represent in their collections. This implies also that they went with specific ideas about what was likely to be found in China and what was needed to complement and expand the extant corpus in Japan. A prominent example of this are Ennin's catalogues, in which he emulates to a significant degree the template begun by Kūkai, i.e., texts, two- and three-dimensional representations, ritual implements, and keepsakes.<sup>27</sup> Shūei's case is particularly instructive: he returned with materials that represented traditions quite different from those to which Kūkai and Saichō had gained access.<sup>28</sup>

While there is no substitute for analyzing the materials themselves, the catalogues give us important first clues about these pilgrims' intent and valuable information about the overarching presuppositions that lay behind it. When we examine the catalogues from this crucial period in a systematic array, they provide a distinctive survey of the religious, political, and hermeneutic interests of key thinkers in this crucial phase of East Asian culture.<sup>29</sup>

### Conclusion

At first glance, the notion of reading these catalogues appears soporific at best. However, if we read them with an eye to their potential for giving clues about the causes and motives behind their composition, their value becomes readily apparent. We can parse them for indications of

<sup>27</sup> Ennin's catalogues are T. 2165, 2166 & 2167; read in conjunction with his diary, *Nittō guhō junrei kōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記 (full text in the *Dainippon Bukkyō zensho* 大日本仏教全書; cf. Reischauer 1955a), they can give a vivid picture of how esoteric forms of Buddhism were woven into the Chinese Buddhist world.

<sup>28</sup> See the extensive analysis in Hunter 1995b of the lineages implicit in the materials that Shūei acquired and catalogued.

<sup>29</sup> Such an array has been provided in a table of correspondences between these various sources in Ishida Hisatoyo 1988b, 197ff.

the religious and political situations in which they were written, and glean information about the material basis of the culture that they reflect. Buddhist scriptures were a kind of religio-political currency, since they were the material evidence of the non-material power that Buddhism afforded rulers in their quest for righteous government, prosperity, and stability. They were the visible and manipulable signs of a network that, starting from the realms of the Buddha's enlightenment itself, permeated the social and political mores of the Sinicized world of ancient East Asia.

The acquisition and distribution of these texts also necessitated a substantial commitment of a nation's resources. Such commitment stretched from the basic need to produce the materials for copying the scriptures through the training, employment, and upkeep of scribes to dispatching monks abroad to acquire further documents and materials suitable for the expansion and consolidation of rule, as well as for national security and prosperity. The building and maintenance of suitable repositories and the ritual activity pertinent to these documents, not to mention the monumental loci<sup>30</sup> of the rituals (temples and shrines), were further essential elements of this nexus.

Hence, cataloguing was of paramount importance, as was the need on the part of the catalogues' composers to reflect in their records the appropriate religio-political sentiments. Indeed, Kūkai's *Catalogue* was composed in response to the imperial order under which he had been sent to the Tang in the first place, and quite clearly was composed against a specific religio-political background rather than from the need for a simple accounting. In this respect, it differs clearly from the Nara-period records and the embassies sent to the Tang before him.

A full analysis of these inventories, even if restricted to the important initial phase of esoteric Buddhism's development in East Asia, is beyond the scope of this contribution. Our purpose will have been served, however, if this discussion has illuminated at least some of the reasons these catalogues should be regarded as an integral adjunct to the Buddhist canon.

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<sup>30</sup> I use the term "monumental" here in its literal sense, meaning actual structures.

## 63. THE MANDALA AS METROPOLIS

Pamela D. Winfield<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

According to the *Shōrai mokuroku* 請来目錄 (Catalogue of Imported Items), in 806 the esoteric master Kūkai Kōbō Daishi 空海弘法大師 (774–835) returned to Japan from China carrying three copies of the Womb World Mandala (Taizōkai Mandara 胎藏界) and two copies of the Diamond World Mandala (Kongōkai Mandara 金剛界). In the *Shōrai mokuroku*, Kūkai claims that this pair of paintings depicts the essence of *mikkyō* doctrines and contains the secrets of the Buddhist scriptures. Two key sūtras in particular provide the scriptural basis for the images he brought back: the Womb World Mandala is based on the *Dainichikyō* 大日經 (*Mahāvairocana sūtra*), a mid-seventh-century text translated into Chinese in 724 by Śubhākarasiṃha (Shanwuwei; Zemmui 善無畏; 637–735) and Yixing (Jpn. Ichigyō 一行; 684–727). The Diamond World Mandala, by contrast, is based on the *Kongōchōkyō* 金剛頂經 (*Vajraśekhara sūtra*), which was translated into Chinese by both Vajrabodhi (Jin'gangzhi; Jpn. Kongōchi 金剛智; 671–741) and his disciple Amoghavajra (Bukong; Fukū 不空; 705–774) in the mid-eighth century (Giebel, “Taishō Volumes 18–21,” in this volume).

A great deal of imagery in the two mandalas is not textually supported by these source sūtras, however.<sup>2</sup> Most significant for the purposes of this study, is that the overall graphic layout for the so-called Two World Mandalas (Ryōkai Mandara 兩界曼荼羅)<sup>3</sup> is largely absent

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to extend my thanks to Charles D. Orzech, Richard K. Payne, Henrik H. Sørensen, Cynthea Bogel, and Nancy Steinhardt for their encouragement and help at various stages of this essay. Any mistakes are my own.

<sup>2</sup> Chapters 2 and 11 of the *Dainichikyō*, for example, enumerate some but not all of the figures appearing in the Womb World Mandala; it admits that other divinities belonging to the same buddha family may be added on occasion, and provides no names for the twelve assembly halls (*in* 院). These are only found in the *Hizōki* 秘藏記 (Tajima 1959, 59).

<sup>3</sup> Originally Kūkai only used the term “world” in reference to the Diamond World Mandala (Kongōkai 金剛界), not to the Womb Treasure Ocean Mandala (Taizōkai 胎藏海). However, the twin homonyms for world (*kai* 界) and ocean (*kai* 海) and

from either scripture. Like many other Buddhist texts, the *Dainichikyō* does mention various buddha assemblies residing in various cardinal or ordinal locations within celestial palaces, but nowhere does it mention the specific layout of the Womb World Mandala's twelve halls and central Lotus Court. Likewise, the *Kongōchōkyō* remains silent regarding the Diamond World Mandala's three-by-three grid of nine mini-mandala palaces. Kūkai's esoteric master Huiguo (Keika 惠果; 746–805) was initiated into the lineages of both Amoghavajra and Śubhākarasiṃha and is often credited with bringing their two strains of Buddhist thought together, but he leaves no record as to how or when these thought-architectures may have been first envisioned or graphically rendered.

The lack of textual evidence for these mandalas opens the door to other modes of understanding their forms. Art historian Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis (1999) has already pointed out several similarities between the Two World Mandalas and Chinese imperial geographies, and this essay builds upon her theory as well as her method of visual analogy. It is precisely because the texts are silent on this matter that we should investigate other Chinese principles for structuring ideal environments.

From what, then, did the organizational layout for the two mandalas stem? What mental maps might have helped to shape the format of these visual aids designed to empower ritual spaces? What classifying and categorizing templates would be immediately accessible and familiar to ninth-century *mikkyō* adepts in China and, by extension, in Japan? The thesis of this investigation is that long-standing Chinese ideals of perfect urban spaces can provide a helpful clue, and there is enough evidence to indicate that ubiquitous tropes of Chinese imperial geography may have influenced the sacred geometry of these mandalas.

Like all mandalas, the Two World Mandalas are two-dimensional architectural plans for three-dimensional palaces. Accordingly, from a purely formalistic standpoint, their bird's-eye-view floor plans exhibit striking similarities to long-standing East Asian ideals for perfect religious-political spaces. The first section of this analysis argues that the layout of the Womb World Mandala evokes the *I*-shaped *gong* 工

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the mandalas' ubiquitous twin displays soon collapsed this distinction and led to the convention of calling them the Two World Mandalas.

plans of early Chinese palaces as well as the architectural elements of the typical *sihe yuan* 四合院 courtyard dwelling. The second section argues that the Diamond World Mandala visually evokes the tic-tac-toe-like grid plan of the Zhou dynasty *wang cheng* 王城, or emperor's city, as documented in the classic *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮). The third and final section argues that when displayed together in Japan, as they probably were from 835 onward,<sup>4</sup> the Two World Mandalas reflect the double-palace system of earlier eighth-century Sino-Japanese capitals, which housed religious and political functions of the court in Ministries of the Right and Left, respectively. Kūkai's claim that these powerful paintings were "as useful to the nation as walls are to a city" 國に於ては城郭たり (*Shōrai mokuroku* 532; Hakeda, trans. 1972, 141) is perhaps due to these urban and architectural associations.

## 2. The Womb World and Chinese Architecture

The Womb World Mandala can be organized according to several alternative layouts. On the one hand, the twelve enclosures can be grouped into an *I*-shaped plan with flanking halls (figure 1). Alternatively, the halls of this step-pyramid mandala palace can be grouped into three or four layers, depending on whether one adopts Amoghavajra's or Śubhākarasimha's interpretation of the *Dainichikyō*.<sup>5</sup>

The *I*-shaped layout with flanking halls is called a *gong* plan, named after the Chinese character *gong* 工, for work or construction (not to be confused with its homonym for palace, *gong* 宮). This layout is one of the long-standing tropes in Chinese architectural history, arguably dating back to the Zhou-dynasty Ancestral Hall, which was characterized by two horizontal halls connected by a central enclosure that was encircled by a ring of peripheral cells. Likewise, the Womb World

<sup>4</sup> In 835, Kūkai performed the first *mishuhō* New Year's rite in the specially constructed Shingon-in sanctuary within the imperial palace. According to the *Record of Yearly Rituals* handscroll (*Nenjū gyōgi emaki*, scroll 6, section 4), during this ritual for the protection of the state both mandalas were displayed on the side walls, with images of the five wisdom kings (*godaimyōō*) in front. As this scroll is Sumiyoshi Jōkei's seventeenth-century copy of Tokiwa Mitsunaga's lost twelfth-century original, it is possible that its configuration illustrates contemporary twelfth- or seventeenth-century practices, which may or may not have diverged from Kūkai's original installation plan. To my knowledge, however, no evidence to date suggests any variation from Kūkai's original configuration (Mason 1993, 135, fig. 158).

<sup>5</sup> All the following references to Amoghavajra's and Śubhākarasimha's differing interpretations come from Snodgrass 1988, 184–85.



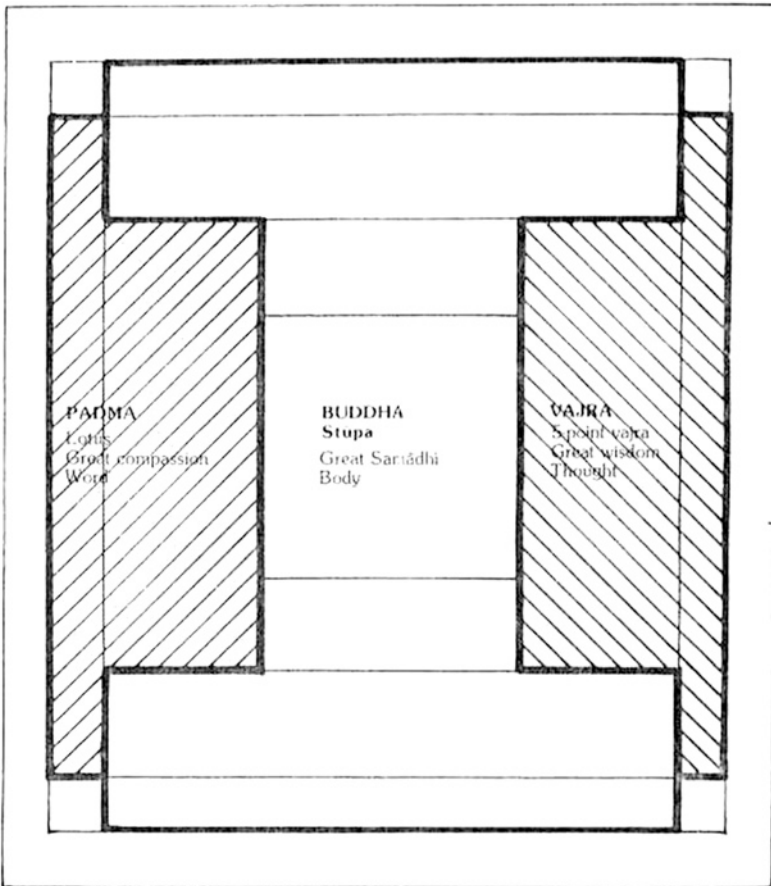


Figure 1. Womb World *gong* I-shaped layout (Rambach 1987, 140).

Mandala can be viewed according to this plan. Buddha assemblies reside in seven halls that form an I-shaped structure, flanked by bodhisattvas of wisdom and compassion, and subordinate deities guard the enclosure from around the perimeter.

An alternative organizational grouping of the mandala halls reveals an equally compelling comparison, though it requires a perspective shift in orientation. In the concentric courtyard layout (figure 2), the Great Sun Buddha Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来 (Mahāvairocana) and his retinue hold court in the center Lotus Hall.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> He is surrounded by four directional buddhas and their four helping bodhisattvas within the eight petals of the central red lotus. The buddhas are the Womb World

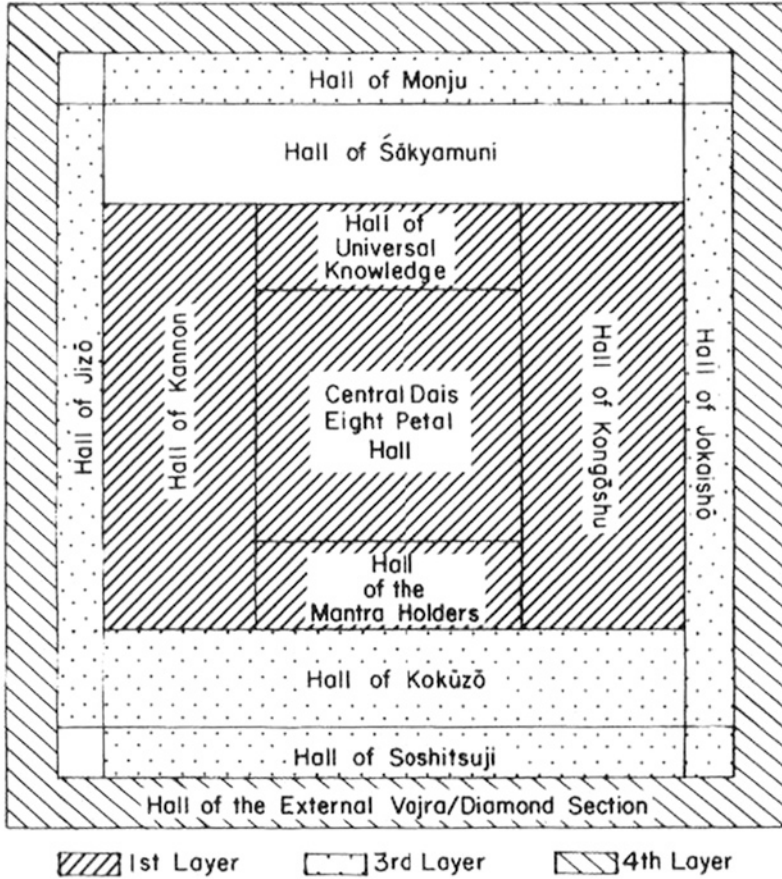


Figure 2. Womb World concentric layout (ten Grotenhuis 1999, 36, fig. 17).

They are surrounded by bodhisattvas in four other assembly rooms: Kongōshu 金剛手 and other diamond assembly bodhisattvas are housed to the right, Kannon 觀音 and other lotus assembly bodhisattvas are housed to the left, the Mother of All Buddhas (Butsumo 仏母) resides in the Universal Knowledge Hall above, and the five wisdom kings (*godaimyōō* 五大明王) reside in the Mantra-Holders Hall below. This first central layer of the mansion symbolizes Dainichi's

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equivalents of Akṣobhya (top/east), Ratnasambhava (right/south), Amitābha (bottom/west), and Amogāsiddhi (left/north); and the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra (southeast), Mañjuśrī (southwest), Avalokiteśvara (northwest), and Maitreya (northeast).

three secrets of body, speech, and mind (according to Amoghavajra) or *bodhicitta* as the cause of awakening (according to Śubhākarasiṃha).

The second layer of the palace is said to be Śākyamuni's assembly directly above the universal knowledge assembly. According to Amoghavajra, this symbolizes Buddha's transformation bodies (*nirmāṇakāya*; *huashen*; *henshin*) that, along with the subordinate deities in the fourth outermost external *vajra* section, are able to adapt to circumstances and function inexhaustibly throughout the cosmos. Śubhākarasiṃha maintains that these same two sections symbolize Buddha's method for awakening (*upāya*).

The third concentric layer of the mandala palace consists of the Hall of Susiddhi at the bottom center and four peripheral enclosures for the retinues of Jizō 地藏 (left), Monju 文殊 (top), Jokaishō 除蓋障 (right), and Kokūzō 虛空藏 (bottom). According to Amoghavajra, this layer symbolizes one's aspiration toward Dainichi in the center; Śubhākarasiṃha believes that it represents compassion (*karuṇā*) as the root of awakening.

Finally, the outermost external *vajra* enclosure houses wrathful guardian deities, personified constellations, planetary divinities, cosmological forces, and numerous other figures that are not always mentioned in the *Dainichikyō*. As mentioned above, Amoghavajra and Śubhākarasiṃha differ slightly in their interpretations of this outermost layer, but the subordinate status of the minimized figures relative to Dainichi in the center is quite clear.

This vertical ranking of enlightened beings according to mandala "floors" and the horizontal privileging of the center over the periphery roughly correspond to Chinese imperial notions of cultural geography. As Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis (1999, 71–72) has pointed out, these concentric layers of the mandala resonate with the "Tribute of Yu" section of the *Book of Documents*. In this text, the locus of imperial supremacy lies in the metropolitan center, and the outermost "Zone of Cultureless Savagery" lies at the periphery (Needham 1959, 502). According to ten Grotenhuis's argument, this visually correlates to Dainichi's enlightened seat at the heart of the mandala and the outermost ring of minor deities who were brought into the Buddhist (i.e., cultured/enlightened) sphere.

In addition to this observation, however, one may also note that the mandala's concentric layout offers distinct visual correlates to Chinese architectural models. Five gates pierce the Womb World compound: two entrance gates at the top of the mandala and three other gates to

the right, left, and bottom of the compound. The two topmost gates lead into the Hall of Śākyamuni and the Hall of Universal Knowledge, where buddha-mothers give birth to the bodhisattvas of wisdom and compassion in the Diamond and Lotus Halls to the right and left, respectively. Three other gates pierce the three remaining outer walls of the palace edifice. Likewise, five main gates placed at identical locations characterized the *sihe yuan* courtyard dwelling (figure 3), and its similarly situated rooms functioned analogously to those of the mandala.

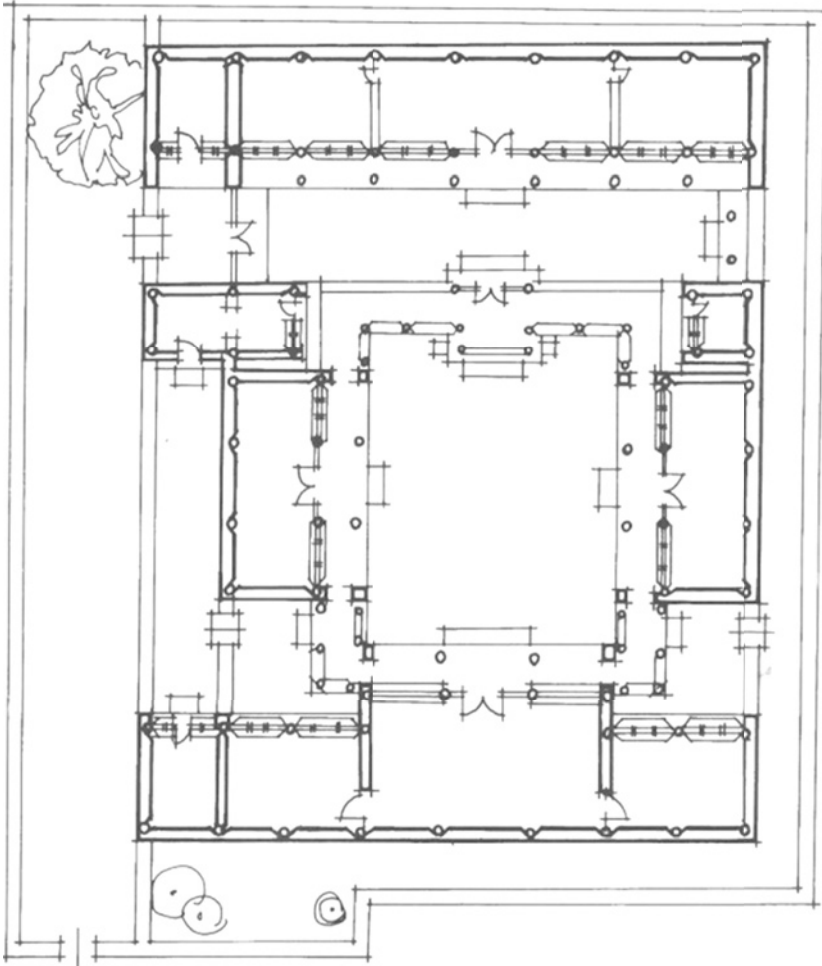


Figure 3. *Sihe yuan* courtyard dwelling. Rotated to match the orientation of the Womb World (adapted from Guo 2002, 29r, 74r).

Chinese courtyard dwellings were usually oriented to the south (not to the east as the Womb World is), but they too usually had a double entranceway. Upon entry, one first encountered the Ancestral Hall, which was associated with the woman's role in giving birth to the family lineage (akin to Butsumo's role in giving birth to enlightened beings of wisdom and compassion in the mandala). Its flanking side halls facing the central courtyard were usually reserved for children's quarters (akin to Kannon and Vajrapāṇi's retainers in the flanking Lotus and Diamond Courts). The large hall at the back was usually reserved for the men's quarters (akin to the Mantra-Holders Hall where five wisdom kings wrathfully but compassionately burn away defilements). In this regard the Womb World Mandala and the everyday world of Chinese family living seem to converge and situate a spatial logic that would resonate with Chinese *mikkyō* adepts.

In addition, Butsumo's flaming triangle in the Hall of Universal Knowledge (figure 4) is also distinctive of Chinese ornamentation for palace architecture. This abstract symbol is usually discussed in terms of its feminine associations and *yonī* symbolism,<sup>7</sup> but seen in the light of Chinese architectural models, it also closely resembles a *shanze ban* 山子版 gable board, "a triangular board which crowns the end wall of small buildings" (Guo 2002, 69–70).

This popular roof finial seems to have been well established as early as the Northern Wei dynasty (465–494 C.E.). Rock-cut cave temples such as Yungang cave no. 12 (figure 5, figure 6) in Datong, Shanxi province, for example, include similar triangles in scenes of Maitreya's celestial palace.

Another bas relief scene at Yungang cave no. 6 (figure 7) depicts the Buddha's great renunciation from his royal palace in India, though the distinctive triangle at the center of the roofline evokes the then-current Northern Wei ideal for palace architecture. The contemporary Tomb of the Wrestling Scene (Kakjöch'ong) in Ji'anxian, Jilin province,

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<sup>7</sup> Manabe Shinshō and Shashibala (personal communication, 2001) agree that after passing through the two entrance gates above, the meditator would encounter this triangle head-on, its tip pointing down. Viewed from this perspective, such an inverted triangle would resemble the *yonī* of the Hindu *yantras* and reinforce the feminine associations of Butsumo. It is not known to what extent ninth-century *mikkyō* adepts may have visualized "entering" into the Womb World Mandala. At least in the contemporary context, Sharf 2001, 167–68, has argued that the *mikkyō* practitioner never actively "enters" into the mandala during ritual visualizations, and Yoritomi agrees (personal communication, 2001).

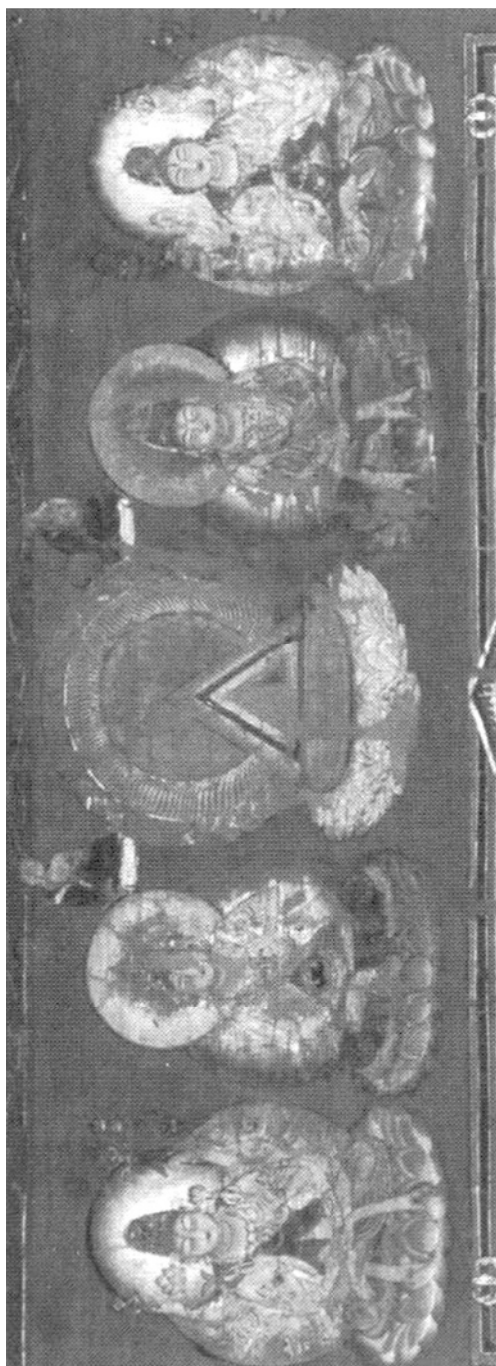


Figure 4. Hall of Universal Knowledge, depicting stylized Butsumo triangle (ten Grotenhuis 1999, 62, fig. 40).



Figure 5. Yungang cave no. 12, Datong, Shanxi, ca. 465–494 (Liu 1989, frontispiece, 81).



Figure 6. Yungang cave no. 12, Datong, Shanxi, ca. 465–494 (Liu 1989, frontispiece, 81).





Figure 7. Buddha's great renunciation, Yungang cave no. 6, Datong, Shanxi, ca. 465–494 (Shanxisheng Wenwu, 1977, *Yungang shiku*, Fig. 1).

Korea, further testifies to the ubiquity of this architectural element over a wide geographical range (figure 8).

In addition to the flaming triangle at the top center, two other foci in the mandala draw the eye down to the bottom corners of Kokūzō's Assembly Hall. The left side of the hall is presided over by the thousand-armed Kannon (Senjusengen Kanjizai 千手千眼観自在), the bodhisattva of compassion whose multiple heads and thousand all-seeing hands branch up and out in readiness to offer compassion and omniscience. On the other side of the hall to the right presides the one hundred and eight-armed Diamond Storehouse King (Ippyaku-hachi Kongōzōō 一百八金剛蔵王), the bodhisattva who embodies the strength and adamantine wisdom of Vajrasattva (ten Grotenhuis 1999, 65; Yamasaki 1988, 131).

In the polychrome copies of the mandala (the oldest of which dates to ca. 859), Kanjizai on the left is primarily painted white and red, while Kongōzōō on the right is a deep, dark green. Could these two figures, with their heads and hands branching up and out like trees, be Buddhist equivalents to the ubiquitous plum and pine trees that are so emblematic of East Asian palace and temple compounds? Could notions of landscape architecture—already implied by the vibrant red lotus pond dominating the mandala composition as a whole—also be included in this architectural template for religious teaching? Could the designer of the mandala have outfitted this palace with a soft, yielding perennial and a strong, fixed evergreen, substituting their familiar *yin/yang* associations for Buddhist compassion and adamantine wisdom instead? From a purely formalistic standpoint, the striking visual and conceptual analogies seem to suggest so.

Thus the Womb World's concentric halls around a central courtyard, its alternate *gong*-style organization, and even some of its ornamental and botanical elements can be seen as suggestive of Chinese architectural principles. Let us now turn to the Diamond World Mandala to discern what other possible Chinese standards for ideal urban spaces may have helped shape its distinctive layout.

### 3. *The Diamond World and Chinese Imperial City Planning*

The Diamond World Mandala is oriented to the west and is characterized by eight assembly halls surrounding the central perfected body assembly (figure 9). In this central hall, Dainichi holds court as an imperially clad world sovereign, for *mikkyō* texts such as the

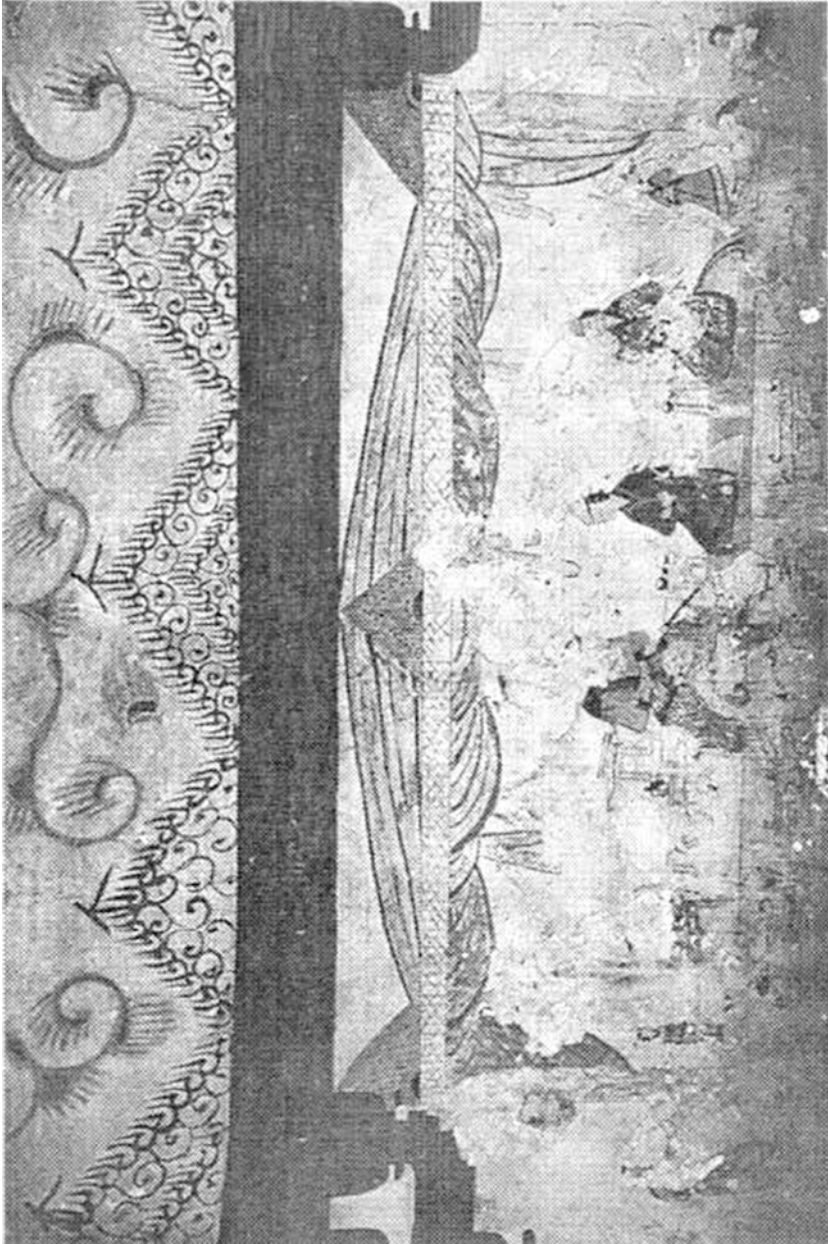


Figure 8. Tomb of the Wrestling Scene (Kakjochong), Jianxian, Jilin province, Koguryō, Korea, fourth–sixth centuries (Kim, *Chiban Koguryū kobun pyōkwa* 1993, fig. 2).

*Kongōchōkyō* and the *Ninnōkyō* 仁王經 make his imperial associations explicit.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, the mandala's three-by-three grid plan strongly resembles the ideal *wang cheng* or prototypical emperor's city (figure 10), which is also characterized by ritual compounds surrounding the imperial palace within the central ward.

The *wang cheng* plan first appears in the "Records of Trade" section ("Kaogonji" 老工記)<sup>9</sup> of the ancient *Rites of Zhou*. This text dates from the tumultuous Warring States period (fifth to third centuries B.C.E.) and nostalgically idealizes the perfect centralized urbanism of the ancient twelfth-century B.C.E. Zhou capital at Luoyi.<sup>10</sup> Supposedly laid out according to the proper *yin/yang* principles of *feng shui* geomancy, with building supervision by the exemplary Duke of Zhou, Luoyi reportedly measured

nine *li* on each side; each side [with] three gates. Within the capital are nine north-south and nine east-west streets. The north-south streets are nine carriage tracks in width. On the left is the Ancestral Temple, and to the right are the Altars of Soil and Grain. In the front is the Hall of Audience and behind, the markets. (Steinhardt 1990, 34)

This passage describes a perfectly square, walled city that is divided into a grid of nine wards by three gates on each side. The Diamond World Mandala as well is a perfect quadrilateral made up of nine squares, though only the top row of three mini-mandalas has gates at the cardinal directions. The *wang cheng*'s nine municipal wards is thus mirrored by the Diamond World's nine assembly halls, and its mention of three gates piercing each outer wall finds its echo in at least the upper registers of the Diamond World Mandala.

Furthermore, the numerological significance of nine, the highest *yang* number (nine *li* squared, nine axial streets, and nine carriage widths), resonates with numerous other representations of imperial geography in China, all of which strike uncannily visual analogies with the Diamond World Mandala. The *wang cheng*'s tic-tac-toe-like

<sup>8</sup> For more on the role of these scriptures in East Asian statecraft, see Yoritomi and Tachikawa, ed. 1999, 141–53; Orzech 1998; Osabe 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Hung Wu 1995, 354 also translates this as the "Regulations of Workmanship" section. In this instance, the reading of 老 as *kao* is accurate.

<sup>10</sup> Luoyi is by far the most talked about capital palace-city in the early Chinese histories, but to date no remains of any such site have been excavated. However, other excavated early capitals such as the Warring States-period Anyi and the Northern Wei-period Luoyang did situate their imperial palaces in the center according to the *wang cheng* centralized plan (Steinhardt 1990, 47, 83).

Four-Seals Assembly	One-Seal Assembly	Rishu Assembly
Offerings Assembly	Perfected- Body Assembly	Gōsanze Assembly
Subtle Assembly	Sammaya Assembly	Gōsanze Sammaya Assembly

Figure 9. Diamond World diagram (ten Grotenhuis 1999, 36).

framework recalls the Zhou dynasty's well-field system (*jingtian zhi* 井田制), which later informed the ward system of block measurements (*lifang* 理坊) at capital cities such as Tang dynasty Chang'an where Huiguo and Kūkai resided (Guo 2002, 55; Steinhardt 2002, 96–97, 132). It also can be associated with eighth-century Daoist rituals such as Taiyi cult initiations, which were structured along a nine-roomed configuration (Orzech 1996a). It further echoes the nine sections of the *luoshu* “magic square,” which was an ancient divinatory grid that mapped out the nine cardinal, ordinal, and central provinces of the idealized Middle Kingdom (ten Grotenhuis 1999, 53). And it also finds its echo in ritual structures such as the Ming Tang “Bright Hall” in Han dynasty Chang'an, whose nine province-rooms microcosmically represented the kingdom through which Wang Mang (r. 9–23 C.E.)

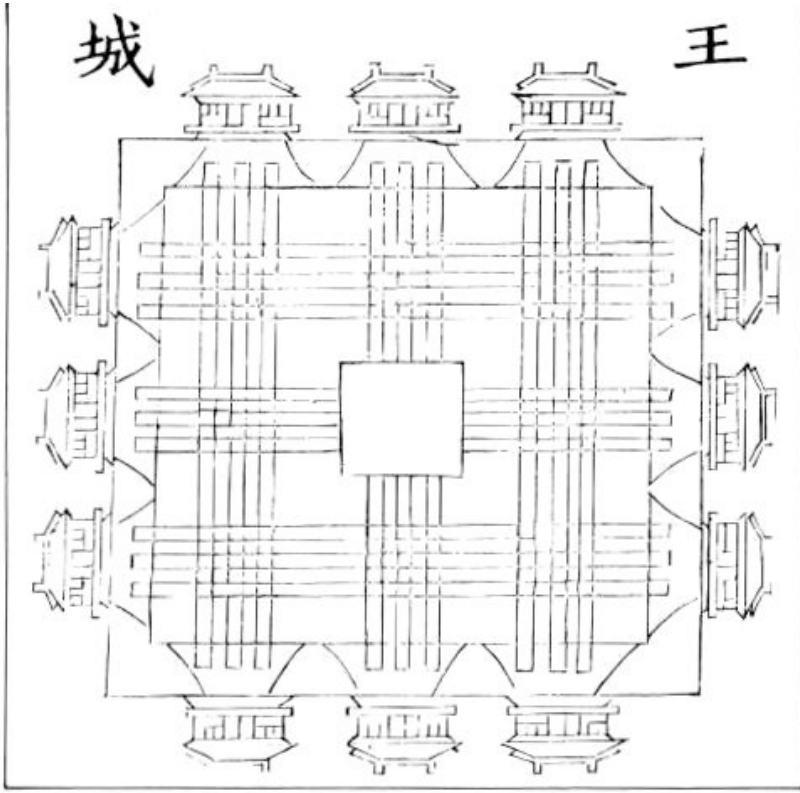


Figure 10. *Wang cheng* emperor's city (Steinhardt 1990, 34).

made his imperial progress.<sup>11</sup> Just as the emperor circumambulated this symbolic space and established himself at the center, so too did Gengō 元果 (914–995) explain the circular order of the Diamond World's nine wards. His tenth-century commentary, the *Kongōkai kuemikki* 金剛界九会密記, proposes that one contemplate the mandala in a counterclockwise spiral to end up at Dainichi's perfected body assembly in the center (Sharf 2001, 167, 179, 242 n. 22, 244 n. 35).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For more on this structure, see Hwang 1996; Wu 1995, 177–87; Forte 1988; Maspero 1951.

<sup>12</sup> Takai 1953, 276–79; Hatta 1981, 278–80; and Yamasaki 1988, 145–47 also note the alternative oral tradition of setting out from the center and circumambulating down and around the mandala in a clockwise spiral. As mentioned above (note 7),

Doctrinally speaking, the miniscule figure of Dainichi in the centrally located perfected body assembly is the source for all the other Diamond World figures throughout the mandala. However, visually speaking, the focus of the Diamond World as a whole is unquestionably drawn to the top center of the grid, where the single large figure of the imperially clad Dainichi dominates all nine mini-mandala wards. That is, the Diamond World's doctrinal source mandala may theoretically be located in the core ward like the *wang cheng's* palatial epicenter, but in terms of visual emphasis, the focus of both plans gravitates to the top center of the ideal three-by-three ward system.

This tension between the mandala's doctrinal and visual foci mirrors the tension between ideal and real Chinese urban planning, as the old centralized ideal of the *wang cheng* emperor's city rarely translated precisely according to plan. By the eighth century, the Tang capital of Chang'an as well as Japanese capitals that copied it, for example, Heijō (710–785), Nagaoka (785–795), and Heian (794–1192), no longer resembled the centralized ideal emperor's city. Rather, the perfect magic square had turned into a rough rectangle bisected by the north-south axis of Red Bird Road, with the matching halves of the city (左京; 右京) marked by Eastern and Western Markets (figure 11).

At Chang'an, the emperor's palace that was once ideally located in the interior was moved atop the newly created administrative imperial city staffed by Confucian bureaucrats. This eighth-century shift in the seat of imperial charisma to the top center may help to explain why the Diamond World Mandala's designer chose to seat the imperially clad figure of Dainichi Buddha in the top center sector as well. To one attuned to the spatial logic of Chinese imperial city planning (including Kūkai's pupils in Heian), the message here is familiar and immediate: just as the emperor rules from atop his palace-city, so too does Dainichi sit regally at the imperial head of his sacralized mandala-palace system.

Let us now turn to a consideration of these two mandala-palace cities as a pair. When displayed together, as they were in Japan, the two mandalas may be seen to evoke certain East Asian political structures.

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Sharf 2001, 167–68, has problematized visualizing either direction in contemporary ritual practice, but this does not affect the architectural symbolism of the image or its interactive functionality, at least in the case of tenth-century Japanese initiates.

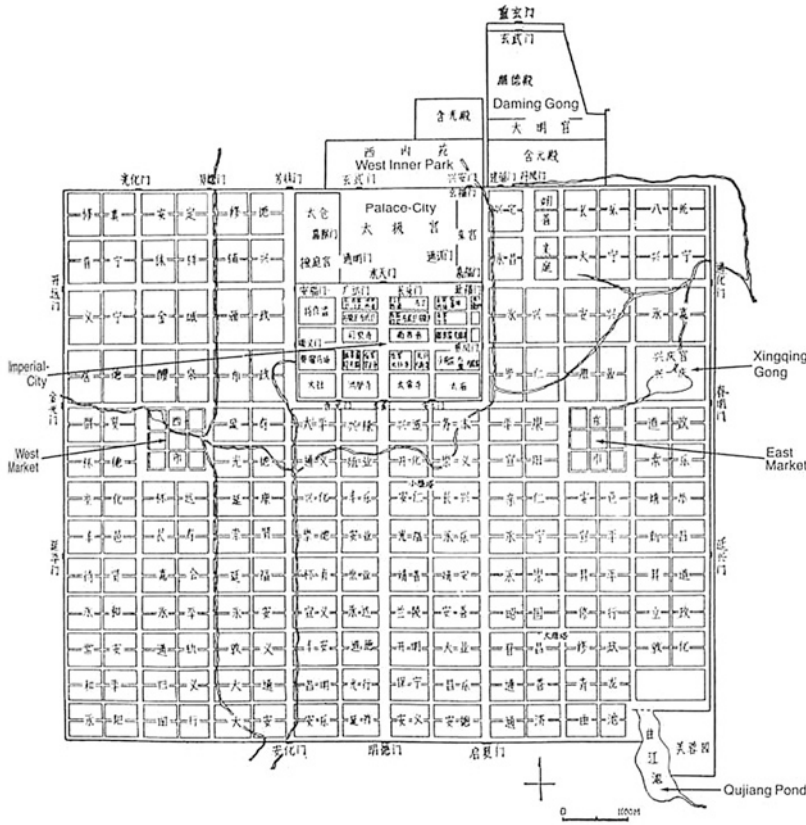


Figure 11. Tang dynasty Chang'an (Steinhardt 1990, 97).

#### 4. The Two World Mandalas and East Asian Political Structures

As we have seen, the Womb and Diamond World Mandalas can be seen individually as blueprints for architectures of enlightenment that show striking similarities to real and ideal plans for Chinese domestic and palace-city spaces. However, at least according to Kūkai's systematic doctrinal and visual synthesis, these twin mandalas should not be considered separately but rather as a pair.

Kūkai claims that Huiguo initiated him into both mandalas, but currently there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that any of the Tang masters adopted the dyadic pairing of the mandalas that became so typical of Kūkai's *mikkyō* in Japan. Not even the crypt at Famensi is conclusive, as it exhibits only slight (and therefore intriguing) indications of both proto-Womb and Diamond World imagery together.



It appears, therefore, that Kūkai may have been the first to see what Yixing and Huiguo (who studied both strains) had right under their noses. That is, he is reputed to be the first *mikkyō* master to synthesize and organize the Womb and Diamond Worlds into a single coordinated religio-aesthetic system.

In Japan (though not in China), Shingon doctrine continually stresses that the Womb World's principle of potential enlightenment and the Diamond World's wisdom of acquired, perfected enlightenment are nondual and complementary. The epithet *richi funi* 理智不二 ("principle and wisdom are nondual") expresses this sentiment well, as does the *Dainichikyō-shō* 大日經疏. This eighth-century commentary on the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* by Yixing states that "All is of one essence because it is the essence of the Buddha's enlightenment" (cited in Yamasaki 1988, 125). This unity of buddhahood exists, Yamasaki explains, "because the truth of the form and mind of all living beings is, from the beginning, in equality with the wisdom body of Dainichi nyorai" (125). According to the common Japanese Shingon understanding, the mirror-image iconographic coding of central buddhas in the Womb and Diamond World Mandalas symbolizes the form and mind of Dainichi, respectively, and thereby mutually reinforces Kūkai's message of nonduality.

Thus in Japan, the mandalas represent two nondual sides of Dainichi's same coin and symbolically encode his interpenetrating form and mind in the realms of phenomena and noumena. In this regard they can also be seen as reflecting familiar bicameral tropes for government palaces and ministries that ultimately derived from the continent.

In China, the structure of the Chinese palace-city was designed along matching institutions. As early as the Western Han dynasty, the emperor alternated between the Changle Gong Palace 長樂宮 and the larger Weiyang Gong Palace 未央宮 in fulfilling his ritual and political functions (figure 12).<sup>13</sup>

In Chang'an during the Tang dynasty as well (figure 11), the West Palace and the Daming Palace to the northeast functioned simultaneously to run the affairs of state. Kūkai would have seen these two structures firsthand during his studies in the Chinese capital from 804–806, though he would already have been familiar with such city

<sup>13</sup> It should be noted, however, that the side-by-side double-palace model often shifted to a north-south stacked arrangement during different periods in Chinese architectural history.

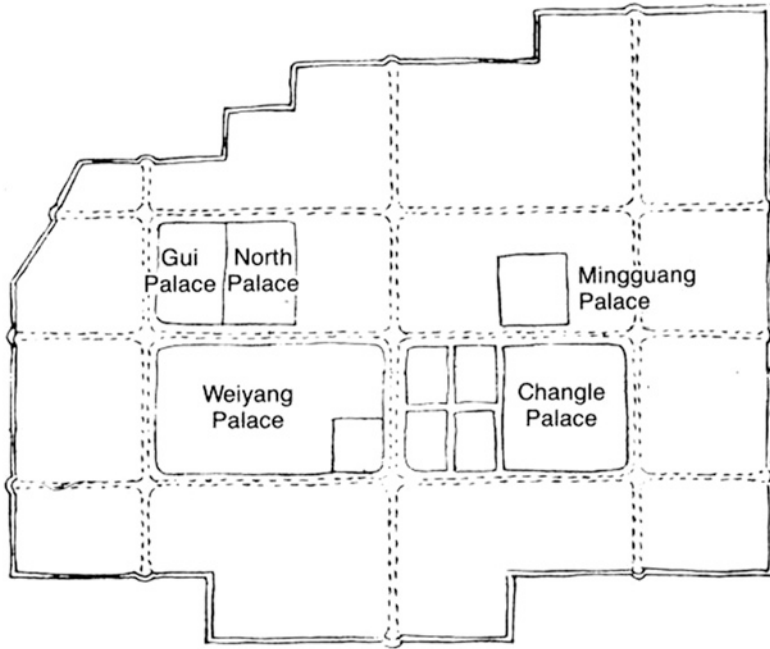


Figure 12. Western Han capital at Chang'an, ca. 206 B.C.E.–9 C.E. (Steinhardt 1990, 64).

standards back home in Japan. Excavations of Japanese capitals at Heijō, Nagaoka, and Heian reveal double-palace layouts that display even more bilateral symmetry than their Chinese inspirations. When considered in this light, it is not unlikely that Japanese *mikkyō* adepts viewing the Two World Mandalas images in Japan would also readily resonate with these familiar double-palace models for ideal (i.e., imperial/enlightened) environments.

This twin trope for bilateral organization had deeper spatial and conceptual associations as well. The twin political institutions of the Ministers of the Right and Left (Sadaijin 右大臣 and Udaijin 左大臣), as well as the Controllers of the Right and Left (Sadaiben 右大弁 and Udaiben 左大弁), embodied the emperor's intent and agency in the Council of State (Daijōkan 太政官) (figure 13).

This fundamentally bicameral order structured political life and government administration in Japan for centuries, and a similar bipartisan construct seems to be at work in the paired display of the two balanced *mikkyō* images in Japan.

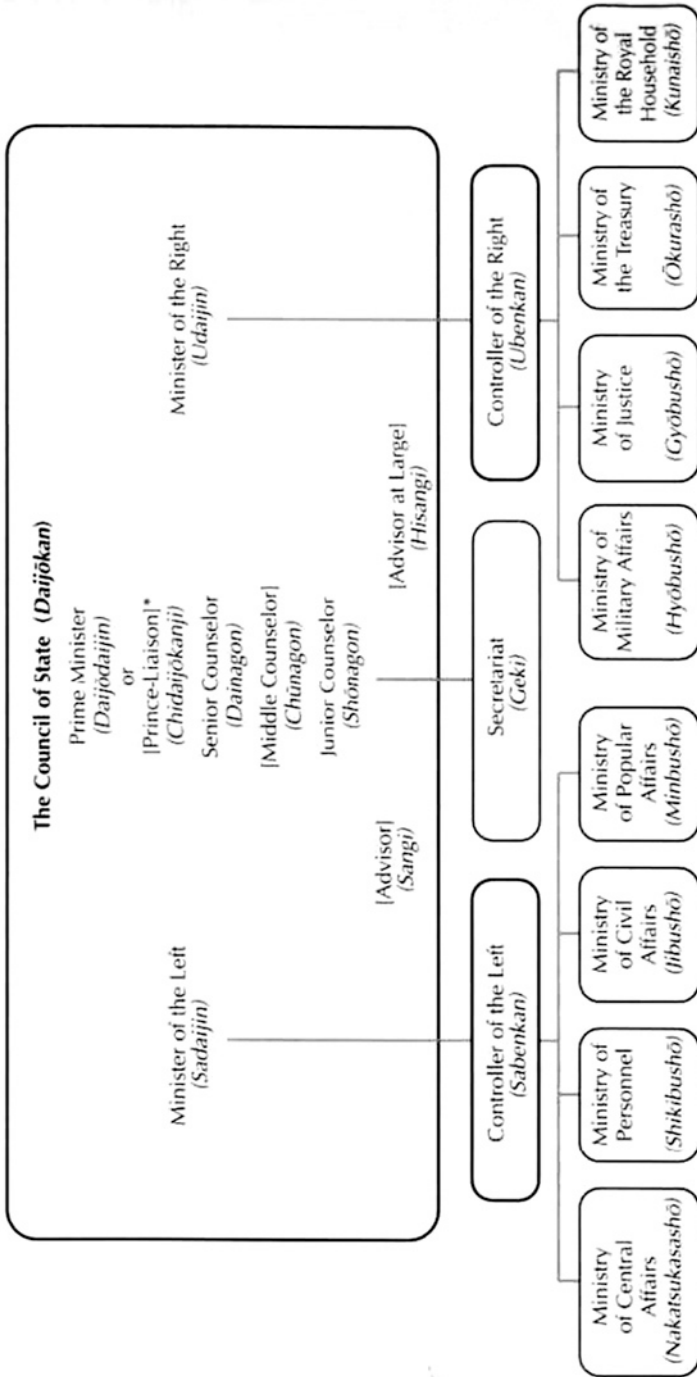


Figure 13. Sino-Japanese bicameral political structure (Piggot 1997, 178).

It is interesting to note, however, that the emperor's central line of command through the office of prime minister seems to have been left out of Shingon *mikkyō* (Tōmitsu 東密), which only sanctions twin mandala illustrations of its two main sūtras. By contrast, Tendai *mikkyō* (Taimistu 台密)<sup>14</sup> recognizes and integrates a third mediating sūtra, the *Soshitsujikyō* 蘇悉地經, which is understood to unify the teachings of the *Dainichikyō* and the *Kongōchōkyō*. A full study of this third middle term is too large to take on here, however. Given the bilateral division of Sino-Japanese palace cities and the binary conceptual trope they exemplified, it is interesting to observe a similar double palace spatial logic in the mandalas' vision of a perfectly harmonized sacred space.

### 5. Conclusion

The symbiotic relationship between religious and political symbolism demonstrated here helps us to see how these templates for esoteric empowerment may have been modeled on ideal urban environments. By focusing on the evocation of Chinese domestic space, palace design, imperial city planning, and political structures in this famous pair of ninth-century mandalas, we have noted uncanny similarities that would have resonated with ninth-century *mikkyō* adepts in East Asia.

To be sure, the majority of these comparisons are visually and not textually based, but this approach was required precisely because the *mikkyō* texts remain silent regarding the overall layout and format of two of *mikkyō*'s most famous images. In the Womb World Mandala palace we observed concentric squares and *I*-shaped *gong*-plans invoked in its courtyard layout. We also suggested two architectural readings for the top and bottom-most visual foci of the mandala. The flaming triangle at the top center may not only symbolize the feminine principle of birthing buddhahood in the Womb World of phenomena, it may equally represent the shape of a popular roof finial that is preserved in Silk Road cave temple architecture. Likewise it was suggested that the two large white/red and dark-green figures in the bottom of the Womb World Mandala may evoke the common presence of plum and pine trees so typical of Chinese landscape architecture.

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<sup>14</sup> "Tōmitsu" is a contraction of "Tōji *mikkyō*"; "Taimitsu" is a contraction of "Tendai *mikkyō*."

In the Diamond World Mandala palace, we observed striking visual analogies to the ideal *wang cheng* emperor's city plan. The influence of secular geography on the mandala's sacred geometry seems most striking here: the municipal grid so integral to the ward and well-land systems seems to have been invoked in the Diamond World's three-by-three checkerboard format. However, although the mandala does create an auspicious space of nine courts, and although Dainichi's theoretical center is in the middle square, we observed that the visual focus gravitates up to the single imperially clad figure of Dainichi holding court in the top center mandala. Likewise, we observed a parallel shift in the location of Chinese palace-cities by the Tang dynasty—precisely when the mandala's designer would have been formulating this ideal mental map.

Finally, we considered the Two World Mandalas as a pair. Taken together, they can be seen as reflecting the double-palace system established during the Han dynasty and extended into the eighth century at Chang'an and its copycat capitals in Japan at Heijō, Nagaoka, and Heian. The symmetrical emplacement of these two painted images mirrors the metropolitan and political orders of the day. The bilateral bureaucratic structure of the state, and the bipartisan balance necessary for its proper functioning, provide added resonance to the numerous imperial metaphors in the source scriptures for the two mandalas.

Finally, this investigation provides an interesting reversal of the symbiotic equation between church and state. One often reads about political institutions invoking religion for self-legitimization, but here a religious institution seems to have invoked the physical and political structures of its day to model the realm of self-perfection, or enlightenment. This evocation of the city in the mandalas demonstrates the symbiotic relationship that exists between political and religious symbolism, between secular and sacred architecture, and between imperial and Buddhist topologies. This symbiosis, itself reminiscent of the double-palace system, compels art historians, Buddhologists, political scientists, and urban studies scholars to accommodate and integrate one another's constructs into their own architectures of understanding. It also opens up the field to future scholarship in at least two interrelated areas.

First, the uniquely Japanese pairing of the mandalas (a configuration that apparently did not exist in China at the time) raises interesting questions about the nature of Chinese-Japanese Dharma transmis-

sions. To what extent did Kūkai invent Japanese Shingon, and to what extent did later Japanese visitors to the Tang keep quiet about their possibly heterodox understanding while acquiring new materials? Or did they perhaps teach Kūkai's synthesis to their Chinese hosts, but we have not yet discovered evidence of this? Investigating such a possible feedback loop of influence would require the concerted efforts and combined expertise of scholars in both Chinese and Japanese esoteric texts and images.

Second, Chinese and Japanese masters claim that their esoteric methods protect the state and liken their efficacy to city walls. This metaphorical link seems to be well supported by the visual materials, and future research will hopefully uncover more explicit textual links between the mandala and the metropolis. Until that time, and until we learn precisely by whom and how the mandalas were first designed, the art historical methods of visual analogy and chronological development of forms (even those as monumental as imperial city plans) seem to be our best tools for discerning the latent organizing principles behind these most intriguing images.

## 64. TAIMITSU: THE ESOTERIC BUDDHISM OF THE TENDAI SCHOOL

Lucia Dolce

### *Institutional Questions*

#### Terminological Issues: Taimitsu and Tōmitsu

Taimitsu 台密, i.e., the esoteric Buddhism of the Tendai 天台 lineages, is one of the two major streams of esoteric Buddhism developed in Japan, the other being the better-known Shingon school. The term “Taimitsu” and its matching term “Tōmitsu” (東密, literally, “the esoteric Buddhism of the Tōji 東寺 lineages”) are documented only in the fourteenth-century *Genkō shakusho*, composed in 1322 by the Tōfukuji 東福寺 monk Kokan Shiren 虎関師鍊 (1278–1346).<sup>1</sup> In the premodern period, the term “Shingon,” 眞言 which today identifies the school that claims Kūkai 空海 as its founder, was used more generally to indicate esoteric Buddhism in its whole, often interchangeably with the term *mikkyō* 密教. Historical sources often refer to Taimitsu as “the *shingon* (or *mikkyō*) of the Tendai lineages.”

Neither term corresponds to homogeneous traditions. Kokan explained that these two major streams consisted of four divisions: the lineages of Ennin 圓仁 and Enchin 圓珍 in Taimitsu, and the Ono 小野 and Hirosawa 広沢 lineages in Tōmitsu. Indeed, at the culmination of the development of tantric Buddhism in Japan (eleventh to fourteenth centuries), Taimitsu identified two competing traditions, the so-called Sanmon 山門 (Mountain branch) and Jimon 寺門 (Temple branch), each of which claimed a different founder and set of distinctive rituals that legitimized their reciprocal existence.

#### Institutional Divisions: Sanmon and Jimon

The depiction of Taimitsu as the tantric practices of the school founded by Saichō 最澄 (767–822) headquartered at Enryakuji

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<sup>1</sup> Kokushi henshūkai 1929–1966, 31: 409. Kokan discusses both streams of esoteric Buddhism under the entry “*mikkyō*.” Before Kokan, Annen used the term “*shingon*” in the same way.

延曆寺 on Mt. Hiei 比叡山, is ambiguous in historical terms, affected as it is by the focus on origins and reflecting the contemporary situation of a centralized Tendai school. The territory of Mt. Hiei itself was not historically a homogeneous entity. It was differentiated in areas of influence, which became known as the “three pagodas and sixteen valleys” by the late-Heian period (Kageyama 1978; Take 1993, 2008b). The area where the Konpon Chūdō 根本中堂 built by Saichō was located, called the Eastern Pagoda (Tōtō 東塔), was developed by Ennin (794–864). He also established buildings in the Yokawa 横川 area, which were to become the center of his own lineage (see Groner 2002, 305–309). A third area of Mt. Hiei, known as the Western Pagoda (Saitō 西塔), was developed by Enchin (814–891) during his term as head (*zasu* 座主) of the Tendai school. Enchin had also restored a temple on the shore of Lake Biwa, southeast of Mt. Hiei, called Miidera 三井寺 or Onjōji 園城寺. This was a separate cloister (*betsuin* 別院) of Enryakuji under his administration.<sup>2</sup>

Long-term succession disputes over the appointment of the Tendai *zasu* led to a split between Ennin and Enchin’s lines; the schism became definitive in the tenth century after Ryōgen 良源 restored the Tendai community and established the supremacy of Ennin’s lineage on Mt. Hiei (McMullin 1984). When the schism exploded, Enchin’s disciples fled to Miidera. This was to become the institutional center of Enchin’s lineage, known as the Jimon. The Sanmon branch that represented Ennin’s lineage (or, according to some narratives, Saichō-Ennin’s lineage), kept its headquarters on Mt. Hiei. From this point onward, the two institutional centers developed independently.

In spite of the different size of the two institutions, historically the Onjōji lineage played a distinctive role within Japanese tantrism. Indeed, in medieval documents Japanese tantrism is usually described as constituted by the Tōji, Sanmon, and Jimon lines. Often indicated as “too close to Tōji lineages,” the Jimon line constructed a specific ritual system in competition with Sanmon and was crucial in the institutionalization of another important tradition of Japanese religious practice, Shugendō 修驗道 (see Sekimori, “Shugendō and Its Relationship with the Japanese Esoteric Sects” and Ambros, “Tōzanha Shugendō

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<sup>2</sup> Another area with historical repercussions for the definition of Taimitsu was the base of Mt. Hiei, in Sakamoto, where the Hiei shrine complex developed. As the abode of the tutelary *kami* of the mountain, this was the core of the esoteric interpretation of the *kami* developed by Taimitsu (Sannō Shintō 山王神道).



in the Early Modern Period” in this volume). The cult of Kumano 熊野 and Yoshino 吉野, in particular, was developed by Onjōji through Shōgoin, an affiliated imperial temple in Kyōto. The political connections of Onjōji, too, extended independently from those of Mt. Hiei. Sanmon and Jimon gained the support of different political sponsors, according to historical periods. The Kamakura shogunate, for example, more often privileged Jimon over Sanmon clerics, probably because of the Sanmon connections to the court. Jimon liturgists alternated with liturgists of the Tōji lineage in the provision of rituals to the shogun (Sasaki 1997). However, there also are examples of prominent Sanmon monks at the service of the bakufu, such as Chūkai 忠快 (1159?–1227), who was the esoteric liturgist of the third shogun Sanetomo (Hayami 2006a).

### *The “Thirteen Taimitsu Lineages”*

Onjōji, like Tōji, did not establish sub-branches. From the mid-Heian period, however, three imperial temples (*monzeki* 門跡) were affiliated with it and considered part of the Jimon stream: the previously mentioned Shōgoin, Enmanin 圓滿院, and Jissōin 実相院 (*Shidō juhō nikki*, T. 2413.77:137c;<sup>3</sup> Ōkubo 2005). The history of Taimitsu multiple lineages thus concerns divisions only of the Sanmon branch. Traditional scholarship speaks of “thirteen lineages,” but it is not clear when these began being identified as such, nor is their interrelation unequivocal. Miidera, for instance, is included as one of the thirteen lineages, but other important lineages, such as Yōsai’s 柴西 Yōjō-ryū 葉上流, or the Shosha-ryū 書写流 founded by Shōkū 性空, which also transmitted the esoteric interpretations of the Yōjō line, are not counted among them.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Shidō juhō nikki* T. 2413 was compiled in 1391 by Gengō 源豪 and contains the transmission of his master Gongō 嚴豪.

<sup>4</sup> A useful chart is included in Fukuda 1995: 487. For more detailed charts of each lineage see *MDJ* (1968–1970) 6: 30–32. The thirteen lineages are: Sanke 山家 (or Konpon daishi ryū 根本大師流), Kawa 川 (otherwise given as Jie daishi ryū 慈惠大師流), Mii 三井 (or Chishō Daishi ryū 智証大師流), Inson 院尊, Renge 蓮華, Sanmai 三昧, Butchō 佛頂, Chisenin 智泉院, Hōman 法曼, Anō 穴太, Nashimoto 梨本, Kudoku 功德 and Ajioka 味岡. Fukuda claims that the first mention of thirteen lineages is in ritual material attributed to Gongō, but other records of Gongō’s transmission, such as the *Shidō juhō nikki* mentioned above, give only nine lineages—Renge, Kudoku and Ajioka, as well as a distinct lineage named after Saichō, are omitted Ōkubo 2005. The first historical source where the Taimitsu lineages are unequivocally mentioned as thirteen is the sixteenth-century anthology *Ōmushō* 鸚鵡抄 compiled by Jōchin

Textual sources identify two major divisions since the mid-Heian period: Kawa-ryū 川流 (abbreviation of Yokawa-ryū), founded by Kakuchō 覺超 (960–1034), disciple of Ryōgen; and Tani-ryū 谷流 (abbreviation of Minamidani-ryū 南谷流), founded by Kōgei 皇慶 (977–1049, a.k.a. Ikegami Ajari). The two branches take their names from the areas of Mt. Hiei where their founders were originally located, Yokawa and Minamidani, both in the precincts of the Eastern Pagoda. This division in two major streams follows the division of Tōmitsu in Ono and Hirosawa, but it is a later designation and does not reflect the actual development of the two branches.

Kakuchō was a remarkable scholar and his works remained influential in later Taimitsu and Tōmitsu scholarship,<sup>5</sup> but his lineage was short-lived. It flourished at the time of its founder, but later died out. The Tani branch, on the contrary, prospered through the centuries, splitting into discrete dharma lines that would comprise nearly all the so-called thirteen lineages. The main branch was carried on by Kōgei's main disciple, Chōen 長宴 (or Jōen,<sup>6</sup> 1016–1081), known also as Ōhara Ajari 大原阿闍梨, who was considered the founder of the Sanmai lineage. The Sanmai-ryū was originally called Ōhara-ryū 大原流, but became better known as Sanmai, after the title of Chōen's disciples, Ryōyū 良祐, who was known as Sanmai Ajari.

The *monzeki* lineages were significant centers of transmission of esoteric knowledge and techniques. They were based at the cloisters of princely abbots (*hoshinnō* 法親王), which from the late-Heian period

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定珍 (1534–1603). This work also indicates four Sanmon representative lineages: Anō, Butchō, Renge and Sanmai. On the thirteen lineages see Inada 1932, 1933 and Ōkubo 2008. Today advanced initiations on Mt Hiei take place according to four ritual traditions: Sanmai, Hōman, Anō and Seizan 西山. (Seizan, initiated by Gongō, was not counted as one of the thirteen lineage, probably because Gongō considered himself as belonging to the Anō lineage.)

<sup>5</sup> Among Kakuchō's extensive writings, the *Taizō sanmitsushō* 胎藏三密抄 in five volumes (T. 2398), the *Kongō sanmitsushō* 金剛三密抄 in five volumes (T. 2400), the *Tōmandara shō* 東曼荼羅抄 in three volumes (T. 2401), the *Sai mandarashō* 西曼荼羅抄 in one volume (T. 2402), the *Gosōjōshin shiki* 五相成身私記 in one volume (T. 2403), and the *Taizōkai shōki* 胎藏界生起 in one volume (T. 2404) are worth mentioning. However, several works of the *hongaku* type produced by later Tendai circles were also attributed to Kakuchō (cf. Stone 1999a). In doctrinal terms, one of Kakuchō's characteristics was his interpretation of the "teacher of esoteric Buddhism" found particularly in *Tō mandara shō bekkān* (T. 2997).

<sup>6</sup> Tendai sources, such as Kiuchi 1990, give the pronunciation Jōen, while standard dictionaries, such as *Mikkyō daijiten*, and *Nihon bukkyō jinmei jiten* have Chōen. Here I follow the most common pronunciation.

were moved from Mt. Hiei to areas close to the capital. Shōren-in 青連院 was noteworthy for its political and religious influence throughout the premodern era. Jien 慈圓, the younger brother of Regent Kujō Kanezane, was its third abbot (Inaba 2004). Historically, the Shōren-in continued the Sanmai branch of Taimitsu. Also noteworthy is the Sanzen-in 三千院, later located in Ōhara, which represented the Nashimoto branch. Finally the Tendai center in the Kantō area, Rinnōji, was a prestigious *monzeki* of the Edo period. It was developed by Tenkai 天海 (1536?–1643) and known as Nikkō Monzeki 日光門跡 (or Miyasama Goryū 宮様御流), and it inherited the tradition of the Hōman-ryū lineage.

### *State of the Field*

The Place of Taimitsu in the History of East Asian Tantrism:  
A Forgotten Tradition?

Although Taimitsu scholar-monks influenced Shingon thought and played a significant role in the development of tantric Buddhism in Japan, they have received only passing mention in the narratives of tantrism, and their esoteric tradition also remains largely unknown to specialists of Japanese Buddhism. Yet Ennin and Annen 安然 wrote the first extensive commentaries on tantric canonical sources, such as the *Jin'gangding jing*, the *Putixin lun*, and the *Yuqi jing*, all of which would be used by the competing lineages. Enchin initiated the cult of Fudō Myōō 不動明王 (Acala[-natha] Vidyārāja), still considered today perhaps the most important tantric deity, and Annen wrote the first substantial work in the study of Siddham.

The secondary place given to Taimitsu is even more surprising considering the political role that esoteric rituals played in the growth of the Tendai school. Curiously, Taimitsu scholiasts are better known for other aspects of their activities. Ennin is remembered for his journey to China, of which his record serves as a major historical document of the Chinese contemporary political and religious situation. Of the medieval scholiasts, Jien, the aristocratic cleric who was four times Tendai *zasu*, is known for his historical chronicle the *Gukanshō*. As well, he was a prominent ritualist, in charge of the nightly rites for the protection of the emperor (*gojisō* 護持僧), and the compiler of new interpretations of Taimitsu liturgies. Another remarkable case is that of Yōsai, initiator of a Taimitsu lineage and a fine interpreter of the combinatory system that Taimitsu developed, who is instead known as the founder of Japanese Zen. (See Mano, “Yōsai”, in this volume.)

The scant scholarly attention paid so far to Taimitsu in both Japanese and Western scholarship seems to me due to the specific sectarian context in which the history of Japanese tantrism has been narrated.<sup>7</sup> Two factors in particular have affected the study of Taimitsu. The first has to do with the emphasis placed on the founder of a school. Saichō, the founder of Tendai, was instrumental in the establishment of esoteric Buddhism in Japan, but his role as a tantric thinker and the extent of his ritual knowledge was negligible when compared to that of his “rival” Kūkai. Nor did he become the object of a devotional cult at as popular a level as Kūkai did.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the three Heian-period scholiasts who shaped Taimitsu each developed a different line of esoteric thought, and thus none of them alone can be said to represent the entirety of Taimitsu. Similarly, a hierarchical institutional approach has hindered the importance of figures such as Annen, arguably the most important esoteric thinker of the Heian period, who, however, never rose to the position of *zasu*.

The second factor is related to the fact that, contrary to Shingon, Taimitsu developed in an institutional context that was also interested in the exoteric doctrinal and liturgical practices inherited from Chinese Tiantai. The intellectual discourse of Tendai scholiasts in the Tokugawa period privileged the latter to the disadvantage of esoteric Buddhism, even though esoteric practice continued to account for most of the activity of Tendai temples. This imbalance was exasperated by the modern construction of Buddhism, with its emphasis on the philosophical rather than ritual aspects of Buddhism. Much twentieth-century scholarship viewed the distinctive strength of Tendai as based in Chinese Tiantai philosophy and thus devoted study to that tradition, rather than esoteric thought.

### The Taimitsu Corpus

The peculiar position held by Taimitsu within its own school is reflected by the unsystematic way the Taimitsu literary corpus has been made

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<sup>7</sup> A plea for the recognition of Taimitsu's place in Japanese Buddhist history vis-à-vis Shingon was first made by Stanley Weinstein in a review article published in the 1970s (Weinstein 1974), but it has remained largely unresolved. Although he focused his argument on Saichō, Weinstein alerted readers to the partisan interpretations of Kūkai's contribution and the neglect of Taimitsu. On the relation between Kūkai and Saichō, see Groner 1984a, 1984b; Abé 1995.

<sup>8</sup> Indeed, only Ennin and Ryōgen among Tendai clerics seem to have acquired some popularity, though it seems to have been circumscribed by geographical areas. The lore of Ennin's extraordinary deeds, for instance, circulated in northern Japan.

available in print. Contrary to Shingon's major thinkers, of whose work dedicated collections have been compiled and critical editions published, Taimitsu writings are scattered across a variety of Buddhist collections. The *Taishō* canon devotes two volumes to Taimitsu (vols. 75–76), which mainly consist of doctrinal works by Annen and medieval ritual anthologies, and late, mainly ritual, exegeses, in part of vol. 77. But major works by Ennin and Enchin are included in other volumes according to the division of the canon into genres: those dedicated to commentarial literature in Japanese (*zoku kyōsho* 続經疏), in particular vols. 58 and 61 (esoteric commentaries), since much of their doctrinal interpretations took the form of sūtra commentaries; and the volume dedicated to catalogues of the inventories of esoteric material introduced from China (vol. 55). Furthermore, the most important Taimitsu ritual anthology is included in the iconographical section of the canon (*TZ*, vols. 8 and 9).

The other major Japanese canonical collection, the *Nihon daizōkyō* (Suzuki Gakujutsu Zaidan, 1973–1978) devotes three full and one partial volume to Taimitsu (vols. 43–45, and part of vol. 42), which include works not available in the *Taishō* canon. Most of Enchin's works (including several medieval-period *hongaku* texts attributed to him) have been collected in four volumes of the *Dai nihon bukkyō zensho* (vols. 25–28, *Chishō daishi zenshū*). A more recent effort to make Taimitsu works accessible to the scholarly community are the four volumes of the *Zoku Tendai zensho* devoted to esoteric Buddhism. These contain several medieval works, including a number of Jien's writings from the Kissui Archives 吉水藏 of Shōrein (vols. 2 and 3) and sixteenth-century ritual encyclopedias (vol. 4), in addition to the first critical edition of the version of the *Commentary to the Dari jing* known as the *Yishi* 大日經義釈 (vol. 1).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The *Commentary to the Dari jing* was of great significance to Taimitsu thinkers because it combined esoteric notions with Tiantai thoughts and thus represented an illustrious precedent of Taimitsu efforts (Asai 1986, 1987; Ōkubo 1996; Dolce 2006a, 147–48). Two versions of this commentary existed, both exegeses of the first six fascicles of the sūtra: the *Darijing shu*, in twenty fascicles, compiled between 725 and 727 by Yixing 一行 (683–727), which recording his master Śubhākarasimha's interpretation; and the *Darijing yishi*, in fourteen fascicles, rearranged after Yixing's death by two fellow disciples, Zhiyan 智儼 and Wengu 溫古. The exegesis of the sixth chapter is the section in which the two versions of the commentary differ most. Sectarian scholarship has claimed that Taimitsu scholiasts used the *Yishi* rather than the *Shu*. Source evidence, however, demonstrates that they employed both versions of the *Commentary*.

Most of the works mentioned above are now also available in electronic format thanks to the work of the Tendai Research Foundation at Eizan Gakuin.<sup>10</sup> Of note also are the seven volumes of the *Onjōji monjo* (Onjōji 園城寺, 1998–2004), a recent collection of primarily historical material related to the Jimon lineages.

The following works traditionally have been considered to represent the Taimitsu canon: Ennin's *Commentary to Jinggangding jing* 金剛頂大教王經疏 (T. 2223) and *Commentary to Suxidi jing* 蘇悉地羯羅經略疏 (T. 2227); Enchin's *Daibirushanakyō shiki* 大毘盧遮那經指歸 (T. 2212a); Annen's *Kyōjiki* (T. 2396, *Shingonshūkyōjiki* 真言宗教時義) and *Bodaishingishō* (T. 2397, *Taizōkongō bodaishingi ryaku mondōshō* 胎藏金剛菩提心義略問答抄); the oral transmissions on the three major sūtras attributed to Ennin, the *Taizōkai kyōshinki* 胎藏界虛心記 (T. 2385), the *Kongōkai jōchiki* 金剛界淨地記 (T. 2386), and the *Soshitsuji myōshindai* 妙心大 (T. 2387); the ritual exegeses attributed to Annen, the *Taizōkai taijuki* (T. 2390, the *Taizōkai daihō taijuki* 胎藏界大法對受記), the *Kongōkai taijuki* (T. 2391, the *Kongōkai daihō taijuki* 金剛界大法對受記), and the *Soshitsuji taijuki* 蘇悉地對受記 (T. 2392); Annen's catalogue of esoteric material, the *Hakke hiroku* 八家秘錄; and the medieval ritual collections *Shijūjōketsu* and *Asabashō* (Kiuchi 1990, 381–408).

None of these works has, however, been comprehensively studied, translated, or analyzed in their intertextual relations. Annen, the great systematizer of Japanese esoteric Buddhism, is the only Taimitsu scholar to have received a dedicated study (Sueki 1995), which, however, does not concentrate on esoteric themes.

Modern studies of Tendai doctrine include an outline of its tantric tradition. Among these, Shimaji Daitō (1875–1927) presented historical profiles of the three major Taimitsu thinkers (Shimaji 1976, 281–345), while Fukuda Gyōei (1867–1954) covered hermeneutical problems, taking Annen's system as a starting point, as well as the major textual sources of Taimitsu (Fukuda 1995, 285–502). Studies dedicated solely to Taimitsu have been few. Shimizutani Kyōjun (1892–1979) was the first to attempt one, bringing together research that the abbot of Sensōji had carried out throughout the mid-twentieth century (Shimizutani 1972).

<sup>10</sup> A list of writings in electronic form is available at <http://www.biwa.ne.jp/~namu007/index.htm>.

More recent scholarship has produced only a handful of key works. Asai Endō's remarkable study of early Japanese Tendai provides a systematic chronological analysis of the writings and perspectives of Taimitsu scholiasts up to Annen, with an in-depth treatment of topics related to *Lotus Sūtra* thought (Asai 1973). Misaki Ryōshū investigates different themes in Taimitsu textual, doctrinal, and ritual practices, and to date has produced the most extensive work on distinctive Taimitsu issues, such as the use of the *Suxidi jing* and the development of a *Buddhoṣṇīṣa* cult (1988, 1994b). Misaki's research has been continued by his student at Waseda University, Ōkubo Ryōshun, currently the only Japanese scholar in an academic institution focusing on Taimitsu. Ōkubo has concentrated on early Taimitsu material, shedding light on a range of important doctrinal points (Ōkubo 2004), while Mizukami Fumiyoshi has tackled medieval textual material (Mizukami 2008c). Of some use also is Kiuchi (1990), which presents a basic outline of the tradition.<sup>11</sup>

### *Doctrinal Questions*

#### Saichō and the Beginnings of Taimitsu

Saichō regarded esoteric Buddhism as equal to the *Lotus*-based Buddhist system that had been developed in China by Tiantai, as both embodied the soteriological idea of “one vehicle” (*ichijō* 一乘). Accordingly, he established it as one of the two courses (*shanagō* 遮那業) for carrying out Tendai education, together with Chinese Tiantai (*shikangō* 止觀業) (Groner 1984b, 70–71). Mastery of both courses of study were to become necessary to access the highest ranks of the monastic community, as later sources prove (cf. *Tendai zasuki*, ZGR (1923–1928) 4:572). Saichō also performed the first *abhiṣeka* conferred to an emperor in Japan (Groner 1984b, 66–68), thus introducing the practice of employing tantric rituals for the well being of the sovereign.

Yet Saichō did not leave any esoteric works, and hardly any of his writings elaborate on either tantric doctrines or rituals. While he sug-

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<sup>11</sup> Until very recently, there is no single study devoted to Taimitsu in Western languages. Groner (1984a, 1984b, 2002) has discussed several aspects of Taimitsu history and doctrine in his studies of Saichō, Annen, and Ryōgen; Michael Saso (1990) has introduced the basic contemporary Taimitsu rituals; and this author (2002, 2006a) has tackled questions related to the esoteric interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra* and to medieval rituals. Jinhua Chen (2009) is an extended critical analysis of texts that were important in the establishment of Taimitsu as a discrete tradition.

gested the need to evaluate Tiantai thought and esoteric Buddhism equally, he did not devise a strategy to implement this. For example, his original interpretation of the realization of buddhahood with this very body (*sokushin jōbutsu* 息身成仏) was conceived and presented solely within the framework of Tiantai doctrine (Groner 1984a). It is difficult to assess what esoteric expertise Saichō transmitted to his disciples, considering that he brought back from China very little esoteric material. Saichō spent less than nine months in China, studying mainly in the provinces. He received esoteric initiations at the end of his stay from a master called Shunxiao 順暁, but their content has been long debated by scholars. Sources attributed to Saichō mention a “Vairocana mandala with thirty-seven venerables” (*Birushana nyorai sanjūshichison mandara* 毘盧遮那如來三十七尊曼荼羅) and a “mandala for initiation in five-sections” (*gobu kanjō mandara* 五部灌頂曼荼羅), which point to a Diamond Realm transmission. Later sources also mention a “tripartite initiation” (*sanbu sanmaya* 三部三昧耶), which has been interpreted as the transmission of the three levels of *siddhi* (*sanjū shitsuji* 三種悉地) (Groner 1984b, 52–61). The historical evidence is, however, controversial, and attribution of the sources that document such initiations has also recently been challenged (Chen 1998, 2009).

However mythical the beginning of Saichō’s experience of tantrism might have been, undeniably his role in the history of Taimitsu was the creation of a Tendai school that was characterized since the beginning by a fundamental concern with esoteric Buddhism. Such concern continued and expanded through the centuries to such an extent that it can now be said that in Japan Tendai doctrine only existed within the combinatory system of *Lotus*-based thought and tantrism (*enmitsu* 円密) (Ōkubo 2008).

The establishment of Taimitsu as a distinct interpretation of esoteric Buddhism occurred only after Saichō, thanks to new tantric knowledge acquired by Ennin and Enchin in China. The two men spent long periods in China, were trained at the centers of Chinese esotericism in the capital Chang’an, and received esoteric transmission from important masters of the time. During his nine-year sojourn (838–847), Ennin studied with Yuanzheng 元政 of Daxingshansi 大興善寺 (Amoghavajra’s 不空 temple), Yizheng 義真 of Qinglongsi 青龍寺 (Huiguo’s 惠果 temple), and Faquan 法全 of Xuanfasi 玄法寺. Enchin traveled in China for five years (953–958); he studied esoteric Buddhism at Qinglongsi, received Faquan’s transmissions, and



commissioned mandalas at Longxingsi 龍興寺. The tantric material that these two scholar-monks brought back to Japan, in terms of scriptural texts, ritual knowledge, and material culture, matched in both quantity and quality that acquired by Kūkai<sup>12</sup> and opened the door to a new interpretation of tantric Buddhism.

#### Characteristics of Taimitsu Doctrine

The Tendai system of tantric Buddhism is often evaluated vis-à-vis Shingon, with the assumption that the latter constitutes the “orthodox” form of Japanese tantrism. This assessment may be justified by the historical importance of Kūkai’s speculation, to which Taimitsu thinkers referred and responded. Yet the specificity of the Chinese transmissions received by Ennin and Enchin, and the particular hermeneutical context in which they operated, made it possible for Tendai scholiasts to produce a discrete contribution to the history of East Asian tantrism. Although Ennin, Enchin, and their successors presented different interpretations of the tantric discourse, it is possible to identify two main concerns that underlined classic Taimitsu speculation and praxis: the reformulation of the meaning of “esoteric,” and the development of a third hermeneutical category that complements the two mandalic realities of Womb and Diamond (*sanbu* 三部).

*The taxonomic question:* Taimitsu scholiasts needed to devise strategies that would make meaningful the ideal of identity of perfect teachings (i.e., the continental interpretation based primarily on the *Lotus Sūtra*) and esoteric teachings (*enmitsu itchi* 円密一致) put forward by Saichō. In the scholiastic context of Sino-Japanese Buddhism, this meant placing esoteric teachings within the Tiantai hermeneutical system, which originally did not contain them, as the major esoteric sūtras had not yet been introduced in China when this taxonomy was devised.

The so-called “Chinese decisions” (*Tōketsu* 唐決) are the first document of this concern. These are questions presented by Tendai monks to the Chinese Tiantai establishment to receive instructions on how to deal with issues left unresolved by Saichō. Several focused on the classificatory evaluation of esoteric teachings, demonstrating the difficulty

<sup>12</sup> The catalogues of imported materials supply evidence of this. See, for instance, Ennin’s *Nittō shingū shōgyō mokuroku* 入唐新求聖教目錄 and the overview of Heian-period catalogues in Annen’s *Hakke hiroku*.

of the Tendai community to justify the twofold curriculum established on Mt. Hiei without such hermeneutical underpinning (see Enchō's 円澄 [771–836] questions to Guangxiu 広修 and to Weijuan 維讎, *NDZ* (1914–1921) 42: 364–65, 393–94; Asai 1973, 215–32).

Taxonomic emendation implied a rethinking of the category of the esoteric, which could also counter Kūkai's exclusivistic definition. Both of Kūkai's hermeneutical patterns had in fact posited the inferiority of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and with it the Tiantai system. One established the irreconcilability of exoteric and esoteric teachings (*kenmitsuni* 顕密二) on the basis of the different nature of the buddhas who preached them and on the different practices to attain enlightenment that they introduced. The second, a ten-level hierarchical ranking of doctrines, culminated with the “secret buddha vehicle” and relegated Tendai to the eighth place, *qua* true Mahāyāna (*jitsudaijō* 実大乘) teachings that expressed the notion of the one vehicle of salvation.

*A new typology of tantric Buddhism:* Taimitsu scholiasts drew from different streams of continental knowledge, both tantric and non-tantric, to put forward a new paradigm. Ennin reaffirmed Kūkai's distinction of the Buddha's teachings into esoteric and exoteric categories, but he brought other elements into this basic taxonomy. He classified the teachings that expressed the notion of the “three vehicles” as exoteric. At the same time, he distinguished two classes of esoteric scriptures, coining specific terms for their definition: those that contain only the principles of esoteric Buddhism (*rimitsu* 理密) and those that at once reveal its principles and practices (*riji gumitsu* 理事俱密) (*Soshijikyōsho*, T. 2227.61:393b; *Kongōchōkyōsho*, T. 2223.61:7). This classification borrowed from the continental distinction of *li* 理 and *shi* 事, but reversed their importance by assigning the highest value to phenomenonic appearance (in the form of ritual actions).

Ennin described the first type in Tiantai terms as teachings that expressed the nonduality of ultimate truth (*shintai* 真諦) and worldly truth (*zokutai* 俗諦), and the second type as including the practice of the three secrets (*sanmitsu*) of body, speech, and mind—in tantric terms, *mudrās*, mantras, and mandalas.<sup>13</sup> The *Nirvana*, *Lotus*, *Vimalakīrti*, and *Huayan* sūtras constituted the first class, while the second was exemplified by the *Dari jing* 大日經 (*Dainichi kyō*,

<sup>13</sup> On the notion of *sanmitsu* in non-esoteric sources and the relative status still given to its practice in Chinese tantric material, see Dolce 2006a, 137–40.

T. 848), the *Jin'gangding jing* 金剛頂經 (*Kongōchō kyō*, T. 865), the *Suxidi jieluo jing* 蘇悉地揭羅經 (*Soshitsujikara kyō*, T. 893), the *Pudichang jing* 菩提場經 (*Bodaijō kyō*, T. 950), and the *Yuqi jing* 瑜祇經 (*Yugi kyō*, T. 867), which were to become the five canonical scriptures of Taimitsu. Ennin thus eliminated the original distinction between exoteric and esoteric set up by Kūkai and expanded the category of *mikkyō* by including scriptures that Kūkai had excluded from it.

Ennin's theories were grounded on the continental notion of the esoteric (*himitsu* 秘密) as the most accomplished (in epistemological and soteriological terms) understanding of reality (Dolce 2006a, 132–42), rather than the monopoly of a tantric school. At the same time, Ennin maintained the superiority of esoteric practice as conferring privileged access to the ultimate. In this scheme, the *Lotus Sūtra* no longer embodied the “perfect teaching” but was rather a “not-yet-complete *mikkyō*.” Ennin's reconciliation of the *Lotus* and esoteric Buddhism thus differed considerably from Saichō's idea of their equality and it marked the advent of a new trend in tantric hermeneutical strategies.

Enchin's attempt to articulate the relation between the *Lotus* and esoteric sūtras followed another direction, since he maintained and stressed the traditional Tiantai *kyōhan* 經判 but elevated the esoteric scriptures within it. In the *Daibirushanakyō shiki*, considered his representative work, Enchin refuted the allocation of the esoteric sūtras to the third period of the traditional Tiantai taxonomy, arguing that the *Dari jing* had the characteristics of the “perfect teaching” and expressed the “one vehicle”; accordingly, it was to be considered to be of the same flavor as the *Lotus* and assigned to the fifth period of the Buddha's teachings. Still, Enchin segmented this fifth period in three phases, starting with the *Lotus Sūtra* and culminating in the *Dari jing*, and this pattern was to become known as the “five periods and five teachings” (*gojigokyō* 五時五教). Annen developed it further (see Dolce and Mano, “Godai'in Annen,” in this volume).

Annen's comprehensive classification of the entire Buddhist system under the umbrella of esoteric Buddhism, which he called *shingonshū* 真言宗, brought the process of re-signification of the esoteric to its climax (see Dolce and Mano, “Godai'in Annen” in this volume). By thus positing the dharma-world of the tantric Buddha as the only reality, accessible solely through the performance of esoteric ritual practices, Taimitsu thinkers displaced other practices existent in Tendai as soteriologically incomplete practices. Rather than following continental

understandings of ritual forms as skillful means to achieve enlightenment (*usō hōben* 有相方便), they gave them ontological weight by deeming them to be the embodiment of the ultimate truth. In this way, they created a solid theoretical ground for the preeminent place tantrism would come to occupy in the history of Tendai. In summary, while the founding fathers of Taimitsu fell short of providing unambiguous evidence for the unity of Tiantai and esoteric Buddhism, they succeeded in reconceptualizing the esoteric *vis-à-vis* Kūkai's formulation, a necessary step for the creation of an alternate tantric system to the existent one. Indeed, this may be seen as the real purpose of their speculation.

*The threefold system (sanbu)*: Ennin and Enchin put forward a threefold paradigm of interpretation of tantric reality, in which the nonduality of the two mandalic categories, Womb and Diamond, was crystallized into a third element, called the accomplishment class (*soshitsuji bu* 蘇悉地部). This contrasted with Kūkai's understanding of the indivisible relation between the Womb and Diamond Mandalas (*ryōbu funi* 兩部不二), and it became a distinctive feature of Tendai esotericism in hermeneutical and ritual terms.

The origin and content of this tripartite scheme (*sanbu* 三部) can be found in the training acquired by Ennin and Enchin in late Tang China. Scholars have argued that the divergence between the two traditions of Japanese tantrism reflects the different environment that two generations of monks experienced during their Chinese sojourns. Although biographical records offer evidence that some forms of threefold initiations were already practiced in early Tang China at the time of Saichō and Kūkai, and were known to Amoghavajra and Huiguo (Misaki 1994b, 300–301), not until the mid-ninth century did the *soshitsuji* become a discrete category in Chinese tantrism, due to a renewed interest in ritual practice (Misaki 1988, 483–513; Hunter 2004). Ennin and Enchin's catalogues record the transmission they received from Faquan as “the great teaching in three categories” (*sanbu daikyō* 三部大教). Enchin also recorded that Faquan transmitted the *soshitsuji* class in ascending order after the Womb and Diamond Mandala initiations and considered the *soshitsuji* the most important of the three (Hunter 2004). A comparison of this material with Kūkai's narrative about the transmission he received makes clear that the taxonomy of the major tantric scriptures shifted in the mid-Tang period, and that different initiatory traditions coexisted.

The *Suxidi jing*

The source of the *soshitsuji* class was the *Suxidi jieluo jing* 蘓悉地羯羅經 (T. 893), a scripture that, surprisingly, is not concerned with doctrinal matters but with the ritual rules for a successful performance. Traditionally classified as a *Dari jing*-type of scripture (because it was translated in Chinese by the same scholiast, and in some lineages the two texts were handed down together), this sūtra is thought by modern scholars to represent a lineage of scriptures related to the notion and representation of the *uṣṇīṣa* (*butchōkei* 佛頂髻) (Misaki 1988, 112–45). It was known in Japan since the Nara period. Saichō and Kūkai brought back new copies from their continental journeys, but the sūtra never played a hermeneutical function for Kūkai, who classified it among the *vinaya* genre of scriptures.

Ennin, on the contrary, wrote the first extensive commentary to the *Suxidi jing*, and placed it at the foundation of a doctrinal apparatus in which it embodied the supreme accomplishment (*soshitsuji*) that completed the practices of both the Womb and Diamond Mandalas. Enchin, too, considered the mantras of the *Suxidi jing* to be the essence of the two worlds. By the medieval period the status of the *Suxidi jing* as a scripture that defined the identity of tantric Buddhism had been unequivocally established, as diverse contemporary materials attest.<sup>14</sup> Yet the text presented several problems that would prove consequential in Taimitsu history. Two, in particular, should be mentioned.

The power of the *soshitsuji* initiation was said to be in a fundamental mantra (*konpon shingon* 根本真言); however, it was not identified in the text itself, nor in Ennin's *Commentary*. Furthermore, Enchin's account of Faquan's transmission suggests that the mantras of the threefold *siddhi* in which he was initiated differed from those given in the *Suxidi jing*. Later scholiasts identified the fundamental mantra with a number of alternatives: the mantras allegedly transmitted to Saichō in China, the mantras from the *Yuqi jing* (Annen, Jien),<sup>15</sup> or the

<sup>14</sup> For instance, the *Hasshū koyō* 八宗綱要, a thirteenth-century outline of Japanese Buddhism, explained esoteric Buddhism as the “secret doctrine of mantras” of the *Dari jing* and *Suxidi jing* without mention of the second major scripture, the *Jin'gangdingjing* (Ōkubo 2001b). Nichiren's classification of tantric Buddhism always included the *Suxidi jing* (Dolce 1999, 355–56; 2002, 73–80).

<sup>15</sup> See, for instance, the *Soshitsujiyō mondō*, in one fascicle, compiled by Jien in 1210. *ZTZ* (1993) *mikkyō* 2 [kyōten chūshaku rui 1]: 190–201.

mantras of another set of apocryphal texts collectively known as the *Podiyu yigui*<sup>16</sup> 破地獄儀軌 (cf. *Asabashō*, TZ 8:974–975).

Second, although the text described deities in a mandalic arrangement, there are no extant examples of *Suxidi jing* mandalas that were produced and used (Ōkubo 2001b, 112). It is thus not clear how the triple structure centered on the *Suxidi jing* was to be implemented in the ritual setting. There is material evidence that in the medieval period the *Lotus Sūtra* mandala was used in a set with the Womb and Diamond Mandalas, illustrating their nonduality (Dolce 2006a, 152–55). The grounds for such a deployment may be found in the canonical source that explained the Lotus Mandala, the *Fahua guanzhi yigui* 法華經觀智儀軌, a ritual manual of probable Chinese origin. Scholars tend to include it in a category of texts presenting a combination of the Womb and Diamond Worlds (Osabe 1966, 66–80; Dolce 2002, 227–31). More research is needed to fully understand the dynamics that engendered such usage.

#### Other Solutions for the Threefold System: The Combinatory *Abhiṣeka*

Because the content of the third category was difficult to define, both the notion of the accomplishment class and its practical application underwent remarkable changes throughout Taimitsu history. By using another Chinese scripture of combinatory nature, the *Yuqi jing*, Annen devised a double accomplishment class: he understood the *Suxidi jing* to fulfill only the reality of the *Dari jing*, while the *Yuqi jing* completed that of the *Jin'gangding jing*.<sup>17</sup> The *yugi* initiation 瑜祇灌頂 later became a standard Taimitsu *abhiṣeka*.

A survey of ritual collections suggests, in fact, that since the late Heian period, the *soshitsuji* initiation was replaced by a “combinatory *abhiṣeka*” (*gōgyō kanjō* 合行灌頂). This *abhiṣeka* occupied a significant place in the *Asabashō*, after the Womb and Diamond initiations. According to this source, the ritual was transmitted by both Ennin and Enchin; however, scholars believe that it emerged during the process of the transformation of the accomplishment rite which took place

<sup>16</sup> On these texts see Chen 2009.

<sup>17</sup> The relation between the *Suxidi jing* and the *Yuqi jing* needs further attention. Such correspondence also affects the association between the main deities of the two scriptures, Ichiji Kinrin and Butsugen Butsumo, who significantly were to become emblematic Taimitsu deities (Misaki 1988, 529–37).

around the time of Kōgei (Misaki 1988, 568–573). The question of the extent to which it actually corresponded to the *soshitsuji* initiation was raised already in medieval sources (cf. *Keiranshūyōshū*, T. 2410.76: 884a–b).

In general, the *gōgyō abhiṣeka* consisted of performing the two mandala initiations simultaneously. Two ritual platforms were used, and the practitioners were instructed to visualize both mandalas (*Asabashō* 18–19, “Gōgyō,” TZ 8:838–841), while the *mudrās* and mantras of each mandala were transmitted separately, in alternate order (*Asabashō* 6, “Gōkanki,” TZ 8:777–779). However, these practices seem not to have been standardized in the medieval period, and much was left to the performer’s interpretation (*Asabashō* 9, “Kanjō shiketsu,” TZ 8:788–979). Later ritual sources, such as the sixteenth-century *Ōmushō* 鸚鵡抄, attest that by the end of the medieval period the combinatory initiation became a distinctive Taimitsu feature.<sup>18</sup>

#### Evolutions and Sectarian Interactions: Medieval Taimitsu

The shift between different possible ritualizations of the tripartite form of tantrism is one example of Taimitsu doctrinal and ritual evolution beyond the paradigms initiated by Ennin and Enchin. Medieval Taimitsu still need to be explored in full, but attention should be given to the dynamic developments that took place from the late eleventh to fourteenth centuries, when novel understandings were articulated and ritually enacted.

The weight assumed by the *Yuqi jing* is another example that suggests a shift of focus in the discursive construction of tantric practice, and the extensive commentarial production of the medieval period attests to this. The scholiast Chōgō 澄豪 (1259–1350) was a key figure of this reappraisal. His extensive work, the *Yugikyō chōmonshō*, of which several manuscripts have been preserved, represents a major Taimitsu interpretation. It was shaped by the tradition of the Anō lineage but includes oral transmissions of the Jimon and Tōmitsu lineages (*ZTZ mikkyō* 2 [kyōten chūshaku rui 1]: 257–355).<sup>19</sup> Kōshū’s

<sup>18</sup> The *Ōmushō*, a comprehensive compendium in six volumes of Taimitsu initiations as upheld by the Renge lineages in Kantō (compiled in 1572, see n. 4), presents six types of advanced abhiṣeka: Womb Mandala, Diamond Mandala, combinatory, distinct (*risagō* 離作業, which is the name of a combinatory abhiṣeka as transmitted in the Kawa lineage), secret (*himitsu*) and yogic (*yugi* 瑜祇). (*ZTZ* 4: 1–253.).

<sup>19</sup> Chōgō was a disciple of Shōchō, the author of the *Asabashō*. He was also the author of a collection of ritual knowledge, the *Sōjishō* 總持抄 (T. 2412.77:53–94).

光宗 (1276–1350) *Yugikyō kuketsu nukigaki* is also thought to record Chōgō's oral transmission to his disciple (*ZTZ mikkyō* 2: 217–256).<sup>20</sup> Also noteworthy are two commentaries by Enni Ben'en 円爾弁円 (1202–1280), the *Yugikyō kenmon* and the lengthy *Taimitsu keigushō*, which are said to follow the interpretative lines of the Sanmai lineage 三昧流 (*ZTZ mikkyō* 2: 205–217; Mizukami 2008c, 595–670).<sup>21</sup> This material, which remains by and large unexamined, provides evidence of the expansion of Taimitsu transmission to newly established centers of Buddhist knowledge, such as Tōfukuji, and at the same time of new interactions with Tōmitsu lineages.

In this context it is also compelling to reassess the sectarian significance of the tripartite system versus Kūkai's twofold system. Not only are transmissions based on the *Suxidi jing* attested also in Tōmitsu lineages, in particular the Ono branch (Misaki 1988, 606–33), but in the medieval period the threefold paradigm was also effectively employed by Tōmitsu scholiasts as a hermeneutical tool to articulate nonduality. Such is the case of the Sanbōin 三宝院 lineages that developed the so-called “combination of the three venerables” (*sanzon gōgyō* 三尊合行). In the discursive, ritual, and iconographical renditions of this little-known practice, which had far-reaching ramifications, the dichotomic oppositions crystalized in the two mandalas were resolved in a third, polyvalent element (Dolce 2010). This suggests that the Taimitsu reconfiguration of the esoteric and the formulation of a threefold pattern had historical and philosophical significance beyond mere sectarian rhetoric. Insofar as the threefold paradigm offered an alternative, not necessarily competing, type of tantrism, it appealed to different lineages interested in reinterpreting the esoteric system.

### *Ritual Dimensions*

The ritual self-definition operated by the Taimitsu lineages is evidence of the same paradigms that constructed Taimitsu as a discrete tantric tradition. The initiatory practices mentioned above, which constituted the training curriculum that qualified a cleric as a tantric master,

<sup>20</sup> Kōshū was the author of the encyclopedia of Tendai knowledge, the *Keiranshūyōshū* (see below). He co-founded the Kurodani lineage, which takes its name from an area of the Western Pagoda, and transmitted Chōgō's teachings to another important centre in the capital, Hosshōji 法勝寺.

<sup>21</sup> On Enni's Taimitsu, see Mizukami 2008a, 2008b. Enni is better known as the founder of Tōfukuji.



demonstrate the extent to which rituals were crucial in the process of legitimization and thus inseparable from the articulation of Taimitsu doctrinal standing. The same sectarian concerns affected the liturgies performed for a particular purpose and for the benefit of a sponsor (*bessonhō*<sup>22</sup> 別尊法). These amounted to the main activity of the esoteric lineages, and their successful performance assured political power and social standing to clerics and their lineages. The intra-sectarian and inter-sectarian agendas of the rituals are unfolded in the anthologies in which they were collected and in the selection of a number of liturgies as the exclusive expertise of the Taimitsu lineages.

### The Liturgical Canon

The ritual anthologies compiled from the eleventh century onward are the major sources to document and reconstruct the variety of rituals developed in Taimitsu centers. They are valuable because they are not mere collections of liturgical manuals but provide the doctrinal underpinning of each liturgy, its history and canonical sources, the visual material necessary for its set-up, and numerous records of actual performances. The number of ritual anthologies seems to have grown during the mid-Heian period, attesting to the multiplication of the dharma lines. Traditionally, in fact, each collection was meant to embody the ritual capital and monopoly of a single lineage. Yet the eclectic training of the compilers and the inclusion of rituals of competing lineages indicate the ambiguity of such sectarian identity (Dolce forthcoming).

Research on these collections is almost inexistent. An overview of the most influential is thus required and is here provided.<sup>23</sup>

The *Shijūjōketsu* 四十帖決 (T. 2408), in forty books, is the first attempt in Taimitsu to collect oral instructions related to the meaning and performance of various liturgies. It records the oral transmission of Kōgei, the founder of the Tani-ryū, as transcribed by his disciple Chōen. Following the tripartite pattern of Taimitsu hermeneutics, the anthology covers the liturgies related to the two mandalas and the *soshitsuji* class and then discusses various individual practices without

<sup>22</sup> Rituals for a single object of devotion as opposed to those involving the two major mandalas.

<sup>23</sup> The only comprehensive overview is Bernard Frank's study of late Heian and medieval iconographic collections (Frank 1986–87), which however concentrates on Tōmitsu anthologies and devotes less attention to Taimitsu corpora.

a specific taxonomy. Kōgei played a crucial role in the development of Taimitsu rituals, and this anthology documents the significant changes that occurred in the eleventh century. Kōgei also received Tōmitsu initiation from Kyōun 景雲 of Tōji, under whom he studied in Kyūshū, and this is reflected in the inclusion of Tōmitsu interpretations in the anthology.

The next extensive collection is the *Gyōrinshō* 行林抄 (T. 2409), in eighty-two fascicles, also considered to represent the liturgical traditions of the Tani branch. It was compiled in 1154 by Jōnen 静然 of Mudōji 無道寺, who was a disciple of the famous cleric Sōshitsu 相実, the initiator of the Hōman-ryū 法曼流. Among the sectarian features of this text, of particular interest is the preeminence of the figure of Śākyamuni. The first ritual rubric is devoted to Śākyamuni, and under this rubric matters related to the two mandalas are dealt with on the basis of the identity of Śākyamuni and Dainichi advocated by Taimitsu scholiasts.<sup>24</sup>

Slightly later is the compilation that is broadly regarded as the canonical source of Taimitsu rituals, *Asabashō* 阿娑縛抄. This is the first compendium to include extensive illustrations of deities and their variants, ritual objects, and diagrams of ritual platforms, and it is thus fundamental for the reconstruction of the performative side of the liturgy. (This is also the reason it is included in the iconographic sections of the canon.) The fact that extensive passages of doctrinal works and important commentaries no longer available today are quoted also heightens its value (Ōkubo 2001a, 4).

The *Asabashō* was compiled between 1242 and 1281 by Shōchō 承澄 (1205–1282), a scholiast belonging to an Anō sub-lineage called Ogawa 小川. However, Shōchō drew extensively from two previous works by Jōnen, the *Gyōrinshō* and the *Jikkanshō* 十卷抄, and thus this collection charts a large part of contemporary Taimitsu doctrines and practices (Kiriata 1969). The title *Asabashō* derives from the three seed-syllables that identify the three sections of the Womb Mandala—*tathāgata* (A), lotus (SA), and *vajra* (VA)—suggesting the preeminence of the Womb textual lineage. The liturgies are arranged according to

<sup>24</sup> Early Taimitsu interpreters had attempted to reassess the role of Śākyamuni *vis-à-vis* Dainichi as the preacher of the esoteric teachings. They equated specific aspects of Śākyamuni's activity with characteristics of the esoteric Buddha, drawing from the imagery of the eternal assembly of the Vulture Peak, the place where Śākyamuni preached the *Lotus Sūtra*. (Dolce 2006a: 147–48)

the traditional fivefold division of the Buddhist pantheon, but the order and terminology differs from the major Tōmitsu anthology of the time, the *Kakuzenshō* 覺禪抄 (TZ. 4–5). The rubric of rituals for individual buddhas, for instance, starts with Yakushi, reasserting the importance of this deity for the Tendai school (Dainichi is not given a dedicated section). One also finds two distinct rubrics for buddhas of doctrinal significance in Taimitsu, the *uṣṇīṣa* buddhas (*sho bucchō* 諸佛頂) and *buddhalocana* (*sho butsumo* 諸佛母). Among the ritual for deities, too, are included some not found in Tōmitsu material, such as the two-bodied Bishamon (*sōshin Bishamon* 雙身毘沙門).

Among the compendia of the *monzeki* lineages, the *Monyōki* 門葉記, in one hundred and eighty-four fascicles (originally one hundred and thirty), is a massive record of the historical and economical development of the Shōrenin and its ritual activities from the early twelfth to fifteenth centuries. It was compiled by Son'en Shinnō 尊円親王 (1298–1356, a.k.a. Daijōin no Miya 大乘院宮), seventeenth abbot of the cloister, but the printed edition available today includes later additions dating to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Of great value in the reconstruction of the liturgical specificity of the other Taimitsu branch is the *Hōhiki* 宝秘記, the main ritual anthology of the Jimon lineage, recently published in the *Onjōji monjo*. Comprising forty-four volumes, it consists of three sets of oral transmissions and records of performances. It takes its name from the first thirty-three fascicles, compiled by Keihan 慶範 (1155–1221) of Daihōin 大宝院 (Shimozaka 2004).

Finally, although traditionally not catalogued as a ritual anthology but rather as a chronicle (*kike*), the *Keiranshūyōshū* 溪嵐拾葉集 should be included as a late-medieval compendium of ritual knowledge. The existing one hundred and sixteen fascicles (one-third of the original size) are in fact mostly concerned with esoteric rituals (Grapard 1998; Nomoto 2001). The compiler, Kōshū, belonged to the Seizan-ryū 西山流, a split-lineage of the Anō, thus in the same tradition as the author of the *Asabashō*. A comparison of the ways the same ritual is covered in the two works, however, reveals an interesting shift in sectarian awareness, with stronger emphasis on the threefold pattern that characterized Taimitsu ortho-praxis in the *Keiranshūyōshū*. The *Lotus Sūtra* ritual (*Hokkehō* 法華法) is an instance of this shift (Dolce 2006a).

### The Four Secret Taimitsu Rituals

Among the diverse *besson* liturgies, some more than others epitomize the dynamics of ritual legitimization in Taimitsu: those constructed as the most important and secret liturgies (*daihihō* 大秘法) of the Tendai school. Later arranged in a set of four (*shika daihō* 四箇大法), these were in fact rituals performed only by the Sanmon lineages: the *shijōkōhō*, the *shichibutsu Yakushihō* 七佛藥師法, the *Fugen enmyōhō* 普賢延命法, and the *Anchinhō* 安鎮法 (*Sanmon anōryū juhō shidai*, BZ 2: 248). The institution of these rituals goes back to Ennin, the indisputably putative father of Taimitsu praxis. The rituals were (originally) concerned with the protection of the state and the well being of the emperor and, except for the *shijōkōhō* 熾盛光法, were first performed at imperial residences. In this sense, they may be considered *mishihō* 御修法 that served to assert the Taimitsu lineages in their “public” function of spiritual support to the government, and consolidate their place within the accepted paradigm of mutual interaction of cultic and political power.

According to the *Asabashō shimokuroku*, an eighteenth-century index to the *Asabashō* compiled in 1729 by Tenchū 天忠, the rites of the seven Yakushi and of the blazing light were the uttermost secrets of Taimitsu, transmitted only face-to-face, and therefore different from other liturgies (Ōkubo 2001a). It is interesting to note that both liturgies may be seen as star rituals, one related to the Big Dipper and other to the Polar Star, and thus they exploited these Chinese symbols of royal authority and control over the destiny of the country (Dolce 2006c).

The *Shichibutsu Yakushihō* amplified the centrality of the Buddha Yakushi in the early Tendai school, but borrowed from Onmyō 陰陽 notions in its identification of the seven manifestations of Yakushi with the seven stars of the Big Dipper. According to the *Asabashō*, Ennin first performed the rite for Emperor Ninmyō 仁明 in 850 at Seiryōden 清涼殿, the emperor’s quarters. He instructed that the rite should be performed only by the *zasu* of Mt. Hiei, but the anthologies record later instances of lower-rank clerics performing it. Also, while originally the ritual was used against calamities, as were most star rituals, it seems that by the medieval period its function had shifted to that of a rite for increasing benefits (*Asabashō* TZ 8: 1066–1084).

The *Shijōkōhō*, too, was a liturgy that due to its inclusion of heavenly bodies was thus deemed effective against disturbances and calamities

in the country. This ritual, however, carried more elaborate doctrinal connotations. The main deity of the liturgy was a golden-wheel turning *uṣṇīṣa* buddha (*kinrin butchō* 金輪佛頂), the “Uṣṇīṣa of Blazing Light.” According to one of the canonical sources of the ritual, this was Śākyamuni emitting innumerable rays of wisdom-producing light (*shijōkō*), and thus able to preach the dharma to stars and other celestial bodies (*Foshuo chishengguang dawei de xiaozai jixiang tuoluoni jing*, T. 963.19:337–338). Liturgical manuals and oral transmissions explicitly identified the Blazing Light Buddha with Ichiji Kinrin, linking the ritual with a *butchō*-type of text, the *Suxidi jing*, whose main figure was Ichiji Kinrin (*Asabashō* 58, “Shijōkō,” TZ 9: 26, 27). The liturgy thus crystallized the Taimitsu distinctive interpretation of tantrism and ritually enacted the notion of an *uṣṇīṣa*-centered system (Misaki 1988, 141–42).

The *Shijōkōhō* was performed in China to pray for the emperor’s longevity. Ennin performed it for the first time in Japan in 850 for the new emperor, Montoku 文徳, and presented it as a most effective liturgy exclusively known to him and not to other esoteric lineages. A hall was appositely constructed on Mt. Hiei to perform it, the Sōjiin 惣持院, clearly meant to match the Shingonin 真言院 established by Kūkai in 834 at the imperial palace. The arrangement of the Sōjiin reflected the doctrinal apparatus distinctive of Taimitsu. According to medieval sources, a three-storied pagoda facing south was at the center, with a *shijōkō* hall in the west, enshrining the *uṣṇīṣa* Buddha, and a hall for Butsugen 佛眼 in the east. With this arrangement, the correlation between Ichiji Kinrin and Butsugen predicated in the *Yuqi jing* was accomplished spatially.

The mandala used for the *shijōkōhō* was a circular-type star mandala, depicting the Ichiji Kinrin sitting at the center of an eight-petaled lotus surrounded by anthropomorphic manifestations of the twelve zodiac deities and the twenty-eight lunar mansions. In its logographic form (*hō mandara* 法曼荼羅), the mandala placed *bhrūṃ* (Jpn. *boron* ボロㇿ), the seed-syllable of the Ichiji Kinrin and the fundamental seed-syllable in Taimitsu, at its center (*Asabashō* 58, TZ 9: 31). Enchin, for instance, considered it to embody the three buddha bodies, as it was composed of three syllables, *bo/ro/n* (*Ichiji kinrinkyō ryaku gishaku*). Ritualists discussed the forms the mandala should take according to the person for whom the ritual was to be performed (*Gyōrinshō*, T. 2409.74:93b), suggesting an expansion of its use beyond the imperial family. In fact, historical records document that since the time of

Ryōgen (912–985), the ritual was also performed for the aristocracy as a remedy to cure illness (Groner 2002, 90–92).

It should be pointed out that the competing branch of Tendai, the Jimon lineage, also created a ritual similar in nature and function to the *shijōkōhō*: the *Sonjōō* 尊星王法. Its central deity, Sonjōō 尊星, a Japanese creation, was the personification of the Polar Star. Indeed the image of this deity largely resembles the representation of the polar star Myōken 妙見. The ritual was presented as the secret liturgy (*hihō*) of the Jimon lineage, transmitted by Enchin and not known to others outside the lineage. Keihan, author of the *Hōjiki*, claimed that Enchin had learned it in China, and while other schools knew other Myōken liturgies, they did not know this (Misaki 1992a). The ritual became a crucial element in the relation between Onjōji and the court. Emperors Shirakawa and Toba sponsored the constructions of *sonshōdōdō* at both Miidera and Shirakawa 白河. Here prayers for the protection of the state were performed, officiated by princely abbots after the mid-Heian period. The ritual, however, was also used to assure safe childbirth, especially for aristocratic women of the Regent house (Matsumoto 2008).

## 65. GODAI'IN ANNEN

Lucia Dolce and Shinya Mano

Godai'in Annen 五大院 安然 (841–889?) is primarily known as the scholar-monk who completed the formal esoterization of Japanese Tendai, for which he used the appellation “Shingon school,” in this way emphasizing the importance of the esoteric mode. Often neglected, however, is the impact of his ideas beyond the sectarian limits of Tendai per se, and which extended to esoteric Buddhism as a whole. Indeed, Annen’s accomplishments are comparable to those of Kūkai. Annen systematized earlier and contemporary doctrines elaborated in both streams of Japanese esoteric Buddhism, Tōmitsu (i.e., Shingon) and Taimitsu (Tendai). He critically reinterpreted Kūkai’s thought, offering new understandings of crucial esoteric concepts and rituals. He elaborated theories that were to become emblematic of Japanese Buddhism, such as the realization of buddhahood by grasses and trees (*sōmoku jōbutsu*). Similarly, his interpretations exerted influence on major Tōmitsu scholiasts, such as Saisen 濟暹 (1025–1115) and Kakuban 覚鑿 (1095–1143), and on the shape of the original enlightenment movement (*hongaku shisō* 本覚思想). These are just a few examples of Annen’s significance in the history of Japanese esoteric Buddhism. In this sense, he may be regarded as one of the greatest thinkers of Japan, “the philosopher who Japanized Buddhism” (Sueki 1994, 69–86).

### *Biographical Obscurity*

Despite his intellectual significance, little is known of Annen’s life, and it is difficult to reconstruct it from existing source material. Annen never ascended to the position of head abbot (*zasu*) of Mt. Hiei, nor did he become the object of a devotional cult, as did Kūkai and Ennin. His institutional marginality may be responsible for the paucity of information about him. Even in the late-Kamakura history of Buddhism, the *Genkō shakusho* 元亨釈書, the entry for Annen is very brief and provides us only with the date he was appointed abbot of Gankyōji 元慶寺, an imperially designated temple near Kyōto, succeeding his

master Henjō 遍照 (816–890). It is uncertain whether the sobriquet Annen used for himself, Godai'in, comes from a hall on Mt. Hiei where he is said to have resided.<sup>1</sup>

Contrary to his illustrious predecessors, Annen never traveled to China to study esoteric Buddhism.<sup>2</sup> Though traditionally considered to be one of Ennin's 円仁 (794–864) disciples, it is unlikely that Ennin directly bestowed any teaching on Annen. In his survey of Annen's biography, originally published in 1918 and the most authoritative to date, Hashimoto Shinkichi identified four major esoteric masters: Dōkai 道海 (n.d.), Chōi 長意 (836–906), Kōbu 公輔 (n.d.), and Henjō (Hashimoto 1972, 90–91). Of these, Henjō and Dōkai played a crucial role in Annen's education, since they transmitted to him the three major Tendai esoteric initiations. In particular, Henjō, who had been a disciple of both Ennin and Enchin 円珍 (814–891), gave Annen access to all significant Taimitsu doctrinal and ritual teachings.

### *Annen's Major Works*

Perhaps because he never rose to a preeminent institutional position, Annen was a very prolific writer and left a voluminous corpus, most of which deals with the ritual aspects of esoteric Buddhism (Sueki 1994, 71–73). Pre-modern Tendai bibliographic sources credited Annen with more than one hundred works, but only forty are today extant, several of which are of dubious attribution (Asai Endō 1973, 630). The majority of Annen's writings have been published in the two of the volumes devoted to Taimitsu in the *Nihon daizōkyō* (Suzuki Gaku-jutsu Zaidan, ed. 1973–1978, vols. 44–45), and in the *Taishō* canon, mainly in vol. 75.<sup>3</sup>

Annen's two major works, the *Shingonshū kyōjigi* 真言宗教時義 (On the Meaning of Teachings and Times in Esoteric Buddhism; hereafter *Kyōjigi*) in four fascicles and the *Taizōkongō bodaishingi ryaku*

<sup>1</sup> Groner 1987 includes an excellent reconstruction of Annen's life. See also Sueki 1995, 42–49 and Kiuchi 1990, 345–59.

<sup>2</sup> Later Tendai scholiasts concluded that Annen went to China, on the evidence of a short biographical sketch at the beginning of the *Taizōkai daihō taijuki*, in which Annen claimed that in 876 he was preparing for the journey (*T.* 2390.75:54a). However, the authenticity of this passage is doubtful, as Annen atypically refers to himself by name.

<sup>3</sup> Asai Endō 1973, 630–638, gives the full list of the extant works and discusses questions of authenticity for each of them.



*mondōshō* 胎藏金剛菩提心義略問答抄 (Abbreviated Discussion on the Meaning of *Bodhicitta* according to the Womb and Diamond [Realities]; hereafter, *Bodaishingishō*) in five fascicles, offer extensive evidence of his efforts to establish a “true” esoteric Buddhist school that would encompass sectarian divisions. Indeed, because of their breadth, these two treatises would come to be regarded by Edo-period Tendai scholiasts such as Keikō 敬光 (1740–1795) as comparable to Zhiyi’s *Fahua xuanyi* 法華玄義, the great compendium of Chinese Tiantai.

Annen’s inclusive attitude toward the study of esoteric Buddhism is also shown in the compilation of the *Shoajari shingon mikkyō burui sōroku* 諸阿闍梨真言密教部類總錄 (a.k.a. *Hakka hiroku* 八家秘錄, Secret Records of the Eight Masters), a comprehensive catalogue of esoteric material imported by all eight Japanese tantric masters who traveled to China in the early Heian period: Saichō 最澄 (767–822), Kūkai, Ennin, Engyō 円行 (799–852), Eun 惠運 (798–869), Jōgyō 常曉 (?–866), Enchin, and Shūei 宗叡 (809–884).

As well as playing a crucial role in the formulation of esoteric doctrines, Annen greatly contributed to the systematization of contemporary esoteric rituals. Several of his major writings present Taimitsu ritual practice: the *Yugikyōsho* 瑜祇經疏 (Commentary on the *Yuqi-jing*), the *Kanchūin senjō jigōkanjō gusoku shibun* 觀中院撰定事業環狀具足支分 in ten fascicles, the *Dainichikyō kuyō jishō fudō* 大日經供養持誦不同 in seven fascicles, the *Taizōkai taihō taijuki* 胎藏界大法對受記 (Records of the Transmission of the Great Ritual of the Womb Realm) in seven fascicles, the *Kongōkai taihō taijuki* 金剛界大法對受記 (Records of the Transmission of the Great Ritual of the Diamond Realm) in eight fascicles, and the *Soshitsuji taijuki* 蘇悉地對受記 (Records on the Transmission of the Accomplishment [Ritual]) in one fascicle.<sup>4</sup> The *Taizōkai taihō taijuki* and the *Kongōkai taihō taijuki* in particular are extensive compilations of great value beyond Taimitsu.

### *A Hermeneutics of Totality: The Kyōjigi*

The *Kyōjigi*, written between 876 and 885, the period in which most of Annen’s important works were compiled, is a comprehensive survey

<sup>4</sup> The authorship of these two works has been debated, but scholars today agree that they share most of their elements with genuine works (Mizukami 2008c).

of Taimitsu doctrines. Here Annen presented his conception of Buddhism in the form of a novel doctrinal classification, known as the “four ones” (*shiichi kyōhan* 四一教判). He analyzed Buddhist teachings according to four similarly structured categories—buddha, time, place, and teaching—and argued that Shingon asserts an all-encompassing reality consisting of one buddha (*ichibutsu* 一仏), one time (*ichiji* 一時), one place (*issho* 一処), and one teaching (*ichigyō* 一教). The innumerable buddhas that have appeared in the world, all the periods and the buddha lands in which they have preached, and all Buddhist teachings are subsumed in the category “esoteric Buddhism”:

The buddha who is without beginning and without end and constantly abides from the origin is called “all buddhas” (*issaibutsu*); the nondiscriminating time (*byōdō no ji*) without beginning and without end is called “all times” (*issaiji*); the palace of the Dharma world without center and without extremities is called “all places” (*issaisho*); the teaching that permeates all vehicles [of the Dharma] and makes one’s mind attain buddhahood is called “all teachings” (*issaikyō*). (*T.* 2396.75:374a)

This is an ontological interpretation that sees reality from an absolute perspective and affirms the suchness (*shinnyo* 真如) of all phenomena. Because of its inclusiveness, it stands in contrast to the relative evaluation of the Buddhist doctrines addressed elsewhere. While his predecessors included the esoteric teachings in the last period of the Buddha’s preaching, Annen conceived of an eternal time of the Buddha that both went beyond and contained the five periods of Tiantai classification. Indeed, the emphasis on an infinite temporal dimension may be the most original aspect of Annen’s contribution. Ultimately, the purpose of Annen’s system was the unification of the diverse forms that Buddhist truth may take in a single Buddhism, rooted in the esoteric understanding of reality and informed by Taimitsu categories. In this sense, the appellations “Shingon” or “Shingonshū” 真言宗, which Annen uses also in the title of this work, indicates the entirety of esoteric Buddhism and, by extension, the totality of the Buddhist experience.

Annen’s hermeneutics drew evidence from two Taimitsu canonical sources: the first chapter of the *Commentary on the Darijing*, which asserted that Mahāvairocana was omnipresent, and therefore innumerable buddhas performed an innumerable number of the three secret activities in innumerable lands and times; and Ennin’s *Commentary on the Jin’gangding jing*, which first proposed the idea of a doctrine

above the distinction of esoteric and exoteric called the “great perfect teaching” (*ichidai engyō* 一大円教) (T. 2396.75:417a).<sup>5</sup>

The recourse to these two sources highlights another particularity of Annen’s esoteric system, the emphasis on the distinctiveness and yet equivalence of the two major scriptural lineages of esoteric Buddhism, the *Darijing* and the *Jin’gangding jing*, and of the mandalic realities of which these sūtras were the source. Annen was the first to name the Womb of Great Compassion (Daiji Taizō) “Womb World” (Taizōkai), thus creating a pendant with the Diamond World (Kongōkai). Throughout his works he took great care to demonstrate that the concepts under discussion were informed by, and valid for, both realities. His reformulation of the meaning of secret (*himitsu*) is an example of this position (Dolce 2006a, 142–45).

*Sectarian Taxonomies and the Superiority of the Esoteric:  
The Bodaishingishō*

The *Bodaishingishō* is an extended commentary on the *Putixin lun* 菩提心論, the Chinese apocryphon regarded by Japanese tantric masters as the main esoteric treatise (Kūkai’s claim of the superiority of esoteric practice was based on it). Indeed, a major concern of the *Bodaishingishō* is to interpret the mind of realization (Skt. *bodhicitta*; Jpn. *bodaishin* 菩提心), central to the realization of buddhahood, and Annen discusses at length the ritual practice to achieve it: a fivefold meditation known as *gosō joshinkan* (T. 2397.75:528a–533a). This classic Buddhological topic was traditionally contextualized within the Diamond World system, as the canonical sources in which it is presented belonged to this scriptural lineage. However, Annen once again argued for the equality of the two esoteric realities by elaborating on the meaning of *bodhicitta* in terms of the Womb tradition as well.

The *Bodaishingishō* also shows the sectarian dynamics of Buddhist hermeneutics at play. Annen reassessed the relative significance of the different Buddhist doctrines in a new taxonomy that drew from Tiantai models but culminated with esoteric Buddhism. He developed Enchin’s fivefold classification and added the category of “esoteric teachings” to another side of the original Tiantai scheme, the four

<sup>5</sup> Scholars have also noted that the four–one system may be traced back to the Chinese Tiantai tradition, in particular Zhanran’s 湛然 (711–782) *Fahua xuanyi shiqian* 法華玄義積籤 (Misaki 1994b, 49; cf. T. 1428.22:824c).

doctrines of conversion (i.e., Tripiṭaka 藏, shared 通, distinctive 別教, and perfect 円). By creating a place for esoteric Buddhism at the top of the structure, Annen once again posited its superiority vis-à-vis the Tiantai continental system, and at the same time provided a comprehensive taxonomy that was suitable to the needs of the Tendai lineages in Japan. Sectarian scholars of the Tokugawa period would note the heretical nature of Annen's operation, which not only dismissed a model going back to Zhiyi but also effectively ignored the fundamental identity of Lotus-based Tendai and esoteric Buddhism established by the founder of Tendai in Japan, Saichō (*Shanagō gaku-soku*, T. 2419.77:276a; Ōkubo Ryōshun 2008, 64–65).

In fact, the identity of the perfect and esoteric teachings (*emitsu itchi* 円密一致) was more an ideal to strive for than an accomplishment of Taimitsu lineages. The *Kyōjigi*, to an even higher degree than Ennin and Enchin's works, demonstrates that for Taimitsu scholiasts esoteric Buddhism surpasses all other kinds of exoteric Buddhism, including Tendai (*kenretsu misshō* 顯劣密勝). Reiterating Ennin's distinctive definition of the esoteric (*riji gumitsu* 理事俱密), Annen characterized the *Lotus Sūtra* as an "abbreviated explanation" (*ryaku-setsu* 略説) that elucidated only the principle (*ri* 理) of esotericism, whereas the esoteric scriptures were "comprehensive explanations" (*kōsetsu* 広説) that clarified both its practice and principle (*jiri* 事理) (T. 2398.75:590).

However, to support his totalizing construction of Taimitsu, Annen also established precise correlations between doctrines and practices of continental Tendai and esoteric Buddhism, and this was to have consequences for the later understanding of fundamental esoteric concepts. For instance, he demonstrated that the notion of an interrelated reality that Tiantai crystallized in the interpenetration of the ten worlds (*jikkai gogu*) was embodied in the two esoteric mandalas by creating a correspondence between each section of the mandala and each of the ten realms. In this way, he visualized and concretized the identity of the Buddha in his Dharma body with sentient beings in the esoteric locale *par excellence*, the mandala (e.g., T. 2397.75:526c–527a; Asai Endō 1973, 661–66; Dolce 2002).

#### *Ritual Accomplishment: The Yugikyōsho*

Among the writings that Annen devoted to the ritual dimension of Taimitsu, the *Commentary on the Yuqi jing* (more properly known as its abbreviated title, *Yugikyō shugyōhō*) is significant in that it discusses

the ultimate secret practice of Taimitsu, the combination of the Womb and Diamond Worlds (*taikon gōgyō* 胎金合行 or *myōgō* 冥合). The theoretical background of such practice lays in the different emphases that Tōmitsu and Taimitsu lineages placed on the two fundamental esoteric scriptures. While Tōmitsu maintained their nonduality, based on the myth of their simultaneous transmission elaborated by Kūkai, Taimitsu considered them as distinct because they were transmitted separately, but devised an “accomplishment class” (*soshitsuji* 蘇悉地) with the function of unifying the two. This teaching is usually identified with the *Suxidi jieluo jing* 蘇悉地羯羅經, a text belonging to the Womb scriptural lineage, since this was the basis for Ennin’s combinatory hermeneutics.

Annen, on the contrary, relied on another Chinese apocryphon, the *Yuqi jing*. The “discovery” of the associative nature of the *Yuqi jing* is Annen’s original contribution to the Taimitsu threefold system. The *Yuqi jing*, while considered a scripture in the Diamond lineage, contains *mudrās* and mantras associated with both the three sections of the Womb Mandala and the five sections of the Diamond Mandala. In fact, scholars deem this sūtra to be one of the first texts to articulate the concept of the unity of the two mandalic realities that emerged in China by the mid-Tang period (Misaki 1988, 508 *passim*).

Annen considered the *Yuqi jing* “the accomplishment ritual (*soshitsujihō* 蘇悉地法) according to the Diamond reality” (T. 2228.61:485a). In the *Kyōjigi*, where he presented five “esoteric repositories” (*shingon himitsuzō*), he identifies the *Yuqi jing* as the core of the two mandalic realities (*ryōbu daihō no kanjin* 兩部大法之肝心) (T. 2396.75:441a). In this way, Annen created an alternative to the Tōmitsu interpretation of the two mandalas as two and yet nondual (*nijifuni* 二而不二), which both maintained the difference between the two realities and unified them according to two distinct modes, one informed by the *Suxidi jieluo jing* and one by the *Yuqi jing*. By positing the practices of the *Yuqi jing* as a more complete “accomplishment ritual” than those of the *Suxidi jieluo jing*, however, Annen also highlighted the importance of the Diamond lineage vis-à-vis the Womb lineage, which had so far been the concern of Taimitsu scholiasts.

Though it is considered one of the five great esoteric commentaries (Fukuda 1995, 323), Annen’s *Commentary on the Yuqi jing* is not truly a doctrinal exegesis. It is not a manual of liturgical procedures but is in fact a ritual exegesis, focused on the practice of the *Yuqi jing abhiṣeka* (Asai Endō 1973, 635; Misaki 1988, 530). In particular, it explores

a crucial set of mantras called the “eightfold mantra of the sudden enlightenment and the great compassion of the Womb Realm” (*Daihi taizō tonshō hachiji shingon* 大悲胎藏頓証八字真言), also known as the “*mudrās* and mantras of the *Yuqi jing ācārya*” (瑜祇經阿闍梨位印明) when taken together with the corresponding *mudrās*. Of the eight syllables of this mantra, *a vi ra hūṃ khaṃ hūṃ hrīḥ aḥ*, the first five are the seed-syllables of the five elements, the visualization of which is a fundamental practice advocated in the *Dari jing*. The remaining three syllables embody three of the five buddhas of the Diamond Mandala. By uttering the mantra, making the corresponding *mudrās*, and visualizing the eight syllables on his body, the practitioner thus physically realizes the unification of the two mandalic realities (cf. *T.* 2228.61:494c–495a).

This mantra came to assume great importance in later Taimitsu history, but with a twist. It is interesting to note that in the *Kongōkai taihō taijuki* Annen claimed to have been the only disciple to whom Henjō transmitted the eightfold mantra (*T.* 2391.75:188c–189a). However, in another writing Annen refers to a similar eightfold mantra presented in a no-longer extant work by Engyō 円行 of Reigenji 靈巖寺 (799–852), one of the Tōmitsu monks who had studied in China.<sup>6</sup> This latter mantra was to become representative of the *Yuqi jing*, though it differs slightly from that of the sūtra in the following ways: the seventh syllable is replaced by *trāḥ*, and in some cases a ninth final syllable, *aḥ*, is added. For instance, Jien, perhaps the most eminent Taimitsu figure of the medieval period, based his innovative interpretations of esoteric practice on this mantra (in its ninefold version).

Annen certainly was the first scholar-monk to give ritual importance to the *Yuqi jing*, and this had a remarkable impact on the later use of this scripture, both in Taimitsu and Tōmitsu. Not only did the *Yuqi jing* become the source of a major *besson* ritual developed in Taimitsu, that of Butsugenbutsubo 仏眼仏母, it also informed the embryological conception of the enlightened body that characterized medieval esoteric practice (Dolce 2009a).

<sup>6</sup> This writing is cited in the *Taizōkai taihō taijuki* as *Taizō konpon gokumikkei* 胎藏根本極密契 (Extreme and Fundamental Secret Vow of the Womb [Class]) (Mizukami 2008c, 453–54).

## 66. EXPLORING THE ESOTERIC IN NARA BUDDHISM

James L. Ford

This essay will examine esoteric thought and practice within what has come to be known as Nara Buddhism (Nara Bukkyō 奈落佛教), a label that conveys two related but distinctive meanings. On the one hand, Nara Buddhism carries a temporal connotation: it designates Buddhism of the Nara era in Japan (710–794). On the other hand, it holds a geo-sectarian meaning in that it often refers to the six schools established and headquartered in Nara that remained powerful and influential well beyond the Nara era. When the capital was moved to Heian-kyō (present-day Kyoto) in 794, these temple complexes were prohibited from relocating and most survive today linked to the old capital of Nara. These schools include Jōjitsu (Chengshi; Satyasiddhi), Sanron (Sanlun; Mādhyamika), Hossō (Faxiang; Yogācāra), Kusha (Sarvāstivāda), Kegon (Huayan; Avataṃsaka), and Ritsu (Vinaya), all transmitted to Japan between 625 and 738.

In most historical overviews, the Heian era (794–1185), and in particular Kūkai's transmission of the Shingon school to Japan, mark the establishment of esoteric thought and practice on Japanese soil. Consequently, the established schools of the former capital in Nara are frequently classified as exoteric (*kengyō* 顯教), in contrast to the esoteric Buddhism (*mikkyō* 密教) of the Shingon and Tendai sects transmitted by Kūkai and Saichō, respectively. Nevertheless, it has long been recognized that esotericism permeated all facets of Japanese Buddhism, including the Nara schools, *after* the establishment of Tendai and Shingon. In the first half of the twentieth century, Ōya Tokujō observed:

In the end they all merged into the current of esoteric Buddhism, producing three branches—Tendai esotericism (*taimitsu* 台密), Shingon esotericism (*tomitsu* 東密), and Nara esotericism (*nanmitsu* 南密, if I may call it that)... Heian belief and practice became almost totally esoteric, for life could be preserved through *mikkyō*'s endorsement. (quoted in Kuroda 1996b, 250)

Scholarship has further revealed, however, that texts and practices eventually classified as “esoteric” were widespread within the Nara schools even before Kūkai's return from China in 806. Kūkai's true

import, at least from the perspective of the Nara schools, was his innovative taxonomy that clearly distinguished esoteric practices and texts from exoteric ones. Moreover, studies of the Heian and Kamakura (1185–1333) eras in particular have revealed the extensive degree to which esotericism was creatively appropriated and adapted within the Nara sects, which remained influential and powerful well into the Muromachi era (ca. 1336–1573). So the conventional classification of Nara Buddhism as “exoteric” is problematic on two counts—both *before* the official introduction of esoteric thought/practice by Kūkai and *after* the establishment of the Shingon and Tendai traditions during the Heian era. This essay will examine the presence and adaptation of esoteric thought and practice within the Nara establishment from the Nara era onward.

*Nara Esotericism, B.K. (Before Kūkai)*

One need not look far to find proclamations of Kūkai as the transmitter of esoteric thought and practice to Japan.<sup>1</sup> Virtually all of the introductory texts mark Kūkai’s return from China in 806 C.E. as the critical “esoteric turn” in Japanese religiosity. This narrative has been further reinforced by the decidedly sectarian scholarship of the post-Meiji period that featured hagiographic focus on Kūkai and Saichō and the unique contributions of the Shingon and Tendai traditions. The fact is, however, that numerous esoteric texts were already circulating in Japan and practices such as *dhāraṇī* recitation and ostensibly esoteric state-protecting rituals were practiced widely.

Ōmura Seigai, writing in the early twentieth century when Buddhism was under attack for being superstitious, backward, and unscientific, proposed two categories for distinguishing the esotericism of the Nara period from that brought to Japan by Kūkai from Tang China, the “Golden Age” of *mikkyō* on the mainland. *Zōmitsu* (雜密, miscellaneous esotericism) refers to the “mixed” tantric practices prevalent within the Nara schools before and after Kūkai’s transmission; *junmitsu* (純密, pure esotericism) refers, as the name suggests, to the truly “pure” tantric thought and practice epitomized by Kūkai’s

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<sup>1</sup> For examples, see Earhart 2004, 86–87; Ellwood 2008, 92–93; Matsuo 2007, 36–37. To be fair, Earhart does acknowledge the existence of esoteric elements and practices in Japan before Kūkai’s return from China, but he adopts Ōmura Seigai’s label of “miscellaneous esoterism,” which perpetuates the inherent problems.



Shingon sect but also acknowledged within Tendai as well. By means of this taxonomy, which appears often in contemporary scholarship, Ōmura was apparently trying to purify *mikkyō* of its “magical” and “superstitious” elements, relegating such elements to *zōmitsu*. Ōmura identified four features of “pure” *mikkyō*:

1. Centered on practices utilizing *mudrās*, mantras, and mandalas
2. Aimed at enlightenment in this lifetime
3. Based on sūtras taught by *dharmakāya* or Dainichi Nyōrai
4. Emphasis on the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* 大日經 and the *Vajraśekhara sūtra* 金剛頂經 (Abé 2004, 107–108).

Ōmura’s taxonomy acknowledges the presence of esotericism in Nara-era Buddhism, a fact that has been further borne out in closer studies of the period. For example, various diary entries corroborate that esoteric rituals were being conducted quite frequently from the middle of the Nara period onward (Abé 2004, 108). Tōdaiji sponsored ritual ceremonies (*danhō* 壇法) comprised of *dhāraṇī* recitation, contemplation of an “esoteric” central image (*honzon* 本尊), and memorial services to the dead (*kuyō*). From the time of Dōkyō (?–772), there are records of various esoteric sūtras being copied at Tōdaiji, including the *Sūtra of the Great Peahen, Queen of Mantras* (*Kujaku myōō kyō* 孔雀明王經), the *Dhāraṇī Collection Scripture* (*Darani jikkyō* 陀羅尼集經), and the *Essential Incantation of the Eleven-Faced One* (*Jūichimen shinju shinkyō* 十一面神呪心經). Based on this, we know that there was *dhāraṇī* study, *hōe* performances, and veneration of esoteric images including Mahāmāyūrī,<sup>2</sup> Batō Kannon (horse-headed), Fukū Kenjaku Kannon (Amoghapāśa), and so forth. This was also the case at Saidaiji (Abé 2004, 111). Even Dōkyō (700–772) was trained at Tōdaiji in *dhāraṇī* recitation accompanied by contemplative practices and most probably *mudrās*.

We find another revealing source for understanding the esoteric features of practice and training within the Nara establishment in the endorsement letters (*ubasoku kōshinge* 優婆塞貢進解) written by masters on behalf of their disciples seeking state-sanctioned ordination. Among other biographical information such as length of training, these letters list sūtras and *dhāraṇīs* that the candidate was able

<sup>2</sup> Mahāmāyūrī is a female bodhisattva and “Queen of the Mantras” invoked in Japan to ward off country-wide calamities.

to recite from memory. Thus, they offer evidence of the sūtras studied and the prevalence of *dhāraṇī* recitation. Horiike Shunpō, in a study of some fifty-three *kōshinge* letters, has shown that *dhāraṇīs* to esoteric deities such as the eleven-faced, thousand-armed and the Amoghapāśa (Fukū Kenjaku) manifestations of Kannon Bodhisattva appear frequently (Horiike 1960, 29).

A similar study by Yoshida Yasuo of *kōshinge* letters written during the early-middle decades of the eighth century reveals that six of the twelve most popular sūtras were esoteric and promote the merit and practice of *dhāraṇī* worship to the deities mentioned above (Yoshida Yasuo 1988, 155–65). According to both Horiike and Yoshida, it was the perceived healing powers of the *dhāraṇīs*, in particular, that enhanced their appeal. Other sources, such as the *Continued History of Japan* (*Shoku nihongi*) compiled by Emperor Kammu in 797 and the *Miraculous Episodes of Good and Evil Karmic Effects in the Nation of Japan* (*Nihonkoku zen'aku genpō ryōiki*), highlight specially trained priests conducting healing rituals through the power of *dhāraṇī* incantations (Abé 1999, 160–61).

We also know that there were frequent performances of *keka* or repentance rites, imbued with esoteric elements, during the late Nara and early Heian periods. Often conducted at imperial request, these rites were dedicated to deities such as Mañjuśrī, Lakṣmī, Amitābha, and others. Yamagishi Tsuneto documents at least fifty-six occasions between 736 and 785 when such rites were performed. For example, in 744 Emperor Shōmu ordered the nation to perform a *keka* rite dedicated to Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yakushi Nyorai), the Medicine Buddha, for seven days and nights to prevent the spread of an epidemic (Abé 1999, 163).

Finally, a review of doctrinal and scriptural studies reveals that the two main esoteric sūtras, the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (*Dainichikyō*) and the *Vajraśekhara sūtra* (*Kongōchōkyō*) were used widely within the Nara establishment. By the end of the Nara period, the *Mahāvairocana* was increasingly used in memorial services, and both sūtras were often copied and studied regularly (Abé 2004, 113). In addition to these texts, others that advocate esoteric practices such as *dhāraṇī* recitation, *mudrās*, and contemplative methods in the pursuit of the highest realization of bodhisattvahood were also copied and studied regularly. Examples include the *Konkōmyō kyō*, the *Daihannya kyō*, the *Senju sengen shinju kyō*, and the *Jūichimen shinju shinkyō* mentioned above (Abé 2004, 139).

The upshot of this scholarship demonstrates that undeniably “esoteric” elements were central to Nara monastic training, popular devotion, and institutional ritual performances. These included the study and copying of well-known esoteric sūtras, *dhāraṇī* memorization and recitation, installation of and devotion toward esoteric deities, and ritual performances involving esoteric *mudrās* and implements. While it appears that Nara scholar-monks did not possess the conceptual framework to distinguish between esoteric and exoteric doctrine or practice, to call this constellation of activities and practices “miscellaneous” *mikkyō* is an oversimplification, at best, and perhaps not even helpful heuristically (Abé 2004, 112). It obscures or perhaps minimizes the extraordinary degree to which esotericism pervaded Nara praxis. In reality, even the so-called “pure” esotericism of the Heian schools is decidedly mixed, as Shingon and Tendai monks continued to study “exoteric” texts and perform traditional rituals. We shall turn now to the increasing influence of esoteric thought and practice on Nara schools *after* Kūkai’s transformation of the ideological landscape.

#### *Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse*

Kūkai was a paradigm-changing figure within Japanese Buddhism because he introduced a clear taxonomy to distinguish between esoteric and exoteric doctrine, texts, and practices. Although Kūkai’s classification clearly privileged esoteric over exoteric, his construct was in many ways beneficial to the established schools. Unlike Saichō, Kūkai nurtured close relationships with scholar-monks in Nara and facilitated exchange between Shingon temples and the established schools. As Abé writes,

Esoteric Buddhism served as the metalanguage that continued to support Exoteric Buddhism, both in its doctrinal studies and its practice of lectures and sūtra chanting, as a crucial part of the Buddhistic symbolization of the emperor and his Shinto ritual functions, bearing witness to the continued influence in medieval society of Kūkai’s initial formulation of Esoteric Buddhist discourse. (Abé 1999, 385)

Kūkai’s efforts in building close alliances with the Nara Buddhist establishment enabled the rapid spread of esoteric Buddhism during the early Heian period. Indeed, many of Kūkai’s major works were directed not at his own disciples but toward the scholar-priests in the Nara Buddhist order whose collaboration he most needed to help spread the esoteric doctrine (Abé 1999, 388). In doing so, Kūkai “provided the Nara Buddhists with the linguistic tool they needed to

present Buddhism as an alternative discourse to that of the Confucian *ritsuryō* system” (Abé 1999, 387–88).

In a similar vein, Hiraoka Jōkai (1981, 287ff.) and Oishio Chihoro (1995, 6) show that the esotericism further imported into the Nara system was primarily from the Shingon sect. Indeed, Oishio observes that the while the “new” Kamakura sects grew from the Tendai tradition, the progressive movements within the Nara schools were based on collaboration with the Shingon sect and its esoteric ideology (Oishio 1995, 6). We will see that this is the case with the prominent scholar-monk Myōe of the Kegon school linked to Tōdaiji.

To reiterate, Kūkai was significant not because he introduced esoteric thought and practice to Japan, but because the very classification of esoteric, as distinct from exoteric, provided a coherent framework *for practices that were already part of Nara training*. The full-blown adoption and integration of esoteric thought and practice *as esoteric* by the Nara schools can be illustrated in a number of ways. In the following sections, I will examine this process in terms of doctrine and practice within the Nara establishment.

#### *Nara Esotericism, A.K. (After Kūkai)*

It is first important to note that sectarian identity was not a central feature of the Nara establishment. Monks, regardless of which institution their ordination was tied to, trained in a variety of institutional settings and studied a broad range of doctrinal traditions and practices. The transmission of the Tendai and Shingon traditions to Japan introduced in some ways a new model of school (*shū* 宗) centered on master-disciple lineages, rather than the doctrinal fields of study that characterized most of the Nara schools. This yielded a deeper sense of sectarian identity, and explains, in part, my designation of the Nara lineages as “schools” and Shingon, Tendai, and later “new” Kamakura transmissions as “sects.”

The general lack of sectarian identity within the Nara schools helps explain the Nara monks’ openness to Kūkai’s collaborative efforts. It was not unusual for Nara scholar-monks to study at Shingon centers such as Mt. Kōya, Tōji, or the Abhiṣeka Hall established at Tōdaiji by Kūkai. Many were even ordained into the Shingon lineage. Similarly, many Shingon monks studied exoteric doctrine at Kōfukuji and Tōdaiji. This mutual exchange, something not generally found with Tendai monks, was largely a byproduct of Kūkai’s outreach efforts from the beginning. Many figures could be highlighted here, but

perhaps just a few prominent examples will suffice to illustrate this phenomenon.

Shōbō (832–909), a Shingon scholar-monk known for advocating the unity of exoteric and esoteric teachings, is also well known for his writings on Sanron doctrine. He studied Sanron at Gangōji as well as Hossō and Kegon doctrines at Tōdaiji. Shinkō (934–1004) studied Yuishiki (唯識 “consciousness only,” Yogācāra) and Buddhist logic at Kōfukuji and later studied *mikkyō*. He is well known for attempting perhaps the first synthesis between Hossō and *mikkyō* thought. Shunjō (1116–1227), who traveled to China to study the *vinaya* and helped restore the Ritsu school in Japan, was first trained in the esoteric tradition of the Tendai school. Shōken (1138–1196), uncle of the Hossō scholar-monk Jōkei discussed below, trained in the Shingon tradition at Daigoji, where he attained the rank of head priest. He later held ranking positions at Kōyasan and Tōji, but also served as the superintendent (*bettō*) at Tōdaiji, head temple of the Kegon school. Another of Jōkei’s uncles, Myōhen (1142–1224) was ordained at Tōdaiji but later studied on Kōyasan. Jippan (d. 1144), Myōe (1173–1232), and Eison (1201–1290) could also be cited here but they are discussed in detail below. Though these are but a few examples among many, they amply illustrate the permeable interface between the Nara schools and their Shingon counterparts.

### *Kuroda’s Kenmitsu Theory*

The spread of esoteric thought and practice that began during the Nara period, as we have seen, continued unabated through the first centuries of the Heian era, distinguished primarily by the broad acceptance of Kūkai’s exoteric/esoteric taxonomic discourse. Kuroda Toshio, widely influential through his studies of the social, political, and religious milieu of the medieval period, labeled this integrated system of esoteric and exoteric practice *kenmitsu taisei* 顕密体制 (exo-esoteric system). This label connoted two somewhat different meanings in Kuroda’s work (Taira 1996). The first, directly related to this essay, referred “to the system of coexistence between the exoteric and esoteric teachings” that were synthesized or at least coexisted within the eight officially recognized schools during the Heian era (i.e., the six Nara schools along with Shingon and Tendai) (Kuroda 1994, 75). In other instances, Kuroda uses *kenmitsu taisei* to refer to a system that united the *kenmitsu* sects with the state power structure. Exploring this religio-political dimension, while interesting, would carry us well

beyond the parameters of this essay. With respect to religious unification, Kuroda focused particularly on the unification of Japanese religion based on thaumaturgic rites performed for the pacification of spirits, healing ceremonies, protection of the state, and so on.

Kuroda's *kenmitsu taisei* bears on the topic of esoteric Buddhism within the Nara schools because he established, beyond a doubt, that an ideological mixture of esoteric and exoteric thought and practice, worked out within the various schools and sects during the ninth and tenth centuries, permeated all aspects of Buddhism during the medieval period. Moreover, this ideological amalgamation was critical to the authority of the powerful temple complexes and schools of the time. Esoteric ideology was the key ingredient in the overarching episteme that informed much religious discourse during the medieval era. Esoteric rituals, cultural currency as it were, attracted aristocratic patronage and sustained the economic and political power of the established temples.

Some critics argue that Kuroda's *kenmitsu* rubric obscures important doctrinal differences *between* the eight established schools of the Heian era. The integration of esoteric praxis also varied considerably between schools and institutions (see Adolphson 2000, 16; Sueki 1996, 457–58 and 1998, 50; Taira 1996, 442–43). To illustrate the different ways in which esotericism was further and perhaps more explicitly embraced by the Nara sects, I have chosen to highlight three prominent scholar-monks of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, almost five centuries after Kūkai's transmission of Shingon from China. Each had strong connections with Hossō, Kegon, and Ritsu, the three most prominent Nara schools by the end of the Heian era.

### *Myōe and the Mantra of Light*

Myōe, one of the most well-known Nara scholar-monks of the early Kamakura era, is particularly noteworthy for his training and proficiency in both exoteric Kegon doctrine—for which he is known as a significant reformer—and esoteric practice, particularly his promotion of the mantra of light (*kōmyō shingon* 光明真言). In 1189, at the age of sixteen, he received the monastic precepts at the ordination platform at Tōdaiji and was later ordained into the Shingon lineage. The fact that Myōe is most often associated with the Kegon school is, in many respects, a function of the sometimes anachronistic imposition of contemporary sectarian identity onto a period when this was not a critical feature of Japanese Buddhism.

Myōe served the latter half of his career as the abbot of Kōzanji, a temple he revived and which was for a long time affiliated with the Kegon school and Tōdaiji. Despite the fact that Kōzanji was established as a temple for the training of Kegon monks, Myōe devoted the last decade of his life to the mantra of light, a decidedly esoteric practice. In fact, Myōe authored as many as ten works devoted to the mantra of light and was a critical figure in the development and popularization of this, one of the most widely practiced mantras in Japan even today (Unno 2004, 8). Mark Unno (2004, 9) contends that

Myōe's contributions should be considered on their own terms; when understood in this way, the mantra can be seen as reflective of his own creative engagement with Buddhism and a lens through which to view the many forces that shaped the Buddhism of the time.

The mantra of light derives from a number of Mahāyāna sūtras that trace back to Indian sources, such as the *Sutra of the Mantra of Divine Transformation of the Unfailing Rope Snare (Amoghapāśavikrīṇita-mantra sūtra; Bukong juansuo shenbian zhenyan jing)*.<sup>3</sup> The main deities of the mantra are Mahāvairocana and Fukūkenjaku Kannon (Bodhisattva of Compassion of the Unfailing Rope Snare; Skt. Amoghapāśa Avalokiteśvara) (Unno 2004, 38). This sūtra was first brought to Japan by Kūkai, and its earliest known use dates to the latter part of the ninth century, but it did not see wide usage until the eleventh century (Unno 2004, 27). Interestingly, Kūkai never employed the mantra of light practice (Unno 2004, 7).

According to the text, if one chants the mantra with a sincere and clear mind, Vairocana Buddha will rid the practitioner of ignorance and delusion. A common practice entailed sprinkling sand, blessed by the mantra, over a corpse or burial site in order to cleanse the deceased of any negative karmic residue, thus enabling birth in a variety of buddha realms. Because the rite was claimed to aid those seeking birth in Amitābha's Pure Land, in particular, it came to be seen as a supplemental practice to the *nenbutsu*. In addition to being invoked at funeral ceremonies, the sand was also used to cure illness. Myōe is well-known for promoting the mantra of light as a superior means of achieving birth in Amida's Pure Land, in opposition to the increas-

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<sup>3</sup> For others, see Mark Unno 2004, 25–26.

ingly popular *nenbutsu* recitation promoted by Hōnen and his followers (Unno 2004, 32–35).

Myōe represented a pivotal turning point, as Unno notes, by emphasizing the universal “efficacy of the sand for the living and the dead, lay and ordained, men and women” (Unno 2004, 40). He thus played a crucial role in the popularization of the mantra of light, extending the benefits to everyone through the use of sacralized sand. Even today it remains one of the most important and widely practiced mantras in Japan. Moreover, the use of sand, advocated by Myōe in particular, became integral to its application and was incorporated into the contemporary practices of other schools such as Zen and Tendai (Unno 2004, 41).

Myōe also emphasized the complementarity of exoteric and esoteric when he wrote that the “profundity of the profound dharma is constant. The Shingon is profound because it expounds the shallow as profound” (Unno 2004, 59). As Tanaka Kaiō observes, Myōe strove “to unify Kegon and Shingon, and out of this arose the *Kugishaku* (Commentary on the Syllables of the Mantra of Light)” that advocated the mantra of light (quoted in Unno 2004, 33). In short, Myōe’s adoption and popular promotion of the mantra of light illustrates the practical integration of esotericism into the Kegon school as well as efforts toward doctrinal reconciliation.

### *Jōkei’s Doctrinal Reforms*

Kūkai’s introduction of the exoteric-esoteric distinction raised hermeneutical challenges within the Nara schools whose identities revolved primarily around doctrinal and textual studies. Responses varied because each school faced different challenges in harmonizing esoteric principles with sometimes opposing doctrinal stances. The Sanron school, for example, confronted minimal challenges because it had already reconciled the Prajñāpāramitā literature, the foundation of the school, with the Shingon esoteric scriptures. Many of the leading Nara clerics known for quickly integrating esoteric teachings came from the Sanron fold. Examples include Enmyō (d. 851), Dōshō (798–875), and Shōbō (832–909). The Kegon school also possessed traditional sources that allowed it to embrace esoteric principles without too much trouble. For example, its assertion that the causal relationship between phenomena and principle is that of mutual inclusion, interpenetration, and identity—*enyū* or complete interpenetration—was easily



reconciled with the nondual teachings of esoteric sūtras. Hossō, on the other hand, was faced with substantive doctrinal challenges. Here I would like to summarize these tensions and highlight the doctrinal reforms offered by Jōkei (1155–1213) and Ryōhen (1194–1252) as yet another example of the impact of esotericism on Nara Buddhism.

The Hossō school traced its lineage to the Yogācāra (Yoga Practice) school in India founded by Asaṅga (ca. 375–430) and his younger half-brother Vasubandhu (ca. 400–480). As suggested by its alternative title, Vijñaptimātra, or Consciousness-only, the school is often characterized as idealist due to its emphasis on the fundamental role of consciousness in our perception of reality. In terms of practice, it stressed the importance of yogic contemplative exercises by which one comprehends the ways one's deluded mind (mis)perceives objective reality.

The most influential transmission of Yogācāra to China was that carried out by Xuanzang (ca. 600–664), who traveled to India in 629 and returned sixteen years later to become perhaps the most preeminent East Asian Buddhist of his generation. Xuanzang's lineage was known as Weishi (Vijñaptimātra) by its proponents, and as Faxiang (Hossō, Dharma Characteristics) by opponents such as Fazang (643–712), the third patriarch and key systematizer of Huayan. Faxiang offered elaborate and rather sophisticated analyses of the different characteristics of *dharma*s, all subject to karmic causality, without denying their underlying nature of emptiness. In contrast, Fazang classified his own Huayan school as Dharma-nature (Faxing 法性), inferring that it offered deeper and ostensibly superior penetration into the reality of *dharma*s.

Most East Asian Buddhist schools accepted fundamental Yogācāra teachings such as the eight consciousnesses, including *ālaya-vijñāna*, the three natures, and mind-only. However, there were several Hossō teachings that drew strong criticism from opposing schools, particularly Tendai, and engendered considerable tension with esoteric teachings. For example, Hossō was well known for its infamous taxonomy of categorizing beings into five classes based on innate seeds that determine one's potential for awakening. The lowest class, *icchāntikas* (*issendai* 一闍提), are devoid of any seeds and deemed incapable of achieving awakening. This teaching was at considerable odds with the widely accepted universal enlightenment view (*kaijō* 皆成) that all beings are destined for realization, which, in turn, was based on *tathāgatagarbha* ideology (i.e., the universality of buddha-nature). Hossō scholar monks rejected this doctrine for being too metaphysi-

cally substantialistic. Hossō also emphasized the gradualist bodhisattva path to enlightenment, traditionally understood to take some three *kalpas* to achieve. This view was at odds with the rapid realization of enlightenment proffered by both Saichō and Kūkai, captured by the phrase *sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成佛 (“the realization of buddhahood in this very body”).<sup>4</sup>

Finally, at perhaps a more philosophical level, Hossō scholar-monks were reluctant to accept the esoteric and nondual contention that the phenomenal world is produced out of the universal principle of suchness (*shinnyo engi* 真如緣起), or *dharmakāya*. Hossō emphasized the fundamental divide between the universal principle and phenomena. The former is eternal and unchanging, and thus transcends the reality of cause and effect. The latter is based on distinctions between *dharma*s and is subject to causal analysis. As noted, Hossō emphasized the difference between *dharma*s, the psychophysical constituents of reality, in terms of their characteristics, hence the name “Dharma Characteristics” school. Tendai and Shingon emphasized the fundamental *identity* of all *dharma*s based on emptiness or the universal *dharmakāya*.

Despite these tensions, Hossō monks at Kōfukuji and elsewhere journeyed to Tōji and Mt. Kōya, centers of the Shingon sect, to master the esoteric teachings and ritual practices. Kōfukuji is a characteristic example of this marriage between exoteric doctrine and esoteric practice. Jōshō (906–983), who served as *bettō* 別当 of Kōfukuji, professed to being a Hossō-Shingon monk, and Shingō (934–1004) is well known for integrating mind-only (*yuishiki* 唯識) contemplation and esoteric practice. But neither proposed doctrinal reforms to address these noted tensions, which, in fact, had inspired well-known debates and numerous back-and-forth treatises between Hossō monks and Tendai adversaries during the ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>5</sup>

Early in the Kamakura period, Jōkei and Ryōhen were the first to offer reforms designed to address these doctrinal tensions. Although too complex to review in detail here, I would like to highlight three important moves and their relevant significance in the context of esoteric influence on this prominent Nara school.<sup>6</sup> In a general sense,

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed analysis of the development of this teaching, including the contributions of Saichō and Kūkai to it, see Groner 1984a, 54–58.

<sup>5</sup> For a summary of these debates involving Tendai representatives Saichō and Ryōgen and Hossō monks Tokuitsu and Hōzō, see Ford 2006, 47–51.

<sup>6</sup> For readers desiring a more complete review and analysis, see Ford 2006, 54–67.

Jōkei argued for the middle way between the disputed positions and often appropriated the phrase *fusoku furi* 不即不離 (“neither the same nor different”) or similar equivalents (e.g., *fuichi fui* 不一不異) to find a compromise resolution. For example, with respect to the difference between Dharma-characteristics and Dharma-nature, he writes:

What person of wisdom, then, insists only on identity or only on difference? ... The true principle (*shinri*) and its existing phenomenal characteristics are neither identical nor different. ... Thus, in our school, the most profound understanding resides in this teaching of “neither identity nor difference” (*fusoku furi*).<sup>7</sup>

Jōkei thus denies the absolute validity of either view; instead, both are indeed true from a particular perspective. He applied the same “middle way” principle to the differences between the one vehicle teaching and the three vehicle teachings.

Second, Jōkei took a significant step in overcoming the apparently irreconcilable divide between the doctrine of universal buddha-nature and the Hossō classification of beings (i.e., the *icchāntika* problem). He did so by resorting to the miraculous power and compassion of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, whose vow to save all beings must surely be fulfilled. In one instance, he responds to an interlocutor who wonders about those beings (*icchāntikas*) who don’t possess the untainted seeds necessary to realize awakening:

The vow common to all buddhas of the three worlds is the unrestricted vow to save all sentient beings. ... If those without the nature [of enlightenment] were rejected, how could it be the great undifferentiating compassion?<sup>8</sup>

In other words, although there are beings classified as *icchāntikas*, their karmic destiny can and indeed must be annulled by the miraculous ability and compassion of the divine beings whose very power is inspired by their selfless vow to lead all sentient beings to buddhahood. Jōkei cites the esoteric *dhāraṇī* of Kannon as evidence of this inconceivable power (see below).

Jōkei was followed by Ryōhen, who is well known for his brilliant treatise, the *Kanjin Kakumushō*, which elaborated and extended beyond some of Jōkei’s reform efforts. In particular, Ryōhen addressed

<sup>7</sup> *Hossōshū shoshin ryakuō zokuhen*, NDZ 63, 401b: 1–13.

<sup>8</sup> NDZ 63, 412a:11–16.

the tension between Hossō's gradualist understanding of the bodhisattva path and the teaching of realizing buddhahood in this very body (*sokushin jōbutsu*). He argued that just as *dharmas* are empty and non-substantial, so also are the provisional distinctions of time, such as the traditional bodhisattva stages and the three immeasurable eons required to achieve awakening. He proclaims:

When the wisdom of supreme enlightenment arises you will see that the three immeasurable eons resemble dream-like objects and hence are included within the objective aspect of the mind that is of a moment's duration.<sup>9</sup>

Time, in short, is a constructed category. In this manner, Ryōhen attempted to harmonize the traditional Hossō view of the bodhisattva stages with the esoteric "short path" to enlightenment.

Jōkei is also noteworthy for his popular promotion of the power of *dhāraṇī*s and his explicit acceptance of esoteric practice. For example, in the *Kanjin shōjō i enmyō no koto* (Contemplation on the Pure and Perfect Enlightenment), Jōkei is asked by a hypothetical inquirer if the Hossō school has a practice like the esoteric moon-disk contemplation of the Shingon school. Jōkei responds affirmatively, but advocates a *dhāraṇī* to Kannon that is even easier to access. He also proclaims that there is no essential difference between the esoteric and exoteric teachings:

The nature of one's own mind is originally pure, perfect, and clear, just like the autumn moon. If one happens to hear this, even if you have not yet distanced yourself from self-discrimination or cultivated the essence of the esoteric teachings, and even if your eyes are obscured and you have not formed the *mudrās*, if you contemplate even slightly this subtle principle, the benefit will be great and not in vain. Among the exoteric teachings, even though there is not a proper text, the meaning and vitality are largely the same. The words are different, but the meaning is one.<sup>10</sup>

In this way, Jōkei endeavored to bridge the exoteric-esoteric divide. The *dhāraṇī* left by Kannon, a vital figure in esoteric devotion, is the key to inconceivable merit and majestic power. As we have seen, this *dhāraṇī* was a practice prevalent in the Nara schools well before Kūkai

<sup>9</sup> T. 71:87c18–21; translation from Weinstein 1965, 257–58.

<sup>10</sup> NDZ 64, 23a:16–23b:16.

returned from China. Let us now examine one final example of the impact of esotericism on the Nara establishment.

*Eison and the Esotericization of the Precepts*

Eison (1201–1290), who studied esoteric, Hossō, and *abhidharma* doctrine at Daigoji, Tōdaiji, and Kōfukuji, established an order at Saidaiji that synthesized Shingon and Ritsu praxis. He is perhaps best known for his role in the precept revival movement of the early Kamakura era that embraced a broad spectrum of members from fully ordained monastics to lay folk. A brief background summary of the debates that preceded Eison's revival efforts will help to highlight the esoteric nature of his reforms.

With the adoption of the bodhisattva *Fan-wang* precepts by Saichō, along with later efforts by his successors Kōjō (779–859) and Annen (841?–880?), precept standards on Mt. Hiei became notably relaxed (Groner 1984b, 292–98). Reflecting a certain “esotericization” of the precept ordination that tended to elevate essence over action, Annen, for example, argued that strict adherence to the precept rules missed their spirit and soteriological essence. Nara monks were highly critical of these trends and asserted that Tendai monks were not officially ordained because they had not received the *Ssu-fen-lu* lineage passed down from Śākyamuni.

In response to at least a perceived decline in monastic adherence to and monastic knowledge of the *vinaya* within the Nara schools themselves, a precept revival occurred in the latter part of the Heian era. Jippan (also pronounced Jichihan; d. 1144) is widely recognized as the initial restorer to the Japanese world of the Nakāya principles of discipline. Initially beginning his career at Kōfukuji, where he studied Hossō doctrine, Jippan went on to study esoteric doctrine at Daigoji and eventually founded the Naka-no-kawa school of Shingon. However, he is perhaps best known for restoring Tōshōdaiji, once the fountainhead of Ganjin's precept lineage transmitted from China, as the center of *vinaya* education, and for inaugurating a new precept lineage. Later recipients of this lineage included Zōshun (1104–1180), Kakuken (1131–1212), Jōkei (1155–1213), Kainyo (n.d.), Kakushin (1170–1243), Kakujō (1194–1249), and Eison (1201–1290), all affiliated with Nara schools. In 1212, Jōkei's disciple Kakushin established Jōki'in, a subtemple at Kōfukuji, as a center for precept study, which became the center for radically new developments in the emerging

revival movement led by figures like Eison, Kakujō, Ensei, and Yūgon. In 1236, at Tōdaiji's Kenjakuin, Kakujō, Eison, Ensei, and Yūgon conferred upon themselves what became known as the "self-administered precepts" (*jisei jukai* 自誓受戒), a term found in the *Sūtra of Brahmā's Net*. A sincere confession and an extraordinary sign or vision (usually in the form of a dream) were considered necessary validation of the efficacy of the ritual and the conferred precepts.

The revival efforts of Kakujō and Eison that followed reconciled the tension between the Nara precepts and the Tendai bodhisattva precepts. They also reflect an increasing esoteric influence on the precepts and ritual associated with their conference. Relying on a number of textual sources, they argued that separate ordinations (*betsuju* 別受) conferred the essence of the precepts (*kaitai* 戒体) and the nature (*shō* 性) of a monk (Groner 1995, 24). In addition to the more conservative restoration efforts by monks such as Jōkei, Eison clearly thought of the precepts in esoteric terms. He emphasized the indispensable nature of the precepts, particularly their power to destroy sins and produce good (*metsuzai shōzen* 滅罪生善), and he administered them widely to all members of society. The precepts became a propagation tool by which to establish Buddhism among the common people, a phenomenon that Ienaga Saburō labeled the "religiousization" of the precepts (Ienaga and Akamatsu 1967, 2:318). Eison eventually established an order at Saidaiji, which flourished and embraced a broad spectrum of members.

It is also worth noting that Eison followed in the Myōe's footsteps in advocating the mantra of light, which he utilized to complement the conference of the precepts. Eison instituted an annual seven-day ritual assembly, the Kōmyō Shingon-e, which, as the name suggests, centered around the recitation of the mantra of light. This assembly grew into a major event at Saidaiji and continues even to this day (Unno 2004, 36). As at Saidaiji, the mantra of light assembly that began as a memorializing funerary rite to relieve karmic burdens in the afterlife later became one of the most widespread practices of Shingon Buddhism (Unno 2004, 38).

### *Conclusion*

I have endeavored in this essay to explore the presence and impact of esoteric Buddhism within the Nara establishment both before and after Kūkai's momentous journey to China. Employing a primarily descriptive approach, I first reviewed the widespread presence of esotericism

within the Nara schools before Kūkai's Shingon transmission from China. We then examined the important impact of Kūkai's exoteric-esoteric taxonomy on Buddhism during the Heian period. Finally, I chose to explore the further assimilation of esotericism, in terms of doctrine and practice, through three prominent Nara scholar-monks of the late Heian and early Kamakura period, some five centuries after Kūkai's return from China. Given space, we might also have analyzed the mandalacization of geography (Nara temple complexes in particular) or the prominence of esoteric deities (e.g., Kannon) within Nara devotion.

It should be clear by now that any effort to characterize the Nara establishment, either before or after Kūkai, as *exoteric* or even "miscellaneous esoteric" (*zōmitsu*) is problematic or misleading at best. Esoteric sūtras, doctrines, and practices were widespread within the Nara schools well before Kūkai. Once Kūkai introduced the Chinese taxonomy that clearly distinguished exoteric from esoteric, Nara scholar-monks were quick to embrace the new hermeneutic. At the same time, this called for conscious efforts to reconcile previously unrecognized—or perhaps not fully recognized—tensions between exoteric and esoteric discourse on doctrine, practice, and the path to buddhahood.

In many respects, the necessary ideological reforms took place *after* esotericism had been fully integrated into the practice and discourse of the Nara establishment. Here Jōkei is a notable case in point. The Nara sects, while still adhering to the exoteric texts and commentaries that were the basis of their doctrinal lineages and institutional identity, fully embraced esoteric discourse and practice in their own creative ways. This ideological merger, labeled appropriately by Kuroda as the *kenmitsu* system, became the currency of power and authority for the temple establishments until well into the Muromachi period.

We have only touched on the underlying motivations and appeal for incorporating esoteric texts and practices into the traditional arsenal of Buddhist practice. Such an analysis, useful as it might be, would take us considerably beyond the scope of this essay. I shall, however, conclude with a general observation. Put simply, the esoteric technologies—and the sophisticated ideology that informed them—were instruments of power, much as "real" technology is today. Monks trained in the "secrets" of this ritual knowledge held sway over nature (e.g., weather), sickness, death, and even salvation. Although some of the texts and practices were already part of the ritual inventory of the

Nara schools before Kūkai's Shingon transmission, it is not difficult to understand why Nara scholar monks and their parent institutions would have been anxious to develop these practices further and to acquire new ones as Hieizan and Kōyasan attracted growing patronage throughout the Heian era. Considerable wealth, influence, and even survival were at stake for the established schools.

These were strong motivations for Nara monks like Myōe, Jōkei, Eison, and many before them to master these ritual technologies, incorporate them into their practice, and reconcile problematic doctrinal positions with prevailing esoteric beliefs. This is not to impugn their motives, but rather to properly acknowledge the social, religious, and even political context of their lives. Esoteric Buddhism represented a paradigm shift in terms of the discourse and practice of Japanese Buddhism. If the Nara schools were to survive this momentous transition, they had little choice but to join the march.



67. DHARMA PRINCE SHUKAKU AND THE ESOTERIC  
BUDDHIST CULTURE OF SACRED WORKS (*SHŌGYŌ*) IN  
MEDIEVAL JAPAN

Brian O. Ruppert

Shukaku Hosshinnō 守覚法親王 (1150–1202), pronounced Shūkaku at Ninnaji, the second son of cloistered sovereign Go-Shirakawa (r. 1155–1158), was one of the most influential masters in the history of Shingon lineages. Along with the Tendai abbot Jien (1155–1225), Shukaku broadly influenced not only the temple-complex establishment of his time but also the aristocratic lineages in the arts. However, until recently, modern and contemporary scholars have all but ignored him in the larger development of Japanese Shingon. As with such figures as Ninnaji’s Saisen 濟暹 (1025–1115), editor of Kūkai’s works and the first great commentator on Kūkai’s oeuvre, who remains largely ignored by academia throughout the world, Shukaku’s remarkable activity and clear influence in the course of medieval and early modern Shingon ritual and intellectual practice has been until recently a largely untold—and unstudied—story.

The literary scholar Wada Hidematsu, in his classic study of imperial house manuscripts, included numerous works by or attributed to Shukaku Hosshinnō that outnumbered those included for any other imperial figure in Japanese history (Wada 1933, 566–621). Yet surprisingly, in his massive study of the history of Japanese Buddhism, Tsuji Zennosuke seems not to have even mentioned Shukaku (Tsuji 1969–1970).<sup>1</sup> For his part, the Shingon scholar Kushida Ryōkō devoted only sparse attention to Shukaku, although he did take note of Shukaku’s central position in the development of the royal Ninnaji Go-ryū 御流 ritual lineage, his ritual ability, his encyclopedic knowledge, and the dissemination of his lineage to Shōmyōji 称名寺 (“Kanazawa Bunko”) in the Kantō region (Kushida 1979, 418–19, 570–73).

The fact that Shukaku did not establish a distinct school (*shūha*) or feature as a prominent figure in one of the extant historical tales of

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<sup>1</sup> There are no sections concerning Shukaku, and I have yet to find mention of his name in Tsuji’s ten-volume study.

the period, such as the *Heike monogatari*, may have had a role in earlier scholars' apparent disinterest, which seems to have been based on a series of assumptions influenced by modern presuppositions about historical prominence and influence as well as institutional history. However, a careful consideration of Shukaku's activities, his political ascendancy and that of his disciple Dōhō 道法, his authorship and editing of a vast corpus of sacred works, his creation of the royal *Go-ryū* ritual lineage, and the influence of his corpus on esoteric Buddhists throughout Japan, make it clear that Shukaku and his culture of sacred works had a deep and lasting impact on Shingon lineages.

Indeed, not until the 1990s did Shukaku gain increased prominence in academic circles. By the mid-1990s Abe Yasurō, Yamazaki Makoto, and their research group, which had completed the first stages of research at Ninnaji, began to publish monumental quantities of Shukaku's work and to analyze its contents in depth (Ninnaji konbyōshi kozōshi Kenkyūkai, ed. 1995; Abe and Yamasaki 1998).

The focus on Shukaku was first related to greater recognition of the preeminence of the dharma princes (*hosshinnō*) during the early medieval era. As Abe Yasurō has noted, the position of dharma prince was the highest rank within the exo-esoteric Buddhist establishment (*kenmitsu Bukkyō*) that dominated the era. Sons of the cloistered sovereign (*in*) were placed during childhood by their fathers into major monasteries, where they took the precepts, entered the monastic community, inherited one of the halls (*inge* 院家) within the premises, and took control of the abbacy of the entire complex.

Moreover, insofar as the cloistered sovereign Shirakawa (r. 1072–1086) created the system at Ninnaji, site of the oldest royal cloister (*monzeki*) O'muro 御室 at the end of the eleventh century, the dharma princes there occupied a unique position within Japanese Buddhism. In fact, the third of the dharma princes, Kakushō (1129–1169), son of the cloistered sovereign Toba (r. 1107–1123), was granted the Sōgō monastic administration by his father. The position of the dharma prince of O'muro would later be referred to as the "universal dharma administrator" (*sōhōmu* 惣法務), and thus constituted the highest status within the Buddhist community at the time (Abe Yasurō 1998, 118–19).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Such status was specific to the court status system of the era, and did not necessarily translate into direct domination of Japanese Buddhists more generally.

It is interesting to note that the section on Shukaku is absent from the mid-Kamakura work *O'muro sōjō ki* (Record of Transmissions of O'muro), the standard early work of Ninnaji describing the lives and activities of the dharma princes. However, we can glean information about him from the later *Ninnaji go-den* (August Biographies of Ninnaji) and other works.<sup>3</sup> Shukaku received the precepts from his uncle, Kakushō, in 1160. He received the status of singular *ajari* master (*isshin ajari* 一身阿闍梨) by royal order in 1168, and soon after was granted the dharma-transmission consecration (*denbō kanjō* 伝法灌頂) by Kakushō, who died the next year. Shukaku was thus officially named dharma prince in 1170.

Following the usual privileges of the O'muro dharma prince, Shukaku was now granted the abbacies of royal-vow temples of both the cloistered sovereign and the *nyō'in* female cloistered sovereigns, including the great six "shō" temples (*rokushōji*) of Higashiyama, several of the "round" (*en*) temples near Ninnaji, the Shōkōmyō'in south of Heian-kyō, and the Hōkongō'in and Saishōkō'in, among others. He was conferred the second highest princely rank in 1176 and would later go on to perform a whole series of esoteric rites (*shuhō*), venerative memorials (*kuyō*), and bond-establishment consecrations (*kechien kanjō*) for the royal house and high nobility. Indeed, Shukaku's reception of the official monastic administration apparatus in 1195 from his nephew, the sovereign Go-Toba (r. 1183–1198), constituted the regularization of the dharma prince as head administrator, given that Kakushō's reception had been the only previous example of such conferral. This signals that Shukaku had now achieved an extremely high position both socially and historically.<sup>4</sup>

Although during his life Shukaku seems to have received just four royal rewards (*kenjō* 勸賞) for his performance of important rites, his disciple, younger brother, and successor as dharma prince Dōhō (1166–1214) was described in the *Record of Transmissions of O'muro* as having received some thirty such rewards. The only figure in the medieval records to match this number was Dōhō's contemporary Jien,

<sup>3</sup> These two works are both included in Nara kokuritsu bunkazai Kenkyūjo, ed. 1964–1967; respectively, *Ninnaji shiryō*, vols. 1 and 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ninnaji go-den* (Shinren'in-bon, Shinkō'in-bon, Kenshō-shosha-bon) in Nara kokuritsu bunkazai Kenkyūjo, ed. 1964–1967, 2: 30–34, 86–87, 145–51. See also Abe and Yamazaki 1998, 14, *Ronbunhen*.

who in the same era also received roughly thirty (*Tendai zasu ki*).<sup>5</sup> In each case, the recipient monk often bequeathed (*yuzuri*) his reward to a disciple, and it is also clear that Shukaku was in the background of Dōhō's reception of rewards. Likewise, although these appointment works do not provide details, it is evident that these rewards were almost uniformly granted through the influence of Go-Toba, especially after he became the cloistered sovereign in 1198.

Shukaku studied royal court protocol under the tutelage of court chroniclers, and also took an active role within the larger cultural world of the cloistered sovereign and the nobility. He was a *waka* poet, a patron of the great monk-poet Kenshō 顯昭 (ca. 1130–ca. 1210), a collector of poetic works, and the center of a poetry salon. Like Jien, who as a member of the leading northern Fujiwara family was an active poet as well as a Tendai abbot and head of the elite cloister (*monzeki*) Shōren'in and other temples, Shukaku was the abbot of Ninnaji, the O'Muro royal cloister within it, and the array of temples mentioned above while also pursuing various forms of learning, including the arts and non-Buddhist literature in general (*geten*).

Shukaku's legacy is ultimately attributable to the broad corpus of works he wrote and collected. We can first take note of the genres of writing he influenced.<sup>6</sup> In terms of Buddhist music, Shukaku wrote such works as the manual *Hossokushū* 法則集, compiled the *Shikanyōshō* 糸管要抄, and was associated with Fujiwara (Myōon'in) no Moronaga (1138–1192), whose eminent disciple Fujiwara Takamichi (1166–1239), father of the original Biwa lineage, spent his later years in Ninnaji.

Shukaku also wrote protocols (*kojitsusho* 故実書) in the form of records (*gyoki* 御記) concerning not only esoteric Buddhist and monastic practice but also Chinese poetry, *waka*, string music, and calligraphy. Other records by Shukaku include depictions of the bond-establishing consecrations (*kechien kanjō* 結縁灌頂) he performed at court as well as various journals (*hinamiki* 日次記) he kept throughout his life at Ninnaji. Shukaku's writings represent a broad chronicling of rites, general activities, and studies, similar to those of the so-called

<sup>5</sup> *O'muro sōjō ki*, in Nara kokuritsu bunkazai Kenkyūjo, ed. 1967, 1: 86–119; *Tendai zasu ki*, in Nara Kokuritsu Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, ed. 1964–1967, 1: 119–22, 127–31, 149–50, 156–63.

<sup>6</sup> We draw here on a vast corpus of research, most of which has been conducted under Abe Yasurō's direction; see Abe Yasurō 1998, 122–26 for a discussion of these genres in succinct terms.

chroniclers (*kike* 記家) at other great medieval temple multiplexes such as the fourteenth-century Mt. Hiei (Abe Yasurō 1998, 130).

Meanwhile, Shukaku was also extremely prolific in preaching (*shōdō* 唱導) and in collecting preaching literature. He was especially involved in writing and collecting ritual pronouncements (*hyōbyaku* 表白), which were presented in front of the object of veneration on the occasion of assemblies (*e* 会) and esoteric rites (*shuhō* 修法). While the preaching lineage of Tendai's Agui is well known, Shingon lineages also featured preaching practices, and collections of ritual pronouncements were prominent from the time of the abbot of Kajūji, Kanjin 寛信 (1074–1149), onward.

Shukaku's own *Jūhachidō shogyō hyōbyaku* 十八道初行表白 featured elaborate *kunten* marks for instructive purposes; he also gathered his own pronouncements together in collected form in at least two works, and his pronouncements were incorporated within large collections such as the twelve- and twenty-two-fascicle versions of the *Hyōbyakushū*, both of which may have been assembled within the context of the cultural milieu surrounding the dharma princes at Ninnaji (Abe Yasurō 1998, 125; Makino 1989).

A major portion of Shukaku's corpus was his series of temple protocols (*shidaisho* 次第書) for a variety of ritual assemblies (*hō'e* 法会) and court annual ceremonies (*nenjū gyōji*). Taken together, these offer insight into not only the character of court Buddhist ritual of the era but also into rites performed specifically on behalf of the royal house, including the cloistered sovereigns, both male and female. Prominent among these works were the so-called *Deep Blue Booklets* (*Konbyōshi kozōshi* 紺表紙小双紙), a massive set of ritual protocols held in the Ninnaji collection that were in close relationship with the large set of similar works called the *Go-ryū sahō* 御流作法 (*Rituals of the Go-ryū*; Kanazawa Bunkozō *Shōmyōji shōgyō* archives), which were the protocols for rituals of the Tōji abbots (*Tōchō gi* 東長儀) as well as of the official Buddhist administrative hierarchy (*Hōgō gi* 法綱儀) (Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, ed. 1933, 360–79 [*Hōgō gi*], 455–92 [*Tōchō gi*]).

In particular, Shukaku's corpus of writings and collections of ritual works (often called *jisōsho* 事相書) formed what might arguably be described as the center of his esoteric world of belief and practice. These works, listed in the catalogue (*mokuroku*) of his core compendium the *Mitsuyō shō* (*Mitsuyō kanjin shō* 密要肝心鈔), formed the heart of the esoteric lineage of the *Go-ryū* of which Shukaku saw himself as

the inheritor (though he was clearly the most influential and innovative figure in its history). In particular, consideration of these works clarifies the extent to which Shukaku's initiation by the Daigoji monk Shōken 勝賢 (1138–1196) enabled him to incorporate Ono branch 小野流 teachings and practices (especially of the Sanbō'in lineage 三宝山院流) into his understanding, performance, and transmission of esoteric Buddhist practices, supplementing the Hirosawa branch 広沢流 framework centered at Ninnaji—and arguably transforming the early medieval history of Shingon belief and practice.

At the same time, Shukaku also gained access to the corpus of the Kōya monk Shingaku's 心覚 (1117–ca. 1180) extensive iconographic commentaries and collections that also incorporated Tendai ritual teachings, which availed Shukaku and the O'muro cloister of the broadest set of ritual works in early medieval Shingon Buddhism. Shukaku's own handwritten *Catalogue of the Three Notes* (*Sanshō mokuroku* 三抄目録; *Mi-kyōzō* 御経蔵 44.7) represents not only his encapsulation of the contents of iconographic works received from Shingaku and Shōken but also his own elaboration on his ritual reception (*denjū* 伝授) from Shōken of the relevant Ono catalogues (*Mi-kyōzō* 44.6). Shukaku thus was initiated into the catalogues—a kind of foreshortening of separate esoteric ritual transmission—in 1195, and went on to incorporate them into a larger corpus into which he likewise granted transmission to disciples.

Clearly the most influential of Shukaku's works within his core compendium were his *Secret Notes* (*Hishō* 秘鈔); one manuscript in Daikakuji 大覚寺 was largely written in his hand and includes both a colophon recording its transmission from Dōhō to the next O'muro dharma Prince, Dōjo 道助 (1196–1249), as well as one signed by the cloistered sovereign Go-Uda (r. 1274–1287) (Abe Yasurō 1998, 131–33).

Significantly, Shukaku's corpus of writings and collections, known more generally as the *Sacred Writings of the Go-ryū* (*Go-ryū shōgyō* 御流聖教), was transmitted rapidly to the Kantō region, home of the shogunate, as well as to temples affiliated with the Hirosawa branch in Kyōto and environs. The Kantō dissemination was accomplished through the influence of the first non-royal O'muro abbot, Hōjo 法助 (1227–1284), a son of the leading noble Kujō Michi'ie, and in particular his disciple Raijo 頼助 (1246–1297), son of the shogunate regent Hōjō Tsunetoki 北条経時 (1224–1246). Having received initiation from Hōjo into Shukaku's *Secret Notes* (1271) and other

works of the *Go-ryū* collection, Raijo transmitted more than one hundred and twenty fascicles to his disciple, the Ninnaji dharma prince Yakujo 益助 (1255–1305), who copied them in 1285.

The site at which these initiations occurred was the Sasame-yuishin'in 佐々目遺身院 Hall in Kamakura, the family temple of the Hōjō clan, which offers further evidence of the great interest the shogun's family had in *Go-ryū* teachings and practices. Moreover, the fact that Raijo was Yakujo's teacher indicates that by the late Kamakura era non-royal monks took increasingly active roles even within the high-status lineage of the *Go-ryū*, an indication of the increasing fluidity of access to esoteric ritual knowledge in both spatial and class terms. Soon after, the abbot Kenna 鋸阿 (1261–1338) of another Hōjō-sponsored temple, Shōmyōji (Kanazawa Bunko), received initiation from Yakujo's disciple into the same lineage, and many of the works are extant there today (Fukushima 1998, 463–69).

At Ninnaji, the *Mitsuyō shō* collection was transmitted and expanded throughout medieval and early modern times within the complex, and disseminated partially to other major Shingon temple complexes such as Daikakuji. Moreover, nearby Kōzanji 高山寺, which held a massive collection of Huayan (Jpn. Kegon) and Shingon materials—thanks to Myō'e 明恵 (1173–1232) and his disciples—had close connections with Ninnaji throughout most of the medieval period. Ninnaji monks such as Chōi 齋怡 (ca. 1501–1579) withdrew to Kōzanji for a period after the devastating Ōnin War (1467–1477), thus enabling the *Go-ryū* and related collections to be maintained.

In the generations after their return, and at the dawn of the Tokugawa shogunate, the situation greatly improved at Ninnaji. There the well-known monk Kenshō 顕証 (1597–1678), who worked closely with the dharma prince Kakujin 覺深 (1588–1642) to reconstruct the Ninnaji complex and transmit Ninnaji traditions, developed the final standard catalogue of the *Mitsuyō shō* (Nagamura 1998). This was the culmination of a process following the age-old activity of expanding upon earlier versions of the *Mitsuyō shō*—a process in which the sacred works (*shōgyō*) of the *Go-ryū* lineage were freely expanded upon in the developing traditions of master and disciple that marked the medieval era in esoteric Japanese Buddhism. Rather than a static “canon,” scripture was worked out in the context of the developing monastic environs where masters and disciples lived or visited; they often reassembled or revived these works in differing ways and in various locales in the Japanese isles. This situation would only become significantly altered with the institutional changes introduced by the shogunate and imperial governments of the Tokugawa and modern eras.

MEDIEVAL (KAMAKURA, MUROMACHI AND AZUKA-MOMOYAMA)





## 68. TACHIKAWA-RYŪ

Nobumi Iyanaga

It is challenging to write about the Tachikawa-ryū in brief, because almost all of what has ever been written on this topic is based on a preconceived image and is in need of profound revision.<sup>1</sup> This preconceived image can be summarized in a few words. The well-known Japanese dictionary *Kōjien* 広辞苑 (fifth edition, 1998) has a useful entry entitled “Tachikawa-ryū”:

(The name is based on the fact that a master of the way of yin and yang of Tachikawa of the country of Musashi 武蔵国 learned [this teaching] from Ninkan 仁寛, and spread it.) A current of the Shingon school. Its secret art is to attain buddhahood within the present body (*sokushin jōbutsu no hijutsu* 即身成仏の秘術) through the sexual intercourse between man and woman. Its founder was Ninkan of the later Heian period; it came to completion under Monkan 文観 of the fourteenth century, but later was repressed as a perverse teaching.

This image of the Tachikawa-ryū as a “perverse teaching” can be traced back to a text by Yūkai 宥快 (1345–1416), later considered the most influential author of the Kogi (“old doctrine”) branch of the Shingon school. The work is entitled *Hōkyō-shō* 宝鏡鈔 (T. 2456)<sup>2</sup> and is certainly his earliest writing (1375). It can be characterized as a “heresiological” work, meaning that its main purpose was to criticize doctrines and practices that the author accuses of being “perverse.” In Japanese Buddhism, there are few works that can be categorized as heresiological, but this one, as with all the heresiological works of Buddhism or of other religions, must be read with a discerning and critical eye. Analyzed critically, it proves to be full of insinuations of every kind, based on intrasectarian (or perhaps more general) political motives. Almost all of Yūkai’s sources of information can be found in earlier works, and some of the information that occurs in this text for the first time is

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<sup>1</sup> Readers should note that the theory presented in this essay is not a generally accepted opinion either in Japan or elsewhere. They are invited to judge for themselves its validity.

<sup>2</sup> This work is also translated into English in vanden Broucke 1992.

certainly his addition, drawn from his own imagination (for example, Yūkai's assertion that the first disciple of Ninkan was a "master of the way of yin and yang").

For clarity of exposition, it seems best to present my principal conclusion first and then develop the main points. When we talk about the Tachikawa-ryū, we must distinguish three different meanings of the term. The first is the real Tachikawa-ryū, a Shingon sub-lineage that did exist from the early twelfth century onward. The second is a special religious current that existed from the mid-thirteenth century or earlier, and which declined rapidly around the beginning of the fourteenth century. What is particularly confusing regarding this current is that it has no specific, historically attested name. The only known designations are a few expressions such as *henjōju no hō* 変成就法 ("teaching of strange/odd achievements?"), *kikuran no ryū* 菊蘭流 ("current of chrysanthemum-orchid"), or *kono hō, kano hō* 此の法, 彼の法 ("this teaching, that teaching"). For lack of a better term, I will hereafter use the expression "that teaching," because it was under this appellation that the Tachikawa-ryū was described in its most detailed source, the *Juhō-yōjin shū* 受法用心集.

Finally, the third meaning is merely a name, a label for a vague set of Shingon lineages and currents of thought that were condemned as non-orthodox by certain Shingon monks (who claimed to be in possession of the orthodoxy) and which were accused of advocating teachings more or less related to sexuality (even if this cannot be confirmed by examination). What confuses the study of the Tachikawa is that the common use of the term "Tachikawa-ryū" derives from this third "thing" that has never really existed. For reasons of convenience, I will use the expression "non-real Tachikawa-ryū" to designate this third meaning of the word.

Another point that must be made before entering into a discussion of the facts is the nature and definition of *mikkyō* lineages. From a certain period that can be situated around the Insei period (1086–1192) onward, *mikkyō* lineages began to split into many sub-lineages, each of which claimed greater authority and legitimacy than all the others. In fact, the differences between lineages were minimal and were based on minor changes in ritual procedures (mainly the mantra and *mudrā* pairs). A lineage was a group of masters and disciples transmitting a well-defined set of ritual transmissions and sharing a blood lineage (*kechimyaku* 血脈) document. In reality, each *mikkyō* practitioner tended to receive transmissions of several lineages (what we can call

“cross-transmissions”), even if he would later transmit only one of the lineages he had received. One important issue is that in these blood lineage documents, the name of the lineage itself was most often not noted but could be deduced from the listed names of masters and disciples.

On the other hand, because of the generalized practice of “cross-transmissions,” the contents of transmissions tended to even out over time. Of course, since the differences between lineages was their essential *raison d'être*, this “leveling out” was to be avoided as much as possible. This was certainly one important reason why certain lineages introduced some peculiar teachings or practices for which they claimed the utmost secrecy. Generally speaking, however, it is almost impossible to recognize doctrinal differences between lineages. Differences of doctrines or thought, rather, were individual matters.

### 1. *The Real Tachikawa-ryū*

The beginning of the real Tachikawa-ryū is documented in two types of sources: the first is contemporary historical records (such as aristocrats' diaries), and the second is some thirteenth-century *mikkyō* documents. According to the tradition, the founder of the Tachikawa-ryū was the younger brother of an important monk of Daigoji named Shōkaku 勝覚 (1057–1129), son of the Minister of Left, Minamoto no Toshifusa 源俊房 (1035–1121). Shōkaku was the founder of the Sanbōin-ryū 三宝院流 lineage. Among his several brothers was Ninkan 仁寛 (?–1114?), who was ordained in Daigoji and became Shōkaku's disciple. However, Ninkan came to be implicated in an important political incident during his service as a protector monk (*gojisō* 護持僧) of Prince Sukehito 輔仁親王 (1073–1119), the third son of Emperor Go-Sanjō 後三条天皇 (1034–1073, r. 1068–1073).

After Go-Sanjō's death, his first son became Emperor Shirakawa 白河天皇 (1053–1129, r. 1073–1087). Though Go-Sanjō left a testament according to which Sukehito would be later invested as emperor, Shirakawa wanted to put his own descendants on the throne, and his son was installed as Emperor Horikawa 堀河天皇 (1079–1107, r. 1086–1107), and later succeeded by Shirakawa's grandson, Emperor Toba 鳥羽天皇 (1103–1156, r. 1107–1123). Sukehito's ambitions were frustrated by these successions, and in 1113 a plot that Ninkan, his protector monk, planned to assassinate Emperor Toba was discovered. The monk was arrested and exiled to Izu 伊豆 in Kantō in the tenth

month of the same year. These events are all established in historical records.

According to some thirteenth-century *mikkyō* documents, while in Izu Ninkan took another name, Rennan 蓮念, and transmitted his lineage to a monk named Kenren 見蓮, who would have come from Tachikawa. After these events, some historical records report that Ninkan killed himself by jumping from a cliff in the fourth month of 1114. According to other records, however, he was pardoned some sixteen years later and returned to Kyōto in 1129. At any rate, little is known about Ninkan after his exile in Izu (Köck 2000).

Extant are a number of manuscripts of *mikkyō* transmissions from the medieval period, many dating from the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, which were discovered in the Shōmyōji 称名寺 library at Kanazawa Bunko 金沢文庫. In them we find blood lineages having the names of famous masters of Daigoji until Shōkaku, then continued by Rennan, Kenren, and others. None contains the name “Tachikawa,” but from what we know of Ninkan’s life story it is presumed that these manuscripts are the transmission documents of the Tachikawa-ryū. The name Kenren is otherwise unknown, and the only evidence that he came from Tachikawa is attested by some thirteenth-century documents. That Rennan was another of Ninkan’s names is also attested only by documents of the same period (Kushida 1964, 333, 337–38).

It is surprising that a Shingon lineage claimed as its founder a notable “criminal” such as Ninkan, and while this point is debatable, in the absence of any other evidence, it compels belief. Alternately, perhaps Rennan could have been the name of another of Shōkaku’s disciples, rather than Ninkan.

Kakuin 覺印 (1097–1164), a disciple of Kenren, is a well-known figure and a younger brother of Yōgen 永嚴 (1075–1151), who founded the Hojuin-ryū 保寿院流 lineage of the Hirosawa-ryū 広沢流. He had close relations with Ejū 恵什 (active ca. 1135), the author of the famous iconographic compilation the *Zuzōshō* 図像抄 (TZ 3) and was one of the masters of Shinkaku 心覚 (1117–1180), author of the *Besōn zakki* 別尊雜記 (TZ 3) (Frank 2000, 222–24, 233–41).

Some of the names found in the blood lineage documents are those of famous Shingon masters such as Dōhan 道範 (1178–1252), Raiyu 頼瑜 (1226–1304), and Dōjun 道順 (?–1321) (Kushida 1964, 378, 388). At any rate, examination of the contents of these manuscripts reveals that they are simply normal ritual transmissions of Shingon rituals,

probably of the Sanbōin-ryū tradition, without any peculiar features, and no traces of sexual teachings are found in these documents.<sup>3</sup>

This is practically all we can know for certain about the real Tachikawa-ryū: it was a normal and minor Shingon lineage, with some great names in its blood lineage. But it should be added that from the thirteenth century onward the name Tachikawa-ryū seems to have been regarded with some suspicion. A manuscript, of which the original seems to date to the mid-thirteenth century (copied by Kenna 劔阿 [1261–1338] of Shōmyōji), notes that the Tachikawa-ryū is to be “half trusted, half distrusted” (*hanshin han-fushin* 半信半不信) (Kushida 1964, 342). A more extreme form of this distrustful attitude can be found in the appendix to the text of the *Juhō-yōjin shū* composed by Shinjō 心定 (also called Seiganbō 誓願房), a monk of Echizen, in 1268. The oldest manuscript of this text, dated 1313, is preserved in Kōzanji 高山寺 (this manuscript is not yet entirely revealed; see Sueki 2007 and 2008), and it is itself a copy of a manuscript by a certain Ekai 恵海 dated 1281. Ekai added an appendix to the *Juhō-yōjin shū*, in which he quotes a work entitled *Haja kenshō shū* 破邪顯正集 (Collection for Refuting the Perverse and Manifesting the Correct). He writes:

The Collection for Refuting the Perverse and Manifesting the Correct says the following.

[Question:] Is the tradition which claims that this teaching was transmitted from the lineage of the master Rennin 蓮念 a true one?

[Answer:] That master was the disciple of deputy archbishop Shōkaku 權僧正勝覚 named Ninkan (later, he changed [his name] to Rennin; he was exiled to Izu); it is said that this person originally began [this teaching]. According to another opinion, Rennin’s disciple Kenren Shōnin (who resided in Tachikawa, in Bushū 武州 [that is, the region of Musashi]) was the original source (*ranshō* 監觴 [of this teaching]). (Sueki 2007, 7a)

All we can know about the *Haja kenshō shū* is that it existed in 1281; its author remains unknown. The manuscript was no doubt known by Yūkai, and it was certainly the origin of all the confusion about the origins of the Tachikawa-ryū after the fourteenth century.

<sup>3</sup> See Kushida 1964, 344–62, esp. 347; Kōda 1981, esp. 67b; and Kōck 2000. Many of these manuscripts are edited in the ninth volume of the *Kanazawa bunko komonjo* 金沢文庫古文書 series, the *Butsuji hen ge* 仏事篇・下 (see Kanazawa bunko, ed. 1956); and many of these edited texts were converted into *yomikudashi* by Shibata Kenryū 柴田賢龍 and are available online at <http://www.ab.auone-net.jp/~badra20/>.

It is difficult to determine the reasons for these suspicions of the Tachikawa-ryū. They possibly stemmed from the fact that the tradition was founded by a “criminal” who ended his life in suicide. Another possibility is the name itself: it indicates a locality in Kantō, far from the central regions of culture, which were all located in Kinki 近畿. From the account in the *Juhō-yōjin shū*, it is clear that people from the central region had little regard for the countryside and its inhabitants. This fact may have been enough to make the Tachikawa-ryū suspect for most people.

## 2. “That Teaching” as Described in the *Juhō-yōjin shū*

The *Juhō-yōjin shū* mentioned above is practically the only source describing “that teaching.”<sup>4</sup> In fact, it is one of the very few medieval documents that mention “Tachikawa-ryū” at all. This in itself was sufficient for representatives of the later orthodoxy to denigrate the Tachikawa-ryū as “that teaching.” From what we read in the *Juhō-yōjin shū*, however, this seems wrong; rather, the *Juhō-yōjin shū* suggests that its author, Shinjō, himself received a transmission of the Tachikawa-ryū lineage. As we have already noted, the teaching described and criticized in this work is never named; Shinjō consistently refers to it either as “this teaching” or “that teaching.”

The main aim of the whole work is to prevent Shingon practitioners from trusting in a special teaching that claimed to be the most secret and the most authentic teaching for attaining buddhahood within the present body. The author says that “this teaching” is widespread throughout the entire country, but is especially prevalent in the countryside. He even claims that “nine out of ten Shingon masters in the countryside believe that this [teaching] is the essence of *mikkyō*” (Moriyama 1965, 554). The first question in the work is most important from a doctrinal point of view, and indeed it is practically the only passage in which the doctrinal tenet of “that teaching” is described:

Question: Recently, felicitous sūtras called the Three Inner Sūtras (Nai-sanbu-kyō 内三部經) have spread throughout the world. In earlier times, these sūtras used to be transmitted only among the abbots of [the

<sup>4</sup> The *Juhō-yōjin shū* was edited by Moriyama 1965, 530–71. This text is available online with some annotation at [http://www.bekkoame.ne.jp/~n-yanag/buddhism/tachikawaryu/juho\\_yojinshu.html](http://www.bekkoame.ne.jp/~n-yanag/buddhism/tachikawaryu/juho_yojinshu.html). It is also partly translated into English in Sanford 1991a.

Shingon center of] Tōji and the Tendai school, but these days, they have spread so widely that everyone trifles with them in the capital as well as in the countryside. I heard that in these sūtras it is said that intercourse with women is the most crucial thing in the Shingon teaching, and that it is the highest among the [practices for] attaining buddhahood within the present body. If one avoids it, then the path to the accomplishment of the buddhahood is said to be distant. Meat-eating is the inner realization of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas.... If one dislikes meat-eating, one will be lost in [choosing the right] door to get out from the realm of birth and death. This is why you must not discriminate between the pure and the impure.... All the dharmas are pure, and thus, one will attain rapidly buddhahood within the present body: this is the doctrine taught in these sūtras, as I heard. I heard also that if one performs the ritual as taught in them, the principal deity (*honzon* 本尊) will suddenly appear and teach the practitioner all things of the three worlds [of past, present, and future], give him felicity and knowledge, confer high ranks on him, so much that this practitioner seems as if he had obtained magical power within the present body. (Moriyama 1965, 530–31)

The first part of the *Juhō-yōjin shū* is an autobiographical account of the author and his learning. Born in 1215, Shinjō began his studies at the age of eighteen, probably in Echizen, and continued to study different Shingon rituals and doctrines in various places, including Kōyasan and Kyōto, until 1262. After this introductory passage, the author recounts his encounter with a special teaching, which he consistently refers to as “this teaching” or “that teaching.” He learned the teaching and received its canonical texts from a monk he met by chance, and he lists the titles of these texts. Shinjō then presents a series of critiques against the teaching in which we can find details concerning some of its traditions in relation to its transmission lineages.

The second scroll begins by relating that some readers of the first scroll criticized the author for having failed to describe the concrete features of the ritual prescribed by “that teaching.” In response to this criticism, the second scroll supplies a full description of the ritual in question (Moriyama 1965, 555–58). After this description, Shinjō gives his own opinion of the ritual—namely, that it is not a Buddhist ritual at all but a demonic ritual; and he goes on to say that even if it has some effect, the practitioner will eventually lapse into utter confusion and madness, and so on (Moriyama 1965, 562–64). Finally, the author expounds some doctrinal reasons as to why “that teaching” cannot be a Buddhist teaching.

The determinant factor for why I believe that what is described in this work is not the Tachikawa-ryū is the transmission lineages recounted



in the first scroll. Although I cannot go into details in the limited scope of this essay, these lineages are not only completely different from those found in documents emanating from the real Tachikawa-ryū, they are also altogether aberrant. For example, the dates of the listed monks are not consistent, and their Shingon branch affiliations (Ono-ryū or Hirosawa-ryū) are randomly distributed and utterly confused. Any learned Shingon monk of the period would have easily seen that these lineages were forgeries—and Shinjō himself does not fail to notice the inconsistencies (Moriyama 1965, 541–42).

The word “Tachikawa-ryū” occurs twice in the first scroll, both times in the autobiographical part of the work. First, Shinjō writes that in 1239, at the age of twenty-five, “he received the three *abhiṣeka* from the master Ashō of Hosono in the country of Ecchu (越中国細野の阿聖あさり): they were the ‘secret *yugi*,’ the ‘[body of the] natural outcome,’ and the ‘body of the dharma’ (*himitsu yugi tōru-hosshin sanshu no kanjō* 秘密瑜祇等流法身三種の灌頂)” (Moriyama 1965, 531). He also writes that on that occasion he “copied all the secret works of the Tachikawa-ryū.” This certainly means that Shinjō received at that occasion a transmission of the Tachikawa-ryū. The second occurrence of the word appears in the following passage (Moriyama 1965, 532).

Sometime after the summer of 1250, Shinjō had an opportunity to visit the temple of a monk of his acquaintance, Kōamidabutsu 弘阿弥陀仏, in Akasaka, Echizen. He was repeatedly invited to this monk’s cell, where he found a big bag full of books. Kōamidabutsu opened it and took out many scrolls, more than a hundred in all. Shinjō discovered that they were mainly *orikami* 折紙 (folded pieces of paper containing secret ritual texts) of the Tachikawa-ryū, which were in circulation in Ecchū. However, among these scrolls, there were seven or eight containing what Shinjō referred to as “those Three Inner Sūtras (*kano nai-sanbukyō* 彼の内三部経) and oral traditions of Kikuran 菊蘭の口伝” (Moriyama 1965, 532). Shinjō writes that it was then that he saw these texts for the first time and found them very unusual. He borrowed the scrolls to take back to his room and copy them, but there were details in them that were unclear to him.

These two passages show that many texts of the real Tachikawa-ryū circulated in Echizen and Ecchū (modern-day Fukui and Toyama) around the mid-thirteenth century. Among them could occasionally be found some famous texts of “that teaching,” but Shinjō does not confound the texts of the Tachikawa-ryū with those of what he calls “that teaching.”

The ritual of “that teaching” described in the second scroll is truly surprising, in part involving sexual intercourse: the practitioner must first acquire a human skull, then have sex with a woman; he must mix the male and female fluids produced from this intercourse, and smear the skull with the mixture; he must repeat this ritual many times, and decorate the skull with colors, so that it looks like a living head. Then he will have to keep it warm, just like an egg, for a long time. After seven or eight years, if the ritual is successful, the skull will come to life and give oracles on matters of the past, present, and future.

The fact that the *Juhō-yōjin shū* refers several times to the Tendai school as having relation with “that teaching” seems to suggest that this ritual was not strictly limited to the Shingon school (the word “Tendai” occurs eleven times in the *Juhō-yōjin shū*; Moriyama 1965, 530, 535, 538, 540, 543, 549, 566, 567). It would appear likely that its main practitioners were not monks or regular clergy; they would have to live in a social context in which sexual intercourse with women would be considered perfectly normal. Even if it is true that many regular monks were living with women, it is difficult to imagine how this condition could be met for them. The most probable social milieu in which such a situation would be feasible would be that of some “para-religious” people, such as *yamabushis* who often formed pairs with female *mikos* (mediums).

However, from the doctrinal and ritual contents reported by the *Juhō-yōjin shū*, it is possible that some professional Shingon (or more vaguely *mikkyō*) monks, of a rather high intellectual level, were implicated in the formation of this current. On the other hand, it is also possible to find some influence or reminiscence of it in certain trends in early fourteenth-century poetry exegesis (such as those represented by the *Ise monogatari zuinō* 伊勢物語髓<sup>5</sup>) or in Ise Shintō thought. All this seems to suggest that in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries there existed very active and inventive religious—or para-religious—groups around the regular clergy of *mikkyō* schools, which could have possibly conceived of these odd rituals.

One thing that should be noted is the fact that the ritual’s final purpose is not sexual pleasure or fulfillment (which would have been assimilated to the felicity of attainment of buddhahood), but is simply a means in a process that could be called artificial procreation.

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<sup>5</sup> Study and translation in Klein 1997, 1998, and 2003, esp. 273–91.

In a sense, it is an embryological ritual, and one with an alchemical character. Nevertheless, the ritual creates a very strong atmosphere of eros and thanatos, which evokes some of the extreme forms of the yoginī-tantra of later Indian tantrism. Some scholars (notably Sanford 1991a) have suggested that this ritual may have been created under some cryptic influence from a later form of Buddhist tantrism. Yet it seems possible that it can be explained almost entirely by elements of Japanese esoteric religion.

### 3. *The “Non-Real Tachikawa-ryū”*

I now wish to discuss the “non-real Tachikawa-ryū” of the late fourteenth century. As mentioned above, Yūkai is mainly responsible for the invention of the image of a “heretical Tachikawa-ryū.” The *Hōkyō-shō* is often considered to be entirely devoted to criticizing the Tachikawa-ryū, but in fact there are very few passages directly dealing with this concern; less than one-tenth of the entire work discusses the topic. Another tenth consists of quotations from a classical sūtra (the *Dafoding shoulengyan jing* 大仏頂首楞嚴經, T. 945) of passages discussing a (probably fictitious) “demonic” teaching that advocates sexual practices.

Fully a third of the work is devoted to a virulent accusation of Monkan (1278–1357), a Shingon monk who held important positions during the reign of Emperor Go-Daigo 後醍醐天皇 (1288–1339, r. 1318–1339). The work also criticizes many other monks by name, but “Tachikawa-ryū” is one of only two lineage names that are explicitly mentioned as advocating a “perverse teaching” (the other is the Kantō-gata Go-ryū Sanbōin-ryū 關東方御流三寶院流) (T. 2456.79:849a23–24). And the author presents the Tachikawa-ryū as the “original source of all the subsequent perverse teachings” (*jahō no ranshō* 邪法濫觴), following what is found in the appendix to the manuscript of Ekai’s *Juhō-yōjin shū*.

This is one of the reasons the reader has the impression that the work deals in its entirety with the Tachikawa-ryū. But as far as I can verify, none of the monks named in the work—including Monkan—taught any specifically sexual teaching. The one exception is Rendō 蓮道 (1189 or 1187–1233 or later), who incidentally was one of the masters of Nyojitsu 如実, the principal master of Shinjō (Moriyama 1965, 533). On the other hand, all the information about the Tachikawa-ryū is taken either from the appendix of the manuscript of

Ekai's *Juhō-yōjin shū* or from a work by Yūkai's master, Kaisei 快成 (?–1367), who noted a very short extract of the blood lineage of the real Tachikawa-ryū.<sup>6</sup>

As we have seen, Ekai identified “that teaching” of the *Juhō-yōjin shū* with the Tachikawa-ryū. Yūkai of course follows this identification, and adds a translation in *kanbun* of a passage from the introductory question of the *Juhō-yōjin shū* quoted above, attributing it to the Tachikawa-ryū. The result is the following:

According to one opinion, it is said that master Ninkan (later named Rennin), disciple and brother of the deputy archbishop of the Sanbōin of Daigoji (i.e., Shōkaku), had been convicted of a certain crime and was banished to the country of Izu. In that country, in order to earn his living, he gave instruction in the Shingon teaching to impure laypeople who had wives and ate meat, and made them his disciples. Now, there was a master of the way of yin and yang who lived in Tachikawa in the country of Musashi, who learned the Shingon teaching from Ninkan, and who introduced into it the practices of the way of yin and yang that he had previously studied; mixing correct teaching with perverse teaching, and adulterating the inner teaching (i.e., Buddhism) with the external teaching, he created a branch of the Shingon school and named it “Tachikawa-ryū.” This is the original source of [all] the perverse teachings. For a detailed [account of] its books, etc., there is a work in two scrolls written by Seigan-bō of Toyohara Temple 豊原寺 (i.e., the *Juhō-yōjin shū*), which gives a rough summary. People who need it should have a look at it. Its doctrine is that the secret art of attaining buddhahood within the present body (*sokushin jōbutsu no hijutsu* 息身成仏之秘術) is the path of yin and yang between men and women; there is no other [way] to attain buddhahood and the path. This indeed is a false doctrine that they made. (T. 2456.79:848c19–29)

After brief quotations from the *Dafoding shoulengyan jing* and from the commentary on the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, Yūkai resumes his account:

Afterward, the Tachikawa-ryū spread in the country of Ecchū, and had two generations of masters, Kakumyō 覺明 and Kakuin 覺印, who visited Kōyasan and sojourned there. At that time, the numerous initiation documents (*injin* 印信) and books of the perverse lineage were diffused [there]; these documents pretend to be essential doctrines (*kyōsō daiji*

<sup>6</sup> See Kaisei's work quoted by Yūkai under the title *Shōryū jaryū ni naru koto* 正流邪流に成る事, in Yūkai's *Tachikawa shōgyō mokuroku* 立河聖教目錄 (Moriyama 1965, 588).

教相大事) or oral transmissions. There are many of them, to this date. . . .  
(T. 2456.79:849a10–13)

Yūkai's strategy of criticizing people who were not on his side, accusing them of teaching more or less explicitly sexual doctrine and practice, and labeling them all with the name "Tachikawa-ryū," was very successful. We can see how the received disparaging image of the "non-real Tachikawa-ryū," such as that recorded in the *Kōjien* quoted at the beginning of this essay, could have been formed as a result.

69. LOOKING BACK AND LEAPING FORWARD:  
CONSTRUCTING LINEAGE IN THE SHINGI-SHINGON  
TRADITION OF JAPAN

Donald Drummond

Until recently the Shingi-Shingon 新義真言 lineages have been another neglected tradition of Japanese esoteric Buddhism. These Shingi lineages trace their emergence to Kōgyō Daishi Kakuban 興教大師覺鑾 (1095–1143 C.E.), a major figure in the development of Shingon doctrine and practice in the first half of the twelfth century. He was active during the period of Japanese history referred to as “the era of rule by retired sovereigns” (*inseiki* 院政期). Retired Emperor Toba 鳥羽院, his beloved consort Bifukumon’in 美福門院, and Taikenmon’in 待賢門院, the consort of the late retired Emperor Shirakawa 白川院, were strong and generous supporters of Kakuban and his vision of reviving Shingon doctrinal studies on Mt. Kōya 高野山, the monastic meditation and training center established by Kōbō Daishi Kūkai 弘法大師空海 (774–835) in the ninth century.

Japanese scholarship has noted that following the esoteric textual and ritual transmissions of Kūkai and Dengyō Daishi Saichō 伝教大師最澄 (765–822), there was a marked difference in emphasis between the Shingon inheritors of Kūkai and Saichō’s Tendai 天台 successors.<sup>1</sup> For several centuries the Shingon masters’ main efforts centered on ritual and yogic practice (*jisō* 事相), in contrast to the Tendai esoteric masters, who actively reflected on the doctrinal aspects (*kyōsō* 教相) of esoteric practice as well. A traditional Shingon explanation for this difference has been that, from the outset, Kūkai’s transmission was

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<sup>1</sup> As discussed in other articles in this volume, Kūkai’s primary focus was on the esoteric transmission he had received during his study sojourn in China from the esoteric master Huiguo 惠果 of Qinglong si 青龍寺 in the Tang-era capital Chang’an. This centered on the two scriptural texts of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (MVS) and the *Vajrasākhara* or *Tattvasaṃgraha sūtra* (STTS; for a discussion of these sūtra cycles, see Kiyota 1978, 22–24; 1982, 26; and Giebel 2001, 5–15). Saichō, on the other hand, had traveled to China at the same time as Kūkai to study the Tiantai 天台 tradition with its emphasis on the *Lotus Sūtra*. In the last month and a half of his studies, Saichō was fortuitously able to receive instruction from the esoteric master Shunxiao 順曉 of Longxing si 龍興寺 in Yue province 越州.

ritually, iconographically, and doctrinally such a well-developed and sophisticated system that there was less need to elaborate on what the founder had articulated; but Tendai masters had to return to China to fill in the gaps left by Saichō's incomplete transmission. Detractors of this interpretation from the Tendai side, on the other hand, have ridiculed Kūkai's followers for not being up to the task of building on their progenitor's foundation.

However, in early Heian society, aristocrats eagerly sought after esoteric rituals for their protection and prosperity.<sup>2</sup> Monks with esoteric training who were capable of successfully performing such rituals were at a premium. Esoteric specialists provided ritual performances for the growing number of "private" temples built by members of the imperial family and aristocracy. Of course, these specialists received stipends for their efforts.

This demand by the elite extended to temples dominated by Shingon lineages, such as Tōji 東寺, Ninnaji 仁和寺, Daigoji 醍醐寺, and Kongōbuji 金剛峰寺 (Mt. Kōya), among others. Each center developed its own style or variation of ritual performances and their transmissions. Lineages and sub-lineages proliferated over time as "successful" variations gained recognition. These transmissions were recorded much like genealogical records, for example the *Yataku kechimyakushū* 野沢血脈集 or the *Yataku kechimyaku kunshū* 野沢血脈摺拾.

The esoteric transmissions were divided into two main lineage streams: the Hirosawa-ryū 広沢流 and the Ono-ryū 小野流, both taken from place names in the region of the Heian capital 平安京. However, by the Insei period (1086–1121), the Hirosawa and Ono lineages had each developed six major sub-lineages. During the Kamakura period (1185–1333) the Hirosawa expanded to nine sub-lineages, while the Ono developed twenty-seven. Eventually, there were over seventy sub-lineages subsumed under the Hirosawa and Ono "parent" lines.<sup>3</sup> The two branches and their sub-lineages developed as esoteric masters introduced variations based on their individual ritual and

<sup>2</sup> There were many purposes for which these rituals were performed, including good health; long life; safe childbirth; prosperity; social and court advancement; good harvests; rain; and protection from misfortune, ill-omens, calamities, and enemies, both natural and supernatural (Hayami 1987).

<sup>3</sup> See the following entries in Mikkyō Jiten Hensankai, ed. 1983: "Hirosawa-ryū," 1891a–c; "Hirosawa-roku-ryū," 1891c–1892a; "Kujakukyō," 336b–c; "Ono-ryū," 188b–191a; and "Shōgyō," 1113b; see also Matsunaga 1969, 210–14; Kushida 1963, 142–52.

yogic practices, on commonalities of understanding within specific temple complexes, and on the demands of their clients.

Each of the six Hirosawa sub-lineages formed during the Insei period stemmed from the esoteric ritual master Kanjo 寛助 of Jōjuin 成就院, a major sub-temple within the imperial temple Ninnaji. One of these sub-lineages, the Denbōin-ryū 伝法院流 of Kakuban (1095–1143/4), is important for our discussion of the later Shingi-Shingon tradition.

Kakuban was the son of a minor warrior family responsible for the policing of a Jōjuin estate in Hizen 肥前 province on the island of Kyūshū. He caught the attention of Keishō 慶照, a monastic traveling to various Jōjuin estates on behalf of their proprietor. Keishō, who was a disciple of Kanjo, took Kakuban into his care and brought him at age thirteen to Jōjuin in the Heian capital, where he began his monastic training in earnest. Shortly after, Kakuban was sent to the temple complexes in the former capital Nara to pursue his foundational studies in the Hossō 法相, Kusha 俱舍, Sanron 三論, and Kegon 華嚴 schools.<sup>4</sup> At the age of sixteen, in 1110, he returned to Jōjuin to take formal tonsure, after which he resumed for a period his studies in Nara. Back at Jōjuin in 1112, he commenced his formational training in esoteric ritual and yogic practice. Kakuban later left the Heian capital to engage in more concentrated yogic practice at Mt. Kōya, where he arrived on the last day of the twelfth month of Eikyū 永久 2 (January 1115).

Over the next decade Kakuban studied and practiced intensively, gathering numerous esoteric transmissions and gaining contemplative experience, and in this context he gradually formulated his vision for the ritual and doctrinal revitalization of the founder Kūkai's Dharma transmission. These transmissions covered the range of Hirosawa and Ono sub-lineages at Ninnaji, Tōji, Daigoji, and Kongōbuji (Mt. Kōya). He also performed the challenging *gumonjihō* 求聞持法 rite multiple times under the guidance of Meijaku 明寂 (d. 1124–1126), as well as receiving from him Ono-ryū transmissions related to the key Shingon goal of *sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成佛 (becoming a buddha in this body just as it is).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> These were the scholastic philosophical traditions of Vijñānavāda, Abhidharmakośa, Mādhyāmaka, and Avatamsaka, respectively.

<sup>5</sup> Tradition states that Meijaku received the *sokushin jōbutsu* oral transmission from Ryōga (ca. 1102). The *gumonji* practice was a highly valued esoteric method for acquiring noumenal knowledge and power. In addition, it would remove all defilements and the attendant suffering. The performer of the rite gained the protection of all buddhas and bodhisattvas; fulfilled all worthy aspirations; was prevented from falling into the



The written intentions (*ganmon* 願文) accompanying Kakuban's last two (the eighth and ninth) performances of the rite, conducted in 1121 and 1123, are still extant. Each was a series of vows to be fulfilled on completion of the rite. They included the copying of esoteric texts and mandalas, recitation of sūtras and mantras, and service to his teacher Meijaku and others. Two significant aspects of Kakuban's life and vision, namely, the fundamental importance of practice and of doctrinal study, were expressed in these vows. Together, they formed the basis of his subsequent Denbōin-ryū 伝法院流 transmission. His intentions reveal his desire not only to preserve tradition but to revitalize Shingon ritual/practice and doctrinal studies and to build a center for this purpose.

Kakuban's master Kanjo had sought to revive the Dharma Transmission Assembly (Denbō-e 伝法会) at Ninnaji in 1109, after several centuries of neglect. Its purpose was to explicate scriptural, doctrinal, and ritual meaning.<sup>6</sup> Kanjo, who was also the chief abbot of Tōji, instituted a reemphasis on doctrinal studies, and established a lecture series during the annual monastic summer retreat, beginning in the

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three evil realms of hell, hungry ghosts, and savage beasts; and was assured of birth in the human and heavenly realms. Successful practice (*siddhi*; *soshitsuji*) resulted in unlimited power of memory, an understanding of the sūtras, and insight into what is true. In 717 Śubhākarasiṃha (Shanwuwei 善無畏; Zenmui; 637–735) translated the primary text, the *Kokūzō bosatsu nōman shigan saishōshin darani gumonjihō* 虛空藏菩薩能滿諸願最勝心陀羅尼求聞持法 (The Rite that Seeks Out, Listens to, and Holds on to the Dhāraṇī/Formula of Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha—the enlightenment being whose store of wisdom is as vast empty space), *T.* 1145. This practice had a formative influence upon Kūkai while he was a young wandering ascetic, before he had taken formal monastic vows. See Kushida 1975, 73–112, 188–210; 1979, 91; Seino 1978, 123–26; and Drummond 2007, 128–36.

<sup>6</sup> On this first occasion the texts that were discussed included the *Hannya rishukyō* 般若理趣經, the *Rishushaku* 理趣釈, the *Treatise on the Mind of Enlightenment, Commentary on the Mahāyāna Treatise*, and the *Record of Siddham Letters*. A leading contemporary scholar, Saisen 濟暹 (1025–1115), was the lecturer. Both Kanjo and Saisen were instrumental in these early efforts. They drew upon the formal explication, discussion, and debate methods of the Tendai and Nara temple complexes and applied them in the Shingon esoteric context. Also building upon retired Emperor Shirakawa's 白川院 fascination with innovation and variety, which included temple-villa construction and ritual observances, they used the esoteric “platform” and fire rituals (*ichidanhō* 一壇法, *godanhō* 五壇法, *hachidan goma* 八壇護摩, etc.) and newly developed rituals such as the “protective deity lecture” (*chinjukō* 鎮守講), “ritual assembly of the buddha names” (*butsumyō-e* 仏名会), and the “ritual assembly of the Buddha relic” (*shari-e* 舍利会) as Shingon esoteric opportunities for doctrinal and ritual explication, discussion, and debate (Kushida 1975, 54–55; Ueshima 2001, 94–96; Kaneoka 1970, 240–54; Drummond 2007, 47–52, esp. n. 102; 74–81, esp. n. 148).

seventh month of 1116. As Tōji's chief abbot, Kanjo was also the chief abbot of Kongōbuji, the temple complex on Mt. Kōya.<sup>7</sup>

Kakuban's practice of the *gumonjihō* revealed his desire to complete his master Kanjo's efforts at revitalizing the Shingon tradition, and indicated that he possessed noumenal power (*genriki* 験力). Indeed, all of Kakuban's subsequent activities on Mt. Kōya, in the capital, and later at Mt. Negoro pointed to this as well. However, there were a number of challenges Kakuban faced in making this vision a reality. From later complaints lodged by Kongōbuji's scholar-monks to retired Emperor Toba, it is clear that they viewed Kakuban as an outsider, *gairaisha* 外来者 (Shirai 2002, 167–73).

Within this context, the *gairaisha* designation had several layers of meaning. First, Kakuban was from the “distant provinces.” The leadership of Kongōbuji, on the other hand, came primarily from the local elite families (*gōzoku* 豪族) in the wider vicinity of Mt. Kōya.

Second, when Kakuban arrived on the mountain he stayed in residences or sections of the mountain that were closely linked to visiting or unaffiliated monastics (*kyakusō* 客僧/*muen shūgakusha* 無縁修学者), whose focus was on practice and obtaining noumenal power. He received instruction and guidance from such monastics for his own practice. Also dwelling in these “separate cloisters” (*bessho* 別所) were “support staff” monastics (*gyōnin* 行人/*hijiri* 聖) skilled in maintenance, construction, and fundraising. Some generations before, these kinds of monastics had begun organizing under the charismatic “outsider” monks Kishin Shōnin Jōyo and Odawara Hijiri Kyōkai 小田原聖教懐, both of whom were related to Kōfukuji 興福寺 in Nara (Drummond 2007, 111–18).

Third, although Kakuban had received Dharma transmission consecration 伝法灌頂 from Kanjo, he did not have an official position within the monastic hierarchy of Mt. Kōya. He was, thus, an unaffiliated outsider.

Fourth, Kakuban was successful in gaining patronage from aristocratic families. His reputation as a possessor of noumenal power gave him entry into elite households, both within the capital and in the regions surrounding Mt. Kōya. The *Chūyūki* 中右記 diarist Fujiwara no Munetada 藤原宗忠 recorded several entries in which Kakuban is

<sup>7</sup> The chief abbot (*ichi no chōja*) of Tōji had held the chief abbacy (*zasu*) of Kongōbuji from the time of Kangen in 921.

referred to as a possessor of such power, and who on visiting Munetada provided him with valuable insight into the significance of the esoteric “mantra of light” (*kōmyō shingon* 光明真言).<sup>8</sup>

Due to his reputation, Kakuban acquired sufficient resources to fulfill the vision of reestablishing Mt. Kōya as a center for monastic training in esoteric doctrinal studies as well as ritual practice. By 1129 he had gained the backing of Retired Emperor Toba, which helped catalyze the support of a number of local elite families who commended estates to him. He was now financially independent of the Kongōbuji temple-shrine complex and independent of Tōji, which had oversight of Mt. Kōya and its resources.

Kakuban proceeded rapidly with construction plans, building the Denbōin 伝法院, where he began to hold the twice-annual Dharma Transmission Assemblies, and the Mitsugon'in 密嚴院, which became his residence. The assemblies were the primary forums for his teaching. An accomplished esoteric practitioner and gifted scholar, Kakuban taught his disciples and students through lecture, discussion, and debate. Much of his written work developed from these settings. They covered ritual, yogic practice, and doctrinal matters of and for the esoteric tradition.

Kakuban's success as the builder of an expanding sub-temple-shrine complex, the teacher and guide to a growing number of disciples, and the recipient of continuing support from the imperial family became a source of tension with Mt. Kōya's main temple, Kongōbuji. Relations between the sub-temple, now known as the “Great Temple for the Transmission of the Dharma” (Daidenbōin 大伝法院), and the head temple Kongōbuji took a dramatic turn for the worse when Retired Emperor Toba issued an edict on the eighth day of the fifth month in 1134, designating the Daidenbōin-Mitsugon'in sub-complex as an officially recognized center for the offering of rituals for the protection and benefit of the imperial family (*chokugansho goganji* 勅願所 · 御願寺). Opposition from the local Mt. Kōya hierarchy and from the leadership at Tōji led to a firestorm that did not abate until Kakuban and most of his followers were forced from Mt. Kōya in late 1140 or early 1141.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For example, the fifth day of the sixth month of Daiji 1 (1126), the seventh day of the twelfth month of Chōshō 長承 1 (January 1133) (quoted in Shirai 2002, 154–55).

<sup>9</sup> van der Veere 2000, 40–42; see also van der Veere 1998, 137–43, which conveniently lists the exchange of petitions opposing Kakuban made by Kongōbuji and Tōji and the edicts of retired Emperor Toba.

Kakuban and many of his disciples went to Mt. Negoro 根来山 on his Iwate estate 岩手庄, the first commendation he had received in 1126 from a local magnate, Taira no Tamesato 平為里. During the medieval period Mt. Negoro developed into a large temple-shrine complex.

Despite having been forced from Mt. Kōya, and with only three years left to him before his death in the twelfth month of Kōji 康治 2 (January 1144), Kakuban continued to teach, holding Dharma Transmission Assemblies in the new Enmyōji 円明寺 structure built with the continued support of retired Emperor Toba, other members of the imperial family, the former Chancellor Fujiwara no Tadazane 藤原忠実, and the chancellor's son, the then-current Chancellor Tadamichi 藤原忠通. This and the *jingūji* 神宮寺 on Mt. Negoro were designated as temples that offered rituals for the protection and prosperity of the imperial household and the regental Fujiwara family. In the assemblies Kakuban focused on central Shingon doctrinal themes of enlightenment in this very body (*sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成仏); the interaction of sound (voice), written symbol (syllabic character), and reality (*shōji jissō* 声字実相), which are expressions of the Dharmakāya Mahāvairocana (Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来); and the seed mantra *hūṃ* (*unji* 吽字), discussed by Kūkai in three of his key texts.<sup>10</sup>

Although Kakuban's name has also been linked to the contemporary concern for rebirth in Amida's Pure Land and the practice of the buddha-name repetition (*ōjō nenbutsu* 往生念仏), he was not interested in simply incorporating the pervading popular versions of Amidist sūtras and practices or of Daoist traditions (*Onmyōdō* 陰陽道; see Drakakis, "Onmyōdō and Esoteric Buddhism," in this volume). He stood primarily on Shingon doctrinal ground as he addressed the popular currents of his day.

Kakuban rejected the notion that the efficacy of the *buddhadharma* declined over time.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, failure to be able to practice the

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of these texts by Kūkai upon which Kakuban expounded, see Abé 1999, 275–304; Kiyota 1982.

<sup>11</sup> This referred to the theory that the ability of sentient beings to receive and practice the Dharma declined over three to five time periods beginning from when the historical Buddha began his preaching. By the mid-sixth century C.E. in China, the three-period schema of the "right/correct" Dharma (*shōbō* 正法), the "image/form" Dharma (*zōbō* 像法), and the "end/latter-day" Dharma (*mappō* 末法/*matsudai* 末代)

Dharma did not lie with its decline or the passage of time. According to Kūkai, performance of esoteric practices could lead to enlightenment in this very body no matter how severe the practitioner's offenses had been in the past or what one's capacity for practice (*kikon*) might be as a result of past actions (van der Veere 2000, 68). From the Shingon perspective, *jōbutsu* 成仏 (becoming a buddha)—that is, awakening to reality—was the outcome of empowerment/unification (*kaji* 加持) through the three mysteries of Dainichi Nyorai that parallel the practitioner's three actions of body (*shin* 身, *mudrā*, gestures), speech (*ku* 口, mantra), and mind (*i* 意, yogic meditation) that occurred within the practitioner's present form (*sokushin jōbutsu*). This was Kakuban's understanding as well. Yet he was also influenced by a Shingon interpretation of the Amidist vision of rebirth into nine levels of the Pure Land (*kuhon ōjō* 九品往生), whereby one's apprehension of and proximity to Amida Buddha was based on the practitioner's karmic capacity.

Saisen, a Shingon monk and close associate of Kanjo, had a personal desire to dwell in the realm of future Buddha Maitreya while awaiting his appearance in this domain. Subsequently, this gave way to an Amida-centered focus. For Saisen, however, neither dwelling in Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven nor rebirth in Amida's Pure Land was anything other than *jōbutsu* within the Shingon context. The vow to seek to dwell in Maitreya's heaven was the buddha-mind (*busshin* 仏心). All that was apprehended by the buddha-mind was none other than that which was encompassed within the "Dharma-realm palace" of Dainichi Nyorai's enlightenment. *Jōbutsu* in Shingon doctrine was the great awakening to enlightenment in the living form given by one's parents (*sokushin jōbutsu*). For Saisen, rebirth in Amida's Pure Land was actually to manifest the Pure Land within this realm, as it is, and to deny the abandonment of this realm for a separate, other realm (Kushida 1979, 75–78).

Likewise for Kakuban, *sokushin jōbutsu* was the goal of esoteric practice. Using the popular terminology of rebirth (*ōjō*), he wrote that the goal of rebirth in Shingon esotericism was Dainichi Nyorai's Pure Land (*Mitsugon Jōdo* 密嚴淨土), the "pure land adorned with Dainichi's mysteries," namely his enlightenment. It was not to be sought

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had become the standard (Hayami 1987, 16–20, 236–39; 1998, 2–7; Matsunaga and Matsunaga 1974, 218–23).

in the west (Amida's Pure Land) or in any other buddha realm of the ten directions. Thus, enlightenment was to be found in this existence, in this realm, and in this present form. However, as in the case of the nine grades of rebirth in the Amidist Pure Land, Kakuban acknowledged the varying capacities of practitioners. Some could fulfill the esoteric practices of the "three actions" through the *kaji*/empowerment of Dainichi's three mysteries. Other practitioners of limited capacities followed the practices of other buddhas and bodhisattvas who were themselves emanations of Dainichi. In the final analysis, these "lesser" methods were simply alternate practices, based on one's capacity, which nonetheless led to *sokushin jōbutsu*.<sup>12</sup>

Forced to leave Mt. Kōya for Mt. Negoro, Kakuban continued his teaching and Dharma Transmission Assemblies for the remaining three years of his life. However, in 1147, through the intercession of Monastic Imperial Prince Kakuhō 覺法法親王 of Ninnaji, Kakuban's heirs were able to return to Mt. Kōya, under an uneasy truce, for the next one hundred and forty years. During this time the "sub-temple" Daidenbōin-Mitsugon'in continued on Mt. Kōya as well as maintaining its presence on Mt. Negoro.

The historic acrimony between "head temple" and "sub-temple" flared off and on until the late 1280s, when the monastics of the Daidenbōin-Mitsugon'in retreated to Mt. Negoro for good. The scholar-monk Raiyu 頼瑜 (1226–1304), who had trained at Mt. Negoro, Mt. Daigo, Mt. Kōya, and at Ninnaji, as well as received foundational studies at key temples in Nara, was appointed "head of curriculum" (*gakutō* 学頭) for the Daidenbōin-Mitsugon'in sub-temple complex in 1286. This position gave him primary leadership in the sub-temple. By the next year he was leading the Dharma Transmission Assemblies

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<sup>12</sup> In his latter years on Mt. Kōya after 1134 and in his last years on Mt. Negoro subsequent to his departure from Kōya (1141–1143), Kakuban composed two important works aimed at a more general audience: the *Ichigo taiyō himitsushū* 一期大要秘密集 (Esoteric Collection Concerning the Most Important Matters of [a Practitioner's] Life) and the *Gorinkujimyō himitsushaku* 五輪九字明秘密釈 (Esoteric Commentary on the Mantras of the Five Elements [Mandalas of Dainichi Nyorai] and the Nine Seed-Syllables [of Amida Buddha]). These works give insight into Kakuban's understanding of esoteric doctrine and its interaction with various religious issues of his day, such as the desire for rebirth in Amida's Pure Land and developments in Japanese forms of Daoist thought and practice. A third very short text, the *Amida hishaku* 阿弥陀秘釈 (Esoteric Commentary on Amida), discussed the relationship of Dainichi Nyorai and Amida as between substance and appearance (van der Veere 2000, 45–56, 111–14, 132–218).

at Negoroji 根来寺, which subsequently became a fully independent and influential center for scholastic study within the wider Shingon esoteric tradition.

As a young monk, Raiyu received transmission in the *gumonji* rite, which had had such significance for the founder Kūkai and the revitalizer Kakuban. Learning of his forbear's practice, Raiyu traveled to Ninnaji where Kakuban's objects were preserved together with texts in the master's hand, which he then copied. This became Raiyu's impetus to pursue and revive Kakuban's vision and scholarly efforts within in the Daidenbōin-Mitsugon'in. In the process, he introduced an important refinement to the scriptural, doctrinal, and ritual explications of the semiannual esoteric study assemblies, a methodology known as *ryūgi* 豎義, "vertical principles," that he had learned from the Hossō tradition. Raiyu asserted that to develop an argument in a correct or right manner, merely lecturing and asserting something to be true or compiling scriptural proof from texts was insufficient. He put forward three steps: first, to ask whether or not one's point accorded with reason (*dōri* 道理, the correct principle of things); second, to determine if there were any supportive texts; and last, to examine whether or not reason and scriptural proof from the texts were adequate. Only after these three points were established could an argument or debate proceed.

Kakuban had revived scholarly study of doctrine and ritual through the Dharma Transmission Assemblies. In honoring Kakuban's revitalization efforts, Raiyu moved the ritual locus of this study and debate from the transmission assemblies to services of gratitude to the founder (*hōonkō*). Having revived systematic interest in Kakuban studies, Raiyu felt that the *hōonkō* 報恩講 was the appropriate setting for such studies, supplemented by his own emphasis on *ryūgi* discussion, argument, and debate (Kushida 1979, 245, 480–88).

All of the numerous sub-temples on Mt. Negoro followed Raiyu's example and began utilizing and refining this methodology for their own study and debate. In 1574, under the direction of Raigen 頼玄, chief leader (*nōke* 能化) of the Jōjū-gata 常住方 faction on Mt. Negoro, a thirteen-article set of regulations for argumentation and debate known as the *Shingirondan hatto* 新義論談法度 (Regulations for New Meaning/Debate and Argumentation) condensed two centuries of practice. This set also focused on four ideals for the development of doctrine: 1) "new" terminology and formulations were to be encouraged, but their content had to be based on "old," established

doctrine; 2) if the terminology was of established usage, the meaning to which it referred always had to be fresh and “new”; 3) both “new” terminology and meaning were requirements; and 4) if the terminology and meaning were of established usage, they had to express the content well (Kushida 1979, 241–44).

From the Tokugawa period on, tradition and scholars have often closely associated Raiyu’s theory that the Dharma was preached by the “empowerment body” of Dainichi Nyorai (*kajishin seppō setsu* 加持身說法説) with developments in Shingon esoteric doctrine by the Mt. Negoro lineages. Thus, this theory was thought to be the source for which the Negoro tradition merited the term Shingi 新義 (new/heterodox doctrine), in contrast to the Kogi 古義 (old/orthodox doctrine) of other major Shingon centers such as Mt. Kōya, Mt. Daigo, Tōji, and Ninnaji. These centers maintained the established position that the Dharma was preached not by an emanation or subsidiary body but by Dainichi Nyorai in his essential nature as the Dharma body (*jishō hosshin* 自性法身). However, according to Kushida Ryōkō, Ryūkei 隆慶 and Shinnichi 信日 (scholastics of Mt. Kōya in the lineage of Shinben) argued that Kakukai, a disciple and revitalizer of “orthodox” Shingon, promoted the same doctrinal position as that of Raiyu without being identified as “heterodox” or “new” (Kushida 1979, 210–11; 1964, 709; see also Matsunaga 1969, 237).<sup>13</sup> Thus, the term *shingi* did not primarily express a “new heterodox” doctrinal position but had to be located in other contexts.

Following the permanent departure of Raiyu and the Daidenbōin-Mitsugoin’in monks to Mt. Negoro, the “new” center, completely independent of Mt. Kōya and its capital overseer Tōji, grew in scholastic stature, wealth, and influence throughout the medieval period. It stressed its “new” style of argumentation and debate and, as a consequence, the tradition of Negoroji was designated as Shingi-Shingon.

After the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi razed the Negoro complex in 1585, two streams of Negoro lineage emerged to carry on the Shingi tradition in the Chizan and Buzan branches. Following Hideyoshi, the

<sup>13</sup> In Japan the issue of how Dainichi Nyorai as the Dharma body preached (preaches) the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*/Dharma went back to the progenitor Kūkai in his response to questions posed by the Hossō scholar Tokuitsu (Abé 1999, 204–35) and continued throughout the premodern period. For detailed discussions of the debate and of the nature of Dainichi Nyorai’s Dharma body, see Matsunaga 1973, 71–79; Kiyota 1978, 63–80; van der Veere 2000, 66, 85–93; and Kushida 1979, 208–13.



Tokugawa shogunate began its own policies of consolidation and centralization of power, which from 1601 included efforts to extend its reach over the temple-shrine complexes, first by insisting that they systematize their internal regulations (*hatto* 法度). In fulfilling this requirement, complexes sought to confirm their lineages and their places within the overall tradition of which they were a part. This applied to both esoteric and exoteric traditions alike (e.g., Shingon, Tendai, Jōdo, Nichiren, Zen, and so on).

Within this process, as Shingon complexes staked their claims to a place in the esoteric tradition, the issue of how Dainichi Nyorai preached/preaches the Dharma took on a more pronounced emphasis and became a doctrinal overlay onto the distinction of temple-shrine complexes from each other, particularly Mt. Kōya and the Chizan and Buzan heirs to Mt. Negoro. These distinctions became efforts to establish “brand names” of “Old Doctrine” Shingon and “New Doctrine” Shingon beyond actual fundamental doctrinal and ritual differences. The “newness” of Kakuban’s revival, the “newness” of expression and meaning stressed in the *ryūgi* methodology for study and debate, became the standard for the Mt. Negoro complex in the medieval period. It was this “new form of study and doctrinal expression” that was *shingi* and which permeated Negoro’s scholastic tradition, forming the basis for the later Chizan and Buzan branches of Shingon esoteric Buddhism (Matsunaga 1969, 258–63; Kushida 1979, 240–41, 480–81).

## 70. YŌSAI AND ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

Shinya Mano

### *Introduction*

Yōjōbō Yōsai 葉上房栄西 (1141–1215; also known as Myōan Eisai 明庵栄西), today considered to be the founder of Japanese Zen Buddhism, was in his own time widely known as a venerable esoteric Buddhist monk. Yōsai lived during the Kamakura period (1185–1333), a period in the history of Japanese religion that has been the subject of much scholarly debate. While other important figures in Japanese Buddhism of the Kamakura period, such as Hōnen 法然, Shinran 親鸞, Dōgen 道元, Eizon 叡尊, and Nichiren 日蓮, have been studied and revisited by both sectarian and non-sectarian scholars, Yōsai has not received much attention. He is still discussed in a single framework: as the founder of the Japanese Rinzai Zen school (Rinzai shū 臨濟宗).

Only a few Japanese scholars have surveyed Yōsai's esoteric production. Taga Munehaya was the first modern scholar to point out the importance of esoteric Buddhism in Yōsai's life. Nakao Ryōshin has approached the topic from a broader perspective, exploring Yōsai's successors and their historical roles. Yanagida Seizan's classic study on the *Kōzen gokokuron* 興禪護国論 argues for the great importance of examining esoteric Buddhism as the other half of Yōsai's persona, but does not offer any significant analysis of it. Recently Yoneda Mariko has published a revised biographical survey of Yōsai on the basis of newly discovered source material, the *Kaihen kyōshu ketsu*, which can be regarded as Yōsai's autobiography. For its part, Western scholarship has completely neglected the esoteric nature of Yōsai's thought and has only briefly dealt with Yōsai's political role based on the *Kōzen gokokuron*.

Much of the received image of Yōsai comes from later evaluations. Two examples can be given here: first, the *Genkō shakusho* 元亨釈書, the first official collection of Japanese Buddhist biographies written by the Zen monk Kokan Shiren (1278–1346), portrayed Yōsai as a Buddhist saint by classifying him, alone among medieval figures, alongside preeminent monks who “imported Buddhist wisdom” (*denchi* 伝智),

such as Ganjin (688–763) and Kūkai (774–835). Kokan distinctively suggested that Yōsai should be considered the founder of Japanese Zen Buddhism. The *Genkō shakusho* is one of the most significant sources to examine Yōsai, but its compilation served a distinct political agenda to establish Zen as a central Buddhist tradition in Kyōto in the early fourteenth century. The depiction of Yōsai served this religious-political aim.

Second, Yōsai's best-known work, the *Kōzen gokokuron* (On Protecting the Country by the Revival of Zen), was included in the *Taishō Tripitaka* with a preface written by an unknown seventeenth-century author, which firmly posits Yōsai as the founder of Japanese Zen Buddhism. Although there are other versions of the *Kōzen gokokuron* (Yanagida 1972, 487) that do not include such a preface, this version of the text and its accompanying preface have determined the modern reading of Yōsai.

It is clear that the received image of Yōsai as the Japanese Zen patriarch was constructed with institutional aims in mind and from a centralized sectarian perspective that did not take into account the importance of the local development of the Buddhism propagated by Yōsai. However, the biggest problem for understanding Yōsai is the fact that his earlier career as an esoteric Buddhist thinker has been so little studied. Yōsai's esoteric thought was highly influenced by Taijitsu, and the scholarly neglect of this tradition, in comparison with Kūkai's Shingon, has also contributed to the gaps in our knowledge of Yōsai. The purpose of this article is to clarify Yōsai's doctrines and practices and outline his esoteric lineage, the so-called Yōjō lineage 葉上流.

### *Yōsai's Works*

There are nineteen extant works by Yōsai, written over the course of his entire life. The earlier works that precede the *Kōzen gokokuron* are all esoteric Buddhist writings or short "origin narratives" (*engi* 縁起). Yōsai began to record his interpretation of esoteric Buddhism immediately after returning from his first period of study abroad in China, in 1175.<sup>1</sup> The *Shutten taikō* 出纏大綱 (General Principle of Enlightenment), the *Tai kuketsu* 胎口決 (Oral Transmission on the

<sup>1</sup> A bibliography of Yōsai, which includes recently discovered materials, is available in Sueki 2006, 573–75.

Practice of Womb [Realm]), and the *Kaihen kyōshu ketsu* 改变教主決 (Revised Resolutions on the [Nature] of the Preacher of Esoteric Buddhism) were all written in this period, as was his *Imazu seiganji sōken engi* 今津誓願寺創建縁起 (Origins of the Erection of Imazu Seigan Temple).

By 1177, Yōsai had completed the *Kyōjigi kanmon* 教時義勘文 (Reflections on [Annen's] Meanings of Teachings and Times) and the *Mumyō shū* 無名集 (Collected Meanings of Dharma). In 1178 he wrote the *Hokke(kyō) nyū shingonmon ketsu* 法華[經]入真言門決 (Resolutions on the Meanings of Lotus Teachings in the Esoteric Discourse) and the *Urabon ipponkyō engi* 盂蘭盆一品經縁起 (Origins of the Ullambana Ceremony), and composed the *Bodaishin bekki* 菩提心別記 (Separate Records on *Bodhicitta*) the following year. In 1180 Yōsai completed the *Kechien ippen shū* 結縁一遍集 (Abbreviated Collection of Initiatory Rites) and the *Shohi kuketsu* 諸秘口決 (Secret Oral Transmissions), and in 1181 he composed the *Ingo shū* 隱語集 (Collection of Esoteric Idioms).

No work is extant from the following six years. In 1187, just before he departed for his second and final study in China, Yōsai completed the *Kongōchōshū bodaishinron kuketsu* 金剛頂宗菩提心論口決 (Oral Transmission of the Treatise on Awakening of *Bodhicitta*) and the *Jūhen kyōshu ketsu* 重編教主決 (Re-revised Version of the Oral Transmission on the Preacher of Esoteric Buddhism). During his second stay in China, from 1187 to 1191, Yōsai wrote the first draft of the *Shukke taikō* 出家大綱, which was completed in 1200, and re-drafted the *Ingo shū*, newly titled the *Hisō ingo shū* 秘宗隱語集 (Collection of Hidden Terminology in Esoteric Buddhism).

After this period, Yōsai's interest in Zen Buddhism increased and he compiled his two major non-esoteric works, the *Kōzen gokokuron* in 1198 and the *Nihon buppō chūkō kanmon* 日本仏法中興願文 (Supplication for the Restoration of Japanese Buddhism) in 1204. However, Yōsai's final composition, written in 1211, was another esoteric Buddhist work, the *Kiccha yōjō ki* 喫茶養生記 (Recover by Tea Drinking), which will be examined later.

All the works listed above contain multiple citations from the writings of Annen 安然 (841–889?), such as the *Shingonshū kyōjigi* 真言宗教時義 and the *Taizōkongō bodaishingi ryaku mondōshō* 胎藏金剛菩提心義略問答抄, the foundational works of Taimitsu doctrine.

The major topics of discussion in Yōsai's works are esoteric doctrinal tenets, texts, and ritual practices. In particular, the following

themes play a key role in his thought: a specific visualization technique, the *gosō jōjin kan* 五相成身觀; the notion of the preacher of esoteric Buddhism (*kyōshugi* 教主義); the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* and its practice; and the combination of Tendai “perfect teaching” and esoteric Buddhism (*enmitsu itchi* 円密一致). Yōsai presented the practice of visualizing five seed-letters on one’s body, a basic esoteric method for obtaining enlightenment following the *Treatise on the Awakening of Bodhicitta* (金剛頂瑜伽中発阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心論), in both his earliest work, the *Shutten taikō*, and in the very last one, the *Kiccha yōjō ki*.

The discussion of which buddha body preached the esoteric canon and thus established esoteric Buddhism was one of the most common subjects in Japanese Buddhism. Yōsai’s interpretation is quite original: while he regarded the buddhas of the Womb (Garbhadhātu; Taizōkai 胎藏界) and Diamond realms (Vajradhātu; Kongōkai 金剛界) as equal, overall he suggested that the buddha of the diamond realm was the real originator of esoteric Buddhism. This interpretation is closely linked with notions expressed in the *Treatise on the Awakening of Bodhicitta*, which constitutes the foundation of Yōsai’s entire system.

Finally, Yōsai advocated the equality of “perfect” and esoteric teachings, the most important concept in the Taimitsu tradition, yet at the same time he asserted the absolute superiority of esoteric Buddhism. This appears to be a contradiction, but it may be considered intrinsic to Taimitsu.

Three major writings by Yōsai may be identified as representative of his interpretation of these topics: the *Shutten taikō*, the *Kongōchōshū bodaishinron kuketsu*, and the *Kiccha yōjō ki*. These works also mark the three stages into which Yōsai’s career can be divided: up to his first trip to China, before his second stay in China, and after his return. The *Shutten taikō*, which addresses all the topics outlined above, may be regarded as the work where Yōsai laid out the basis for further elaboration. The *Kongōchōshū bodaishinron kuketsu* focuses on a practice informed by the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*, which will be discussed in the following section.

Here I want to briefly discuss the third key work, the *Kiccha yōjō ki*. While this has long been considered a Zen text, it in fact contains several esoteric elements. In it Yōsai presents the effects of tea drinking on one’s heart according to Chinese medical knowledge, in which the heart is regarded as the most important organ for human beings

(*Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho*, vol. 115, 505b). Yōsai connected the heart to one of the five steps in the meditative practice for obtaining a perfect body, quoting from the *Zunshengtuoluoni podiyu yigui* 尊勝陀羅尼破地獄儀軌 (T. 906.18:912a–914c). This apocryphal esoteric scripture was popular in late-Heian Japan and was used by earlier esoteric scholar-monks, such as Annen and Kakuban 覺鑾, as a key source for their doctrines.

### *Yōsai's Pivotal Esoteric Doctrine and Practice*

The characteristic of Yōsai's doctrine is the combination of the Womb and Diamond realms, variously called *taikon gōnyū* 胎金合揉, *gōgyō* 合行, or *myōgō* 冥合. In line with Taimitsu interpretations, Yōsai deemed the two realms equally important. Taimitsu scholar-monks had regarded the transmission of the two realms as separate and established a threefold system in which the “accomplishment class” (*soshitsujibu* 蘇悉地部) played the central role. This categorization is commonly understood to be based on the *Susiddhikara sūtra* 蘇悉地經, a sūtra belonging to the Womb scriptural tradition. Yōsai, however, based his interpretation on the *Yuqi jing* 瑜祇經, a sūtra of the Diamond scriptural tradition. This use of the *Yuqi jing* seems to have been a trend in the medieval period, drawing on the emphasis that Annen, for the first time, had placed on the *Yuqi jing* as the source of the evidence for uniting the Womb and Diamond realms (Mizukami 2008a, 639).

Yōsai also used the *Treatise on Awakening of Bodhicitta* and the *Dapiluzhe'na jing gongyang cidifashu* 大毘盧遮那經供養次第法疏 (Commentary on the Seventh Fascicle of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*) as textual bases for the combination of the two mandalic classes. The *Treatise*, while classified in the Diamond class, in fact contains very strong combinatory elements; for example, in the way it uses the syllable *a*, which usually represents Mahāvairocana of the Womb realm.

The *Kongōchōshū bodaishinron kuketsu* mainly discusses the issue of combination and the esoteric precepts. Yōsai's argument on the combination is founded on the practice of visualizing the sun and moon circles (*nichigacchirinkan* 日月輪觀, the “circles” here being *cakras*), which first appears in the *Treatise* as a method to develop buddha-nature. Following Annen, Yōsai maintained that the sun circle symbolizes the Womb realm and the moon circle symbolizes the Diamond realm; thus, to practice this type of meditation means to actualize the unity of Womb and Diamond.

Furthermore, this visualization practice plays an important role in actualizing the esoteric precepts (*samaya kai* 三昧耶戒 or *bodaishin kai* 菩提心戒). Once again following Taimitsu interpretation, Yōsai claimed that each of the three types of *bodhicitta*—practice (*gyōgan* 行願), wisdom (*shōgi* 勝義), and identification with buddha (*samaji* or *sanmaji* 三摩地)—contains the others. Similarly, each corresponds to one of the three secret activities (*sanmitsu* 三密) and at the same time contains all three. The three types of *bodhicitta* also embody the precepts of esoteric Buddhism. Eventually, all three types of *bodhicitta* are encompassed within the *bodhicitta* of identification with buddha, understood by Yōsai in absolute terms as the essence of the precepts (*kaitai* 戒体). The interpretation of this most accomplished type of *bodhicitta* resembles the role Enchin assigned to the syllable *bhrum* in his *Bodaijōkyō ryakugishaku* 菩提場經略義釈 (Abbreviated Commentary on the *Pudichang jing*; T. 2230.61:535b–536c).

In the *Kongōchōshū bodaishinron kuketsu* Yōsai explains that the practice of this *bodhicitta* and the visualization practice of the sun and moon circles are identical (T. 2293.70:30c). Visualizing the sun and moon becomes the crucial step by which the precepts are embodied by the practitioner who receives them. This also substantiates the notion that buddhahood can be attained by receiving precepts (*jukai jōbutsu* 受戒成仏), which had been argued by Annen on the basis of the Tendai “perfect” precepts (Fukuda 1954, 597–98). In his *Shutten taikō*, Yōsai claims that practicing the *bodhicitta* of identification with buddha is the same as visualizing the combination of the Womb and Diamond realms in one’s mind (*Nihon daizōkyō*, *Tendaishū mikkyō shōsho* 3: 655a).

This notion of combination is closely connected to and may be derived from an esoteric consecratory ritual performed only by Taimitsu monks, namely the combinatory *abhiṣeka* (*gōgyō kanjō* 合行灌頂). Kūkai maintained the nondual transmission of the Womb and Diamond realms based on the myth of the transmission in the Iron Tower of South India (*nantentettō sōjō* 南天鉄塔相承). Taimitsu did not subscribe to this mythology, however, and Taimitsu scholar-monks after Saichō endeavored to create a nondual pattern in ritual transmission. The combinatory consecratory ritual probably emerged by Annen’s time in parallel with the threefold system (*sanbu* 三部).

Yōsai also employed other patterns to explain the relation between the Womb and Diamond realms. In the *Ingoshū*, a text that has recently been reassessed as Yōsai’s genuine work, he used the metaphor of

woman and man: women symbolized the womb class and the sun; men symbolized the diamond class and the moon. He discussed the relation between these two opposites in terms of sexual intercourse and its result: if a woman's desire is stronger than the man's, the fetus will be female, symbolized by the color red or yellow. If the man's desire is stronger, the fetus will be male, represented by the color white. The combination of the two mandalic realms is thus represented by the union of blood and semen (赤白二滯) and flesh and bones (黄白二滯). The fetus is understood as the *cintāmaṇi* (*nyoirin hōju* 如意宝珠), signifying the result of enlightenment and at the same time symbolizing new life. Yōsai shared this type of interpretation, which has misleadingly been associated with the heresies of the Tachikawa-ryū, with several other figures of the medieval period.

#### *Yōsai's Esoteric Lineage*

It has been historically ascertained that Yōsai received multiple esoteric lineages, but a particular lineage is emphasized in the *Kaihen kyōshu ketsu*, which includes Yōsai's autobiography (see Taga 1965, 279–81). According to this work, Yōsai's master was Kikō 基好 (1167?–1198?), resident monk at Mt. Dai 大山 (modern Tottori prefecture), known as one of three major Tendai centers in medieval times. The esoteric lineage chart contained in this work is that of a combinatory *abhiṣeka*. Kikō also instructed other famous monks, such as Jien Jichin (1155–1225), in the combinatory *abhiṣeka*. Although details of Kikō's life are still obscure, his crucial role in Taimitsu should be underlined.

The esoteric lineage founded by Yōsai is known as the Yōjō-ryū or Kenninji-ryū 建仁寺流. It developed as part of the Tani 谷流 branch of Taimitsu, one of the two major divisions of Tendai esoteric Buddhism,<sup>2</sup> and still constitutes one of the existing Taimitsu lineages, with headquarters at Mitsuzō-in 密蔵院 in modern Nagoya (Aichi prefecture).

Yōsai's lineage was transmitted by Shakuenbō Yōchō 釈円房栄朝 (1165–1247), who was Yōsai's first disciple according to the *Rengeinryū*

<sup>2</sup> In fact the Tani lineage (founded by Kōkei 皇慶, 977–1049), after the time of Chōen 長宴 (1016–1081), incorporated the Kawa-ryū 川流, the other lineage (created by Kakuchō 覚超, 960–1034). See Inada 1936, 2 and Ōkubo 2008, 79–80.



*kechimyakufu* 蓮華院流血脈譜 (Lineage Chart of Rengein-ryū).<sup>3</sup> Yōchō established Chōrakuji 長樂寺 (in modern Gunma prefecture), which became the center of the Yōjō lineage until late medieval times. This temple was a very important platform of ordination for esoteric and Zen monks in the Kantō area, and many famous medieval monks, such as Ben'en Enni 弁円円爾 (1202–1280) and Mujū Ichien 無住一円 (1226–1312), trained there (Yamamoto 2003, 25). Within a hundred years, the center of Yōjō lineage moved to Mitsuzō-in, later known as the Shinogi Tendai Academy (Shinogi Dangisho 篠木談義所). Chōrakuji still exists, but in the Edo period the temple was known as one of the Tokugawa shogun family temples (*Tōshōgū* 東照宮).

Yōsai's other prominent disciple was Sōgonbō Gyōyū 莊嚴房行勇 (1163–1241). The first reference to him is found in the *Tsurugaoka hachimangūji gusō shidai* 鶴岡八幡宮寺供僧次第 (Program of the Serving Monks of Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine-Temple) (ZGR (1923–1933), vol. 104, 894). Gyōyū in fact served at the Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine-Temple, the religious center of the Kamakura shogunate, and through him Yōsai established close links to the political power of the time. Yōsai and Gyōyū performed several esoteric rituals for the shogunate.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, in response to a request from the shogun family, they helped establish Kongō Sanmai Temple 金剛三昧院 on Mt. Kōya, which became a leading institution for the instruction of well-known monks such as Shinchi Kakushin 心地覺心 (1207–1298) of Kōkoku Temple 興国寺 (Nakao 2005, 115, 123–24; Girard 2007, 51). The Yōjō lineage thus played a crucial role in the religio-political life of Kamakura Japan.

<sup>3</sup> See Gunmakenshi hensan iinkai, ed. 1984; Okonogi 2002; Yamamoto 2003, 28. Other sources, such as the *Tōji tendai kechimyaku zu* 東寺天台血脈図 (Tōji Version of Tendai Lineage Chart), introduce a different master. See DNK, Iewake 20, Tōfukuji monjo 1, 70–74.

<sup>4</sup> *Azuma kagami*. See also Sasaki Kaoru 1997, 84.

## 71. SHINTŌ AND ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

Fabio Rambelli

A central aspect of Buddhism and a key factor in its successful diffusion is its facility to interact with preexisting religious traditions. In general, Buddhism did not attempt to supplant preexisting cults but to create a specific cultural space for itself by interacting with native cults in several ways. This resulted not only in the development of forms of religious syncretism (cults, doctrines, festivals, calendrical rites, etc.), but also and especially of specific and original intellectual systems and ritual procedures that would characterize Buddhism and differentiate it from other traditions. Recent studies have begun to show that interaction with local cults was an essential aspect of Buddhist beliefs and practices from the very beginning. Buddhist canonical sources provide us with a detailed picture of early Buddhist interest in and attention to local cults in India (DeCaroli 2004). Archaeological evidence reveals that early Buddhist temples were built on the sites of prehistoric megalithic formations or in nearby areas, indicating an earnest interest in interacting with local cults, including those dedicated to the dead (Schopen 2004, 360–81).

In other words, Buddhism is a complex cultural system that since its early stages of development in India included “local deities,” i.e., Brahmanical deities and local gods such as *yakṣas* and *nāgas*, as well as spirits of the dead. This became the general paradigm for the structure of local cults elsewhere. As Buddhism spread, it carried its peculiar patterns of interactions with other traditions, including elements mediated from Brahmanism and from local, non-Aryan cultures in India.

### *Buddhism and “Local” Deities*

Arriving at a definition of “local deities” (and local cults in general) in a Buddhist context is not an easy task. In fact, “local deities” is an umbrella term that covers a number of different phenomena and entities. We should note that Buddhism and Indian religions in general have developed a detailed vocabulary to designate “supernatural” beings, and this terminology cannot be adequately rendered in English

words such as “deity,” “god,” “spirit,” “ghost,” and “ogre.” (Moreover, such beings cannot even properly be considered “supernatural,” since they exist and operate within the same natural realm of human beings.) An attempt to give a unified classification to various forms of such beings is represented by the Sino-Japanese term *hachibushū* 八部衆 (or *tenryū hachibushū* 天童八部衆). Systematized and popularized by esoteric Buddhism, this multifarious category includes *devas* (Jpn. *ten* 天), *nāgas* (*ryū* 竜), *yakṣas* (*yasha* 夜叉), *gandharvas* (*kendatsuba* 乾闥婆), *asuras* (*ashura* 阿修羅), *garuḍas* (*karura* 迦樓羅), *kiṃnaras* (*kinnara* 緊那羅), and *mahoragas* (*magoraga* 摩睺羅迦); in addition, we find *rākṣasas*, *pīśacas*, and various kinds of ghosts and demonic entities.

However, not all local deities were, strictly speaking, “local.” While some controlled a very limited territory (for example, the area covered by the shade of the deity’s tree or the lake in which the deity resided), others, such as the Vedic and Brahmanic gods, extended their influence over many world systems and were the objects of widespread cults; and some were originally regional gods, most notably, Kṛṣṇa and Gaṇeśa, that spread to various parts of the Indian subcontinent. At times, certain local spirit-deities, due to their interactions with Buddhism, came to acquire a “translocal” (transnational) character, as in the case of Indian deities that are worshiped from Southeast Asia to Japan. I propose to define “local deities” (“deities” understood here in the broadest possible sense) as essentially comprising three kinds of non-human entities: spirits/deities that were 1) not originally Buddhist (or, outside of India, not originally Indian); 2) brought elsewhere by Buddhism as part of a larger process of acculturation and which became the objects of local cults; and 3) produced by the interactions between Buddhism and local traditions.

Such local cults are not just part of folk religion or simply ways to cope with popular superstition and ignorance. In addition to their role in the ordering of society (social and cosmic hierarchies, definitions of righteous behavior) and control over territory (kingship), they are also related to other ideas of cultural identity and definitions of subjectivity (souls, spirits, various forms of existence); as such, they enabled Buddhism, originally a translocal religion, to set its roots in foreign localities.

*Tantric Buddhism and Local Deities*

Compared with other forms of Buddhism, tantric Buddhism tended to give local deities a more active and important role, elevating several of them to the highest ranks in its pantheon. A few examples from the Japanese context will explain.

Daigensui Myōō 太元帥明王 (*Āṭavaka Vidyārāja*) is a violent and ambiguous deity that since the mid-ninth century became the main object of worship in one of the most important rituals for the Japanese emperor, the *taigen no hō* 太元法. *Āṭavaka* was originally a demon (*yakṣa*) living in the desert together with outcastes. In a typical case of tantric reversal of values, he converted to Buddhism and vowed to protect the religion and its followers after the Buddha's death. By protecting the emperor and the social order, *Āṭavaka* promotes the diffusion of Buddhism and, by extension, its soteriological goals (see Duquenne 1983b).

The sacred beings known as *myōō* 明王 (*vidyārāja*) are important objects of cults in Japanese tantric Buddhism, much more so than in India where they are scarcely mentioned. Their representations reveal strong Śaivaite imagery associated with aspects of *yakṣas*. Their chief, Fudō 不動 (Acala), in particular, is defined as a wrathful (*funnu* 憤怒) manifestation of Mahāvairocana who employs violent means to dispel evil passions (*bonnō* 煩惱), and thus opens the way for rapid attainment of enlightenment. In Japan, Fudō is particularly venerated in Shugendō 修驗道. In the case of the *myōō* as well, Indian deities with strong local flavor play a central role in esoteric Buddhist cults and soteriology.

Perhaps the most striking case of former Indian deities making it to the top of tantric soteriology is Mahāvairocana (Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来), the tantric version of Vairocana, the cosmic Buddha of the *Avatataṃsaka sūtra* and Kegon 華嚴 (Huayan) Buddhism. Originally, however, Vairocana was a transformation of Virocana, chief of the *asuras*, according to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.7–12), and this deity was criticized in early Brahmanism for identifying the self with the body and for emphasizing earthly pleasures—aspects that came to constitute important features of the tantric nondualist vision.

In these few examples we detect an important aspect of the treatment of local deities peculiar to tantrism. While in other forms of Buddhism such figures are essentially protectors and guardian spirits, at best involved in merit-making activities, within the tantric tradition

they also take on an important soteriological role. Mahāvairocana and Fudō exemplify this new role (though it is likely that most practitioners were not aware of their origin as “local” deities).

In addition, we should note that the esoteric Buddhist mandala provided an important model for the systematization of the realm of sacred beings in Japan. The external sector of the Womb Mandala (Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala; Taizōkai Mandara 胎藏界曼荼羅) contains a number of non-Buddhist divinities ranging from Brahmā, Śiva, and Indra to astral deities more animistic entities, such as the gods of fire, water, and wind, as well as violent spirits and demons (*yakṣas*). These divinities constituted the template for the organization of the premodern Japanese pantheon; as part of the mandala they were considered provisional manifestations of the Buddha, and therefore were entitled to a place in the Buddhist cosmos. In other words, in Japan tantric Buddhism provided a new and broader cosmological and soteriological framework in which to insert all (or most) forms of local sacred entities. The soteriological role of deities also took other forms in Japanese tantric Buddhism.

### *Ryōbu Shintō*

A distinctive Japanese doctrine regarding the status of local deities in general holds that the *kami* 神 are in fact local manifestations (*suijaku* 垂迹, “manifested traces”) of buddhas and bodhisattvas who are themselves the *kami*’s original forms (*honji* 本地, “original ground”). The conceptual roots of this doctrine, usually known today as the *honji suijaku* doctrine, are far-reaching and diverse. They include, for example, the Chinese Tiantai 天台 patriarch Zhiyi 智顛 (538–597), who distinguished between two main divisions in the *Lotus Sūtra*, one referring to the original Buddha and the other to his earthly manifestation, Śākyamuni; and a possible transformation of Indian Vaiṣṇava ideas about Viṣṇu’s manifestations (*avatāra*; *gongen* 権現), mediated in Japan through the influence of tantrism.

The *honji suijaku* doctrine per se is, strictly speaking, not a tantric doctrine. In some cases, however, it became the basis for new theories and rituals about the *kami* that were direct transformations or adaptations of esoteric Buddhist doctrines and practices, and thus deserve to be treated as elements of Japanese tantric Buddhism. These tantric discourses about the *kami* are generally known as Ryōbu Shintō 両部神道 (literally, “the Shintō of the Twofold Mandala of Shingon 真言

Buddhism”) or Shingon Shintō. It is important to understand that this was not a sectarian movement, but rather a widespread discourse carried out by various people (Buddhist practitioners and *kami* specialists alike) in a number of cult centers (mainly Shingon and Tendai, but also at the Ise 伊勢 Shrine and other temple-shrine complexes) from the twelfth until the mid-nineteenth centuries.

Toward the end of the Heian 平安 period (794–1185), the *Nakatomi no harae kunge* 中臣祓訓解, one of the earliest texts in which esoteric Buddhism was explicitly used to develop a new discourse about the Japanese *kami*, set forth a Buddhist typology of *kami* that became widely accepted. It divided the *kami* into three groups according to their degree of enlightenment: *kami* of original enlightenment (*hōgakushin* 本覺神), *kami* in the process of attaining enlightenment (*shigakushin* 始覺神), and *kami* of non-enlightenment (*fukakushin* 不覺神). The first group was later redefined by the Shintō priest and theoretician Yoshida Kanetomo 吉田兼俱 (1435–1511) as *ryōbu shūgō no shintō* 兩部習合神道 (“the form of Shintō that associates the two [fundamental mandalas of esoteric Buddhism with the two shrines of Ise]”) (see Grapard 1992). During the Edo 江戸 period (1603–1868), authors began to use the term Ryōbu Shintō to refer to Shingon-related discourses about the *kami*, an interpretation that is still common today.

The *kami* of original enlightenment is a category that comprises only the two main deities worshiped at the Great Shrines of Ise, Amaterasu 天照 and Toyouke 豐受, understood as embodiments of the essence of the principle of Buddha Dainichi (*rishō* 理性). It is important to emphasize that, unlike other Japanese deities, the *kami* of Ise were not simply “manifested traces” (*suijaku*)—mere provisional manifestations of specific Buddhist divinities—but were considered direct emanations of Dainichi’s essence and embodiments of the two mandalas, which, according to the teachings of esoteric Buddhism, are the structure of the universe. It is interesting to note that Japanese *kami* in general, including Sannō 山王, Kumano 熊野, Hachiman 八幡, and Kasuga 春日, each of which claimed primacy over Japan, never went beyond their status as manifestations of buddhas or bodhisattvas. A notable exception is the Miwa 三輪(大神) deity, associated with the Womb Mandala, together with Amaterasu, who emanated instead from the Vajra Mandala (Vajradhātu Maṇḍala; Kongōkai Mandara 金剛界曼荼羅).

Scholars now identify two main phases in the formation of *kami* doctrines and practices based on esoteric Buddhism. In the early phase, between the end of the Heian and the mid-Kamakura (1185–1333) periods, texts such as the *Tenshō Daijin giki* 天照大神儀軌 (also known as the *Hōshi kashō kuden* 宝誌和尚口伝), the *Nakatomi no harae kunge* (early Kamakura), and the *Mitsuno kashiwa denki* 三角柏伝記 appeared. During the later phase, from the late Kamakura 鎌倉 to Nanbokuchō 南北朝 periods (1336–1392), the *Yamato Katsuragi hōzanki* 大和葛城宝山記, the *Ryōgū gyōmon jinshaku* 両宮形文深釈, the *Ryōgū honzei rishu makaen* 両宮本誓理趣摩訶衍, the *Jindaikan hiketsu* 神代卷秘訣, and the *Reikiki* 麗氣記, among others, were composed.<sup>1</sup>

The most influential Shingon traditions within Ryōbu Shintō were the Miwaryū 三輪流 and the Goryū 御流. The Miwaryū was centered on Mt. Miwa south of Nara 奈良 at the Ōgorinji 大御輪寺 (or Dai-gorinji). This temple controlled the Miwa Shrine, which was initially part of the temple network affiliated with the Saidaiji 西大寺 in Nara. The Miwa deity, Miwa Daimyōjin 三輪大明神, was an emanation of a much earlier mountain cult, but it appears that by the late Kamakura period it came to be associated with the Womb Mandala in combination with Ise's Amaterasu, which originated instead from the Vajra Mandala. The Goryū Shintō developed at the Murōji 室生寺, a mountain temple located in Yamato between Nara and Ise. The term *goryū* (“noble lineage”) comes from a legend in which Emperor Saga 嵯峨 (r. 809–823) transmitted certain secret teachings, related to the imperial regalia, to Kūkai 空海, who supposedly combined them with the cult of the wish-fulfilling jewel (*cintāmaṇi*; *nyoi hōju* 如意宝珠).

The teachings of both the Miwaryū and the Goryū were transmitted through numerous initiation rituals, collectively known as *jingi kanjō* 神祇灌頂 or *shintō* (or, perhaps, *jindō*) *kanjō* 神道灌頂 (literally, “*abhiṣeka* concerning secret teachings about the *kami*”). The most important among them were the *Ama no iwato kanjō* 天岩戸灌頂 (on the legend of the Heavenly Cavern in which Amaterasu secluded herself and plunged the world into darkness), the *sanshu jingi kanjō* 三種神器灌頂 (on the three imperial regalia), the *waka kanjō* 和歌

<sup>1</sup> For a representative sample of a later text, see the English translation of the *Ise shōsho Nihongi yūshiki honshō nin denki* by Faure 2000.

灌頂 (on *waka* poetry), the *Ise kanjō* 伊勢灌頂 (on tantric teachings concerning Ise), and the *Reiki kanjō* 麗氣灌頂 (on the teachings of the *Reikiki*, a central Ryōbu Shintō text; see below). Variants of such types of initiation constituted the basis for rituals for specific professions (carpenters, merchants, farmers) involving deities of the *honji suijaku* universe. Similar initiations were also performed in Tendai temples—and perhaps, also in cult centers affiliated with other Buddhist schools.

Initiation rituals concerning *kami* matters (understood in a broad sense to include literary texts and secular professions), such as *abhiṣeka* rituals, were generally modeled directly on esoteric initiation rituals (*denbō kanjō* 伝法灌頂). They were perhaps also based on the *himitsu kanjō* 祕密灌頂, given the extracanonical origin of Shintō rituals, but modified to a certain extent to better represent myths presented in the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 and the spatial structure of *kami* cult places. Buddhist priests took pains to study non-Buddhist texts and went through initiation rituals that were often very complicated, time-consuming, and presumably quite expensive. Through those rituals, the initiated became identical with a “Shintō” deity, thus creating a new soteriology that replaced the usual idea of “becoming Buddha” (*jōbutsu* 成仏) with a form of “becoming *kami*” (this occurred, of course, within the intellectual context outlined above, in which *kami* were local manifestations of buddhas and bodhisattvas). All this was related to an awareness of the specificity of Japan as a sacred place.

The attainment of secret knowledge transmitted through initiation rituals was a soteriological goal, since it was equivalent to the attainment of salvation (becoming Buddha or, in the case of *shintō kanjō*, identifying oneself with the *kami*). But it also involved a promise of worldly benefits such as professional and artistic success, a moral obligation as well in the realization of the essential principles and duties of a specific craft or profession, and the attainment of the “trade secrets” of a specific family lineage.

The development of a tantric discourse on Shintō during the middle ages also generated an great deal of commentarial activity concerning Nara and Heian literary texts, such as the *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語, *waka* poetry collections, and especially the *Nihon shoki* (in contrast, the *Kojiki* 古事記 was practically ignored). The textual field centered on the *Nihon shoki* has recently been defined as “medieval *Nihongi*” (*chūsei Nihongi* 中世日本紀), a vast and fluid area of intertextuality to which the *Reikiki* was also related.



The *Reikiki* seems to constitute the mythological and ontological framework for such rituals; several medieval authors explicitly point to this text as the origin of *shintō kanjō*. The *Reikiki* is indeed one of the most important Ryōbu Shintō texts. It is composed of eighteen fascicles: fourteen constitute the main text, and the last four contain only iconographic material. Many copies of the text exist, but scholars have pointed to the existence of at least three different versions. Modern scholars believe that the *Reikiki* was written by a Shingon priest (or perhaps group of priests) connected with the Ise shrines between the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. This attribution, however, is not completely convincing, given the numerous Tendai esoteric elements and the references to the Katsuragi 葛城 mountain range in the Yamato region present in the text.

The themes addressed in the various chapters of the *Reikiki* are quite common in medieval combinatory literature. They range from cosmology (especially cosmogonical theories and the place of Japan in the universe) to theology (the status and role of the *kami*), soteriology (a theory and practice of salvation with many elements from the teachings of original enlightenment), the role of authority (in particular the emperor), and issues related to the representation of the sacred. The treatment of these themes, however, is quite peculiar, and in some cases without equivalent in any other extant text. This fact, taken together with the peculiarity of the iconography, may be an indication of the early and perhaps essentially experimental nature of the *Reikiki*.

#### *The End of the Tantric Discourses on the Kami*

The fact that the Ise deities Amaterasu and Toyouke were envisioned by Ryōbu Shintō as being the very essence of dharma-nature (*hosshō* 法性) and of the Buddha Dainichi gave them an ontological primacy that opened the way to cosmogonical speculations on the original state of the universe and the primordial godhead. Indeed, to argue that the essence of Dharma and the very nature of Dainichi is a *kami* (in fact, two different *kami*) opens up a number of problems in Buddhist ontology, cosmology, and soteriology. These issues were addressed by medieval and early modern discourses about the *kami* that were deeply infused with tantrism.

Several medieval Shintō texts indicated, more or less explicitly, that while Buddhism offered a soteriology progressing from ignorance to awakening, and as such was still tied to a fundamental dualism (pre-

cisely, one opposing ignorance to enlightenment), doctrines and cults related to the *kami* were primarily concerned with the original condition of beings and the universe before the appearance of the first buddha—a condition, they argued, that transcended every dualism. For example, the Tendai monk and *kami* scholar Jihen 慈遍 (active 1333–1340) claimed in his *Toyoashihara jinpū waki* 豊葦原神風和記 that explicit representations of Buddhism were forbidden at the Ise shrines because Buddhism preaches the difference between ignorance and enlightenment and thus defiles the perfect unity of primordial chaos that forms the basis of “Shintō.” Another Tendai priest, Sonshun 尊舜 (1451–1514), explicitly advocated in his *Monguryaku taikō shikenmon* 文句略大綱私見聞 the primacy of the *kami* over the buddhas, claiming that the *kami* belong to a primeval condition of ontological wholeness, which he identifies with original enlightenment as primordial ignorance. As a result, the quest for a supposedly original condition became one of the foci of Japanese discourses on the *kami*.

Thus, toward the fifteenth century certain authors were arguing that the *kami* were in fact the primary, original forms of divine beings, and buddhas and bodhisattvas were local Indian manifestations of these Japanese originals. This reversal of dominant Buddhist ideas was the basis for a new Shintō movement with a strong nativist character, originally centered at the Yoshida shrine in Kyōto 京都. Its main priest, the abovementioned Yoshida Kanetomo, had collected a number of doctrines and rituals about the *kami* that were mostly related to tantric Buddhism (*mikkyō* 密教), and he tried to establish his own tradition by excising the most visible Buddhist features (see Scheid 2001). In time, the Yoshida tradition became the inspiration for nativist thinkers, anti-Buddhists, and *kami* priests disgruntled with the Buddhist establishment still dominating their shrines. These were the people and groups that contributed to a Shintō discourse distinct from Buddhism during the Edo period in a process that would culminate in the early Meiji separation of Shintō from Buddhism.

In medieval Japan, for example, certain authors began to identify the *kami* with the ultimate realm, the unconditioned and absolute dimension of blissful “ignorance” (*ganbon mummyō* 元品無明, “primeval ignorance”), which was supposed to predate the appearance of the first buddha and, with him, of speculative thinking that differentiated between ignorance and enlightenment. This “primeval ignorance” was thus the ultimate form of nondualism. This surprising development opened the way to nativist critiques of Buddhism based on ontological,

epistemological, and ethical considerations, as in so-called Ise Shintō and, more clearly, in Yoshida Shintō 吉田神道.

In this manner, systematic and sustained attempts to integrate “local deities” into the Buddhist system produced an independent, and gradually non-Buddhist, discourse on local cults that became increasingly nativistic in character. This seems to be a common development in regions in which tantrism played an important role, such as in India, with the development of Hindu nativism; Tibet’s Bön tradition, and in Japan, with the creation of Shintō as an independent religion.

## 72. SHINGON RISSHŪ: ESOTERIC BUDDHISM AND VINAYA ORTHODOXY IN JAPAN

Klaus Pinte

Shingon Risshū 真言律宗 (literally, “Mantra Vinaya school”) designates the Japanese Buddhist order of Saidaiji (Saidaiji-ryū 西大寺流) in Nara 奈良 that emerged from the “precepts restoration movement” (*kairitsu fukkō undō* 戒律復興運動) initiated by Eison 叡尊 (1201–1290; also Eizon) and others around 1238 (Groner 2005, 215; cf. *infra*). The distinctive twofold appellation “Shingon Risshū” hints at the synthesis of Shingon doctrine and ritual with the praxis and ceremonial of monastic discipline as propagated in the Japanese “Vinaya school” or Risshū (Quinter 2007, 437).<sup>1</sup>

Although very little is known about the first Buddhist communities on the Japanese archipelago (Hankó 2003, 329–33), early Nara-period (710–784/94) hieratical officiates seem to have been regulated by the state and primarily conducted for its welfare. The procedure had more to do with evaluating a candidate’s diligence in chanting sūtras or performing nation-protection ceremonies than with his/her vowing to uphold a certain set of disciplinary rules in front of a quorum of ten (or in remote areas five) legitimately ordained monks (three learning masters and two or seven witnesses), as prescribed by the “orthodox” method (Hankó 2003, 333). Aside from the official sacerdotal examination system, there were also self-ordained priests and priestesses or “monastics who *liberated* themselves” (*jidosō* 私度僧) (Groner 1984b, 5–6).<sup>2</sup>

In 733, however, the court sent two men to China to request Chinese masters to come to Japan and perform legitimate ordinations according to the regulations of the *Sifenlü* 四分律 (*Shibunritsu*, T. 1428) (Groner

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<sup>1</sup> On the origins and establishment of Risshū in Japan, see Hankó 2003, esp. 327ff; for genealogies, 357–58.

<sup>2</sup> For contemporary self-ordinations or “vowing to keep the precepts on your own accord” (i.e., *jisei-jukai* 自誓受戒) and their textual foundation, see Hankó 2003, 332–34, esp. \*2; and Yamabe 2005; on early ordinations in Japan, see Hankó 2003, 328ff.

1984b, 7).<sup>3</sup> Their invitation was accepted by the reputed *vinaya* master (*risshi* 律師) Jianzhen 鑑真 (Ganjin, 688–763), who reached Japan in 753 or 754 (Ueda 1939, 120; Hankó 2003, 346).<sup>4</sup> He introduced the *Shibunritsu* interpretation of Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) or the Nanshan Vinaya school (Nanshan Lüzong 南山律宗), and conferred the “full precepts” (*gusokukai* 具足戒) of the continental tradition upon Japanese priests who renounced their previous “unorthodox” initiations, and thus became the first full-fledged formally and properly ordained monastics on Japanese soil. Jianzhen erected an ordination platform hall (*kaidan'in* 戒壇院, also *kaidandō* 戒壇堂) at Tōdaiji 東大寺 (Nara) in 755, which became the center for official ordinations (Groner 1984b, 8–9).<sup>5</sup>

However, as in China where Mahāyānists took an additional set of precepts as a supplement to the *Shibunritsu*, Jianzhen also conferred the bodhisattva-*śīla* (*bosatsukai* 菩薩戒) of the *Fanwangjing* 梵網經 (*Bonmōkyō*, T. 1484) upon the Japanese candidates as a “separate ordination” (*betsuju* 別受) (Groner 1979, 26; Unno 1994, 29; Abé 1999, 47–49; Groner 2005, 214).<sup>6</sup> Jianzhen’s establishment of a legitimate ordination system gave him the reputation of the founder of Risshū, which from 759 onward was headquartered at Tōshōdaiji 唐招提寺 (Ueda 1939, 120; Hankó 2003, 13–14 nn. 39–40).

<sup>3</sup> This Chinese translation of the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* had been accepted as the only valid scriptural authority for monastic ordination practice throughout China almost two decades earlier (Heirman 2002, 422; Heirman 2007, 195; André Bareau, cited in McRae 2005, 70).

<sup>4</sup> On Ganjin, see Hankó 2003, 341–52.

<sup>5</sup> For six years the Tōdaiji Kaidan'in was the only permanent ordination platform on Japanese soil, but after Empress Kōken 孝謙 (r. 749–758; a.k.a. Shōtoku 称徳, r. 764–770) ordered the erection of two additional precept platforms in 761, it became known as the “central platform” or *chūō kaidan* 中央戒壇; at Yakushiji 薬師寺 in Shimotsuke 下野 (Tochigi) there was an “eastern platform” or *tōkaidan* 東戒壇 and at Kannonji 観音寺 in Chikuzen 筑前 (Fukuoka) a *saikaidan* 西戒壇 or “western platform” (Eliot 2005, 232). On ordination platforms in India and China, see McRae 2005, 75ff.

<sup>6</sup> Traditionally the alleged translation of the Sanskrit *Brahmajāla sūtra* or the tenth chapter of the *Bodhisattvaśīla sūtra* attributed to Kumārajīva (344–413) in 406, but nowadays accepted as a Chinese forgery. By the end of the fifth century, the second fascicle of the *Bonmōkyō* circulated as a so-called *Bodhisattva-prātimokṣa* (*Pusa jieben*; *Bosatsu kaihō* 菩薩戒本), which formed the basis for the Mahāyānist code in East Asia. On the term *bodhisattva-prātimokṣa*, see Malalasekera 1972, 240–46. For a brief discussion on the apocryphal origins of the *Bonmōkyō*, see Hankó 2003, 108–10. For an annotated German translation, see Hankó 2003, 125–81; see 182–85 for an overview. For a complete French translation, cf. De Groot 1967. For further reference, see Groner 1990, esp. 251–57; Gombrich 1998, 52–53; Yamabe 2005.

Although ordinations soon became purely *pro forma* (Faure 1998, 173), the system of separate *Shibunritsu* and *Bonmōkyō* ordinations seems to have remained the standard format in the Heian period (784/94–1185), at least until 822. In that year, only a few days after the death of Saichō 最澄 (767–822), Tendai 天台 priests were legally permitted to ordain so-called “Mahāyāna bodhisattva monks” (*daijō bosatsusō* 大乘菩薩僧) in a procedure that was exclusively based on the “perfect and sudden Mahāyāna precepts” (*daijō endonkai* 大乘圓頓戒) of the *Bonmōkyō*, and which was performed on a new Tendai-exclusive precepts platform at Enryakuji 延曆寺 on Mt. Hiei 比叡山 (Ueda 1939, 119; Groner 1984b, 162; Groner 2005, 214). Thus, within a century after the introduction of the *vinaya* into Japan, Tendai priests abandoned the continental ordination procedure and rejected the Tōdaiji *Shibunritsu* ordination as *conditio sine qua non* to enter the monastic order.

In the same year, Kūkai 空海 (774–835) received imperial consent to erect an Abhiṣeka Hall (Kanjōdō 灌頂堂, also Shingon'in 真言院) in front of the Great Buddha Hall (Daibutsuden 大仏殿) at Tōdaiji (Abé 1999, 53). In his dying instructions (*Kōnin no Goyuikai* 弘仁の御遺誡), Kūkai instructed Shingon priests to “strictly adhere to both the exoteric and esoteric precepts (*ken-mitsu ni kai* 顯密二戒),<sup>7</sup> and to purify themselves” (KZ 1978 vol. 2, 861; quoted in Ueda 1939, 141). He admonished them: “If you purposely violate [these precepts], you are not a disciple of the Buddha... nor are you my disciple” (KZ, vol. 2, 862; Groner, trans. 2005, 211; Tinsley, “Kūkai and the Development of Shingon Buddhism,” this vol.). However, adherence to the *vinaya* was again soon in decline, and not until the Kamakura period (1185–1333) did Kūkai’s admonition to strictly observe the monastic code inspire Buddhist prelates to initiate a “precepts restoration movement” in order to revive the *Shibunritsu* ordination tradition and to restore the *vinaya* “orthodoxy” of Jianzhen’s Rishshū.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The “esoteric precepts” (*mitsukai* 密戒) are also called “*samaya* precepts” (*sanmayakai* 三昧耶戒), and according to Kūkai comprise four vows centered on the aspiration to attain enlightenment (cf. KZ, vol. 2, 150–51; English translation in Hakeda 1972b, 94–95), while he included in the “exoteric precepts” (*kenkai* 顯戒) the disciplinary codes of the *Shibunritsu* and *Bonmōkyō*. For Kūkai’s precepts view, see Ueda 1933; for the origins of the *sanmayakai*, cf. Tomabechi 1990. The history of the order in which the respective *Shibunritsu*, *Bonmōkyō*, and *samaya* precepts are bestowed during the ordination process is addressed in my forthcoming dissertation (2012).

<sup>8</sup> While Shingon Rishshū is narrowly defined as a specific “school” (*shū* 宗), the term *Shingon-ritsu* 真言律 designates both the Shingon precepts interpretation of Kūkai

While Jippan 實範 (1089?–1144; also Jitsuhan) from Nakagawa 中川 (Nara) is considered the trailblazer of the Shingon Risshū movement, Kakujō 覺盛 (1194–1249) of Tōshōdaiji (Nara) and especially Eison of Saidaiji are perhaps its most famous prelates.<sup>9</sup> Shingon Risshū in Nara became known as the “Southern school” or the “Vinaya school of the Southern Mountains” (Nanzan Risshū 南山律宗) and became the dominant trend, but there was also a “Northern school” (Hokushū 北宗), centered in Kyōto (Faure 1998, 173–74). One of its most renowned representatives is Shunjō 俊秀 (1166–1227) of Sennyūji 泉涌寺 (Groner 2005, 215). Other Kamakura-period Shingon Risshū representatives are Gedatsu 解脱 (a.k.a. Jōkei 貞慶; 1155–1213) from Kasagi 笠置 (northeast of Nara), Myōe 明恵 (1173–1232) from Toganō 桐尾 in Yamashiro 山城 (Kyōto), and Eison’s disciple Ryōkan 良観 (a.k.a. Ninshō 忍性; 1217–1303) from Gokurakuji 極楽寺 (Kamakura). Eison and Ninshō are particularly known for their contributions to Buddhist social aid (Quinter 2007).<sup>10</sup>

Just as during the period prior to Jianzhen, Eison and Kakujō saw themselves compelled to self-ordinations, which in contrast to the Nara tradition of separate *Shibunritsu* and *Bonmōkyō* ordinations were performed as a single “comprehensive ordination” (*tsūju* 通受) before a buddha statue (*honzon* 本尊) in the hope of reestablishing a legitimate dharma lineage (Groner 2005, 212ff.). This signaled “a dra-

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as well as the amalgam of movements for the revival of monastic discipline that was preached by Shingonshū-trained, or at least Shingonshū-affiliated, priests (*MD* 1277c, s.v. “*Shingon-ritsu*”; Ueda 1939, 120–21). In this broader sense, *Shingonritsu* has been described as “inside being the secret practice of *bodhisattvas*, but outside appearing as the revealed *śrāvaka* path” (Ueda 1939, 119). Shingon Risshū preaches the “orthodox” way of employing the *Shibunritsu* codex, both during ecclesiastic initiation as in daily monastic life, while at the same time adhering to the *Bonmōkyō* bodhisattva-*śīla* and *samaya* precepts, as well as to abiding by the Shingon teachings (Ueda 1939, 141). For Shingon Risshū lineages, see Ueda 1939, 130–32. The attempts to restore *vinaya* “orthodoxy” were to a great extent a reaction against such figures as Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262), the founder of the True Pure Land School (Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗, also Shinshū 真宗), who caused mainstream Buddhists to virtually abandon every form of disciplinary rule (Ueda 1939, 119). On Shinran, see Hirota and Ueda 1989; Nasu 2006. For Shinshū, see Yamamoto 1963; Dobbins 1989; Porcu 2008. Next to *vinaya* restoration movements, there were also Kamakura-period attempts to revive the bodhisattva precepts (Faure 1998, 173–74). Due to space limitations, these developments will not be discussed here.

<sup>9</sup> For Eison’s biography, see Groner 2005, 210–21.

<sup>10</sup> On Myōe, see Abé 2006 and Unno 1998; 2004; and 2006, 129ff. Except for Myōe and Jōkei, all these precepts revivers were monks with a clear Shingon affiliation (Ueda 1939, 120–21).

matic break from the tradition espoused by Japanese *vinaya* masters from Jianzhen, through Jippan and Jōkei” and “none of these [former] *vinaya* masters would have allowed the use of self-ordinations to ordain monks” (Groner 2005, 213–14).

Nevertheless, adherence to the precepts soon declined again, and it was another three and a half centuries before renewed precepts restoration attempts occurred at the beginning of the Edo period (1603–1867). Myōnin 明忍 (1576–1610), who together with his disciples Yūzon 友尊 (n.d.) and Eun 慧雲 (n.d.) took self-initiation at Byōdōshin’ō-in 平等心王院 on Makiozan 檜尾山 in Yamashiro in 1602, initiated this movement and subsequently transformed Makiozan into a “practice hall (also *maṇḍa*) for precepts restoration” (*ritsu saikō dōjō* 律再興道場) (Ueda 1939, 121–22). The Makiozan faction (Makiozanha 檜尾山派) inspired other Edo-period monks to establish other *vinaya-vihāras* (*ritsuen* 律園) or temples where monks were trained in accordance with the *Shibunritsu*. For instance, Yoshinaga 良永 (1585–1647) returned to his birthplace Kōyasan in 1619 after being initiated by Eun, and founded the Shinbessho Entsūji 眞別處圓通寺, which became the headquarters of Kōyasan Risshū. Yoshinaga’s pupil, Kaien Ekū 快圓惠空 (d. 1712), revived Shinhōji 神鳳寺 on Ōtorizan 大鳥山 in Izumi 和泉, and Jinin Emyō 慈忍慧猛 (1615–1675), Myōnin’s second-generation disciple, restored Yachūji 野中寺 in Kawachi 河内 (Kashū 河州).

Thus, Makiozan, Ōtorizan, and Yachūji became the centers of *Shibunritsu* studies and are known as the “three *vinaya* training temples” (*ritsu no san sōbō* 律の三僧坊). Because their founders were Shingon-affiliated monks, these temples are also called the “three branches of Shingon Risshū” (*Shingon Risshū no san ha* 真言律宗の三派). However, the successors of these monks later considered themselves closer to Risshū, and are therefore categorized as Shibun Risshū 四分律宗 (Dharmaguptaka-Vinaya school) or Shibunha 四分派 (Dharmaguptaka faction) (Ueda 1939, 122).

Some Edo-period monks went a step further and established their own forms of Shingon Risshū. Jōgon 淨嚴 (1639–1702, ordained by Kaien), for instance, sought to establish a sangha according to the orthodox teachings of the Buddha, and preached the “Dharma-Accordant Mantra Vinaya” (Nyohō Shingon Ritsu 如法真言律), which also aimed to restore the *Shibunritsu* precepts. In 1677 he founded Enmeiji 延命寺 in Kawachi and, relying on the patronage of the shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi 徳川綱吉 (1646–1709), established Reiunji 靈雲寺



on Hōrinzan 寶林山 in Yushima 湯島 (Edo) in 1691. The Reiun branch (Reiunha 靈雲派) of Nyohō Shingon Ritsu employs the *Shibunritsu* and is still extant today (Ueda 1939, 123).

On the other hand, Jiun 慈雲 (1718–1804), who succeeded the Yachūji lineage, is the founder of what is known as the “Correct Dharma Vinaya” (Jōbō Ritsu 正法律), which he proclaimed in 1756. Thirty years later, Kōkiji 高貴寺 in Kawachi was recognized as the head temple of Jōbō Ritsu. In this denomination monastics not only employed the *Shibunritsu* but also studied the *Uburitsu* 有部律 (*Konpon-setsu issai ubu binaya* 根本説一切有部毘奈耶, T. 1442) or the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* translated by Yijing 義淨 (635–713) in the early eighth century (Ueda 1939, 123).<sup>11</sup> Even though Jiun’s *Konpon-setsu issai ubu esō ryakuyō* 根本説一切有部依相略要 suggests that he envisioned establishing a sangha according to the *Uburitsu*, he never argued for exclusive reliance on it, nor did he reject the *Shibunritsu* as the foundation for the legitimate ordination procedure (Ueda 1939, 127; for Jiun’s *vinaya* sermons, see Watt 1992).

While it was initially designed to revive the *Shibunritsu*, and therefore referred to as the Dharmaguptaka branch (Shibunha), Edo-period Shingon Rishshū also developed a *Mūlasarvāstivāda* branch (*Ubuha* 有部派) (Ueda 1939, 141). This *Uburitsu* movement started with Myōzui 妙瑞 (1696–1764), who was seventh in the Shinbessho, or Entsūji, lineage on Kōyasan. Together with his disciples Mitsumon 密門 (d. 1788) of Shinbessho, Gakunyo 學如 (1716–1773; also Kakunyo) of Fukuōji 福王寺 in Aki 安藝 (modern-day Hiroshima), and Mitsumon’s disciple Tōkū 等空 (1745–1816) of Matsuoji 松尾寺 in Tango 丹後 (also Gotan 後丹), Myōzui claimed that Shingon adepts should uphold the *Uburitsu* instead of—not in addition to—the *Shibunritsu*,<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The *Uburitsu* is often ambiguously referred to as *Uburitsu* 有部律, which can also point at the Chinese translation of the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* (*Jūjuritsu* 十誦律) or *Ten Recitations Vinaya* (T. 1435) (Clarke 2006, 3, n. 4). For more information on the interpretation of the term 有部律 in this context, cf. Ueda 1932, 1–14. For a study of the Sanskrit *prātimokṣa* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādins*, see Prebish 1975.

<sup>12</sup> Although Mitsumon, Gakunyo, and Tōkū’s preaching of the *Uburitsu* revival is based on the teachings of Myōzui, it is important to note that Myōzui owed his preference for this *vinaya* to Shingen 眞源 (1689–1758) of Jōren’in 成蓮院 on Kōyasan. In 1756 Shingen recommended that Jiun write a revision on the *Nankai kikiden* 南海寄歸傳, i.e., *Nankai kikiden geranshō* 南海寄歸傳解纜鈔, finished at Fudōji 不動寺 in Nukata 額田 in 1758. Before his death, Shingen added an epilogue to Jiun’s *Ubu esō ryakuyō* 有部依相略要 in which he argued for the exclusive implementation of the *Uburitsu*. Therefore, Shingen, and not Myōzui, can be considered the actual founder

because Kūkai had listed the *Uburitsu* and not the *Shibunritsu* in the *vinaya* section (*ritsubu* 律部) of his *Sangakuroku* 三學錄 (Catalogue of [Texts Consisting of] the Three [Divisions of] Learning).<sup>13</sup>

Mitsumon argued that since the precepts revival of the middle ages the *Shibunritsu* was employed instead of the *Uburitsu*, which is counter to Kūkai's teachings, and in his *Shingon ritsugyō mondō* 真言律行問答, Gakunyo pleaded to have a Shingon Risshū ordination system that was different from the one used in Risshū (Ueda 1939, 125–28; for Myōzui, Mitsumon, Gakunyo, and Tōkū, cf. Ueda 1939, 127–28; and Clarke 2006, 1–27, *passim*). In 1759, Gakunyo received permission from Ninnajimiya 仁和寺宮 to turn the Fukuōji on Kikisan 金龜山 into a “*Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* practice hall” (*Uburitsu dōjō* 有部律道場) (Ueda 1939, 127).

Although Shinbessho had employed the *Shibunritsu*, from Myōzui onward the *Uburitsu* was enacted, and especially after Mitsumon's time, the latter came to rely exclusively on the *Uburitsu*. Therefore, Shinbessho-Entsūji, Fukuōji, and Matsuoji are called the “three *Mūlasarvāstivāda* training temples” (*Ubu no san sōbō* 有部の三僧坊), and they formed the operating base of the *Uburitsu* revival movement (*Uburitsu fukkō undō* 有部律復興運動), which strove to make the *Uburitsu* the only “*Shingon-vinaya*” (*Shingon-ritsu* 真言律) in Japan (Ueda 1939, 127; for more on the *Uburitsu* revival in the post-Edo period, cf. Clarke 2006, 29–39). The popularity of this movement resulted in serious disputes between the Shibunha and Ubuha branches of Shingon Risshū over which *vinaya* was to be followed (Ueda 1939, 132–41). Thus, the *vinaya* was “in no way peripheral, but in fact an integral part of the life of the [Edo-period] Shingon monastic communities” (Clarke 2006, 39–40).

Eventually, Shingon Risshū was recognized as an independent school in 1895 (*MD* 1277c, s.v. “Shingon Risshū”), and still profiles itself as the “orthodox school” (*seitōha* 正統派) (Ueda 1939, 142). According to a

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of the *Uburitsu* restoration movement (Ueda 1939, 125–26). On Myōzui's biography and his inclination toward the *Uburitsu* and its related texts, see Ueda 1939, 126–27; on Shingen, see Mizuhara 1922; Inaya 1972.

<sup>13</sup> Full title: *Shingonshū shogaku kyō-ritsu-ron mokuroku* 真言宗所學經律論目錄 (Catalogue of Sūtras, Vinayas, and Śāstras to Be Studied in the Shingon School), compiled by Kūkai in 823 (cf. *KZ*, 1: 105–22). Although the Shingon monastic curriculum outlined in this catalogue was meant to addend the standard works of the Nara schools and not to replace them, the question of Kūkai's exclusion of the *Shibunritsu* has yet to be systematically addressed.

survey conducted in 1930, Shingon Risshū had seventy-two temples (*ji'in* 寺院), led by one chief abbot (*kanchō* 管長), thirty-five male and four female chief priests (*jūshoku* 住職), and fifty-nine male and five female teachers (*kyōshi* 教師). The school had about 8,700 temple supporters (*danto* 檀徒), and over 618,000 lay adherents (*shinto* 信徒) (*MD* 1278a, s.v. “Shingon Risshū”). The *Outline of Japanese Buddhism* (*Nippon Bukkyō yōran* 日本仏教要覽)<sup>14</sup> draws approximately the same picture based on a survey conducted in 1923 (Lévi 1937, 325). Compared to Shingon and Risshū, the Shingon Risshū of the early 1920s was statistically larger than Risshū in numbers of ordained priests, employees, temples, training facilities, and adherents, but was still much smaller than the Shingonshū. Though still of some importance today, Shingon Risshū has become quite a peripheral denomination in contemporary Japan.<sup>15</sup>

The Shingon Risshū scriptural canon (*shōden* 聖典) includes the following major works: 1) the *Bonmōkyō*; 2) the *Yogācārabhūmi-sāstra-prātimokṣa* (*Yuga kaihōn* 瑜伽戒本 or *Yugashijiron kaihōn* 瑜伽師地論戒本; *T.* 1579) translated by Xuanzang 玄奘 (646–648);<sup>16</sup> 3) the *Dharmaguptaka-prātimokṣa* (*Shibun-kaihōn* 四分戒本; *T.* 1429) (German translation in Hankō 2003, 17–81); 4) the three major *vinaya* commentaries (*ritsu san daibu* 律三大部) by Daoxuan;<sup>17</sup> 5) the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-prātimokṣa sūtra* (*Konponsetsu issai ubukai kyō* 根本說一切有部戒經; *T.* 1454); 6) the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*; 7) the *Sarvatathāgata tattvasaṃgraha sūtra*; 8) the *Yogin sūtra* (*Yugikyō* 瑜祇經; *T.* 867);<sup>18</sup> 9) the *Recitation*

<sup>14</sup> An “espèce de Vade-mecum” distributed gratis by the Japanese Buddhist Alliance (Nihon Bukkyō Rengōkai 日本佛教聯合會) exclusively to the Chinese and Korean participants who attended the Congress on East Asian Buddhism (Tōa Bukkyō Daikai 東亜佛教大會) in October 1925. Hartmann 1937, 319–20.

<sup>15</sup> As of this writing, the author has no access to more recent data.

<sup>16</sup> Also called *Bodhisattva-prātimokṣa* or *Pusajieben* 菩薩戒本, actually comprising only the last part of the fortieth and forty-first fascicles, i.e., *T.* 1579:510c7ff. (Malalasekera 1972, 241b). The history of the *prātimokṣa* in Japan remains the subject of future research.

<sup>17</sup> The *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 (*T.* 1804) compiled ca. 628 and revised in 636 (Johnston 2000, 359–61). The two other commentaries are the *Sifenlü biqiu hanzhu jieben* 四分律比丘含注戒本 (*T.* 1806) and the *Sifenlü shanbu suiiji jiemo* 四分律刪補隨機羯磨 (*T.* 1808). On Daoxuan, see McRae 2005.

<sup>18</sup> Full title: *Jin'gangfeng luogē yiqie yujia yuqi jing*, *Kongōbu rōkaku issai yuga yugi kyō* 金剛峯樓閣一切瑜伽瑜祇經, or *Sūtra of the Pavilion with the Vajra Peak and All Its Yogas and Yogins* (attributed to Vajrabodhi). For a full, annotated Dutch translation, see vanden Broucke 1990; English translation forthcoming in vanden

*Sūtra* (*Ryakunenjukyō* 要略念誦經; full title *Daibirushana bussetsu yōryaku nenju kyō* 大毘盧遮那佛說要略念誦經; T. 850); 10) the *Susiddhikara sūtra* (*Sushijikyō* 蘇悉地經, also *Shoshijikyō*; T. 893);<sup>19</sup> and 11) the *Treatise on Mahāyāna* (*Shakumakaenron* 釋摩訶衍論; T. 1668).<sup>20</sup> The first four texts are major scriptures of the Risshū corpus; the latter six are part of the Shingon canon (Lévi 1937, 323–25).

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Broucke and Pinte, trans., 2011. See also Goepper 1993 for an English translation of chapter 5.

<sup>19</sup> See Klaus L. Pinte, “*Śubhākarasiṃha* (637–735),” in this volume; Giebel 2001.

<sup>20</sup> The *Shi moheyan lun* is a commentary on the East Asian composition of the *Awakening of Faith* (*Daijōkishinron* 大乘起信論; T. 1666), attributed to Nāgārjuna (second to third centuries), but which was composed between the seventh and eighth centuries in the Korean kingdom of Silla (Buswell 2007, 369–70, n. 284).

### 73. THE DEITY OF MIWA AND TENDAI ESOTERIC THOUGHT

Anna Andreeva

In recent years academic scholarship concerning the history of worship of Japanese deities (*kami* 神) has made significant progress. New approaches have been steadily developing, and major frameworks have now been established. More historical case studies of combinatory cults in which *kami*, esoteric Buddhist and other divinities played important roles, continue to arrive. However, some details still need to be fleshed out. For example, how and why did *kami* enshrined at specific local sites become incorporated into multiple and highly diverse strands of esoteric Buddhist worship in premodern Japan? How did Japanese *kami* come to be at the centre of esoteric Buddhist rituals that claimed to provide new means for securing instant enlightenment or to ensure a safe passage to a Pure Land? More precisely, what were the mechanisms or agents that allowed such incorporations?

Perhaps the answer can be sought in the nature of interaction between major hubs of esoteric Buddhist learning and sacred *kami* sites that dotted the landscape of premodern Japan. One of such hubs was undoubtedly the temple complex at Hieizan 比叡山 founded by Saichō 最澄 (767–822) upon his return to Japan from Tang China in the early Heian period. Tendai's own esoteric tradition, Taimitsu 台密 cultivated by Saichō's disciples at Hieizan and by practitioners associated with Tendai monastic circles elsewhere became a major current of esoteric Buddhism that shaped local *kami* cults in medieval Japan. However, the exact details and the extent of such influence only begin to emerge.

A variety of premodern sources testify that Tendai esoteric thinkers paid particular attention to the worship of *kami*. An example that helps us trace and explain their interest is the case of *kami* divinities enshrined at Mt Miwa.

In prehistoric times Mt. Miwa had been an important ritual center for the early Yamato kingdom. It was considered a sacred mountain and three powerful deities, Ōnamuchi 大己貴, Ōmononushi 大物主 and Ōkuninushi 大国主, were enshrined there, along with several

others that figured prominently in the records of the *Nihon shoki* and the *Kojiki*. The prominence of these deities associated with Miwa in eighth-century official records indicates that the *kami* of Miwa played a special role in the politics of the prehistoric Yamato court and may have been the original *kami* worshiped by early Yamato rulers before the sun deity Amaterasu was adopted as the imperial progenitor.

The deity of Miwa was also connected to the sacred site at the foot of Hieizan. During the Heian period, this *kami* became a part of the group of deities venerated at the seven Great Hie shrines (*Hie shichisha* 日枝七社), and was incorporated into the star cult (*Hokuto shichisei* 北斗七星).

### *The Great Deity of Miwa as the Kami of Hie*

The *Nihon shoki* reports that the worship of *kami* at Hie was important from fairly early on. Although the early records do not name the deities for whom places of worship were established,<sup>1</sup> the idea that Ōnamuchi, the deity worshiped at Ōmiwa shrine in Yamato and one of the most important *kami* in ancient times, was enshrined at the foot of Hieizan had been held as true for centuries. Sugahara Shinkai and Allan Grapard have argued that it was precisely because of the special relationship of the Ōmiwa deity to the imperial family that it was moved from Yamato to Ōtsu, enshrined and worshiped as the Great Deity of Hie<sup>2</sup> (Ōbie 大比叡), and in this capacity came to dominate the sacred landscape of Ōmi, northeast of the Heian capital (Grapard 1987, 214; Sugahara 1992, 10–11).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Nihon shoki* reports that in the ninth year of Emperor Tenchi's reign (c. 670 AD) the places of worship for local deities were laid out close to Mii, not too far from Ōtsu, (Aston 1972: II, 293).

<sup>2</sup> Customary reading in contemporary Japanese scholarship of the characters 比叡 is "hie" when it refers to the mountain, i.e., Hieizan, but "hie" when it refers to the deities. Hence, 大比叡 and 小比叡 are pronounced "Ōbie" and "Obie" respectively. (In addition to the pronunciations used here, the latter—小比叡—also appears as "Kobie.") At the same time, there is an intentional homophonic convergence with characters used for the "seven Great Hie shrines" for which the characters 日枝七社 are always used. Such convergences are typical in medieval Japanese, whereby both association and discrimination were achieved.

<sup>3</sup> Fujiwara Nakamaro 藤原仲麻呂, a governor of Ōmi in the time of Emperor Tenchi, was said to have established a shrine there in 715. A *Kaifusō* poem attributed to him supports the proposition that native deities were worshipped on Mt Hiei (?) long before the arrival of Saichō and the foundation of Enryakuji (Grapard 1987, 214).

We can certainly see the confirmation of this theory during the late Heian and Kamakura periods, when *honji suiijaku* theories concerning the origins of the Ōbie deity (also referred to as ‘the Deity of the Great Shrine’, Ōmiya 大宮) began circulating both in the temples of Hieizan and at the Hie shrines. Several entries describing the cult of Sannō in the *Yōtenki* 耀天記 (ca. 1223) maintain that the Ōbie/Ōmiya deity was actually the Great Deity of Miwa, who descended to earth in the time of Emperor Kinmei 欽明 and was transferred to the new capital at Ōtsu during the reign of Emperor Tenchi (天智天皇, 626–672).<sup>4</sup> This deity had manifested itself on Hieizan as the protective deity of Ōmi, and also as a Buddhist saint, Hōshuku bosatsu 法宿菩薩. Another account stated that the Ōmiya deity was none other than the Buddha Śākyamuni who, in Emperor Kinmei’s time, when Buddhism was first introduced to Japan, descended to earth in the form of the Ōmiya deity and was later enshrined at the foot of the mountain by Saichō.<sup>5</sup>

In both cases, these accounts emphasize the essentially Buddhist nature of the *kami* of Miwa, its pivotal position on Hieizan, and its central role in the propagation of the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Hokkekyō* 法華經). The fact that the *kami* of Miwa was perceived as a manifestation of Śākyamuni, and thus as the most perfect embodiment of the teaching of skillful means (*hōben* 方便), linked it to the central scripture and doctrine of Tendai. This association became a trademark theory of Tendai esoteric tradition dedicated to *kami* worship and was further employed in many rituals of esoteric Shinto that developed both on Hieizan and at Miwa during the medieval period. However, the question remains of how exactly such appropriation of a *kami* from a distant area of Miwa by Tendai became possible. Why was the deity of Miwa deemed so important for the monks of Hieizan?

### Saichō

It is not known whether Saichō personally worshiped the *kami* of Miwa. Documents written soon after Saichō’s death, such as the *Eizan daishiden* 叡山大師傳, the *Dengyō daishi gyōgōki* 傳教大師行業記, and the *Dengyō daishi gyōjō* 傳教大師行狀, do not support the idea of Saichō’s involvement, nor do they mention any journeys he may

<sup>4</sup> ST 29: 44 「大宮御事」, p. 62 「大和三輪神事」, p. 68 「大宮」.

<sup>5</sup> ST 29: 81, 85; *Yōtenki*, 「山王事」, pp. 81, 85. It is thought that this section was accomplished at least by the end of the Heian period.

have made to Miwa (ZGR (1936) 8, ge, scroll 205). Several references, however, suggest that Saichō did indeed worship the deities of Ōbie, Kasuga, Usa Hachiman, and Sumiyoshi (*Dengyō daishi zenshū* 伝教大師全集 2: 286–89, hereafter DDZ).

We can spot a significant shift in the perception of the Ōbie-Miwa deity at Hie that started after the foundation of the Tendai temple. The new origin narrative maintained that Ōbie had been transferred from Mt. Miwa by Enryakuji's founder. The *Eizan daishi den* and the *Dengyō daishi gōgyōki*, written by Enchin 円珍 (814–891), mention the existence of a “meditation hall at the shrine dedicated to *kami*” (*jingū zen'in* 神宮禅院) and a “shrine temple of Hiei” (*Hiei jingūji* 比叡神宮寺) as places where Saichō's father worshiped the native deities prior to Saichō's birth (DDZ bekkān, ZGR 8, ge, 481).<sup>6</sup> It is possible that at least some of the deities worshiped in the vicinity of Hieizan before Saichō's arrival and the establishment of Enryakuji were of continental origin; however, little is known about the period prior to the compilation of the first official records in the eighth century.

The fact that the Tendai order fought to firmly establish itself as a leading Buddhist institution in the early ninth century meant that it could not possibly ignore the political importance of appropriating all forms of *kami* worship on the mountain. Although the significance of the Miwa deity as a former protective *kami* of the early Yamato rulers had been long since put aside by the imperial family, the Tendai lineages realized its importance from early on. There were some political disputes, however. After Saichō's death, each of the competing branches at Enryakuji was trying to promote its own version of *kami* worship. For example, the identity of the Ōmiya *gongen* 大宮権現, the central deity of the Hie shrines 日枝大社, remained open to question. There were at least two versions: one, supported by Enchin's branch at Miidera, was that the Ōmiya *gongen* was the reincarnation of the Miwa deity; another, propagated by Eryō 恵亮 (801–859), maintained that the Ōmiya *gongen* was actually the deity of the Lower Kamo shrine.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Cited in Sugahara 1992, 14. Another source mentioned by Sugahara, the *Eigaku yōki* 叡岳要記, refers to the *kami* worship facility as the *Konpon jingūji* 根本神宮寺 (GR 214: 517).

<sup>7</sup> This version was built on local lore and ancestral legends of the Kamo lineage. One legend, which in content is very close to the legends about Seyadatarahime and the Miwa deity recorded in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, says that the deity of Lower Kamo was struck by an arrow while washing her clothes and eventually gave birth to a child, who turned into a dragon and flew into the sky. A similar story about the deity



*Ennin and the Rise of Taimitsu*

Saichō, having established himself on Hieizan in the 780s, obviously felt it necessary to pay attention to the Greater and Lesser Hie deities (Ōbie 大比叡 and Obie 小比叡) residing at the foot of the mountain. In Saichō's writings, these deities of "princely kin" (*Ōshi kenzoku* 王子眷属) are referred to as "the Mountain King of Hie" (Hie Sannō 比叡山王) or even "the Great Mountain King of Hie" (Ōbie Sannō 大比叡山王) (Sugahara 1992, 18). In one of the texts attributed to Saichō (and even more so in other Tendai texts written later), Ōbie Myōjin or Sannō is mentioned by his dharma name (*hōmyō* 法号), Hōshuku bosatsu 法宿菩薩, which may or may not mark the beginning of the worship of this deity as one of the star constellations (*seishuku* 星宿).<sup>8</sup>

However, it was Saichō's disciple Ennin 円仁 (793–864) who played the major role in defining the links between the deities of Miwa and Sannō and laying the ground for the esoteric worship of *kami* in the Tendai tradition. In the 880s, following Enchin's request, chanting esoteric scriptures, such as the *Great Vairocana's Sūtra of Prayers for Divine Transformation and Attainment of Buddhahood* (*Dainichikyō* 大毘盧遮那成仏神变加持經, T. 848), the *Sūtra of One-syllable Golden Sphere of Buddha's Pate* (*Ichiji butchō rinnō kyō* 一字佛頂輪王經, T. 951) and the *Tantra of Wondrous Attainments* (*Soshitsuji katsuma kyō* 蘇悉地羯囉經, T. 893), in front of the Ōbie and Obie deities was included as part of the duties of one or two yearly ordinands who trained on Hieizan. This practice of chanting the sutras in front of the local deities became a customary practice of Buddhist monks.

The Tendai tradition asserts that Ennin was instrumental in outlining the importance of the Miwa deity for *kami* worship at Hieizan. The no longer extant *Account of Assisted Quest for the Three Treasures* (*Sanbō bugyōki* 三宝輔行記, NDZ (1914–1921), Shūtenbu, *Tendaishū kengyōshōshō* 2: 607–609) attributed to Ennin (*MDJ* (1970) 3: 1364), may have been one of the early texts that discussed the ideas of the original ground and manifestations of Sannō (*Sannō suijaku* 山王本迹), the identity of the Ōmiya *gongen* as Hoshuku bosatsu (which

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of Kamo was recorded in the *Yamashiro kuni fudoki*. These older narratives laying out the origins of the Kamo lineage settled in Yamashiro during the ancient period were subsequently taken up by the Tendai branch of Eryō.

<sup>8</sup> Sugahara (1992, 14) argues that such worship in Japan may have been preceded by a similar veneration in China, documented in Sui dynastic histories such as the *Annals of Sui* 隋書 (589–618) or the *Jinshu* 晉書 (646).

became a widespread belief at Hieizan), and the role of the Sannō deity as a protective deity of Mt. Tiantai in China and the doctrine of Three Points (*Santen* 三點). More important was that this text contained a passage that established the paramount role of the *kami* of Miwa as the propagator of the *Lotus Sūtra* and as one of the three protective deities of Mahāyāna. It also established a parallel between the deities of Sannō and Miwa: both manifested themselves as “three Buddhas in one body” (*sansei ittai* 三聖一體). This passage received wide circulation in later works about *kami* produced by the Tendai literati.

The subsequent medieval works, produced at Hieizan, such as the *Sange Yōryakki* 山家要略記 (1289–1351), and the *Keiran shūyōshū* 溪嵐拾葉集 (1347), attributed the production of most esoteric theories about the *kami* of Miwa to Zentōin 前唐院. It was one of the main temples at Hieizan, established by Ennin in the vicinity of the Konponchūdō of Enryakuji. The influence of ideas and practices attributed to the Zentōin circle seem to have special significance for the development of esoteric lore about Miwa and the emergence of esoteric ritual that incorporated the worship of the Miwa deity. The perception of Ennin’s ideas and the activities at Zentōin for the development of esoteric *kami* worship in medieval Japan still needs further assessment.

### *Back to Miwa*

The theory that the Miwa deity had been transferred to Hieizan was undoubtedly very important for the Tendai establishment, and it was repeated in many documents compiled in the late Kamakura and early Muromachi periods. Although different versions of the enshrinement of the Ōbie deity exist, they clearly express the idea of Saichō’s direct involvement. With the growth of Enryakuji and the expansion of its influence, these accounts became widely accepted.<sup>9</sup>

By the end of the Heian period, worship of the Miwa deity on Hieizan, both by Tendai monks and within the Hie shrines, was inseparable from the ritual and symbolic system of the Tendai shrine-temple complex. Writings concerning the origins of the Hie shrines and the

<sup>9</sup> For example, the story of Saichō in Miwa was given in a critical literary work by the poet Kenshō 顯昭, the *Notes in the Sleeve*, 『袖中抄』 (1183) (*OJS* 1: 334).

deity Hie Sannō 日吉山王<sup>10</sup>, such as the previously mentioned *Yōtenki*, *Sange Yōryakki*, and *Keiran shūyōshū*, contain many accounts that in one form or another underline the crucial link between Hieizan and Miwa *myōjin* (Miwa *myōjin* 三輪明神), or that discuss the significance of *kami* worship in Miwa.

Indeed, so powerful was the Tendai interpretation of the Miwa deity that after a few centuries it “returned” to Miwa and was recorded in the *Origins of the Great Miwa Deity* (*Miwa daimyōjin engi* 三輪大明神縁起), which may have been compiled as early as in 1318. The production of this text is usually attributed to the lineage of Eizon 叡尊 (1201–1290) or the Saidaijiryū 西大寺流 monks who resided at Ise and Miwa (Itō 1993). However, the contents of the *engi* suggest that the majority of esoteric reinterpretation of the sacred site of Miwa and the identity of Miwa *myōjin* is largely owing to Taimitsu discourse.

For instance, the traditional Tendai view of esoteric doctrine rested on the notions of Three Parts (or Three Mandalas) (*sanbu* 三部), three bodies [of Buddha] in one (*santai soku ichi* 三体即一), and Three Points (*santen* 三點). Veneration of the *Lotus Sūtra* and its doctrine was also a pinnacle of Taimitsu discourse, and the echo of this influence is precisely what is seen in the *Miwa daimyōjin engi*. In its description of *kami* the text also uses terms that are very close to the interpretations of the One-syllable Golden Sphere (*ichiji kinrin* 一字金輪) seen in esoteric scriptures of the same title brought by Ennin to Japan. The argument of the *engi* is built around the notions of “one body but three names” (*ittai sanmyō* 一躰三名), which resembles classic Tiantai theories seen in the *Mohe-jin guan* and the *Lotus Sūtra*. It is important to note that one of the *engi* chapters relates a story how Saichō transferred the Miwa *myōjin* to Hieizan to serve as a protective deity of Tendai. Could it be that the identity of Miwa, the deity of “three rings” (Miwa 三輪) was particularly suitable for the propagation of the core Tendai doctrine?

The *ichiji kinrin* ritual seems to have been of real importance to the Tendai interpretation and ritual communication with *kami*. It appears that the previously mentioned *Sūtra of One-syllable Golden Sphere of Buddha's Pate* had a special significance for both the political

<sup>10</sup> Also written as 日枝山王, when associated with Hieizan. Also note that in this context, “Hiyoshi” is a mistaken pronunciation for 日吉.

performance of Enryakuji and the construction of *kami* worship at Hieizan since early times. Its principal deity, the *uṣṇīṣa*, or One-syllable Golden Sphere of Buddha's Pate (*ichiji kinrin butchō* 一字金輪佛頂), represented by the Sanskrit syllable *brūm*, was central to the ritual of the same name, originally performed by Tendai monks for the pacification of calamities and the protection of the emperor. The ritual, also known as the Rite of the Buddha's Pate (*dai butchō hō* 大佛頂法), was brought to Japan by Saichō, who had received it in an esoteric initiation at Guoqing'si 国清寺 in 804. In the medieval period, however, the *Ichiji kinrin butchō* became a powerful tool in the conception of esoteric *kami* worship and a prominent ritual in Sannō Shintō, a tradition developed at Hieizan dedicated to the worship of Sannō 山王, the Mountain King (Misaki 1992b; Kiuchi 1984, 337–44). It was assumed that the One-syllable Golden Sphere (*ichiji kinrin* 一字金輪) was the "original manifestation" (*honji* 本地) of the deity of Sannō.

In the *Origins of the Great Miwa Deity*, similar concepts appear to be of central importance. The text says that the name of Amaterasu, the Great Ise deity, was in fact "Dainichi, King of the Heavenly Golden Sphere [Cakravartin], Illuminating All Things" (*Ten kinrinno kōmyō henjō dainichi no son* 天金輪王光明遍照大日尊) (*ST*, Jinja hen, *Ōmiwa Isonokami*, Ōmiwa, 95). Although the particular use of this term is not encountered elsewhere, it may be closely related to numerous descriptions of the one-syllable golden sphere in the sutras brought to Japan by Ennin and Enchin. As well as stating that the identity of the Miwa deity was tripartite, the text also demonstrates the use of the threefold pattern of the two-world mandala important in the Taimitsu tradition, which interprets the mandala as consisting of "three parts" (*sanbu wagō* 三部和合): the Kongōkai 金剛界, the Taizōkai 胎藏界, and the nondual (*funi* 不二), in accord with the Tiantai doctrine of the Three Truths (*santei* 三諦).<sup>11</sup>

One of the major puzzles in the discourse on medieval *kami* worship remains that of the production and possible circulation route of the *Miwa daimyōjin engi*. It could be that such a merging of concepts happened within the networks of esoteric and *shugendō* practitioners who had connections to both Hieizan and Miwa and who congregated

<sup>11</sup> On the key notions of Chinese Tiantai, such as the Three Truths, see Swanson 1989 and Stone 1999a.

at cultic centers and small practice halls in the vicinity of the Great Ise shrines. The question on whether the esoteric discourse on Miwa originated locally and was indeed produced independently at Miwa during the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, or whether the text revealing the origins of the Miwa deity was initially composed somewhere else and was later copied at Miwa, remains to be answered. Further discussion of this important issue could help cast light on the process of formation and circulation of esoteric ideas about *kami* in medieval Japan, but it will be taken up at length elsewhere (Andreeva, forthcoming).

### *Questions for Future Study*

The tradition of esoteric *kami* worship at Miwa, as explained in the *Miwa daimyōjin engi*, has traditionally been described as an example of Ryōbu Shinto. The fact that it owes a great part of its doctrinal justification to the esoteric tradition of Tendai raises a difficult issue of addressing the doctrinal labels that are historically attached to surviving texts.

It is not quite clear how Taimitsu ideas became transmitted to local sacred sites, such as Miwa, and how exactly their reinterpretation happened in the ritual context. For example, a large body of ritual manuals and doctrinal texts that invoke the deities of Sannō and Miwa were transmitted at Saikyōji 西教寺, one of the temples at the foot of Hiezan, established in the sixteenth century. The meaning of these texts, which may cast light on many gaps in our understanding of medieval *kami* worship, also needs to be assessed.

Perhaps what is important here is not so much understanding which sacred sites produced which ideas first, but the vision of diversity and plurality that can be discerned in texts such as the *Miwa daimyōjin engi*, or the *Keiranshūyōshū*. Far from our previous envisioning of medieval *kami* worship as something arcane and largely irrelevant, it instead appears to be a complex and endlessly fascinating world of ideas that expanded and contested the limits of religious thinking and created the ground for the emergence of new concepts and theoretical possibilities. While it is a production of the medieval mind, that mind brought about innovation at the time.

## 74. KŌMYŌ SHINGON<sup>1</sup>

Mark Unno

### *Preface*

The *kōmyō shingon* 光明眞言, or the mantra of light, is a key practice of the Shingon school. In Japanese, it is *On abokya beiroshanō makabodara mani handoma jimbara harabaritaya un* 唵阿謨伽尾盧左曩摩訶母捺囉麼拏鉢納麼入嚩囉鉢囉鞞哆野吽, which is a transliteration of the Sanskrit *Oṃ amogha vairocana mahāmudrā maṇi padma jvāla pravarttaya hūṃ*. It means, “Praise be to the flawless, all-pervasive illumination of the great *mudrā* (the seal of the Buddha). Turn over and set in motion the jewel, lotus, and radiant light.”

The mantra originated in India, was transmitted to China by such renowned translator-monks as Amoghavajra (705–774) and Bodhiruci (d. 727), and was then propagated in Korea and Japan. It reached the height of prominence in Japan, and it is one of the most widely disseminated ritual practices of not only the Shingon 眞言 school but in Japanese Buddhism generally, having found its way into the menu of practices of the Tendai 天台 and Sōtō Zen 曹洞 schools as well. Within the Shingon school, as Shōun Toganoō writes, “Today the most widely practiced of the ten major Shingon rituals are the ritual of the *kōmyō shingon* and the ritual of the *Rishukyō* 理趣經” (1940, 286).

The mantra serves many functions, including healing illnesses, purifying one’s evil karma, expiating the sins of the dying and deceased, and religious rebirth in the Pure Land of Amida 阿弥陀 (Amitābha). The thread that runs through all of these is the purification of evil or destructive karma. Through this purification rupture—whether physical,

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<sup>1</sup> The basis for this article can be found in Unno 2004, esp. 22–42, 73–127; and 1998, esp. 173–79. However, this essay incorporates substantial updates and refinements, including the following: further incorporation of the scholarship of Shōun Toganoō on the mantra of light, including developments after the Kamakura period; methodological reflections concerning ritualization and textualization; and examination of the mantra within the spectrum of devotional to yogic dimensions of the mantra. In order to incorporate this research, this article has been recomposed from the ground up.

moral, or religious—can be healed and one can be liberated. In addition to the various functions of the mantra, the most distinctive aspect of this practice is the use of sand. The power of the mantra can be transferred to grains of sand through a ritual procedure, and once so effected, the sand can be sprinkled on or near the body or corpses to provide the purifying power of the mantra even without it being intoned.

As prominent as the mantra of light has been in the history of East Asian Buddhism, it has until recently received scant attention in Western-language scholarship. Beyond the need to address the obvious neglect, examination of the mantra as a Buddhist ritual practice is revealing on several counts and helps to illustrate the following three points: 1) the dynamic interrelation between sacred text and religious ritual, what Catherine Bell has called the ritualization of text and the textualization of ritual (1998, 366–92), in which both the sacred texts of the mantra and its practice evolve organically over time within the shifting context of social circumstances, human need, religious aspirations, and individual predilection; 2) the relation between the material and spiritual benefits of mantra practice,—of social and material benefits, on the one hand, and of awakening or enlightenment, on the other; and 3) the range of mantra practice from devotional to yogic.

### *Text and Ritual in the Mantra of Light*

*On abokya beiroshanō makabodara mani handoma jimbara harabari-taya un.* The Tathāgata Vairocana, seeking to bestow the *mudrā* and the *sanmaya*, gave primacy to the divine dharma entity (i.e., cosmic truth, realized teachings). Even though there are the various sins of all of the ten evils, five transgressions, and four grave offenses from past [lives], their embers are all extinguished. If sentient beings attain this baptism and mantra anywhere so that it reaches their ears just two, three, or seven times, then all evil hindrances will be eliminated.

If sentient beings commit the various sins of the ten evils, five transgressions, and four grave offenses—so many as grains of dust needed to fill the world—then their bodies will be broken, their lives will come to an end, and they will fall into the various evil paths [of rebirth]. [In that case], one should empower the sand with the mystic power of the mantra by repeating it one hundred and eight times, and the sand should be sprinkled on the corpses in the charnel grounds or on the graves of the deceased; one should sprinkle the sand wherever one encounters them.

The deceased may be in hell, in the realm of hungry ghosts, of angry gods, or of beasts. However, they will attain the body of light according to the needs of time and circumstance by means of the mystic power of

the sand of the divine power of the mantra of light.... The karmic retribution of their sins will be eliminated, they will discard their suffering bodies, and they will go to the Western Land of Bliss (the Pure Land of Amida). They will be reborn in the lotus blossom [of Amida] and will not fall back until they attain *bodhi* (awakening).

After many years and many moons come to pass, sentient beings may be stricken with frailty, illness, and myriad other hardships. This is the karmic retribution suffered by the ill due to [their actions in] past lives. If one sits before the stricken for one, two, or three days and intones this mantra one thousand and eighty times every day with a full voice, then the hindrance of illnesses from past karma will be destroyed. Suppose one is tortured by a demonic spirit and loses one's voice. Although one does not say a word, if one holds the hand of someone who maintains the mantra and rubs her face one hundred and eight times.... then one can get rid of [the spirit]....

This is an excerpt from the earliest extant sūtra devoted solely to the mantra, the *Bukong zhuansuo piluzhenafa daguanding guangming zhenyan jing* 不空羈索毘盧舍那佛大灌頂光明真言經 (Sūtra of the Mantra of Light of the Baptism of Vairocana of the Unfailing Rope Snare; T. 1002.19:606b–607a). This translation is by Amoghavajra, early patriarch of Chinese Zhenyan 真言, and it actually corresponds to the twenty-seventh fascicle of Bodhiruci's earlier translation of the *Bukong zhuansuo shenbian jing* 不空羈索神變真言經 (Sūtra of the Mantra of Divine Transformation of the Unfailing Rope Snare). These texts belong to a group of scriptures on related themes, such as the *Bukong zhuansuo shenzhou wang jing* 不空羈索神咒王經 (Sūtra of the King of the Divine Incantation of the Unfailing Rope Snare), translated by Bao Siwei 寶思惟 (673–706), and the *Bukong zhuansuo shenzhou tuoluoni jing* 不空羈索神咒陀羅尼經 (Sūtra of the *Dhāraṇī* of the Unfailing Rope Snare), translated at the beginning of the eighth century by Li Wuzhao 李無詔.

When one examines Amoghavajra's translation of the *Sūtra of the Mantra of Light*, it is striking that all major functions of the mantra practice are already evident in this early scripture, including its efficacies in this world and the next and its association with Amida and the Western Pure Land. Through the work of such monks as Myōe Kōben 明惠高辯, Eizon 叡尊, and Dōhan 道範 in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the mantra of light reached a hitherto unknown level of popularity. All of these functions, the seeds of which were planted a millennium or more earlier, then came into play, as they were key to addressing the historical circumstances faced by these monks and others.



During the Kamakura period (1185–1333) the mantra of light emerged as a perfect match for adherents of the Shingon school to appeal to the swelling populist ranks of the Amida movement. The chanting of the mantra of light became the counterpart to the intoning of the *nenbutsu* 念佛, or the name of Amida; both were designed to lead the practitioner to birth in Amida's Pure Land. The use of the sand, which had until then been sporadic at best, became the ideal vehicle for the popularization of the power of the mantra among the masses, since the sand multiplied the efficacy of the mantra as each grain was infused with its power.<sup>2</sup> Along with the Amida *nenbutsu*, the mantra of light conferred both material and spiritual benefits, and covered as well a trajectory from the devotional to the yogic dimensions of realization.

Kūkai 空海 was only one generation removed from Amoghavajra in the Zhenyan school lineage of the latter, and the *Sūtra of the Mantra of Light* was included in the catalogue of texts transmitted to Japan by Kūkai. The transmission of texts and rituals in the Zhenyan and Shingon schools was regulated by a strict adherence to codes of esoteric initiation and ritual rigor, so one might expect the story of the mantra of light to turn out to be central to the history of Zhenyan tradition as well as to Kūkai's Shingon school. However, this was not at all the case. Instead, the thread connecting Amoghavajra and the dissemination of the mantra in Japan became rather tangled, with twists and turns formed organically in accordance with changing circumstances.

Roughly speaking, the development of the use of the mantra in Japan may be divided into three phases. In the early phase, beginning at the end of the ninth century, it was primarily used at funerals of the nobility as a means of conveying the deceased to Amida's Pure Land, and functions as an auxiliary practice to Amida *nenbutsu*. In the second phase, beginning sometime in the twelfth century, it began to take on additional functions, such as the purification of karma in this life, including curing illnesses and expiating karmic evil. Finally, in the thirteenth century, especially with Myōe's advocacy, the use of the sand along with the mantra catalyzed its popularity among the masses, beyond its previous constituency among the nobility and aristocracy.

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<sup>2</sup> The range and forms of this efficacy are examined in greater detail later in this essay.

Certainly, without Kūkai having physically transmitted the text to Japan, it would not have had a chance to spread. However, there is no evidence of its use by either Kūkai or his immediate disciples. The earliest evidence of its use is in the memorial service for Emperor Seiwa 清和 in 880. Thereafter, records show a gradually increasing frequency in the use of the mantra. At first, the mantra was intoned predominantly at funerals and memorial services, mostly for nobility. From the eleventh century onward, Shingon monks such as Hanjun 範俊 (1038–1112) and Jōkai 乘海 (1074–1149) began to invoke the mantra for other reasons, including this-worldly benefits and religious awakening.

Ritual protocols for the mantra were eventually codified and expanded to correlate with the dual aspects of the Diamond Realm and Womb Realm Mandalas of both Tendai and Shingon esotericism. In the twelfth century, Dōhan 道範 (1178–1252) advocated the mantra of light as a simple, accessible practice, akin to the Amida *nenbutsu*.<sup>3</sup> Myōe (1173–1262) in particular was instrumental in popularizing the mantra through the propagation of the sand imbued with its mystic power as well as incorporating mantra recitation into the daily schedule of his monastery, Kōzanji 高山寺. Eizon 叡尊 (1201–1290) held an annual memorial assembly featuring the mantra of light.

Sometimes the mantra was used exclusively; other times, as was the case with the Tendai monk Genshin 源信, the mantra was used in an auxiliary capacity, with the Amida *nenbutsu* as the primary practice. By the thirteenth century, not only was the mantra often used as the primary practice, even followers of the Pure Land schools, such as Jōganbō 淨願房 of Takedani 竹谷, recommended the mantra of light above the Amida *nenbutsu*, depending on the occasion (Morrell 1985, 118).

As Toganoo Shōun 桐尾祥雲 (n.d., 300–302) shows, the aspect of empowering the sand eventually took on a life of its own. The Hōmon 寶門 tradition continued the empowerment with the mantra of light, while the Jumon 壽門 tradition empowered the sand with the recitation of the *Rishukyō*. Various other rituals evolved that included sūtra recitation, mantra recitation, supplication to *kami* 神, and circumambulation around the altar. Later, the mantra was intoned at *goma* 護摩 ceremonies, and although this practice eventually waned, by the Tokugawa period, the use of the mantra at funerals of the laity became

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of Dōhan's view of Amida *nenbutsu*, see Sanford 2006, 175–79.

widespread. In both formal and informal contexts, the mantra of light continues to be one of the most widespread practices of the Shingon and beyond.

While key elements of the mantra practice remained faithful to the scriptural sources imported from China, the actual protocols, accompanying mantras and rituals, correlation with mandalas, and other features evolved organically over time. Unlike many other Shingon practices whose interpretation down through the centuries carried the unmistakable stamp of Kūkai's major influence, the practice of the mantra of light was shaped by many hands over time. As Myōe purportedly said, according to the *Kyakuhai mōki* 却廢忘記 (Record of Things Not To Be Forgotten),

[As for] the doctrines of the Shingon,...just as an artisan collects odd pieces from here and there and creates something, so too do [these sundry practices] become the functioning parts of the esoteric school (Kamata and Tanaka 1971, 109).

This process of combining “odd pieces from here and there” reflects a dialectic between text and praxis where each produces changes in the other, a process that Bell (1998) has aptly called the ritualization of text and the textualization of ritual.

### *Material and Spiritual Benefits*

#### Karma, Faith, This-Worldly and Other-Worldly Benefits

Historically, Mahāyāna Buddhists in East Asia have generally not drawn hard distinctions between the material and spiritual benefits of religious practice. Likewise, they have not made corresponding distinctions between mind and body. Describing the work of Myōe, one of the primary advocates of the mantra of light, George Tanabe (1994) writes:

Destroying bad karma, *metsuzai* 滅罪, lies at the heart of Myōe's religion.... Healing and all of the other practical benefits are not functional concessions to folk superstitions but normative expressions of one of the mainstreams of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Even Shinran, Myōe's contemporary in the Shin school, who is generally known for emphasizing religious realization over material benefits, extolled the this-worldly effects of the *nenbutsu* path. In the *Genze riyaku wasan* 現世利益和讚 (Hymns on This-Worldly Benefits) he writes:

The Tathāgatha Amida arrived,  
 For overcoming calamity and ensuring longevity  
 [Amida] expounded the dharma of  
 The “Chapter on Lifespan” of the *Golden Radiance Sūtra*. (Kaneko 1964,  
 419)

Likewise, the mantra of light is said to cure illnesses, enable devotees to fly through the air, and otherwise bring about extraordinary benefits in this life (Unno 2004, 240–41). Yet the relation between this-worldly benefits, the ultimate goal of religious awakening, and the role of karma has yet to be sufficiently understood. Here we take the case of Myōe and the mantra of light to outline some of the issues involved. In one episode dealing with this-worldly benefits of the mantra, Myōe relates the following:

When this fool (Myōe) was residing on Mount Takao 高尾山, there was a plague, and many people fell ill. Among them was someone who was diagnosed as terminally ill, ... one Saishō Ajari Shōken 宰相阿闍梨性憲.... He unexpectedly fell gravely ill and lost consciousness. The High Priest [Jōgaku-bō] Gyōji 上覺房行慈, my former teacher, came to his side, transferred the mystic power [of the mantra] to a melon, and wetted [Shōken’s] lips with it, whereupon he revived and said, “If I had died, I was destined to be born as a fish. While I was immersed underwater, a sweet delicacy entered my mouth. As I revived and came out of my unconscious state, I remembered the taste extremely well. Afterwards, I became aware that the sweet substance was the melon to which the High Priest had transferred the mystic power and had placed in my mouth....” This reminds me that I, too, was once revived by being wetted with a melon to which the mystic power of the mantra was transferred. (Unno 2004, 240).

There are a number of key points regarding this and similar episodes. First, most are given as examples of karmic recompense, of the fruition of positive past karma and present actions. Thus, as Myōe writes in the *Recommending Faith in the Sand of the Mantra of Light* (*Kōmyō Shingon dosha kanjinki* 光明真言土砂勸進記), “the karmic recompense in the present world is the result of accumulated effects of past karma” (Unno 2004, 241). Second, one will fail to recognize the invisible workings of past karma coming to fruition in the present if one is too preoccupied with the external outcomes: “Because the mind is distracted by the phenomenal world before one’s eyes, it is not possible to see that the...present world is the result of accumulated...karma (Unno 2004, 241). Third, because, unlike enlightened buddhas, sentient beings cannot see the workings of karma transparently, foolish

sentient beings must have faith in the power of the dharma, in the Buddhist path of practice, to overturn negative karma:

When a person possesses the mind of faith in nothing more than this mantra, the [karmic] seed of this wisdom is planted in that person's mind. It is like the flourishing growth of vegetation that occurs when the seeds of grasses and trees are planted in the great earth where there are no stones. Although the minds of sentient beings are unborn by nature, they nevertheless form the mental bases for the realization of all the tathāgatas. If the stone of disbelief gets in the way, the seeds of virtue will not grow. If there is faith, myriad goods will flourish like the verdant earth. (Unno 2004, 212)

Fourth, a significant corollary to the unseen nature of karmic fruition is that benefits in this life are unpredictable. The various examples given by Myōe show that faith, directed to the goal of awakening and liberation, can have unexpected material benefits. Myōe's writings on the mantra of light, of which approximately ten are thought to be extant (Unno 2004, 313), are primarily concerned with awakening and liberation, in both this life and the next, and material benefits in this life are secondary although significant. More precisely, material benefits are markers of the unseen working of positive karma that lead to awakening. According to Myōe,

No direct correlation exists with either the sick [being cured] or the *rakshasa* [turning to the Buddha's virtue such that any explicit karmic links can be identified]. Yet the benefits derived by virtue of their faith was not insubstantial... [They] ultimately lead to the extinction of sins, the production of good, and the realization of great awakening. (Unno 2004, 245)

Traditionally, petitionary prayer for good health, safe childbirth, and other desired outcomes has often been explained doctrinally in terms of *enzukuri* 縁作り, creating a karmic bond with the buddhadharma in order to encourage lay practitioners. That is, such prayers and their the goal of attaining this-worldly benefits are often explained as a kind of *hōben* 方便 or skillful means (*upāya*). Myōe's presentation of the mantra of light seems to accord with this but, as we have seen, he does not describe the desire for this-worldly benefits as mere wishful thinking. Rather, he suggests that material benefits can and will accrue, but only as an effect of faith and karmic action that is directed toward the ultimate goal of awakening. The difference between petitionary prayer as a means to an end and faith in the karmic power of the mantra may seem minor to modern readers, but it seems that for Myōe, they are

worlds apart: petitionary prayer in its instrumental mode as a kind of “white lie,” versus the mantra of light as a vehicle of total liberation that includes both material and spiritual benefits.

### *Body-Mind Continuum*

The holistic view of material and spiritual benefits of the mantra of light as articulated by Myōe can be further elucidated in terms of the body-mind continuum. For present purposes, a useful distinction can be made in terms of three views of body-mind relations. First, the body and mind may be regarded as separate and independent. Second, the body and mind may be regarded as distinct yet interactive. Third, the body-mind complex may be regarded as ultimately inseparable or nondual. As an example of the first view, when someone has a broken bone and needs to set it with a splint, the part of the body in which the bone is contained can be treated as an object, more or less, without too much consideration for the complex interaction of body and mind.

In such traditional East Asian forms of medicine as acupuncture and herbal medications, however, a more interactive view is taken in terms of the relation of matter, the body, and the workings of the mind. In his *Dream Journal* (*Yume no ki* 夢記), Myōe relates an episode in which, during a dream, a monk brings a broth to him, which he then drinks (Kawai 1992, 87). Upon awakening, Myōe finds that the illness he had when he went to sleep has been alleviated. In this example, he attributes physical efficacy to the mental representation of a medicinal substance in the form of the broth.

Finally, in the nondual view of mind and body, the two become inseparable. Myōe expresses such a view in relating another dream-vision:

During my early evening meditation, I prayed for the extinction of sins and received the body that maintains the precepts. . . . My body and mind became quiescent in the midst of *samādhi* as had happened in the sixth month. . . . My face suddenly became like a bright mirror. My entire body gradually became like one. . . . [S]omeone said, “All the buddhas have entered. You have now attained purity.” (Unno 2004, 82)

This dream follows just after another dream that is pivotal to Myōe’s adoption of the mantra of light as a central practice:

In the summer of 1220 I was practicing the *samādhi* of the Buddha’s Radiance. . . . I received auspicious signs in the midst of meditation. . . . a sphere of white light appeared before me. . . . There was a voice that said, “This is the Mantra of Light.” (Unno 2004, 33)

The themes of bright light and meditative absorption are common to both dreams, which Myōe purportedly experienced around the same time. In the first dream particularly, there is an emphasis on the melding of body and mind as a mirrorlike quiescent expanse, suggesting an interdependent, nondual realization of body-mind. In the practice of the mantra of light, this nonduality extends to the relation between the monk invoking the mantra and the supplicant receiving the power of the mantra: “The mantra master applies the mystic power of the sand to another person...by virtue of this nondual mystic power” (Unno 2004, 271). In the Buddhist body-mind understanding of the mantra, each type of understanding has its place, but there is a deepening level of realization with the nondual as the most profound, at least according to Myōe’s view, in which the mirrorlike coalescence of body-mind reflects the “entering of all buddhas.”

The non-dual view of the mantra, however, is not simply a realized state. Rather, it becomes the basis for addressing the discursive conditions of history, or, in Buddhist terms, karmic circumstances. Two passages from Myōe’s writings in particular illustrate the intersection of the nondual basis of the mantra and its application at the discursive level of form and karma.

In the first, Myōe emphasizes the purity of the sand that is imbued with the mystic power of the mantra (Unno 2004, 233–38). In this exchange, Myōe sets up a dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor, to whom he says that even grains of gold must be culled out of the sand so that it is pure enough to hold the power of the mantra. As I have discussed elsewhere, the religious logic of this rests on the inversion of conventional values (Unno 2004, 112–23).

In emptiness, everything is equal, and in the mantra of light, this is expressed as the wisdom of the equality of things realized as the quality of the middle *maṇi*-syllables of the mantra, those representing the wish-fulfilling jewel. In conventional society, however, there is a material hierarchy of value, with gold at the top and “useless” sand at the bottom. The *practice* of culling sand and removing impurities, including gold, effectively inverts the conventional hierarchy in a contemplative action that fosters the *samādhi* of the mantra. Thus, in order for the equality of emptiness to be realized in the realm of form, the mantra and sand must be cultivated to cancel the false hierarchy of conventional values. It is not that sand or even the mantra is inherently superior to gold or other material objects. Rather, according to Myōe, when the sand and mantra are practiced appropriately,

the religious hierarchy of the mantra cancels the secular, conventional hierarchy of values so that the equality of emptiness is realized:

*Maṇi* is the wisdom of equality. It is bright and pure like the *maṇi* jewel. This wisdom can purify the defilements of the discriminations of the two types of innate attachments, namely, to self and to phenomena. It authenticates the principle of the equal nature of things. (Unno 2004, 158)

In this practice, intoning the mantra and empowering the sand become vehicles of realizing emptiness, in that they are all indistinguishable and they ultimately lead to Myōe's realization of the mirrorlike quiescent mind-body non-duality.

In another passage, Myōe likens the action of the mantra and sand to hallucinogenic mushrooms. He describes an episode in which these mushrooms are brought to a monk by another monk and his mother (Unno 2004, 217–19). When the first monk ingests the mushrooms, he awakens from his dream. In an interesting twist in this story, the monk who ingests the mushrooms sees the other monk and his mother bringing the mushrooms to him *in* the hallucinogenic vision. Myōe likens the monk and his mother who brought the mushrooms to Buddha Śākyamuni and the cosmic buddhas. Following the parable, then, the cosmic buddhas, the historical Buddha, and the practice of the mantra and sand are all illusory, like hallucinations caused by the mushrooms that are themselves illusory. Yet they are illusions that have the power to awaken, just as the buddhadharma constitutes a set of skillful means that have the power to awaken.

In both episodes, the mantra of light is attributed with the power to effect the realization of mind-body emptiness and mind-matter non-duality in such a way that it acknowledges functional definitions of reality at the conventional level of separate minds and bodies, of the interaction between mind and body/matter (teachings and sand), and of the nonduality of all things.

#### *Mantra as Petitionary Prayer*

Myōe's views recounted above reflect an integrative approach to the mind-body/mind-matter continuum in a manner that harnesses the causal power of karma to disclose emptiness and realize awakening. Discussions of this-worldly benefits reinforce the role of faith and karma to focus the reader's attention on the ultimate goal of liberation. Although Myōe is credited with having played a pivotal role in



the development and dissemination of the mantra of light, its function in petitionary prayer has not necessarily followed his soteriologically centered view of praxis. Today, many Shingon devotees engage in petitionary prayer that, in terms of doctrine, would at best be described as *enzukuri*, an instrumentally based view of bringing followers into connection with the buddhadharma.

In the process of institution building, there may have been increasing numbers of followers who adopted the practice of the mantra and sand in the context of petitionary prayer. Though beyond the scope of this essay, it would be instructive to further examine the relation between faith, karma, this-worldly benefits, and petitionary prayer. Could it be the case, as Myōe suggests, that this-worldly benefits, although unpredictable, are more likely to issue as a consequence of faith and positive karmic actions than if they are pursued through petitionary prayer?

*The Mantra of Light as Devotion and as Yoga*

Until recently, there has been a perception that devotional practices are for the laity, and more advanced contemplative or yogic practices are the province of monastics or religious professionals. Such distinctions as karmic versus nirvanic Buddhism, as posited by Melford Spiro (1982), though rejected by Richard Gombrich and others (1996), has tended to reinforce the lay-devotion, renunciant-yogic associations within the non-specialist view of Buddhism. Yet even in such monastic-centered traditions as Chan/Zen, faith has played a key role from early on, as evinced by works such as the *Song of Faith* (*Xinxin ming* 信心銘) by Sengcan 僧燦 (d. 606). Furthermore, in the lay-centered movement of Shin Buddhism, in which faith is considered central, Shinran described a trajectory of religious awakening moving through three dialectical stages (*sangan tennyū* 三願転入), in which intoning the name of Amida Buddha begins from a more devotional stance but culminates with the Shin practitioner as “equal to the *tathāgatas*” (Kaneko 1964, 585–86).

This trajectory from a more devotional attitude to a more yogic understanding can be seen in the mantra of light as well. This is especially clear in the case of Myōe. In works that are directed more toward the laity, such as *Recommending Faith* and its *Supplement*, he emphasizes more the devotional attitude. In works that are meant for his fellow monks and nuns, such as the *Kōmyō Shingon kaji dosha gi* 「光明眞言加持土砂義」 (Significance of the Mystic Power of the Sand

of the Mantra of Light) (Hase 1973, 2:6–14), he emphasizes the more yogic dimensions of the practice through which the mystic power of all of the cosmic buddhas enters into the practitioner.

However, it is not simply that one ideally progresses from a more devotional attitude to a more yogic realization within what at first appears to be predominantly either a devotional or yogic practice. Such figures as Myōe, Shinran, and their contemporary in Zen Buddhism, Dōgen, continued to express profound devotion to the buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout their lives, in part as an expression of their ever-deepening religious humility. In that sense, what at first appear as polar opposites—devotional versus yogic—turn out to be more mutually intertwined and interpenetrating than expected. As we continue to develop our understanding of the mantra of light and other practices, many other dimensions of religious practice within the esoteric traditions and beyond are likely to come to light.

75. COLLAPSING THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN  
BUDDHA AND BELIEVER: HUMAN HAIR IN JAPANESE  
ESOTERICIZING EMBROIDERIES

Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis

One of the most remarkable phenomena in Buddhist art is the appearance in Japan of devotional embroideries incorporating human hair. Unparalleled elsewhere in Buddhist Asia, these unique embroideries were created in significant numbers from about 1300 through the mid-sixteenth century. The embroideries first emerged from within the Japanese Pure Land tradition but came to include esoteric images and, more rarely, images from the *Lotus Sūtra*. Of particular interest are the unusual and potent embroideries incorporating human hair that display synthesizing elements between the Pure Land and esoteric traditions. I will first review the Pure Land sources for this phenomenon (ten Grotenhuis 2004, 31–35) and then turn to esoteric and esoterizing embroideries that incorporated human hair. A particular focus will be the monk Kakuban 覺鑾 (1095–1143, posthumous title, Kōgyō Daishi 興教大師), credited with establishing the Shingi Shingon 新義眞言宗 (“new doctrine”) movement.

Embroidery art in Japan can be traced to the seventh century, but one of the most famous early extant textiles is neither Japanese nor of the seventh century. This is the large, four-meter-square tapestry called the Taima Mandala 當麻曼荼羅, dated to the mid-eighth century, which was woven in China and imported into Japan (ten Grotenhuis 1999, 13–23). The tapestry and its many painted copies, which date from the thirteenth century onward, depict the Western Pure Land (Saihō Jōdo 西方淨土) of the Buddha Amida 阿彌陀 where devotees will be reborn after death. Technically, the work is not embroidery—by definition, a tapestry is woven, not produced by needlework. In later centuries, however, when the technique of eighth-century Chinese tapestry weaving was no longer understood, the Taima Mandala was considered something like an embroidery.

The Taima Mandala has a complex configuration (figure 1). In its center, appearing larger than all the rest of the deities, is the Amida triad: the Buddha Amida attended by his two chief agents of salvation,

the bodhisattvas Kannon 觀音 (Avalokiteśvara) and Seishi 勢至 (Mahāsthāmaprāpta).

In front of the central grouping lies the resplendent golden lake of the Pure Land where devotees are born seated on lotus flowers. In the lower horizontal court, the Amida triad and other deities descend to welcome devotees and to carry them back to the Pure Land. Being born in the Pure Land is a promise of ultimate enlightenment, because in that sacred realm devotees can perfect their understanding and practice of wisdom and compassion, thanks to the teachings of Amida.

Although embroidered Buddhist images may have been made during the Heian period (794–1185), not a single example remains, so to resume the history of Buddhist textile art in Japan we must jump from the eighth-century Taima tapestry to the early thirteenth century and the beginning of the Kamakura period. In the landmark 1964 catalogue of embroidered Buddhist images exhibited at the Nara National Museum, Ishida Mosaku directly links the reappearance of embroidered Buddhist images in the Kamakura period to the “discovery” of the Taima Mandala at the beginning of the thirteenth century (Nara National Museum 1964). The Taima tapestry had reposed quietly in the country temple of Taimadera for some four hundred years, unmentioned in any extant documents from that period. Ishida points out that the technique of tapestry weaving seen in the original Taima Mandala was unknown in the Kamakura period. Desiring to reproduce a technique they thought was akin to embroidery, as well as wishing to reproduce the spiritual content of the Taima Mandala, devotees of Amida’s Western Pure Land began to create embroideries of Pure Land themes.

The most ubiquitous of Japanese Pure Land images is the welcoming descent (*raigō* 來迎), showing Amida, often with attendants, descending to welcome devotees and accompany them back to the Pure Land. This image first appeared in the lower horizontal court of the Taima Mandala and served as inspiration for many independent paintings, and it is also seen in embroideries incorporating human hair. One example is the fifteenth-century work in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art, which shows the Amida triad descending from the Western Pure Land and Kannon offering the lotus throne on which the believer will be transported to salvation (color plate 6 and detail color plate 7). Rays of light shooting forth from Amida illuminate a house where three believers—two adults and a child—kneel in prayer (ten Grotenhuis 1999, 140–41).

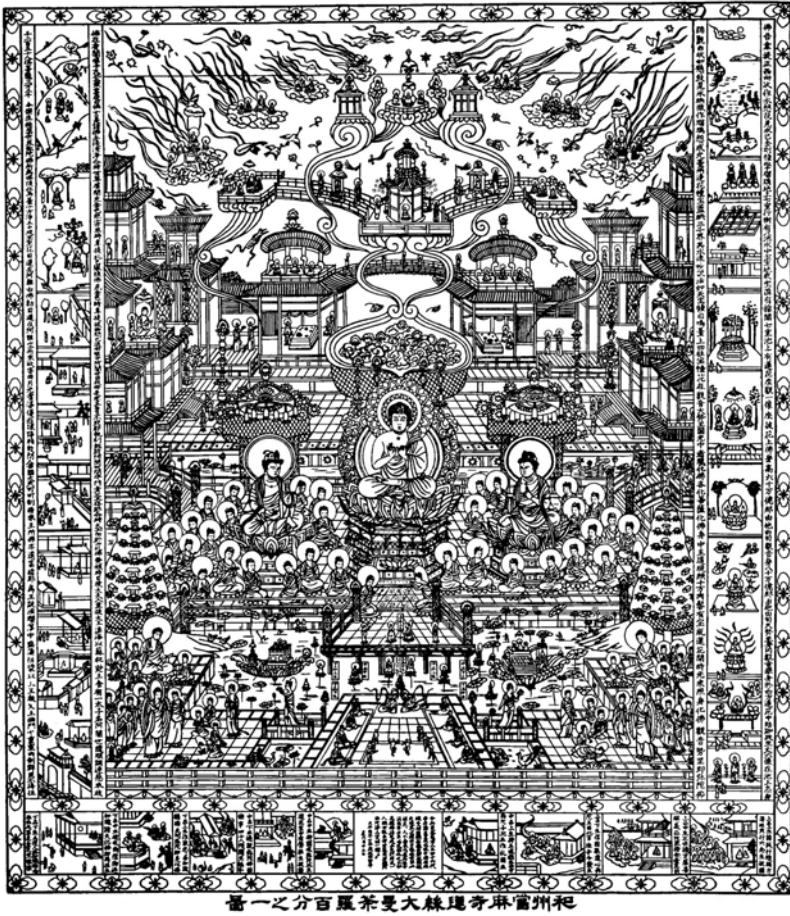


Figure 1. Taima Mandala. Distributed by Taimadera, Nara prefecture, Japan.



Color plate 6. Welcoming descent. Cleveland Museum of Art.  
Photo: Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis



Color plate 7. Welcoming descent detail.

The Cleveland work appears to be made solely of green, purple, yellow, white, black, and blue silk, but close examination of the embroidery under an electron microscope reveals a startling fact: human hair was used to work the snail-shell curls of Amida and also the child's hair. By contrast, the hair of the two adults kneeling in the house with the child was embroidered with silk thread. Although the embroidery lacks accompanying documentation, it is tempting to speculate that two parents commissioned this welcoming descent image in order to enhance the spiritual well-being of their deceased child. The child's actual hair would have been used for the hair of the child figure in the embroidery, and probably also for the hair of Amida, although other believers, including the parents, might have contributed some strands of hair to the central image. In this way, a physical association between the child and the Buddha Amida would have been dramatically confirmed. This association in the embroidery would be a promise of the union with Amida that the child and all other believers could expect after death and rebirth in the Western Pure Land.

The human hair embroideries are certainly linked to the Japanese Pure Land tradition, but it seems evident that ideas concerning human hair also emerged from a basic substratum of Japanese culture related more to the *kami*-worshipping or Shintō tradition than to the Buddhist tradition. In his thought-provoking book *Hair: Its Power and Meaning in Asian Cultures*, Gary Ebersole writes about hair symbolism in Japanese popular culture in both premodern and modern times. Ebersole makes the point that his research is limited to popular non-sectarian Japanese religion and does not deal with the symbolism of hair in Japanese Buddhism (Ebersole 1998, 75). However, the popular Japanese cultural presuppositions about which Ebersole writes must surely have been one basis upon which an overlay of Buddhist belief was added in the creation of devotional embroideries incorporating human hair. He writes:

[H]air was used in ancient Japan to signal both normality and abnormality, wildness and enculturation...hair was associated with sexuality, female reproductive power, and ritual communication with divinities (*kami* 神) and the dead. (Ebersole 1998, 77)

The positive and negative powers associated with hair—its association with vitality or fertility on the one hand, and with disease or death on the other—may be partly due to the biology of hair. In addition to the hair with which we are born, there is significant growth of new



kinds of hair with the onset of puberty and sexual maturation. Then, as we grow older, our hair turns grey or white, signifying the approach of death. Ebersole writes about many popular practices and taboos. *Kami*—numinous spirits with supernatural power who can be both benevolent and malevolent—are believed to be attracted to the long hair of young women, into which they descend to reside temporarily. Mentioning the plague in the presence of a woman combing her long hair might therefore attract the *kami* of the plague and bring disease. Even today some Japanese fear the possibility of another person or an animal coming to possess a clipping of one's hair and thus gaining control over one's vital essence.

On the other hand, human hair is also popularly believed to have positive powers. As the site of the life force and fertility, human hair can repel evil demons and spirits and is sometimes worked into amulets. Fishermen caught in a storm often throw tufts of their hair into the sea, offering this as a substitute gift to the *kami* of the sea so that their lives may be spared. Women have offered locks of hair to shrines and temples as amulets to protect men sent away to war because it is believed that hair has the power to attract the spirits of absent loved ones. Ropes made of female human hair were used for construction purposes (for example, at Higashi Honganji 東本願寺 in Kyōto), but they also symbolized women's contribution of the life force to the religious institution. The donation of hair created merit and acted as a kind of symbolic taking of the tonsure. Ebersole writes,

The ancient Japanese seem to have been struck by the fact that even after the rest of one's body had ceased to grow, one's hair, like fingernails and toenails, continued to grow by itself, outside one's conscious control. This may be one reason why hair was associated positively with life force and energy, but at the same time had the negative valence of wild or untamed energy. (Ebersole 1998, 77–78)

Hair and nails do not, of course, grow after death; metabolic energy is required for the growth of any tissue, and that energy is not available once blood circulation stops. Biologists have documented shrinkage of the scalp or skin, which gives the appearance of the growth of the hair or nails. The assumption that hair continues to grow after death, however, must have contributed to the association between hair and skeletons or ghosts in Japan. Many images from Japanese art depict skeletons or ghosts with hair. Color plate 8, a detail from the outermost court of a thirteenth-century Womb World Mandala, shows six “hungry ghosts” (*preta*; *gaki* 餓鬼), creatures that occupy one of the



Color plate 8. Detail of hungry ghosts from the Womb World Mandala.  
(Courtesy Sylvan Barnet and William Burto).

six realms of rebirth. These unfortunate beings suffer from hunger or thirst that can never be satisfied because they were lustful or avaricious during life, or because their descendants neglected to provide adequate nourishment at the household altars. In the upper section of this image, four hungry ghosts flank a front-facing ghost with a distended belly who holds a begging bowl in its right hand and a severed foreleg in its left. This hungry ghost has found part of a body, perhaps while wandering through a graveyard looking for food, but it cannot eat the flesh and so remains famished. Below, another hungry ghost lies pathetically on its back, belly distended. Hair is clearly visible on all these ghosts, a remnant of life that seems to bridge the worlds of the living and the dead.

Hair—or the lack of it—has specific connotations in the Buddhist world. Buddhist monks and nuns shave their heads as a symbol of their renunciation of the world and also, perhaps, to conserve vitality. Bits of hair and nail parings believed to have been those of the historical Buddha have been enshrined in stūpas or pagodas. The presence of the Buddha's relics in these structures ensures the continuing power and presence of the Buddha in this world. There are also many examples of the donation of memorial locks of hair to religious institutions. In Japan, hair is sometimes inserted into the cavities of Buddhist sculptures.

The incorporation of human hair in Japanese Pure Land embroideries did not begin until the Kamakura period, probably sometime in the late thirteenth century. The practice then gained momentum and became widespread in the Muromachi period (1333–1573), from the fourteenth through the early sixteenth centuries, a time of experimentation and fluidity before the onset of sectarian rigidity in the Edo period (1615–1868). Most of the Pure Land human hair embroideries—and there are scores of them—fall into two general categories, one emphasizing figurative images and one emphasizing the written word. The welcoming descent image is more popular by far than the other type of figurative images that depict the historical Buddha Śākyamuni and the transhistorical Buddha Amida standing side by side, facing the viewer. In images of the two buddhas, human hair was customarily used to work the hair of the buddhas and the edging on their robes.

The other category of Pure Land embroideries focuses on written rather than figurative images. The most common written-word embroidery presents the *nenbutsu* 念佛, the invocation comprising six Chinese characters pronounced in Japanese as *na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu*—

“homage to Amida Buddha.” Repeating the *nenbutsu* in a prayerful way helps devotees assure their birth into Amida’s Pure Land. This six-character invocation to Amida substitutes for a representative image of the figure of Amida and the *nenbutsu* is often shown enthroned on a lotus pedestal under a canopy, just as in a standing image of the Buddha. The devotees’ hair is worked into the six characters comprising the *nenbutsu*.

Searching for doctrinal justifications for the use of human hair in Pure Land Buddhist embroideries, I have proposed a closer look at Zennebō Shōkū 證空 (1177–1247), a prominent disciple of Hōnen 法然 (1133–1211), founder of the Pure Land (Jōdo 淨土) sect. Shōkū, who is credited with having discovered the Taima Mandala at the beginning of the thirteenth century, was the founder of the Seizan 西山派 branch of the Pure Land sect and greatly influenced Pure Land teachings in the Kamakura and Muromachi periods (ten Grotenhuis 1999, 122–28). His influence extended beyond the Pure Land sect to permeate the doctrines of the Time sect (Ji shū 時宗) founded by Ippen 一遍 (1239–1289) and the True Pure Land sect (Jōdo Shinshū 淨土真宗) established by the followers of Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262).

Shōkū’s interpretation of the prayerful *nenbutsu* helps illumine the doctrinal changes that occurred in the Pure Land tradition, which led, I believe, to the incorporation of human hair in embroideries. Shōkū accepted the primacy of the *nenbutsu* but, unlike some of Hōnen’s other disciples, he did not believe that the *nenbutsu* was a form of religious practice. He interpreted the *nenbutsu* as a gift from Amida that brought about the union of believer and buddha. Faith (*anjin* 安心), which leads believers to the *nenbutsu*, arises when believers reject religious practices and recognize the Pure Land. They then hear the primal vow of Bodhisattva Dharmākara, who will eventually become the Buddha Amida. In his primal vow, Dharmākara declares that he will not accept buddhahood until he can bring to salvation all those who call on his name with sincere faith. Believers realize that their salvation was ensured at the moment Amida did, in fact, attain buddhahood eons ago. Therefore, since Amida’s buddhahood is not in doubt, there can also be no doubt about the believer’s salvation. The absence of doubt is an expression of faith and the *nenbutsu* of faith signifies the union of believer and Amida, their becoming one substance (*kihō ittai* 機法一體) (Dobbins 2002).

Shōkū’s teachings influenced Ippen, who was a disciple of Shōkū’s student Shōtatsu. Ippen also believed that the *nenbutsu* represented

the union of believer and Amida, which made birth in the Pure Land an immediate experience. The most prominent heirs of Shōkū's teachings, however, were priests of the Shin sect who appropriated Seizan terminology and doctrines.

Shinran, Hōnen's best-known disciple, believed that because human-kind suffered under such a burden of accumulated evil deeds, people were incapable of building up sufficient merit to attain salvation through their own efforts. While Hōnen held that Amida's compassion extended to include evil as well as good persons, Shinran gained the insight that Amida had made his vows for the express purpose of saving *all* people without any moral distinction whatsoever. Salvation cannot be generated by human beings: it is solely the gift of Amida. Human beings do not choose Amida. Rather, Amida chooses human beings through his primal vow and they are assured of salvation when they accept Amida's gift of faith. Recitation of the *nenbutsu*, rather than constituting a meritorious act that leads to birth in the Pure Land, becomes an expression of gratitude to Amida for the gift of faith that assures that very birth.

Human hair was worked into esoteric images from about the same time as the proliferation of Pure Land embroideries that incorporated human hair. One example is the dramatic early-fourteenth-century Mandala of the Two Worlds (Ryōgai Mandara 兩界曼荼羅) from Taisanji in Kobe, representing the entirety of the Buddhist cosmos (figure 2).

This devotional embroidery, showing the Diamond World above the Womb World, is a Siddham seed-syllable (*shuji* 種子) mandala in which the sacred syllables signifying deities were worked with human hair. The Diamond World Mandala represents reality in the buddha-realm, the world of the unconditioned, the universal, the absolute. The Womb World Mandala represents reality as it is revealed in the world of the conditioned, the individual, the particular, and the relative. Such an object raises the perplexing question: why has the quintessential mandala of the esoteric tradition, focused on the primordial Buddha Dainichi 大日 (Mahāvairocana), incorporated human hair, when human hair embroideries are associated with the Pure Land tradition focused on Amida? We must examine this issue historically in the context of *nenbutsu* thought.

By the twelfth century, belief in birth in Amida's Pure Land through recitation of the *nenbutsu* was spreading rapidly throughout society, and thinkers associated with traditional schools of Buddhism had to

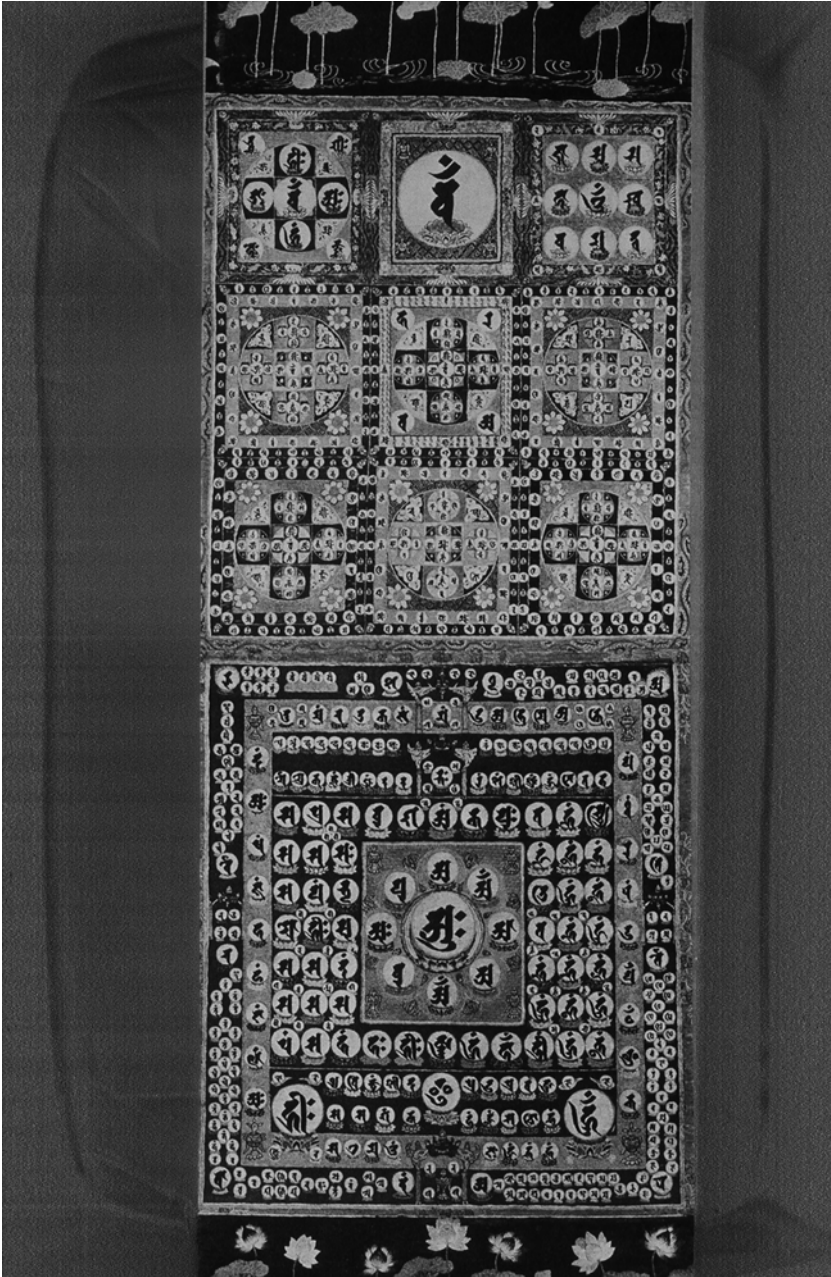


Figure 2. Diamond and Womb Worlds. Taisanji, Kobe, Japan.  
(ten Grotenhuis, 1999, 95).

deal with this powerful phenomenon. By the late twelfth century, the growing belief in the exclusive power and practice of the *nenbutsu* had polarized religious thinkers, and in 1207 esoteric Tendai 天台 authorities on Mount Hiei 比叡山 petitioned the government to ban the exclusive *nenbutsu* practice and defrock and exile its most influential exponent, Hōnen. Other thinkers reacted more positively to the religious debates of the day, including the esoteric Shingon monk Kakuban, who is credited with the Shingi Shingon reform movement in the twelfth century that must have helped justify esotericizing images and devotional objects focused on sacred syllables, many of which incorporated human hair.

Kakuban did not consider practices in which the name of Amida was chanted or that led to birth in the Pure Land to lie outside the scope of esoteric Shingon thought. But he explained that these practices had to be conducted in the correct, Shingon way if they were to be efficacious, because everything, including Amida and Amidist practices, had been brought into existence by Dainichi's great compassion. Wishing to reconstruct an orthodox position, Kakuban was always a loyal exponent of the teachings of Kūkai 空海 (774–835, posthumous title Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師), the Japanese monk who introduced Shingon esoteric Buddhism from China into Japan in the early ninth century. One of Kūkai's teachings was called the "secret mandala teaching" (*himitsu mandara kyō* 秘密曼荼羅教). This mandala teaching is based on the concept of *honpushō* 本不生 (fundamental no-birth), which asserts that all elements of existence, including human beings, are originally uncreated without a first cause and that all of existence is contained in the Samaya Mandala of Dainichi. The totality of existence is characterized by the state represented by the seed-syllable *A* (*aji* 阿子), which marks or symbolizes *honpushō* (van der Veere 2000, 85).

Visualization practices on the *A* syllable, called *ajikan* 阿字觀, were described by Kūkai and also by a number of his disciples (Payne 1998, 1999b). Kakuban himself wrote ten texts on these visualizations, based in large part on earlier writings. There are two fundamental forms of *A*-syllable visualizations. The first relates to the Diamond World and its object of devotion (*honzon* 本尊), the Diamond World Mandala; the second relates to the Womb World and its object of devotion, the Womb World Mandala. In the Diamond World, the syllable representing Dainichi is visualized on a lotus, and these two elements are placed within a moon disk. In the Womb World, the syllable representing

Dainichi is visualized within a moon disk, and the moon disk rests on the lotus (van der Veere 2000, 97–98; see also details of figure 2).

In Kakuban's time there was great interest in rituals related to the moment of death because this was seen as an opportunity to escape from the sorrow-filled cycle of birth and death (samsara) through immediate enlightenment in this life or through birth in a pure land (Stone 2006, 2003). Again basing his work on earlier writings, notably those of Jippan, Kakuban wrote the *Ichigo taiyō himitsushū*, which describes the possibility of achieving enlightenment in this life (*sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成佛) or birth in a pure land (*ōjō* 往生) through visualization of the syllable A (van der Veere 2000, 123). Regardless of these teachings, Kakuban remained an orthodox Shingon thinker. It is important to note that he always reiterated his firm position that Dainichi is the ultimate principle and that Amida is one of the five modes/forms of Dainichi's wisdom, namely, *myōkanzatchi* 妙觀察智, the wisdom of wondrous perception (van der Veere 2000, 115–116). For Kakuban, to consider Amida anything other than one of the wisdom functions of Dainichi would be a deluded view.

A number of embroideries incorporating human hair show a mingling of Pure Land and esoteric elements. One example now in the collection of the Nara National Museum, depicts an Amida triad represented by means of seed-syllables worked with human hair presented in the *ajikan* format associated with the Diamond World, that is, seed syllables on lotuses within moon disks (color plate 9). A canopy above and an offertory table in front of the triad recall adornments associated with sculptural triads. Lotus petals and flowers at top and bottom suggest the Pure Land.

An early-fifteenth-century image, originally in the Honda Hachiman Jingūji in Kawachi (Osaka), shows the Amida triad represented in seed-syllables within a framing rectangle of forty-eight A syllables, representing the forty-eight vows relating to his eventual buddhahood made by Bodhisattva Dharmākara. The inscriptions at the top is from the *Kanmuryōjukyō* 觀無量經 (Sūtra of Visualization on the Buddha of Measureless Life), on which the Taima Mandala is based. The one on the left appears frequently in Pure Land embroideries from this period, for example, at the top of the Cleveland embroidery discussed earlier. The passage comes from the ninth of the sixteen visualizations:

The light [of Amida] shines everywhere,  
[Illuminating] the world of the ten directions.





Color plate 9. Amida triad shown in *ajikan* format associated with the Diamond World, Nara National Museum. Photo by author.

Sentient beings who are mindful of the Buddha [practice *nenbutsu*]  
Will be always embraced, never rejected (*sesshu-fusha*).

A *Lotus Sūtra* mandala in which all the syllables are worked in human hair comes from Izuyama Jinja in Atami and probably dates to the fourteenth century (figure 3).

The central section shows the historical Buddha Śākyamuni and the past buddha Prabhūtaratna enshrined in the multijeweled pagoda (*tahōtō* 多寶塔) associated with the esoteric tradition in Japan. The syllable to the left suggests the identity between Prabhūtaratna and Dainichi; the syllable to the right represents Śākyamuni. Syllables representing deities from the Diamond World appear in the next rectangular court, and syllables representing deities from the Womb World appear in the outer rectangular court. The central pagoda appears on an eight-petaled lotus flower like the one in the center of the Womb World Mandala. This image shows an intermingling of exoteric and esoteric concepts, as well as a mingling of the esoteric two worlds.

Images from the Pure Land and esoteric traditions presenting sacred syllables suggest that communication with the absolute is possible through language and sound. This is true for representations of the *nenbutsu*, representations of the *A* syllable, or representations of large, complex mandalas in which all the figures are shown as sacred syllables. There is common ground between the Pure Land and esoteric traditions in the belief that by using language—mantra—as a spiritual device, religious goals can be achieved. Recitation of the *nenbutsu* assures birth in Amida's Pure Land; in the esoteric tradition proper practice of the three mysteries, including speech or mantra, leads to enlightenment in this very body. Language becomes the direct means of communication between the human and the sacred. In his writings, Kakuban states that the only difference between unenlightened sentient beings and buddhas is their understanding of the nature of language.

When devotees donated hair to be worked into these powerful images, another layer of meaning is added. Since hair often suggests wild, untamed, sexual energy, its use in embroideries can be seen as an attempt to control or transform that “negative” power, to turn negative into positive, to make the imperfect into the perfect. Hair, signifying the human body, undergoes a purifying metamorphosis when used in these embroideries to depict the hair and garments, or the names, of sacred figures. The distinction between buddha and believer collapses and they become one.



Figure 3. *Lotus Sūtra* Mandala. Izuyama Jinja, Atami, Japan.  
Photo by author.

## 76. GODDESS GENEALOGY: NYOIRIN KANNON IN THE ONO SHINGON TRADITION

Sarah Fremerman Aptilon

In a famous passage of the *Kakuzen shō* 覺禪鈔, a Shingon 眞言 ritual-iconographic manual compiled in the late twelfth century, Bodhisattva Nyoirin Kannon 如意輪觀音 (Ruyilun Guanyin) takes the form of a “jewel woman” (*yuniū*; *gyokujo* 玉女), a beautiful concubine who brings boundless good fortune to the sovereign and causes him to be reborn in the Pure Land paradise of Amida Buddha after death.<sup>1</sup> In fact, such “jewel women” appeared in the dreams of several prominent Japanese Buddhist monks in the early years of the Kamakura 鎌倉 period (1185–1333); scholars have drawn attention to the wording of this *Kakuzen shō* passage because it prefigured Shinran’s 親鸞 (1173–1263) account of a dream in which Kannon promised to become his consort, which inspired him to leave the celibate priesthood and marry.<sup>2</sup> The *Kakuzen shō* passage is also important, however, because it explicitly identifies Nyoirin Kannon—a tantric form of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara—as female, a development that seems to have occurred only in Japan. Nyoirin’s appearance as the jewel woman reflects a long history of her convergence with other deities within the Ono branch of Shingon, in a process of mythological contagion that endowed her with the qualities of a fecund goddess of fertility and fortune.

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<sup>1</sup> *BZ* (1912–1922) vol. 47, 181b–182a. Compiled by the Ono 小野 Shingon monk Kakuzen 覺禪 (1143–ca. 1213) of Kanjuji (or Kajūji) 觀修寺.

<sup>2</sup> Shinbutsu 眞佛 (1209–1258), *Shinran muki* 親鸞夢記 (see Shinbutsu 1969–1970, 201–202). The “jewel woman” or “jade woman” (also pronounced in Japanese as *gyokujo* or *gyokunyo*) had long been known in Japan as a goddess figure connecting imperial authority to female sexuality, as one of the seven treasures of the ideal Buddhist “wheel-turning king” (*cakravartin*; *Zhuanlunwang*; *tenrinnō* 轉輪王), and as a deity specializing in worldly happiness, especially conjugal harmony. On the jewel woman motif, including an examination of the connection between the *Kakuzen shō* passage and Shinran’s dream, see Tanaka Takako 1989, 99–104. These two passages are also cited and their relationship discussed in Iyanaga 2002, 57787; Faure 2003, 205–206. On jewel women see also Schafer 1977, 131–48.

By the time the *Kakuzen shō* appeared, Nyoirin was already widely known in Japan for her power to grant both salvation and worldly happiness. Medieval esoteric texts and also sculptures and paintings dating from the early Heian 平安 (794–1186) period onward offer glimpses of an image that might well have haunted the dreams of monks—a graceful figure seated on a lotus blossom, holding in her six hands symbols of both material and spiritual wealth, one hand cupping a wish-fulfilling jewel (*cintāmaṇi*; *ruyi baozhu*; *nyoi hōju* 如意寶珠), another twirling a wheel (*cakra*; *lun*; *rin* 輪) symbolizing the Buddhist teachings. Reflecting these attributes, the bodhisattva's Sanskrit name is Cakravarti-Cintāmaṇi-Avalokiteśvara.<sup>3</sup>

Texts and images devoted to Nyoirin had reached Japan by at least the mid-eighth century, but the Tang 唐 (618–907) Chinese texts that serve as the basis for her worship in Japan contain no clear precedent for her manifestations in female form.<sup>4</sup> In these texts Ruyilun appears as an androgynous or male tantric deity, one of several esoteric forms of Avalokiteśvara and, like them, the bearer of an all-powerful *dhāraṇī* spell symbolized by his wish-fulfilling jewel. On a broad scale,

<sup>3</sup> The name has also been reconstructed as Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara, though the Chinese texts devoted to Ruyilun give the name as Cakravarti-Cintāmaṇi. See the *Ruyilun tuoluoni jing* (T. 1080.20:188c9–26), and the *Ruyilun pusa guanmen yizhu bijue* (T. 1088.20:216a22–b2), a text thought to have been composed by Kūkai's master Huiguo. One of the most celebrated images of Nyoirin in Japan is the ninth-century statue housed at the Shingon temple Kanshinji 觀心寺, long praised by Japanese priests and art historians for its mysterious charm. The so-called “femininity” of this and other Nyoirin images is debated, however, because most can also be read as androgynous. In a sense the images leave open possibilities for feminization that the texts render more explicit. Because of the problematic nature of the term “feminization,” the phenomena that our texts reveal might also be described as a kind of “gender play” in which female identities became central to the persona(s) of this bodhisattva in Japan. On the “gender” and history of the Kanshinji image, see Bogel 2002, 32–64. Nyoirin is variously depicted with two, four, six, eight, ten, or twelve arms, though in Shingon the six-armed form is most common. On Nyoirin's iconography in Japanese sculpture, see Fowler 1989, 58–65.

<sup>4</sup> These translations, found in T. vol. 20, are attributed to Bodhiruci (Putiliuzhi 菩提流志; Bodairushi; 572–727), Amoghavajra (Bukong Jin'gang 不空金剛; Fukū Kongō; 705–774), Vajrabodhi (Jin'gangzhi 金剛智; Kongōchi; 671–741), and others, and were done mostly in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. In Japan Nyoirin became particularly important in the Sanbōin 三宝院 lineage of the Ono branch of Shingon, founded by the priest Shōbō 聖寶 (832–909) at Daigoji 醍醐寺, and one of the earliest streams of this tradition. The *Guanzizai pusa ruyilun niansong yigui* 觀自在菩薩如意輪念誦儀軌 (*Kanjizai bosatsu nyoirin nenjugiki*) and the *Guanzizai ruyilun pusa yuqie fayao* 觀自在如意輪菩薩瑜伽法要 (*Kanjizai nyoirin bosatsu yuga hōyō*), among others, are important Sanbōin ritual texts. See T. 1085 and 1087.

Avalokiteśvara is known to have changed gender in China, from male to female, in the early Song 宋 dynasty (960–1279), but Nyoirin/Nyoirin appears to have taken on explicitly female characteristics only in Japan, possibly by the mid-ninth century.<sup>5</sup> There she was worshipped in medieval Shingon and Tendai 天台 as one of the esoteric “six Kannon” (*roku Kannon* 六觀音) that became popular during the Heian period.<sup>6</sup>

Nyoirin’s *cintāmaṇi* helped to catalyze her transformations in Japan, triggering a cascade of new associations with both local and Indian deities through a process of “metonymic drift” that led to an identification of her jewel with both Buddha relics and the jewel of the imperial regalia (Faure 1999a, 19).<sup>7</sup> As Nyoirin came to play a central role in court rituals, her identity overlapped with those of various jewel-bearing deities, including female *nāga* (snake or dragon deities; *long* 龍; *ryū*) such as Seiryō Gongen 清涼権現, as well as Benzaiten 辨才天 (Sarasvatī; Biancaitian), Kichijōten 吉祥天 (Lakṣmī or Śrī Mahādevī; Jixiangtian), and Dakiniten 荼枳尼天 (Dākiṇī; Tujinitian).<sup>8</sup> She also became a favorite object of worship for women and was associated with fertility, childbirth, and, by the

<sup>5</sup> On Avalokiteśvara’s gender transformations, see the classic study by Stein 1986, 17–80. For a more recent encyclopedic study, see Chün-fang Yü 2001.

<sup>6</sup> These tantric forms of Avalokiteśvara appear in sūtras that describe various esoteric rites devoted to them; the bodhisattva no longer merely attends and carries out the work of buddhas but appears as a savior figure in his own right. These tantric forms include the “Noble” (Arya; Sheng 聖; Shō), “Thousand-Armed” (Sahasrabhuja; Jianshou 千手; Senju) or “Thousand-Eyed” (Sahasranetra; Jianyan 千眼; Sengen), “Eleven-Headed” (Ekādaśamukha; Shiyimian 十一面; Jūchimen), and “Horse-Headed” (Hayagrīva; Matou 馬頭; Batō), as well as “Pure” (Cundī; Zhunti 準胝; Juntei), and “Fisher [of Human Beings]” (Amoghapāśa; Bukongjuansu 不空羂索; Fukūkenjaku), who came to replace Juntei in the Tendai tradition. For a discussion of the rivalry between Shingon and Tendai over the “true” esoteric six Kannon, and the symbolic importance of Nyoirin Kannon within this milieu, see Hayami 1981; for a general overview of the six Kannon, see Hayami 2000.

<sup>7</sup> On Nyoirin’s connection with relics in medieval Japan, see Faure 1999b, 271–87; and Faure’s forthcoming *Raging Gods: The Implicit Pantheon of Medieval Japan*.

<sup>8</sup> Of course, the *cintāmaṇi* is a common tantric motif, and Jizō 地藏 (Kṣitigarbha; Dizang) is another well-known example of a (generally male) Buddhist deity who proffers a wish-fulfilling jewel to devotees. Thus the *cintāmaṇi* possesses no inherently feminine characteristics; rather, in Nyoirin’s case it happened to converge with those possessed by various goddess figures whose paths she crossed. At the same time, the bodhisattva’s jewel and her place in the esoteric ritual pantheon linked her with several male or androgynous deities, including, among others, Aizen Myōō 愛染明王, Myōken 妙見 (Miaojian), Monju 文殊 (Mañjuśrī; Wenshu), and Miroku 彌勒 (Maitreya; Mile), as well as the legendary historical figures of Kūkai 空海, Eisai 榮西 (1141–1215), and Shōtoku Taishi 聖德

Muromachi 室町 period (1392–1573), salvation from the Blood Pool Hell (*chi no ike jigoku* 地の池地獄) that was believed to await women after death.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the earliest of these feminine associations occurred within the Ono lineage, which takes its name from the area of southeastern Kyōto where it flourished. This was where the Ono patriarch Ningai 仁海 (951–1046) established Ono's main temple, Mandaraji 曼荼羅時 (later Zuishin'in 隨心院) in 991, not far from where its legendary founder Shōbō 聖寶 (832–909) established the Daigoji 醍醐寺.<sup>10</sup> Beginning with Shōbō's mysterious encounter with Nyoirin on Mt. Kasatori 笠取山, the future site of Daigoji, the Ono branch of Shingon did much to promote Nyoirin's early career in Japan. Among the earliest records of Shingon worship of Nyoirin are the writings of the palace monk Shunnyū 淳祐 (890–953), grandson of Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845–903). Shunnyū later retired to Ishiyamadera 石山寺 due to illness and devoted himself to the worship of Nyoirin Kannon there.

Ono monks also established an important place for Nyoirin in court-sponsored rituals. From the Heian period onward Japanese sovereigns used possession of relics to strengthen their legitimacy in times of contested authority, and Kūkai 空海 (774–835) identified relics as *cintāmaṇi* and established several major Shingon rituals in which they reaffirmed and regenerated the power of the sovereign (see

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太子 (574–622) (who was also the founder of the Rokkakudō 六角堂, the Kyōto temple where Shinran was on retreat when he had his dream about Kannon).

<sup>9</sup> The teaching of the Blood Pool Hell is found in the *Foshuo dacang zhengjiao xiepen jing* 佛說大藏正教血盆經 (*Bussetsu daizō shōkyō ketsubon kyō*), BZ 87, 4: 2999; for a study of this sūtra, see Takemi 1983, 229–46. For a study of the *etoki bikuni* and other itinerant Kumano nuns who spread the visual teaching of Nyoirin as savior from this hell, see Ruch 2002, 537–80. See also Kodate 1991, 667–90. Despite Nyoirin's importance in both clerical and lay circles in medieval Japan, she never attained the widespread popular devotion that other forms of Kannon received during that time. She does not appear, for example, in medieval tale collections such as the *Hokke genki* 法華驗記 or the *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集 (though she does appear in the fourteenth-century *Shintōshū* 神道集, a topic for future research).

<sup>10</sup> While the other major branch of Shingon, the Hirosawa 廣澤, drew most of its clergy from aristocratic families and tended to focus more on the formal details of ritual practice, Ono priests often came from humbler families, and Ono ritual was more concerned with cultivating mystical experience and supernatural powers (see Kasahara 2001, 109–111). For an illuminating example of Nyoirin worship in Ono ritual, see Sharf 2001, 157–66. For a full treatment of Sanbōin lineage rituals, see Takai Kankai 1953.

Yasuro Abe 1989, 115–69; Ruppert 2000, 43–141). As cloistered sovereigns (*insei* 院政), beginning with Shirakawa 白河 (1053–1129, r. 1072–1086), rose to reclaim their power from the Fujiwara regents by creating a parallel political establishment, possession of a relic-jewel took on increasing importance, and Ono Shingon ritual offered the chief religious institutional support for their legitimacy in a ritual system that featured Nyoirin and her jewel. Many Ono monks were famous for their thaumaturgic talents, and their expertise in the production of *cintāmaṇi* and relic worship also helped establish their position at court. Sometime from the late tenth to the mid-eleventh centuries onward, for example, Ono monks were among those who performed daily and monthly “Kannon offering” (*Kannon ku* 觀音供) rites in the Futama 二間 area of the imperial palace, adjacent to the sovereign’s chamber, in which Nyoirin was worshipped along with Jūichimen Kannon 十一面觀音 and Shō Kannon 聖觀音 for the protection of the sovereign and nation.<sup>11</sup>

Out of this miracle-working, jewel-worshipping tradition emerged the monk Kakuzen 覺禪 (1143–ca. 1213) of Kanjuji (or Kajuji) 觀修寺, compiler of the *Kakuzen shō*.<sup>12</sup> He describes many kinds of efficacious rituals in this encyclopedic work, including a large number involving *cintāmaṇi* and relic veneration. Kakuzen’s lengthy chapter on Nyoirin draws on several sources and betrays a highly practical focus. The “jewel woman” passage appears in a list of worldly benefits that cites two main texts, the *Ruyilun tuoluoni jing* 如意輪陀羅尼經 (*Nyoirin darani kyō*) and an obscure work referred to only as the *Beppongi* 別本軌.<sup>13</sup> When Kakuzen cites the *dhāraṇī* sūtra he downplays its vast

<sup>11</sup> These monks included, among others, Shōbō’s direct disciple Kangen 觀賢 (854–925), as well as Kangen’s disciple Kangū 寬空 (884–972) and the Daigoji monk Gengō 元杲 (914–995). On these rituals see Abe Yasuro 1989, 123–25, 135–36; Iyanaga 2002, 575–76; and Ruppert 2000, 147–48. See also Inoue Kazutoshi 1992, 36. On this and other rites involving Kannon and wish-fulfilling jewels, see Ruppert 2002, 2–11. In addition to these rites, probably beginning during the reign of the sovereign Gosanjō 後三条 (1034–1073, r. 1068–1072), a series of rituals for protection of the sovereign called the “three altars rites” (*sandan mishihō* 三壇御修法) was also held in the Futama, and included Tendai monks from Enryakuji performing rites to Nyoirin.

<sup>12</sup> Kakuzen’s two main teachers were Kōzen 興然 (1121–1203) and Shōken 勝賢 (1138–1196). Kōzen, also of Kanjuji, was the author of the *Gojukkanshō* 五十卷鈔, a similarly vast collection of ritual and iconographic lore whose tradition Kakuzen passed down in his own compilation.

<sup>13</sup> See *Ruyilun tuoluoni jing*, T. 1080; the translation is attributed to Bodhiruci 菩提流志 (572–727) and dated 709 C.E. Iyanaga Nobumi has noted the peculiarly sexual



cosmic tableau of universal salvation, choosing rather to isolate particular rites to be performed to gain specific benefits.<sup>14</sup> The “jewel woman” passage itself is cited from the *Beppongi*, whose other selections include rituals for achieving the love of a woman, assuring safe childbirth, bearing male children, and arousing and extinguishing lust, among others. By this time in Japan, Nyoirin’s wish-fulfilling jewel had come to signify not merely the power of her *dhāraṇī* but her direct intervention to grant devotees’ wishes, and even the female body that she offered to worthy emperors and monks.

Nyoirin’s manifestation in female forms like the jewel woman in Japan may have their roots in the visions of Shōbō, or Rigen Daishi 理源大師, in the ninth century. Renowned for his supernormal powers, Shōbō was an accomplished scholar-monk known as the founder of Daigoji, the temple from which the Ono lineage later emerged, and also as the restorer of the Tōzan 当山 branch of Shugendō.<sup>15</sup> According to the tenth-century *Daigoji engi* 醍醐寺縁起, Shōbō discovered what he considered to be a holy site at the top of Mt. Kasatori, southeast of Kyōto.<sup>16</sup> The *Engi* recounts that in 874 he began work on images of Nyoirin and Juntei Kannon 準提觀音 (Cundī-Avalokiteśvara; Zhunti Guanyin) and on a hall to enshrine them on the mountain.<sup>17</sup> The work was completed in 876, the year Daigoji was officially founded (see Saeki 1991, 80–92). Once installed, however, the Nyoirin icon slipped out of the hall and took a seat on the eastern peak of the mountain. There Shōbō worshiped her day and night until she revealed that the mountain was Potalaka, mythical home of Avalokiteśvara, and that from this spot she sought to bring happiness to all sentient beings.

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nature of the items drawn from the no longer extant *Beppongi*, and suggests that it was probably a Japanese creation of the late Heian or early Kamakura period (Iyanaga 2002, 577–87).

<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed study of this list of benefits, see Fremerman 2008.

<sup>15</sup> On Shōbō’s biography, see Saeki 1991.

<sup>16</sup> This text, whose earliest extant manuscript dates to 937, is the earliest account of these events. See *BZ* 117, 246a–252b; see also Saeki 1991, 80–108, 204–17. Several incidents recorded in the *Engi* also appear in two Daigoji document collections. See Keien 慶延 (twelfth century), *Daigo zōjiki* 醍醐雜事記 (Nakajima 1932); and Gien 義演 (1558–1626), *Daigoji shinyōroku* 醍醐寺新要錄 (Daigoji bunkazai kenkyūjo, ed. 1991).

<sup>17</sup> Like Nyoirin, Juntei is often depicted holding a *cakra* and *cintāmaṇi*, among other attributes. On the bodhisattvas’ iconographies, see Inoue Kazutoshi 1992, 1–98; Asai Kazuharu 1998, 1–98.

The text narrates a further revelation on the mountain that occurred in 902, in which the female dragon deity Seiryō Gongen declared that she was a manifestation of both Juntei and Nyoirin, who together constituted her original form (BZ 117, 247b–248a). Seiryō, third daughter of the dragon king Sāgara, tells how she began her career guarding Qinglongsi 青龍寺, the main esoteric Buddhist temple in Chang'an 長安, where Kūkai had studied under his teacher Huiguo 惠果 (Eka, 746–805). She eventually devoted herself to esoteric Buddhist practice and followed Kūkai's ship all the way to Japan, finally taking up residence on the mountain in order to protect and propagate the Buddhist dharma.<sup>18</sup>

In Seiryō Gongen, then, Nyoirin also merged with Juntei Kannon, another esoteric form of Avalokiteśvara, long known both in India and China as a goddess who had the power to grant devotees conjugal happiness, fertility, and safe childbirth, among other blessings. In India this bodhisattva likely began her career as the tamed and converted Buddhist form of an ogress (*yakṣiṇī*), and her Indian name “Cundī” (or “Cundā”) denotes lower-caste female status (Gimello 2004, 249–250 n. 1). Sūtras refer to her as *fomu* 佛母 in Chinese (*butsumo*), literally “buddha mother,” which has often later been read as “mother of buddhas,” but which may originally have meant simply “goddess,” a translation of the Sanskrit *bhagavatī* or *devī* (Gimello 2004, 252 n. 6). The pairing of Nyoirin with this goddess figure may have contributed to Nyoirin's “feminization,” and several of Zhunti/Juntei's rituals for

<sup>18</sup> Sāgara's second daughter is the dragon girl who attains buddhahood in the Devadatta chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Seiryō also explains that in the Great Tang her name was Seiryū 青龍 (“blue/green dragon,” also translated as “black dragon”), but that here she was “named for water,” and indeed the water radical is added to both characters of “Seiryū” to get the name “Seiryō” 清瀧 (“pure waterfall”). This of course also calls to mind Kannon's traditional association with water (BZ 117, 248b).

Seiryō Gongen appears in two iconographic forms: as a beautiful woman similar to Kichijōten holding a wish-fulfilling jewel, or as a two-headed snake symbolizing the two Kannon (Inokuchi 1991, 240–41). For an image and explanation of the two-headed snake, see *Daigoji shinyōroku*, vol. 1, 397–98.

Despite her Buddhist pedigree, Seiryō Gongen likely reflects a cult that already existed on Mt. Kasatori. *Gongen* or avatars are syncretic deities that were sometimes created as emanations of Buddhist deities, but they often served rather to clothe local cults in Buddhist garb. Dragon or snake deities often possess wish-fulfilling jewels, and Nyoirin's jewel may have played a role here in linking her with Seiryō Gongen. Seiryō Gongen's tale also bears a strong resemblance to the tale of a Chinese girl named Shanmiao 善妙 (Zenmyō), who fell in love with the Korean monk Ūsang 義湘 (625–702), popularized in Japan by the Kegon monk Myōe, who believed himself to be a reincarnation of Ūsang.

love and fertility that appear in the Chinese sūtras may later have come to be attributed to Nyoirin in Japan (see Fremerman 2008, 62–64).

Shōbō's vision of Seiryō Gongen was dramatically recapitulated some two hundred years later when the goddess appeared again on the mountain in 1088, this time taking possession of the monk Shōkaku 勝覺 (1058–1129), then abbot of Daigoji.<sup>19</sup> Shōkaku was the son of Minamoto no Toshifusa 源俊房 (1035–1121), Minister of the Left, and a direct descendant of the sovereign Daigo 醍醐 (885–930; r. 897–930), who was a patron of the temple and had sponsored the construction of several new halls. Shōkaku himself is known for having built the Sanbōin 三寶院 of Daigoji in 1115 at the behest of the sovereign Toba 鳥羽 (1103–1156, r. 1107–1123), which became an imperial temple (Jpn. *monzeki* 門跡) and later the headquarters of the Tōzan branch of Shugendō.

In this encounter, Seiryō appears to Shōkaku in the form of a beautiful woman holding a jewel, resembling the goddess Kichijōten (Nakajima 1932, 40–41),<sup>20</sup> and then takes possession of him and delivers a revelation in which she affirms the need for the Minamoto clan to be loyal to the temple that Daigo has established for them. She then asks that a shrine be built for her there (Daigoji bunkazai kenkyūjo, ed. 1991, 1: 94–97).<sup>21</sup> The following year, Shōkaku is said to have constructed a shrine dedicated to Seiryō Gongen, installed her as the tutelary deity of Daigoji, and placed small statues of Nyoirin and Juntei within the shrine as the *shintai* 神体, or objects of worship in which the *kami* takes up residence (see Akamatsu 1951, 9–12).<sup>22</sup>

Shōbō's influence is also evident in the long tradition of Nyoirin worship at Ishiyamadera 石山寺, built on a hill overlooking Lake Biwa 琵琶湖. Like Daigoji, Ishiyamadera became known during the Heian period as a pilgrimage site frequented by sovereigns and aristocrats who prayed there for children and other benefits.<sup>23</sup> Founded in the

<sup>19</sup> On this incident, see Nakajima 1932, 40–41 and Daigoji bunkazai kenkyūjo, ed. 1991, 1: 88–97.

<sup>20</sup> Kichijōten is an Indian deity, the wife of the god Viṣṇu, who later became a goddess of luck and beauty in Japan; she holds a wish-fulfilling jewel and wears a wheel of dharma in her tiara, both attributes that may have linked her to Nyoirin.

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of this episode see Akamatsu 1951, 3–12.

<sup>22</sup> For a more recent art historical study of this statue, see Tsuda Tetsuei 2001, 16–32.

<sup>23</sup> Located in what was then the province of Ōmi 近江, now Shiga 滋賀 prefecture, east of Kyōto.

mid-eighth century, Ishiyamadera is one of the oldest temples in Japan devoted to the worship of Kannon. Many tales of devotees' supernatural dreams and visions of Nyoirin are recorded in the temple's illustrated miraculous history, the *Ishiyamadera engi emaki* 石山寺縁起絵巻, the text of which was compiled from 1324 to 1326.<sup>24</sup> Shōbō served as abbot (*zasu* 座主) of Ishiyamadera, where he passed on the Ono lineage of esoteric transmission to his disciple Kangen 觀賢 (854–925), who then transmitted it to Shunnyū (Naitō Sakae 2002, 15).

Despite a long historic association between Nyoirin and Ishiyamadera, the Kannon icon originally enshrined there in the Nara period (710–784) probably came to be identified as Nyoirin only later, during the Heian period, with the “esotericization” of the temple due to Shōbō's presence there (Naitō Sakae 2002, 15; see also Kajitani 2002; Inoue Kazutoshi 1992, 26–28).<sup>25</sup> Shōbō's devotion to Nyoirin was so great that by the late twelfth century he himself was believed to be a manifestation of the bodhisattva (Hayami 1975, 123). He lived and practiced for much of his life in the area surrounding Ishiyamadera in temples within a region that stretched from Yamashina 山科, the area southeast of Kyōto that served as a main route connecting the city to the shore of Lake Biwa, all the way to Nara 奈良. So it is natural that this region became the cradle of Nyoirin faith. Today not only Daigoji and Ishiyamadera but also other historic temples in this area, including the imperial Shingon temples of Kanjuji and Zuishin'in, still enshrine important sculptures of Nyoirin.

The oldest known version of the founding legend of Ishiyamadera (and earliest record of Nyoirin enshrined there) appears in the late tenth-century tale collection *Sanbō ekotoba* in a story that portrays Ishiyamadera as the site of successful prayers to Nyoirin for gold needed to complete the Great Buddha Hall at Tōdaiji 東大寺.<sup>26</sup> In this story, the sovereign Shōmu 聖武 (701–756, r. 724–749) prays to Zaō

<sup>24</sup> See BZ 117, 179a–200b. For a modern Japanese translation of the text, see Washio 1996, 60–74.

<sup>25</sup> The popular medieval association of the two-armed Nyoirin with Ishiyamadera is evident in the *Kakuzen shō* and several other ritual-iconographic compendia, including the *Besson zakki* 別尊雜記 and the *Asabashō* 阿娑縛抄, among others. See BZ 47, 190b; TZ 3, 220c17–20; and TZ 9, 3190, 196a13–16.

<sup>26</sup> The *Sanbō ekotoba*, completed in 984, is an illustrated collection of Buddhist tales compiled for didactic purposes by Minamoto no Tamenori 源為憲 (ca. 941–1011) for an imperial princess who had recently become a nun, Sonshi Naishinnō 尊子内親王 (966–985), daughter of the sovereign Reizei 冷泉 (950–1011, r. 967–969). See Koizumi and Takahashi 1980, 314–19; Kamens 1988, 328–32.

Gongen 藏王権現, the god of Mt. Kimpu 金峰山 (“Golden Peak”), for gold to complete construction of the temple.<sup>27</sup> Zaō instructs him to worship an image of Nyoirin, and when he does, gold is soon discovered in distant Mutsu 陸奥 province. Tōdaiji was completed and dedicated in 752, and Ishiyamadera was founded on the site where Nyoirin was worshipped. A more elaborate version of this same story appears in the *Ishiyamadera engi* (see *BZ* 117, 179a–181b).

The presence of Zaō Gongen is just one detail in this story that reflects Shōbō’s legacy at Ishiyamadera: Shōbō is said to have revived Shugendō practice on Mt. Kimpu, where Zaō presides. According to the *Daigoji engi*, he engaged in ascetic practices and enshrined images there of Nyoirin, Tahō Tennō 多寶天王 (Prabhūtaratna), and Zaō Gongen (*BZ* 117, 249b). In fact, several key details from the *Daigoji engi* reappear in both the *Sanbō ekotoba* and *Ishiyamadera engi* versions of the story of Ishiyamadera’s founding, which together suggest that the founding legend of Daigoji was transposed to Ishiyamadera.<sup>28</sup>

Other tales in the *Ishiyamadera engi* reflect Nyoirin’s growing appeal as a child-granting deity of special interest to women. In one tale, for example, a dying marriage is revived: the tenth-century diarist Fujiwara Michitsuna no Haha 藤原道綱母 has fallen out of love with her husband, the Great Minister of the Left Fujiwara no Kaneie 藤原兼家 (929–990); she goes on retreat at the temple and prays for help, has a mysterious dream in which a monk pours water out of a sake bottle onto her right knee, and returns home to find her relationship with Kaneie vastly improved (*BZ* 117, 184a).<sup>29</sup> In another, the wife of a court official named Fujiwara Kuniyoshi 藤原国能 goes on retreat at the temple to pray for a child, and Nyoirin appears to her in a vision and hands her a wish-fulfilling jewel; the couple is soon blessed with a male child and substantial wealth (*BZ* 117, 191a–192a). Another

<sup>27</sup> Also called Kimpusen or Kane no Mitake, located in what is now Nara prefecture. As the home of Zaō Gongen, the mountain is considered one of Shugendō’s most sacred sites. Zaō is the central deity of Shugendō, a fierce god who dwells on the mountain and is believed to guard the gold hidden within it; Shugendō’s founder En no Gyōja (fl. late seventh century) is said to have had a vision of Zaō on the mountain. Zaō is depicted with one head, three eyes, and two arms, right foot raised in a pose that suggests leaping or alighting, holding up a *vajra* in the right hand, and the left hand on his hip in the sword *mudrā* (*tokuen no in*).

<sup>28</sup> On similarities among the three tales, see Fremerman 2008, 82–89.

<sup>29</sup> Fujiwara Michitsuna no Haha is the author of one of the four major Heian diaries, the *Kagerō Nikki* 蜻蛉日記, spanning the period from 954 to 974, in which she describes, among other things, her unhappy relationship with Kaneie.

episode records a prayer of gratitude offered by the powerful Heian court figure Kujō Kanezane 九条兼実 (1149–1207) for the pregnancy of his daughter, Empress Sōhekimon'in 藻壁門院 (1209–1233), in which he invokes Nyoirin's power as having made possible the birth of several sovereigns, including Ichijō 一条 (980–1011, r. 986–1011), Goichijō 後一条 (1008–1036, r. 1016–1036), and Gosuzaku 後朱雀 (1009–1045, r. 1036–1045) (*BZ* 117, 194b–196a).

Nyoirin's manifestation as a jewel woman in the *Kakuzen shō* thus reflects a long process of transformation and transitory "feminization" of the bodhisattva that unfolded in a series of revelations from the ninth century onward. According to the *Daigoji engi*, Nyoirin merged with the goddess-bodhisattva Juntei Kannon in the form of the female dragon deity Seiryō Gongen, and this identification was later reconfirmed on the occasion of Seiryō's possession of the monk Shōkaku. Through Shōbō's influence Nyoirin also emerged at Ishiyamadera as a wish-granting deity who blessed sovereigns and aristocrats with their hearts' desires, particularly children. Together these manifestations hint at the process through which Nyoirin at times took the form of a goddess and later came to hold a special appeal for women in Japan. Yet they also reveal that "Nyoirin Kannon" was never a single entity but a family of deities, a name that was freely borrowed and lent.

## 77. LANDMARKS OF ESOTERIC ART IN JAPAN

Karen J. Mack

### *Nara Period (710–794)*

The earliest esoteric art in Japan had already begun to appear in the Nara period (710–794). The Buddhist imagery naturally reflects the state of Buddhism at the time. During the Nara period, separate denominations had not yet appeared, and any of the “six schools of Nara Buddhism could be studied at an individual temple.<sup>1</sup> In addition, proto-esoteric texts such as the *Golden Light Sūtra* 金光明經 and the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* 仁王經 were already being introduced, which would become full-fledged esoteric texts in their later versions in the Chinese Tang dynasty (618–907). Also, some texts, generally considered to be exoteric, contained esoteric elements, such as the appearance of the cosmic Buddha Vairocana in the *Garland Sūtra* 華嚴經.

The Great Buddha of Nara is an image of Vairocana that is considered to be informed by the *Brahma’s Net Sūtra* 梵網經 and the older version of the *Garland Sūtra*; in both of these texts this buddha’s name is transcribed as Rocana 盧舍那 (Rushana). Rocana is described in the Buddhahadra (ca. fifth century) version of the *Garland Sūtra* as “emanating great radiant light illuminating the ten directions and each hair follicle emitting clouds of transformation bodies (*T.* 278.9:405c9). The *Brahma’s Net Sūtra* describes Rocana in the Lotus Storehouse realm seated on a lotus flower dais, each petal of which contains a world with another thousand realms within it, which again manifest another thousand realms, and so on almost into infinity. Each realm, with its own Śākyamuni, is described according to Indian cosmology as having a Mt. Sumeru, a sun and moon, and the four *deva* kings (*T.* 1484.24:997c6–c14).

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<sup>1</sup> The six schools are: Sanron 三論 (Mādhyamika, “Three Treatises”), Hossō 法相 (Yogācāra, “Consciousness-Only”), Kegon 華嚴 (Avatamsaka, *Garland Sūtra*), Ritsu 律 (Vinaya, “Discipline”), Jōjitsu 成實 (Sautrāntika), and Kusha 俱舍 (*Abhidharma-kośa*). For example, at Tōdaiji all six schools were present, with the Tendai and Shin-gon schools added in the Heian period.

The Nara Great Buddha at Tōdaiji 東大寺 has been severely damaged multiple times, and at present only minor fragments on the main figure and some of the lotus petals of the dais remain from the mid-eighth-century original (*IBJ* 625). However, each petal depicts a realm with Śākyamuni as described in the *Brahma's Net Sūtra* (Ishida Hisatoyo 1988, 26; Elisseff 1936, 91). Because of the state of the Great Buddha sculpture itself, it cannot be ascertained if there once was additional imagery more relevant to the *Garland Sūtra*. However, the later eighth-century Tōshōdaiji dry lacquer sculpture of Rocana has eight hundred and sixty-four seated transformed buddha figures depicted on its mandorla, and the petals of the lotus dais have multiple images of buddhas depicted in ink.<sup>2</sup>

In 743 Emperor Shōmu 聖武天皇 (701–756, r. 724–749) officially promulgated his vow to build an image of Rocana, in the tradition of a history of building great buddha figures on the continent.<sup>3</sup> The “eye-opening dedication ceremony took place in 752 before the gilding was complete, probably to commemorate the bicentennial anniversary of the official introduction of Buddhism to Japan in 552, and international emissaries from India and Tang China participated in the ceremony.<sup>4</sup> Following the precedents of the Sui and Tang dynasties in China, Emperor Shōmu established a network of national temples

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<sup>2</sup> Likewise, among Chinese examples, the painted image of the mid-sixth-century Vairocana from Dunhuang cave 428 has a depiction of a buddha realm on the outer robe with flying *apsaras* above and the six realms of existence on the lower half of the robe. The mid-fifth-century sculpted buddha image from Yungang cave 18 also has multiple images in relief of seated buddhas on the robe, which, like the Tōshōdaiji image, likely illustrate clouds of transformed buddhas emanating from the hair follicles, as described in the *Garland Sūtra*.

<sup>3</sup> The Great Buddha at Nara was in its time the culmination of a history of Great Buddha figures built on the continent, such as the Bamiyan Great Buddhas (ca. fourth–sixth centuries), the fifth-century Northern Wei Great Buddha at Yungang, the Vairocana Great Buddha at Fengxian dated 765, and the Leshan Great Buddha built from 713 to 803.

<sup>4</sup> The first molds for the sculpture were made in 746, casting was completed in 749, and after gold was discovered in the northern Ōshū province in 749, the gilding of the sculpture was completed in 755. However, the final gilding of the lotus petals was not completed until 756 after Ganjin (Jianzhen 鑑真, 688–763) had arrived in Japan from Tang China in 753. With a total height of approximately sixteen meters and requiring two hundred and sixty-six tons of bronze (*IBJ*, 545), the construction of the Nara Great Buddha was a major feat, especially in light of the failure to complete the bronze Great Buddha of China commissioned by Empress Wu Zetian 武則天后 (690–705, r. 624–705) in commemoration of Śikṣānanda's translation of the *Garland Sūtra* in 699 (Asai Kazuharu 2004, 55).



throughout the land, with the Nara Great Buddha at Tōdaiji as its center (Miwa 1980, 26).

In 741 Emperor Shōmu commanded that the national temples be built, which were to include national monasteries called Temples of the Four Deva Kings of the Golden Light Sūtra Protecting the Nation (Konkōmyō Shitennō Gokokuji 金光明四天王護国之寺) after the state-protection scripture, the *Golden Light Sūtra*; and national nunneries called Temples of the Lotus Elimination of Transgressions (Hokke Metsuzaiji 法華滅罪之寺) after the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>5</sup> The *Golden Light Sūtra*, *Lotus Sūtra*, and *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* constitute the three state-protection sūtras (*gokoku sanbukyō*, 護国三部經). The *Golden Light Sūtra* and the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* had been expounded together in the provinces since 676 to protect the state, even before the national temples were built; the *Lotus Sūtra* was added once the national nunneries were built.

The first documented ceremony based on the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* was held in 660 (*Nihongi* 26, 465), but there is no information on the images used in the Benevolent Kings Service (*ninnō-e*, 仁王會) until the ceremony held at Tōdaiji in 753. Along with the hundred images used for the Benevolent Kings Service of 753, in accord with the older version of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* (*T.* 245.8:830a), five images of the five great powerful bodhisattvas (*godairiki bosatsu*, 五大力菩薩) were included (Kameda 1947b, 139–41; citing *Shōsō komonjo* 12, 428–29). It is unclear whether these images were paintings or sculptures, but they were relatively large, approximately two and a half meters in height. The Benevolent Kings Service held simultaneously at the imperial palace and Tōdaiji in 760 also included individual images of the five great bodhisattvas (*godai bosatsu*, 五大菩薩 figure 1) with the other hundred images (Kameda 1947b, 141).

The five great powerful bodhisattvas derive from the older proto-esoteric version of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*, in which these five bodhisattvas protect the five quarters of the realm of a sovereign who maintains the three treasures (*T.* 245.8:833a). The only evidence of what these images may have looked like in the Nara period comes from a twelfth-century iconographical drawing of the Nara-period five great powerful bodhisattvas from Akishinodera 秋篠寺. This icono-

<sup>5</sup> The national temples were apparently not yet completed by 747, at which time it was ordered that the pace of construction be accelerated.



Figure 1. Iconographic drawings for Benevolent Kings Ceremonies, top register. Twelfth century. New York Public Library, Spencer Collection.

graphical drawing depicts five benevolent-looking bodhisattvas standing on lotuses and holding defining attributes in accordance with the older version of the sūtra.

It is uncertain what images may have been installed originally in the national temples. In 737 it was commanded that images of a Śākyamuni triad be built in each province and lectures were to be given on the new esoteric version of the *Golden Light Sūtra* by Yijing (義淨, 635–713), properly called the *Victorious Kings of the Golden Light Sūtra* (*Konkōmyō saishō ō kyō*, 金光明最勝王經; T. 665; hereafter *Victorious Kings Sūtra*) (Miwa 1980, 23–24). That same year, the first Victorious Kings of the Golden Light Sūtra Service (*Konkōmyō saishō ō kyō e*, 金光明最勝王經會), based on the new version of the text, was held at the imperial palace by the imperial vow of Emperor Shōmu to protect the nation (de Visser 1935, 436, 447, 471; citing *Shoku nihongi* 12: 212). (The first lecture at the palace on the earlier version of the text had taken place in 680 [*BDJ* (1974) 2:1180a].) According to Emperor Shōmu's vow, the main image was Rocana flanked by Avalokiteśvara (Kanzeon 觀世音) and Ākāśagarbha (Kokūzō 虛空藏), accompanied by the four deva kings (*catvāro mahā-rājikāḥ*; *shitennō* 四天王) (*MDJ* 1968–1970 2: 587; *BDJ* 2: 1180a; de Visser 1935, 473–74).

In 766 or 768, this service was instituted as a yearly event called the Gosaie 御齋会 held at the Daigokuden 大極殿 (Great Hall of State) in the imperial palace during the second week of the New Year, from the eighth to fourteenth days (de Visser 1935, 447, 473; citing *Shoku nihongi* 12: 212; *BDJ* 2: 1180a). Ākāśagarbha flanked Rocana as a representation of that buddha's original vow of the two virtues of merit and wisdom. Ākāśagarbha also became popular among monastics in

the Nara period as a main image of a ritual for memory retention (*gumonji-hō*, 求聞持法), based on the *Ākāśagarbha sūtra* (*Kokūzō gumonji hō* 虛空藏求聞持法, T. 1145) (*MJ* 205).

Built by First Lady Kōmyō 光明皇后 (701–760), the Hokkeji nunnery in Nara, with a main image of the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, was made the head of the national nunneries by imperial edict sometime in the Tenpyō Shōhō era (749–757). Kōmyō, empress to Emperor Shōmu, inherited the estate from her father, Fujiwara no Fuhito (659–720), and converted it into a temple in 747 (Miwa 1980, 22). There is a fair amount of contention regarding whether the present image dates to the eighth or ninth centuries, but it has stylistic commonalities with both the eighth-century sculptures at Tōshōdaiji and the late-eighth-century Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yakushi Nyorai, 藥師如來) at Jingoji (Iwasa 2004, 39). The sculpture is traditionally described as having been made in the image of Kōmyō (Iwasa 2004, 37). However, it is unlikely that this image was typical of those at the provincial national nunneries (de Visser 1935, 641, 650). Amitābha and the Western Pure Land appear in the *Lotus Sūtra*, which would explain the relation of these sculptures to the national Hokkeji nunneries.

A year before the 741 edict to build the national temples, there was an imperial edict to build statues of Avalokiteśvara, probably not esoteric, and supply them to the provinces along with copies of the *Lotus Sūtra* (Robert K. Reischauer 1967, 186–87). These sculptures may or may not have been later housed at the national nunneries. In 761, a *jōroku* 丈六 size Amitābha sculpture was installed in the Pure Land Hall (Jōdoin 淨土院) at the Hokkeji nunnery on behalf of the deceased First Lady Kōmyō, and in the same year Amitābha triads were commanded to be installed in all the provincial national nunneries (de Visser 1935, 641, 650).

Likewise, the Amoghapāśa Avalokiteśvara (Fukū-kensaku Kanon 不空羂索觀音) presently installed in the Hokkedō (Sangatsudō 三月堂) at Tōdaiji is also associated with First Lady Kōmyō. It was built in the Tenpyō era for a *Lotus Sūtra* Service (*rengē e*, 法華會) held in 746, and was installed in the Hokkedō after it was built a few years later (Asai Kazuharu 2004, 529). It is recorded that a sculpture of Amoghapāśa Avalokiteśvara was installed in the Kenjaku Hall 羂索堂 built at Tōshōdaiji in 759 (de Visser 1935, 644; citing *Fusō ryakki basui*, 573). This sculpture may possibly be either the extant *Siṃhanāda Bodhisattva* (Shishiku bosatsu, 獅子吼菩薩) as is traditionally

ascribed, or the Prabhūtaratnarāja Bodhisattva (Shuhō ō bosatsu 衆寶王菩薩 [also Tahō Nyorai 多寶如來]) at Tōshōdaiji. A thousand-arm Avalokiteśvara, along with Bhaiṣajyaguru, flanks the Rocana sculpture in the Golden Hall of the Tōshōdaiji, perhaps reflecting the original altar arrangement at the Nara-period three official ordination platforms at Tōdaiji, Yakushiji in Tochigi, and Kanzeonji in Fukuoka (Asai Kazuharu 2004, 14, 63–64).

Other important Nara-period esoteric images not to be overlooked are the clay sculpture of Shukongōjin 執金剛神 in the Hokkedō at Tōdaiji, and the recently discovered wooden armature of a “deity lord” (*shin ō* 神王), one of a pair flanking the *jōroku*-size Cintāmanicakra-Avalokiteśvara (Nyoirin Kannon 如意輪觀音, see Apton, “Goddess Genealogy: Nyoirin Kannon in the Ono Shingon Tradition,” in this volume) built for the Ishiyamadera in 761. It has been suggested that the latter is an early image of the esoteric deity Kongō Zaō 金剛藏王 (Asai Kazuharu 2004, 65, 72; Mack 2006a, 66 n. 147).

#### *Heian Period (794–1185)*

Kūkai 空海 (774–835) is purported to have been motivated to go to China in 804 because no one in Japan could yet interpret the Sanskrit passages in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (*Dainichi kyō*, 大日經; KZ 3: 476, T. 848, see Beghi, “The Dissemination of Esoteric Scriptures in Eighth-century Japan,” and Tinsley, “Kūkai and the Development of Shingon Buddhism” in this volume). After his return from China in 806, Kūkai introduced a wealth of new material, including the Two-Realm Mandala (*ryōbu mandara*, 兩界曼荼羅), which pairs the Diamond Mandala (*Kongōkai mandara*, 金剛界曼荼羅) and Womb Mandala (*Taizōkai mandara*, 胎藏界曼荼羅), based on the *Diamond Peak Sūtra* (*Kongōchō kyō*, 金剛頂經; T. 865) and the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, respectively. However, he also introduced the new version of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* by Amoghavajra (705–774) and related esoteric imagery, which may well have had a broader and farther-reaching impact on esoteric imagery and ritual in Japan.

The earliest imagery associated with Kūkai in relation to the new version of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* is a set of iconographic drawings copied by Kakuzen 覺禪 (1143–ca. 1219) (figure 2).



Figure 2. Images of the various deities of the five directions from the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*, center leaf. 14th to 15th centuries copy after Kakuzen (1143–ca. 1219), Tōji version (TZ 12, iconographical drawing no. 5).

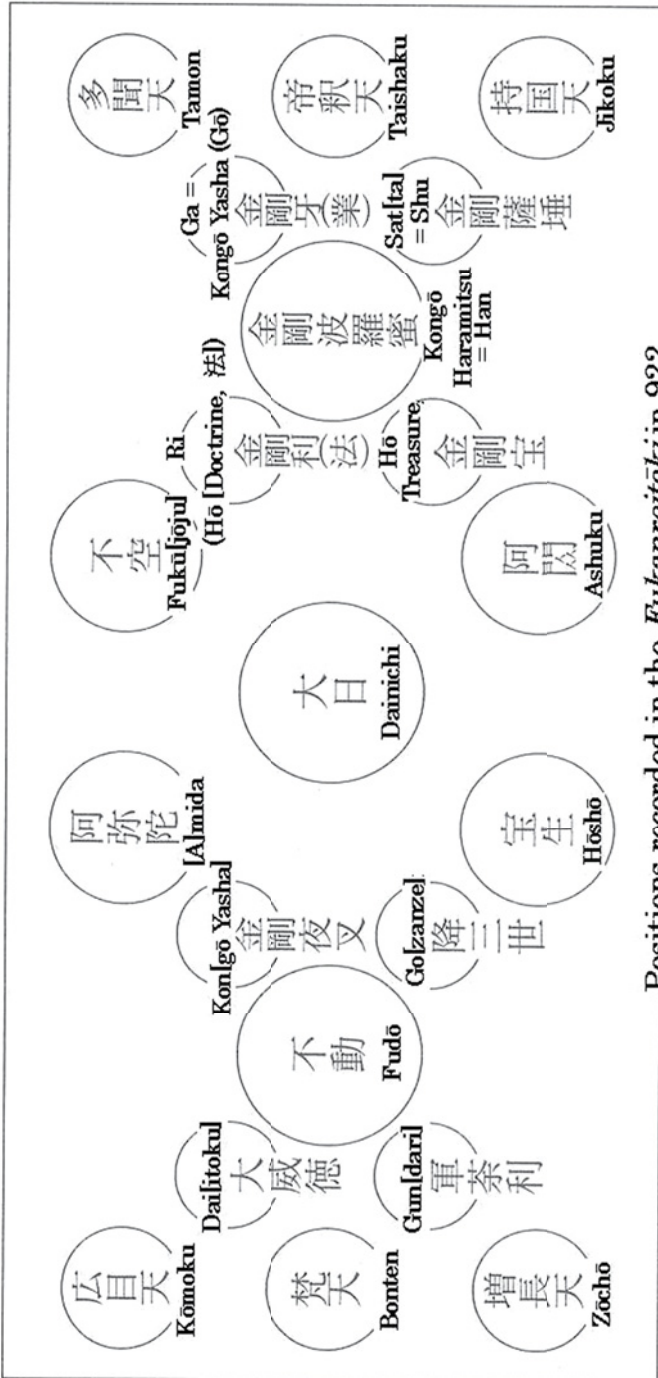
According to the inscription, they were based on Kūkai's full-scale silk paintings, which he likely had made in or brought back from China.<sup>6</sup> These iconographic drawings depict, in one leaf each, the five bodhisattvas of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* who have become the five directional bodhisattvas (*gohō bosatsu*, 五方菩薩) in the new version. Furthermore, as depicted in these iconographic drawings, each of the five bodhisattvas has become associated with three other deities based on the commentaries on the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*, particularly the *Benevolent Kings Ritual Manual* (*Ninnō nenjugiki*, 仁王念誦儀軌, T. 994, 995).

The bodhisattva of the center is written as a partial transliteration of Vajra Pāramitā (Kongō haramitta 金剛波羅蜜多) and is depicted with the associated deities of the center: Vajra Pāramitā (Kongō tōgan 金剛到岸 [also Kongō tōhigan 金剛到彼岸]), written in translated form; Acalanātha (Fudō, 不動); and Indra (Taishaku ten, 帝釈天 [also Indara, 因陀羅]). Starting with Acalanātha in the center, each of the five great mantra kings (*vidyārāja*, *godaimyōō*, 五大明王) is depicted on one of the five leaves of the iconographic drawings in association with one of the five directional bodhisattvas. This is the first appearance and the origin of the five great mantra kings in Japan.

These deities, based on the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* and its commentaries, reappear in the Lecture Hall at Tōji (see figure 3 and Bogel, "The Tōji Lecture Hall Statue Mandala and the Choreography of *Mikkyō*," in this volume).

The group of five mantra kings appear to the left facing the altar, the five wisdom buddhas (*gochi butsu*, 五智仏 [also, *gochi nyorai*, 五智如来]) in the center, and the five great bodhisattvas (*go dai bosatsu*, 五大菩薩) to the right. The altar sculptures also include six celestial deities (the four *deva* kings with Indra and Brahma), five of whom appear in the ritual manuals of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* and the set of iconographic drawings associated with Kūkai mentioned above. The altar arrangement has changed slightly over time, and the five buddha sculptures and central bodhisattva are later replacements, but a diagram in the *Fukanreitōki* 不灌鈴等記 compiled in 922 depicts the

<sup>6</sup> Extant in two later copies, one at Tōji and one at the Sanbōin at Daigoji, although the dating of these copies is problematic, with estimates at roughly the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries and the late twelfth century, respectively. See Nakano Genzō in *FMZ* 29 and 1981 *Gazō Fudō Myōō* 198, among others.



『不灌鈴等記』による講堂諸尊の配置図

Figure 3. Diagram of the Tōji Lecture Hall altar based on the *Fukanreitōki*. (Adapted from Kyoto National Museum, 1995, *Tōji kokuhō ten*, 186).

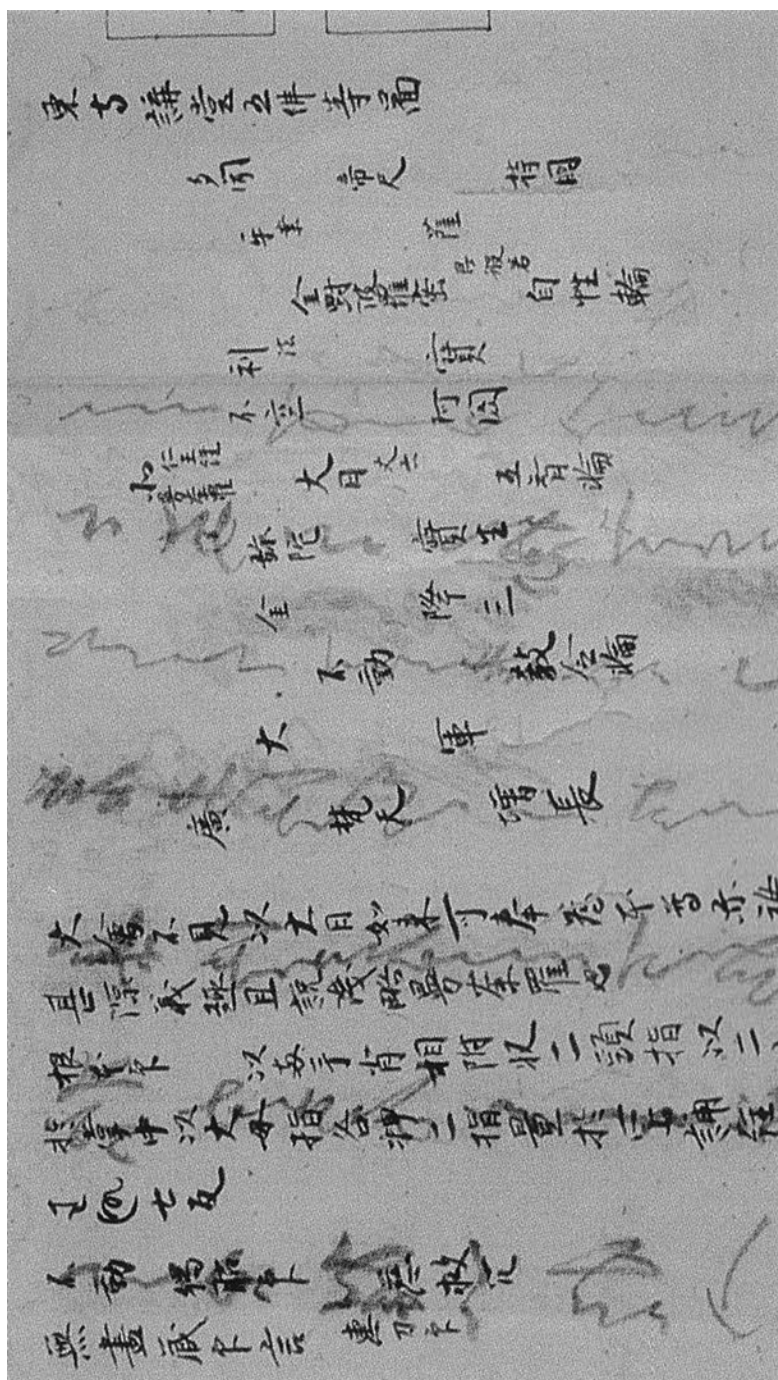


Figure 4. Fukkanreitōki (Diagram of the Tōji Kōdō). Compiled in 922 by Imperial Prince of the Law Shinjaku (眞寂法親王, 886-927). Kanazawa Bunko collection, Kanagawa.



original configuration (figure 4).<sup>7</sup> According to this diagram, the altar configuration represents the Benevolent Kings Mandala in sculptural form.

As seen previously, the five mantra kings are related to the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* through the *Benevolent Kings Ritual Manual*. Four of the bodhisattvas are the same as those that appear in Amoghavajra's version of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*.<sup>8</sup> The five wisdom buddhas are associated with the five great mantra kings through two commentaries, the *Secret Storehouse Records* (*Hizōki*, 秘藏記, TZ vol. 1, no. 1) and the *Embracing without Hindrance Discourse* (*Shōmuge kyō*, 攝無礙經, T. 1067). These texts are thought to transmit the oral teachings Kūkai received in China, though the dating and authorship of both is problematic.

However, the configuration of sculptures on the altar at the Tōji Lecture Hall is not simply a rendition of the Benevolent Kings Mandala but is also conflated with the Diamond Mandala through the dual identities of the bodhisattvas in the rear right and left quadrants: Kongōri 金剛利 and Kongōga 金剛牙 as Kongōhō 金剛法 and Kongōgō 金剛業, respectively. The *Fukanreitōki* records the dual identities of these two bodhisattvas, and when Unkei (d. 1223) repaired these sculptures in 1197, he found notations in Sanskrit characters inside the two sculptures confirming their alternate identities. Hence, the five wisdom buddhas and the five *cakra* bodhisattvas on the altar at Tōji are the same as the main deities of the central quadrant of the Diamond Mandala and represent both the Diamond Mandala and the Benevolent Kings Mandala simultaneously (for a more detailed discussion of the Tōji Lecture Hall altar configuration, see Mack 2006, chap. 2).

The configuration of the altar is generally accepted as having been designed by Kūkai. Although the eye-opening ceremony for the Tōji Lecture Hall was held in 839, after Kūkai's death in 835, he was put in charge of Tōji in 823, his plan for the Lecture Hall was approved in 825, and the construction of the sculptures was begun in 833 (*MDJ* 4:

<sup>7</sup> This diagram can be accepted as the original configuration because the ritual manual Ryakuō gonen ninnōkyōbō zakki (曆応五年仁王經法雜記, *Miscellaneous Notes on the Benevolent Kings Ritual of the Fifth Year of the Ryakuō Era*), substantiates that the arrangement was consistent with the *Fukanreitōki* as late as 1342.

<sup>8</sup> Extant in two later copies, one at Tōji and one at the Sanbōin at Daigoji, although the dating of these copies is problematic, with estimates at roughly the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries and the late twelfth century, respectively. See Nakano in *FMZ* 29 and 1981, *Gazō Fudō Myōō* 198, among others.

1764; GMZ 19). It is quite possible that Kūkai envisioned Tōji as an esoteric version of Tōdaiji, to be dedicated to the service of the state and the emperor through esoteric rituals and imagery. However, the exoteric Benevolent Kings Service remained the primary ceremony for the state closely associated with that sūtra, and the esoteric Benevolent Kings Ritual was later appropriated by the nobility and primarily used for its efficacy in averting calamity and increasing prosperity.

More successfully, Kūkai established the “Latter Seven Days Imperial Ritual” (*Goshichinichi Mishuhō*, 後七日御修法) at the imperial palace to protect the nation and sanctify the emperor as a *cakravartin* king. This ritual was held annually at the imperial palace during the second week of the New Year and took place at the same time as the exoteric *gosaie* 御齋會. In 834 Kūkai petitioned Emperor Ninmyō 仁明天皇 (810–850, r. 833–850) to add this ritual; it was held at a temporary facility, the Kageyushichō, at the palace in the first month of 835. The Shingon’in 眞言院 was built at the palace expressly for the Latter Seven Days Ritual in 836, a year after Kūkai’s death.

An iconographic drawing in the *Kakuzenshō* 覺禪鈔, compiled from 1176 to 1219, diagrams the placement of objects in the Shingon’in for the ritual (*BZ* (1912–1922) 51: 241). The main images used are the Diamond and Womb Mandalas, paintings of the five mantra kings, the Peacock King, and the twelve *deva* kings.<sup>9</sup> On the last day of the latter seven days ritual, the consecration as a *cakravartin* king is conferred on the emperor in the Seiryōden Hall of the palace.

The latter seven days ritual closely corresponds to the rituals Kūkai petitioned in 810 to hold at Jingoji, based on the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*, the *Protecting the State Sūtra* (*Shugo kokkaishu darani kyō*, 守護国界主陀羅尼經, *T.* 997), and the *Peacock King Sūtra* (*Butsumo daiujaku myō kyō*, 佛母大孔雀明王經; *KDCZ* 3: 182, *T.* 982). Likewise, the Latter Seven Days Ritual serves as an amalgam of the rituals based on those texts. The Diamond Mandala represents the state-protecting ritual, the painting of the Peacock King represents the Peacock King ritual, and the five great mantra kings represent the benevolent kings ritual. The state-protecting ritual also includes the consecration of the emperor as a *cakravartin* king (for a more detailed discussion of the

<sup>9</sup> According to an annotation on the *Kakuzenshō* diagram, the painting of the Peacock King was destroyed in the fire of 1177 and never replaced.

content and meaning of the Latter Seven Days Ritual, see Mack 2008, 85–89).

The images used in this ritual are major monuments of Heian-period painting, now designated as national treasures. The paintings of the twelve *deva* kings from the Saidaiji may have been commissioned for the first Latter Seven Days Ritual in 835 (Ariga 1995, 223–25, fig. 301). The ninth-century paintings of the Womb and Diamond Mandalas from the Tōji Saiin were borrowed for use in the latter seven days ritual in 1177, when the former Shingon in paintings were destroyed in a fire (Ariga 1983, 85–86). This later set of images of the twelve *deva* kings and the five mantra kings commissioned for use in the latter seven days ritual are generally accepted as dating to 1127, with the possible exception of the paintings of Brahma (Bonten, 梵天) and the wind god Vāyu (Fūten, 風天), which possibly date from 1040 (for more on the issues of dating these latter paintings, see Sakuma 1986).

Kūkai worked in tandem with the temples of Nara and likewise promoted Shingon Buddhism as serving the state, but by the mid-Heian period the nobility had acquired greater power and wealth than the state. In this situation, however, the Tendai school of esoteric Buddhism was at first more successful at soliciting the patronage of the nobility.

The Tendai priest Sōō 相応 (831–918) was paramount in this initial development. Sōō was ordained as a Tendai priest in 856 to perform Buddhist practices and acquire merit for the personal well being of Major Counselor Fujiwara no Yoshimi 藤原良相 (813–867), and he received a character from Yoshimi's personal name for his ordained name (*Konryū Kashō den*, GR 5: 545a). Afterward, Sōō was repeatedly asked to perform rituals for the benefit of the nobility, the most famous of which included ministrations for Yoshimi's daughter Lady Nishi Sanjō in 858 and 861, Yoshifusa's daughter First Lady Somedono Akirakeiko in 865, Vinaya Master Genshō in 903, and Emperor Daigo in 903 (*Konryū Kashō den*, GR 5: 545b, 546b, 548a, 550b, 550a).<sup>10</sup>

Sōō is quite famous for his practices in regard to Acalanātha. During his ascetic practices in the Mt. Hiei area incumbent upon Tendai ordinands, he had a vision of Acalanātha, who appeared to him in

<sup>10</sup> These stories are also charmingly recounted in a number of legends (of somewhat dubious accuracy). See *Katsuragawa engi* ZGR (1957–1959) 28 上: 119–120; *Uji shūi monogatari* (SNKBT 42: 386–88) and Mills 1970, 429; *Kojidan* (KT 18:56–57); *Fusō ryakki* (KT 12:174).

the guise of a floating *katsura* tree (*Konryū Kashō den*, GR 5: 546a; *Katsuragawa engi*, ZGR 28 上: 119–20). Sōō later carved the *katsura* log into three rough-hewn sculptures of Acalanātha, and had Ninsan 仁算 (n.d.) make at least one of them into a finished sculpture (*Konryū Kashō den*, GR 5: 547–548).<sup>11</sup> Based on an injunction found in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, ordinands at the time were expected to be able to make Buddhist images, whether simple sketches or rough-hewn sculptures. This practice is the origin of what later came to be called *natabori* 鉦彫 sculpture (Sawa 1964, 116–19). Sōō’s three sculptures were installed at the Mudōji 無動寺 on Mt. Hiei, the Sokushō Myōōin 息障明王院 at Katsuragawa, and the Isakiji 伊崎寺 on the far side of Lake Biwa, but none is extant (Murayama Shūichi 1994, 81; Kageyama 2000, 244).

With the increasing popularity of esoteric rituals among the nobility, whether for favorable rebirth or for worldly concerns such as sickness and childbirth, specialized halls dedicated to esoteric images became common at temples sponsored by the nobility (for a discussion of esoteric imagery related to favorable rebirth, see Mack 2006b, 297–317; for that associated with worldly concerns, see Mack 2006a, 151–271). Esoteric halls were built at the Fujiwara clan temple Hosshōji 法性寺 in 1006 and Michinaga’s Hōjōji 法成寺 in 1022 (*IBJ*, s.v. “Hōjōji”). The Acalanātha sculpture originally installed in the Godaidō 五大堂 hall devoted to the five mantra kings at the Hosshōji is believed to be the work of Kōshō 康尚 (n.d.), father of the famous sculptor Jōchō 定朝 (d. 1057); the figure is now at the Tōfukuji Dōjuin (*IBJ*, s.v. “Hosshōji”; *Asabashō*, BZ 39: 93; *GMZ* fig. 36).

The Fujiwara temple Byōdōin 平等院, now more famous for its replication of Amitābha’s Pure Land, originally also had a hall for the mantra kings built in 1066, a hall for Acalanātha in 1072, and a hall for fire offerings (*gomadō*, 護摩堂) in 1074 (*IBJ*, s.v. “Byōdōin”; *Kokuhō Byōdōin ten*, exhibition catalogue 174). This trend continued with the rise in power of the retired emperors, and esoteric halls were established at temples of imperial patronage, including Emperor Shirakawa’s Hosshōji 法勝寺 (*IBJ*, s.v. “Hosshōji”; *MJ* 399–400; *KD* 12: 760–61); Emperor Gosanjō’s Enshūji 円宗寺 (*KD* 2: 401; de Visser 1935, 481–82); Emperor Toba’s Anrakujin 安樂寿院 at the Tobadono

<sup>11</sup> Ninsan was a descendent of the Southern House of the Fujiwara. It is unclear whether he was a secular artisan (*eshi* 絵師) or a Buddhist sculptor (*busshi* 仏師).

Imperial Villa (*MJ* 18; Fukuyama 1976, 86–92); and Emperor Goshirakawa's Hōjūji 法住寺 (*KD* 12: 586; Fukuyama 1976, 92).

A number of extant Heian-period esoteric paintings not otherwise addressed in this essay should be mentioned at least in passing, although this is not a comprehensive list. The Yellow Fudō (Acalanātha) painting at Onjōji has long been accepted as a work produced during the lifetime of Enchin 円珍 (814–891), and recent scholarship suggests that it was commissioned by him for the *denpō kanjō* 伝法灌頂 ordination of two of his disciples in 891 (Ajima 1994, 143–44). The set of five paintings of the five mantra kings from Kiburūji 来振寺 are dated by inscription to 1088–1090 (*GMZ*, fig. 11). The Blue Fudō is an important example of Fujiwara-period (951–1086) painting style, with the garment designs depicted in colored line rather than in ink or cut gold leaf (*kirikane* 截金).

The Tōji *Shiki Mandara* 敷曼荼羅 is dated to 1112. There are three paintings extant from an original set of five great powerful bodhisattvas, originally from Tōji but now housed at the Yūshihachimankō Jūhachikain on Mt. Kōya (see color plate 10). These images are based on the older proto-esoteric version of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* despite being depicted in wrathful form (Ishida Hishatoyo 1969, 68; Nakano Genzō 1981 313; Nakano Genzō in *GMZ* 22). The Boston Museum of Fine Arts' Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara and the Ākāśagarbha and Peacock King from the Tokyo National Museum are all twelfth-century Heian-period paintings (Ariga 1995, 241; 1983, 63–65).

#### *Kamakura Period (1185–1333) and Later*

The influence of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* continued into the Kamakura period and afterward through the Benevolent Kings Mandala. As discussed above, the earliest renditions of the *mandara* were introduced by Kūkai for the protection of the realm. The rendition of this *mandara* as a single painting developed during the tenth or eleventh century by different lineages of the Shingon school, primarily for rituals for the secular elite (see *Asabashō* in *BZ* 37: 302; *Kakuzenshō* in *BZ* 46: 189, 207–208, 235), but the extant images are predominately works of the Kamakura period. This *mandara* has three courts with Acalanātha in the center, the other four mantra kings in the second court, and eight *deva* kings and eight bodhisattvas in the outer court (figure 5).



Figure 5. Iconographic drawing of the Benevolent Kings Mandala. Copy after Kakuzen (1143–ca. 1219). (*TZ* 4, iconographical drawing no. 85).



Color plate 10. Kongōku, Central Deity of the Five Great Powerful Bodhisattvas. One of three extant paintings from an original set of five. Tenth to twelfth century. Yūshihachimankō Jūhachikain, Mt. Koya.

There are two main variations of the Benevolent Kings Mandala in painted form (see *Kakuzenshō* in *BZ* 46: 204 and 216). One has the east at the top for the increasing-prosperity ritual (*sōyaku hō*, 增益法) (Daigoji version) and the other has north at the top for use in the averting-calamity ritual (*sokusai hō*, 息災法) (Jōdoji, Hiroshima version) (*FMZ* 31–32, figs. 42 and 43; Hayashi On 2002, fig. 50).

Other *mandara* paintings with images of Acalanātha include the *Sonshō Mandara* 尊勝曼荼羅 and the Maitreya Mandala 弥勒曼荼羅. The *Sonshō Mandara* has a circle of nine deities, in the center of which is Mahāvairocana surrounded by the eight other buddhas manifesting the *uṣṇīṣa* wisdom of the Buddha. Below, Trailokya (Gōzanze, 降三世) is typically placed to the right in a half-moon, and Acalanātha is in a triangle to the left. There are a large number of extant works, one of which is the Kamakura-period painting from Jingoji. There is also a sculptural rendition of this *mandara* at the Kongōji in Osaka, with a Fujiwara-period sculpture of Mahāvairocana flanked by fourteenth-century sculptures of Acalanātha and Trailokya. The Maitreya Mandala has Maitreya in the center surrounded by eight bodhisattvas; below Trailokya is in a half-moon to the right and Acalanātha is in a triangle to the left. A rare example is the Kamakura-period painting from Daigoji (*FMZ* 40–43).

There are as well a number of other *mandaras* dedicated to other deities, such as the *Aizen Mandara* 愛染曼荼羅 from the Zuishin'in temple, the *Taigensui Mandara* 天元師曼荼羅 from Daigoji, and the Seven Star Mandala 七星如意輪曼荼羅 with a central image of Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara from the Gumyōji in Kanagawa, among many others. The *Taigensui Mandara* was introduced to Japan by Jōkyō 常暁 (d. 866) in 840 and was used in a ritual held at the imperial palace simultaneously with the Latter Seven Days Ritual from 851 (Hayashi On 2002, 69). While the majority of these *mandaras* may have originated in the Heian period, the extant images are primarily from the Kamakura period or later, implying an increase in production at this time.

*Mandara*, a transliteration of the Sanskrit term *maṇḍala*, does not carry exactly the same meaning as the Sanskrit in Japan. The term was likely introduced by Kūkai, and by the tenth century it could refer to any painting depicting multiple deities, but establishing when this term was extended to include paintings of Shintō deities and shrine compounds is problematic (Hamada Takashi 1980, 77). A good example of the use of the term *mandara* to refer to an exoteric



painting with multiple deities is the *Taima Mandara*, which is actually an illustration of the *Visualization Sūtra* (*Kanmuryōju kyō*, 觀無量壽經, T. 365), properly called a *Kangyō hensōzu* 觀經变相図 in Japanese. The original from Taimadera is an eighth-century tapestry; it is generally thought that the technology of the weave used for this tapestry was not yet available in Japan, and the work is likely a Chinese import. Amitābha's Pure Land is depicted in the center with the story of Vaidehī in a column to the left, the thirteen visualizations in a column to the right, and the nine stages of rebirth in a register at the bottom. The replication of this image became popular in the Kamakura period after Hōnen 法然 (1133–1212), founder of the Pure Land sect in Japan, rediscovered it.

Early prototypes in Japan of buddhas manifesting alternate deities include the Rocana bronze sculpture at Tōdaiji with manifestations of multiple images of Śākyamuni on the petals, and the sculptures at Tōji where the buddhas have alternate identities as mantra kings and bodhisattvas according to the “three *cakra* body” (*sanrinshin*, 三輪身) concept propounded in the commentaries of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* and the *Diamond Peak Sūtra*. The earliest extant paintings of Shintō deities depicted in their Buddhist manifestations appeared in the Kamakura period. One of the earliest is the *Kasuga Mandara* dated to 1300 by Kanshun 觀舜 (n.d.) at the Yuki Museum in Osaka. Above a landscape painting of the shrine grounds, five Buddhist deities are depicted in roundels representing the five Shintō deities of the Kasuga shrine. Another type of *Kasuga Mandara* has the Buddhist deities depicted in a roundel above the image of the sacred deer of Kasuga, such as the Kamakura-period Kasuga Deer Mandala at the Nara National Museum.

Through the worship of itinerant ascetics, the Ōmine mountains came to be associated with the Two-Realm Mandala, the Kumano area with the Womb Mandala, and the Kinpu mountain with the Diamond Mandala. One type of *Kumano Mandara* depicts the eight main deities of Kumano in their Buddhist manifestations within the eight-petal lotus of the Womb Mandala. The three main avatars (*gon-gen* 権現) of Kumano are depicted, with Amitābha in the center, Bhaiṣajyaguru to the right, and the thousand-arm Avalokiteśvara to the left, supplemented with Śākyamuni above representing the Kanjō Jūgoshō shrine. Between these figures are depicted the five subsidiary shrine deities as Cintāmaṇicakra-Avalokiteśvara (Nyoirin Kannon 如意輪觀音), Kṣitigarbha (Jizō 地藏), the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara

(Jūichimen Kannon 十一面觀音), Nāgārājuna (Ryūju 龍樹), and Āryāvālokiteśvara (Shōkannon 聖觀音). Above and below the central lotus are various other esoteric deities associated with the region such as Rāgarāja (Aizen, 愛染) and Zaō. The Kamakura-period painting from Kōzanji is generally considered the most outstanding example of this *mandara*. Another type of *Kumano Mandara*, similar to the *Kasuga Mandara* of 1300, has the Shintō deities of the three main shrines in Buddhist form arranged in a row above each of the shrine compounds depicted against a landscape background, as seen in the Kamakura-period *Kumano Mandara* in the Cleveland Museum of Art collection.

There are also a number of esoteric sculptures extant from the Kamakura period, such as the Acalanātha Triad by Unkei 運慶 (1151–1223) from 1186 installed in the Ganjōjuin in Kamakura, along with the central sculpture of Amitābha flanked on the opposite side by a standing figure of Vaiśravaṇa (Bishamonten, 毘沙門天). This image was made in supplication for Minamoto no Yoritomo's success in defeating the Ōshu Fujiwara (*Azuma kagami*, section 1189/6/6; Kuno 2001, 15, 17–18, 20). At the Daigoji there is a seated figure of Acalanātha by Kaikei 快慶 (active 1183–1236) dated to 1203. This famous duo of artists, known for their powerful sculptures of the two guardian figures at Tōdaiji, created many other important sculptures of the Kamakura period.

Esoteric images continued to be made along similar lines into the Edo period and have had a lasting effect even to today. The priest Tenkai 天海 (1536–1643) established the five colored-eye sculptures of Acalanātha in Edo (present Tokyo) during the time of the third shōgun Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–1651) at five different temples to protect the five quadrants of the city. Two of the Tokyo Yamanote-line train stations, Mejiro 目白 and Meguro 目黒, are named after the white-eyed Acalanātha at Jigenji 慈眼寺 and the black-eyed Acalanātha at Ryūsenji 瀧泉寺, respectively; the latter is designated a National Treasure. Thus such images remain part of contemporary Japanese culture.

## 78. ZEN AND ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

William M. Bodiford

### *Introduction*

Zen and esoteric Buddhism can be seen either as two complementary expressions of a single underlying Buddhism, or as two fundamentally separate entities that have overlapped due to historical and social proximity. The traditional Zen myth of an ancestral lineage, whose members transmit the entirety of the buddha-mind (*bushin* 佛心), can imply either view.

Traditional accounts of Zen history assert that the orthodox Buddhist lineage was brought from India to China by Bodhidharma in the fifth century and then successfully transplanted to Japan several times beginning in the late twelfth century. The Zen that subsequently developed in Japan drew inspiration from the Chinese Buddhist monasticism of the Song dynasty (960–1279), not only its material culture and institutional practices but especially its literature, myths, and doctrines (see Foulk 1993; Schlütter 2008). Insofar as the Chinese government designated the major Buddhist monasteries as Zen 禪 (Chan) institutions and the “pure rules” (*shingi* 清規; *qinggui*) governing life at these institutions to constitute a major genre of Zen literature, the Buddhism transmitted by the Zen ancestors must embrace all the diverse practices of Chinese Buddhist monasticism, including its many *dhāraṇī* (esoteric spells or formulae) and rituals.<sup>1</sup> Yet because the members of the Zen lineage claim to transmit only the buddha-mind, they are free to eschew any characteristics deemed external to that mind, whether texts, practices, or dogma.

Japanese scholars commonly refer to the inclusive view of Zen as “mixed Zen” (*kenshū zen* 兼修禪, i.e., Zen mixed with other forms of Buddhism) or “esoteric Zen” (*mikkyō zen* 密教禪) and the exclusive

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<sup>1</sup> Many *dhāraṇī* are known by a variety of alternative names, and their precise formats can vary depending on region, Zen lineage, or ritual context. In this essay I try to use the most common generic names and provide the *Taishō* serial numbers of scriptures where canonical versions of the same spells can be found. These numbers are for purposes of identification only. The actual textual sources and histories of the ones used in Zen are more complex than can be discussed here.

version as “pure Zen” (*junsui zen* 純粹禪; see Takeuchi 1976, 121, 144, 181). Such distinctions, however, usually reflect modern analytical categories more than historical evidence. When similar vocabulary appears in the historical record, it is rarely purely descriptive but almost always serves polemical or sectarian agendas. Keizan Jōkin 瑩山紹瑾 (1264–1325), for example, is in current scholarship widely credited with introducing esoteric Zen into the Japanese Sōtō Zen lineage. Keizan’s Sōjiji 總持寺, today the most powerful Zen temple in the Sōtō order, began as a Shingon chapel for esoteric rituals (Bodiford 1993, 97). At the same time, Keizan criticized the rival Rinzaï Zen lineage of Eisai on the grounds that Eisai’s Zen was not pure but combined the three doctrines of exoteric, esoteric, and [buddha-]mind (*jun’itsu narazu, ken-mitsu-shin no sanshū o oku* 純一ならず、顯密心の三宗をおく).<sup>2</sup> In short, Keizan’s actions seem accepting of esoteric Zen, while his words agree with the views of the modern Zen apologist D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966), who stated that Zen stands apart from the esoteric Buddhist elements it harbors.<sup>3</sup>

Rather than describing the relationship between Zen and esoteric Buddhism (a description that necessarily renders religious judgments outside the realm of objective scholarship), this essay surveys a few historical examples to illustrate the many ways that Zen and esoteric Buddhism have and continue to overlap in Japan. This survey begins with esoteric aspects of the Zen tradition inherited from China and the roles they play in Japan. Next it examines the influence of Japanese esoteric Buddhist traditions within Zen, and concludes with a brief overview of secret initiations in Zen.

### *Esoteric Aspects of Zen*

*Dhāraṇī* play a prominent role in the daily services of Zen temples across East Asia, including China, Korea, and especially Japan.<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>2</sup> Keizan’s assertion appears in his biography of Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253) in the *Denkōroku* 傳光錄. For a transcription of the manuscript version of this text, see Azuma 1970, 110. The idea that Buddhism consists of the three categories of exoteric, esoteric, and mind seems to have originated with Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001) in his *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (fascicle 3; T. 2061.50:719c).

<sup>3</sup> Suzuki discusses what he calls “the Shingon elements of Chinese Zen” in his *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (1960, 21) and “the Chinese Shingon element” in *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk* (1965, 80).

<sup>4</sup> Regarding Korea, especially note Buswell 1992, 229–42, “Principal Chants Used in Korean Monasteries.” More than forty percent of these chants (fourteen out of a total

liturgical manuals of daily rituals for laypeople (*shinto nikka* 信徒日課) published by Japanese Zen temples typically include *dhāraṇī* for averting calamities (*shōsai shinju* 消災神呪; T. 963), invoking great compassion (*daihi shinju* 大悲神呪; T. 1060–1061), and invoking the power of the Victorious Uṣṇīṣa (*Butchō Sonshō darani* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼; T. 873), as well as the *dhāraṇī* of tutelary deities such as the bodhisattvas Cundī (*Juntei darani* 準提陀羅尼; T. 1078) or the eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara (*jūichi men Kanzeon shinju* 十一面觀世音神呪).<sup>5</sup> Laypeople are instructed to chant each of these *dhāraṇī* at least once a day. Temple priests chant them at almost every ceremony, including the morning, midday, and evening services (*chikujitsu sanji* 逐日三時).

Temple services include many other *dhāraṇī* for specialized purposes. The *Sho ekō shingi shiki* 諸回向清規式 (Dedicatory Scripts for Zen Procedures; T. 2578), a guide to Zen rituals compiled around 1566 by a Japanese Zen cleric, Tenrin Fūin 天倫楓隱 (n.d.), mentions all of the above plus *dhāraṇī* for radiant light (*kōmyō shingon* 光明真言; T. 1002), summoning rain (*shō'u darani* 請雨陀羅尼; T. 864A), averting storms (*jo raisai shu* 除雷災呪; T. 1027), averting theft (*zokunan shōjo shu* 賊難消除呪; T. 1405), deliverance to the Pure Land (*ōjō jōdo shu* 往生淨土呪; T. 930). It also contains *dhāraṇī* for invoking the aid of the deities such as the Ox-Headed King (*Gozu Tennō shingon* 牛頭天王真言), Mahākāla (*Daikoku Tenjin shingon* 大黑天神真言), Vaiśravaṇa (*Bishamon shingon* 毘沙門真言), King Yama (*Enma ō shu*

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thirty-two) consist of *dhāraṇī*. Buswell translates their names as mantra of shattering hell (230); sublime mantra of the original mind of Amitābha Buddha, shattering hell mantra, mantra of incense offering (231); mantra that purifies speech, mantra that consoles all Buddhist and non-Buddhist spirits of the five directions, mantra for opening the treasure-store of the Dharma (236); the vast, consummate, unimpeded, great compassion, great *dhāraṇī* of the thousand-handed, thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva invocation (237–38), the great *dhāraṇī* of spiritually sublime phrases (238–39); repentance mantra (240); mantra for purifying the Dharma realm, mantra for protecting the body, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva's King of Great Knowledge mantra consisting of six syllables that reveal the original mind, and Cundī Bodhisattva's mantra (241).

<sup>5</sup> The *Showa teiho Sōtōshū nikka kyō daizen* 昭和訂補曹洞宗日課經大全 published by Eiheiji Temple (Fukui prefecture) in the 1930s contains all of these. The *dhāraṇī* of the eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara (under the name *Zuigan sokutoku darani* 隨願即得陀羅尼) appears because that bodhisattva is a protector of the temple. The source for this *dhāraṇī* is not contained in any of the standard Buddhist canons, but a longer version of it is found in the *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經, fascicle 4 (T. 901.18:813c). Also see the *Rinzai zenshū shokyō yōshū* 臨濟禪宗諸經要集, 1935.

閻魔王呪), and the radiant kings (*myōō* 明王) of immovability (*Fudō shingon* 不動真言) and lust (*Aizen daishu* 愛染大呪), among others.

The *Śūraṅgama* spell (*Ryōgon shu* 楞嚴呪; T. 944A) stands out as the *dhāraṇī* most often associated with Zen training.<sup>6</sup> Every day at noon during the summer training retreat (mid-May to mid-August), Zen monasteries conduct a *Śūraṅgama* assembly (*Ryōgon e* 楞嚴會) during which this *dhāraṇī* is chanted repeatedly. The Chinese Zen patriarch Zhenxie Qingliao 眞歇清了 (Shinketsu Seiryō, 1088–1151) supposedly initiated this custom after the monks at his monastery complained of pain in their legs caused by long periods of sitting Zen (*zazen* 坐禪) meditation. He taught his students that the *Śūraṅgama-dhāraṇī* would ease their pain, increase the vigor of their meditation, and enable them to attain buddha awakening. He also composed the “Universal Dedication” (*Fu ekō* 普回向) that is recited after the *dhāraṇī*. This dedication directs the merit of the *dhāraṇī* to ease the suffering of all humans and gods who protect Buddhism, ensure political tranquility, bring seasonable weather, make immediate progress toward the ultimate goals, and attain perfect wisdom.<sup>7</sup>

Aside from the noontime *Śūraṅgama* assembly, this *dhāraṇī* also is chanted at every important monastic ceremony throughout the year. According to the *Sho ekō shingi shiki* of 1556, it is chanted during memorial services for ancestors and teachers (628b, 628c); anniversaries of the Buddha’s birth, awakening, and nirvana (631a–b); the

<sup>6</sup> The Sanskrit name for this *dhāraṇī* probably should be reconstructed as *Sītātapatra-uṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī* (*Xidaduobo daluo tuoluoni* 悉但多鉢怛囉陀羅尼), which is the name used in the title of the translation attributed to Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空; 705–774): *Da foding rulai fanguang xidaduobo daluo tuoluoni* 大佛頂如來放光悉但多鉢怛囉陀羅尼 (1 fascicle; T. 944A). It is known as “*Śūraṅgama*” because it subsequently became embedded in another scripture titled the *Śūraṅgama sūtra* (*Lengyan jing* 楞嚴經; 10 fascicles; T. 945), an apocryphal work likely composed in China (see Luk, trans. 1966). This scripture and its descriptions of the powers of the heroic concentration (*Śūraṅgama samādhi*) remain extremely influential among Zen practitioners. Because of the similar title, it is frequently confused with the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi sūtra* (*Lengyan sanmei jing* 楞嚴三昧經; 2 fascicles; T. 642) translated by Kumārajīva (*Jiumoluoshi* 鳩摩羅什, 350–409?); see Lamotte 1998.

<sup>7</sup> This account is pieced together from information about Zhenxie Qingliao and his universal dedication in the following collections of pure rules, listed in chronological order. The texts are *Conglin jiaoding qinggui zongyao* 叢林校定清規總要 (1274), fascicle 2 (ZZ. 1905–1912, 2:17.18c–d); the *Chanlin beiyong qinggui* 禪林備用清規 (1311), fascicle 3 (ZZ. 2: 17.38d); the *Luyuan shigui* 律苑事規 (1324), fascicle 10 (ZZ. 2: 11.47c–d); the *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* 敕修百丈清規 (1338), fascicle 7 (T. 2025.48:1151c); and the *Sho ekō shingi shiki* 諸回向清規式 (1556), fascicle 1 (T. 2578.81:631b, 631c).

Ghost Festival (632b); memorial services for patrons (635c); vegetarian feasts (635c); and worship ceremonies performed periodically before each deity enshrined within the monastery (635c, 644–645). It is also chanted to cure illness (641b), for safe childbirth (642a), to empower icons (636c), to bestow a posthumous ordination name (636c), to install a memorial tablet in the ancestral hall (636c), to begin construction projects (643b), and so on. On these occasions it usually accompanies other *dhāraṇī* such as the one for invoking great compassion.

The more important the ceremony, the more *dhāraṇī* there are to chant, and they will be repeated a greater number of times. In this way *dhāraṇī* are woven into all aspects of Zen practice. The *Sho ekō shingi shiki* reinforces the impression of the close connection between Zen practice and *dhāraṇī* when it notes, regarding one type of funerary ritual, that morning and evening rites are the same except that morning ones are “sitting Zen and *dhāraṇī* while evenings are *dhāraṇī* and sitting Zen” (*akatsuki zazen darani, yū darani zazen nari* 曉坐禪陀羅尼夕陀羅尼坐禪也; fascicle 4; T. 2578.81:664b). Table 1 lists the number of times specific *dhāraṇī* are mentioned in a representative sample of pure rules from China and Japan.

The *dhāraṇī* mentioned above represent the final stage of East Asian esoteric Buddhism. Instead of the so-called mnemonic (*giji* 義持) kinds of *dhāraṇī* found throughout Mahāyāna scriptures, they belong to the genre of fully developed esoteric scriptures, which are accompanied by powerful deities, ritual gestures, hand signs (*mudrā*), circular altars (mandala), and visualizations.<sup>8</sup> These spells are precisely those that are widely deemed to be the most efficacious for invoking spiritual resonance (*kannō* 感應; *ganying*) and attaining blessings. Regardless of how one defines esoteric Buddhism, these kinds of *dhāraṇī* must constitute one of its main currents. The use of these *dhāraṇī* within Zen can result in contradictory social dynamics, in which Zen can be seen either as included within Japan’s esoteric Buddhist tradition or as an outside rival to it.

Zen initially succeeded as an independent school of Buddhism in Japan largely because its leaders offered patrons a unique combination of strict meditation, ritual expertise, and thaumaturgy. Stories describing

<sup>8</sup> Here I am referring to the esoteric scriptures translated during the seventh and eighth centuries by people such as Śubhākarasimha (Shanwuwei 善無畏; 637–735), Yixing (一行; 683–727), Vajrabodhi (Jin’gangzhi 金剛智; 671–741), and Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空; 705–774).

Table 1. Pure Rules and the Number of Times They Mention Specific *Dhāraṇī*.

Title	Chinese					Japanese				
	Jiaoding 1274	Beiyong 1311	Huanzhu 1317	Baijiang 1338	Keizan 1350s	Sho ekō 1556	Ōbaku 1672	Shōsōrin 1684		
fascicles	2	10	1	8	2	5	1	3		
<i>Zokuzō</i> pages	28	48	21	—	—	—	—	—		
<i>Taishō</i> pages	—	—	—	52	29	64	20	36		
Great compassion	9	14	13	20	20	17	10	68		
Śūraṅgama	10	11	30	23	27	53	9	60		
Averting calamities	—	—	1	1	10	22	—	23		
Victorious Uṣṇīṣa	—	—	—	2	—	1	—	—		
Pure Land	—	2	—	2	—	2	6	4		

Notes. The *dhāraṇī* are: great compassion (*daili shinju* 大悲神呪; T. 1060–1061); Śūraṅgama (*Ryōgon shu* 楞嚴呪; T. 944A); averting calamities (*shōsai shinju* 消災神呪; T. 963); Victorious Uṣṇīṣa (*Butchō Sonshō darani* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼; T. 873), and Pure Land (*ōjō jōdo shu* 往生淨土呪; T. 930). The full names of the “pure rules” are: *Conglin jiaoding qinggui zongyao* 叢林校定清規總要 (ZZ, 2: 17); *Chanlin beiyong qinggui* 禪林備用清規 (ZZ, 1905–1912, 2: 17); *Huanzhu an qinggui* 幻住庵清規 (ZZ, 1905–1912, 2: 16); *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* 敝修百丈清規 (T. 2025); *Keizan oshō shingui* 靈山和高清規 (T. 2589); *Sho ekō shingui shiki* 諸回向清規式 (T. 2578); *Ōbaku shingui* 黃檗清規 (T. 2607); and *Shosorm ryaku shingui* 小叢林略清規 (T. 2579). For more information on this genre, see Foulk 2004.



the founding of new Zen temples frequently depict Zen teachers as being greater spiritual adepts than the practitioners of Japan's established esoteric Buddhism (Bodiford 1993, 111–121, 173–179). *Dhāraṇī* played an indispensable role in this success, as indicated by the Japanese Zen teacher Enni 圓爾 (Ben'en 辨圓; 1202–1280), who chastised rival Buddhists with these words: “Monks in Japan meditate too little and their ceremonies lack *dhāraṇī*. How dare they consume the alms of the faithful?”<sup>9</sup> Leaders of Japan's esoteric Buddhist schools were equally harsh in their criticism of the Zen approach to *dhāraṇī*. The Shingon teacher Shuzen Kakumu 修善覺夢 (1306–1362), for example, wrote:

These Zen people only learn the two or three *dhāraṇī* such as the *Sūraṅgama* spell and great compassion spell. They cannot fulfill all types of prayers. Moreover, aside from the words they make no use of the secret dharma rituals.... And what about the pronunciation that contemporary Zen monks use for these spells? It is the dialect of Song-dynasty China, not the correct pronunciation of India.<sup>10</sup>

While *dhāraṇī* in some ways place Zen in opposition to Japan's other traditions of esoteric Buddhism, they also can serve as a gateway that promotes cooperation with them.

#### *Esoteric Rituals within Zen*

Many Japanese Buddhists regard rituals for attaining worldly benefits one of the key identifying features of esoteric Buddhism. Using this criterion, one could say that Japanese Zen has become one type of esoteric Buddhism. But this would be wrong. While it is true that many Zen temples function as centers for prayer rituals (Williams 2005, 59–60) and proffer services and talismans that appear indistinguishable from those of Tendai and Shingon temples, upon closer examination rarely can one find cases of Zen prayer rituals that directly borrow elements from Tendai or Shingon traditions. Ordinary laypeople do not distinguish prayer rituals in sectarian terms because they largely ignore the internal ritual logic and doctrinal basis of these rituals. They

<sup>9</sup> *Zōdanshū* 雜談集, “Jiri no gyōji” 事理ノ行事, fascicle 9 (Yamada and Miki, ed. 1973, 276). This account also reports that each day Enni chanted the *Sūraṅgama* spell at dawn and the victorious *Uṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī* seven times at noon.

<sup>10</sup> *Kaishinshō* 開心抄, chap. 2, “Kikyō zengo mon” 機教前後門 (T. 2450.77:749c).

just know that Zen temples promise donors the same kinds of worldly benefits as Tendai and Shingon temples.<sup>11</sup>

In some cases esoteric rituals have been imported into Japanese Zen. Eigenji 永源寺 (in Saitama prefecture) offers one remarkable example. Affiliated with the Sôtō Zen school, Eigenji also hosts one of the most popular *homa* (*goma* 護摩) fire invocation rituals in the Kantō region (Payne and Orzech, “Homa,” in this vol.). The *homa* ritual is performed exactly as it would be at a Tendai or Shingon temple, except the celebrants are Zen priests. They present the fire offerings to the Immovable Radiant King (Acalanātha Vidyārāja, Fudō Myōō 不動明王) and chant his *dhāraṇī* (*Fudō Myōō shingon* 不動明王真言). Perhaps the most notable examples of this phenomenon is the ambrosia gate (*kanro mon* 甘露門) ritual performed at every Sôtō Zen temple. “Ambrosia gate” refers to the ritual of feeding hungry ghosts, which plays an indispensable role in Japanese ancestor memorial rites and in the mid-summer Ghost Festival (Urabon 盂蘭盆 or Obon お盆; Ullambana).<sup>12</sup>

Since the early fourteenth century Zen temples in Japan have followed the format of the ambrosia gate ritual described in the *Huan-zhuan qinggui* 幻住庵清規 (ZZ. 1905–1912, 2: 16.503a–506d), a Chinese collection of pure rules compiled in 1317. This text describes a complex ritual program that combines elements from many disparate sources. It begins with the great compassion *dhāraṇī* (repeated three times), followed by two of the key *dhāraṇī* for feeding hungry ghosts: one for sanctifying the food and drink with the unimpeded radiance of innumerable virtues (repeated seven times) and one for bestowing the ambrosia Dharma taste (repeated seventeen times).<sup>13</sup> The remainder of the ceremony lacks coherence, jumping from the five *tathāgatas* who liberate ghosts, to the *dhāraṇī* (repeated three times) of the Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha (who has no obvious relationship to ghosts), to the

<sup>11</sup> Regarding the importance of worldly benefits in Japan and the attitudes of laypeople toward them, see Reader and Tanabe 1998.

<sup>12</sup> For the Chinese background of this festival, see Teiser 1988b. The Buddhist-Hybrid Sanskrit word “*ullambana*” might be a back formation based on a term coined in China (Teiser 1988b, 21–24), but it appears so often in the secondary sources that it seems useful to include it here.

<sup>13</sup> See *Wuliang weide zizai guangming jiachi yinshi tuoluoni* 無量威德自在光明加持飲食陀羅尼 and *Meng ganlufa mi tuoluoni* 蒙甘露法味陀羅尼, in *Shi zhu egui yinshi ji shuifa* 施諸餓鬼飲食及水法 (T. 1315.21:467a).

“Verse for Breaking the Gates of Hell.”<sup>14</sup> These are followed by a repentance script (recited three times) with a repentance *dhāraṇī*, verses, and a *dhāraṇī* for taking refuge in the three jewels, a lecture on the rules of morality for laypeople, and a *dhāraṇī* for arousing the mind of awakening (*bodhicitta*).<sup>15</sup> It concludes with the *Heart Sūtra* and the repentance script with a repentance *dhāraṇī* again.

In 1706 Menzan Zuihō 面山瑞方 (1683–1769) composed a new ritual program for the ambrosia gate ritual, and it is this version of the ritual that is now performed at Sōtō Zen temples. Menzan is a towering figure in Japanese Zen history. His scholarship came to define the standard interpretation of Sōtō Zen doctrine and practice (Riggs 2002; 2005; 2008). Although Menzan was a strong advocate of the superiority of Zen, to reform this ritual he received esoteric initiations under the direction of Ekō Risshi 慧光律師 (n.d.) of Reijunji 靈雲寺 in Edo (Tokyo). Ekō taught the Shin’anryū 新安流 lineage of Shingon Buddhism (Sugimoto 1982b, 1–2). Menzan studied Sanskrit as well as the secret gestures and visualizations used during esoteric ceremonies, and used this knowledge to edit the wording, word-division, and pronunciation of the *dhāraṇī* chanted in Sōtō temples. He also translated them into Japanese and wrote commentaries on them.<sup>16</sup> While no one today would mistake Menzan’s transcriptions of Sanskrit for the “correct pronunciation of India” (to use Shuzen Kakumu’s phrase), he brought Zen *dhāraṇī* into conformity with the best philological knowledge of his time.

<sup>14</sup> For Ākāśagarbha’s *dhāraṇī*, see the *Dari rulai jianyin* 大日如來劍印 (T. 864A.18:197a). The “Verse for Breaking the Gates of Hell” appears in the *Flower Garland Sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經, fascicle 19, chap. 20, “Yemo gongzhong jizan pin” 夜摩宮中偈讚品; T. 279.10:102a–b):

If people wish to know	若人欲了知
All buddhas of the past, present, and future	三世一切佛
They should view the Dharma realm as:	應觀法界性
All is mere mental fabrications.	一切唯心造

The Chinese Chan teacher Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–975) linked this verse to the deceased, when he wrote that chanting this verse breaks open the gates of hell and allows the beings there to escape to the Pure Land (*Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄; fascicle 9; T. 2016.48:461b).

<sup>15</sup> For these *dhāraṇī*, see the *Dari rulai jianyin* 大日如來劍印 (T. 864A.18:197a) for repentance; the *Shou putixin jie yi* 受菩提心戒儀 (T. 915.18:941a) for taking refuge in the three jewels; and the *Yujia jiyao yankou shishi yi* 瑜伽集要焰口施食儀 (T. 1320.21:479b) for arousing *bodhicitta*.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, the *Shōsai kichijō darani kyō jikisetsu* 消災吉祥陀羅尼經直說, reprinted in *Sōtōshū zensho* (Sōtōshū Zensho Kankōkai, ed. 1970–1973, 13: 715–22, no. 4, “Chūkai” 注解).

Menzan's revised ambrosia gate ritual largely follows the format of the *Shi zhu egui yinshi ji shui fa* 施諸餓鬼飲食及水法 (Dharma for Providing Hungry Ghosts with Food, Drink, and Water; T. 1315) attributed to Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705–774).<sup>17</sup> Menzan's version consists of thirteen sections, all but the first two consisting of *dhāraṇī*.<sup>18</sup> Each *dhāraṇī* serves a well-defined purpose: summoning the hungry ghosts, preparing them, soliciting the blessings of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, and delivering the deceased from suffering (Sakauchi 1981, 223–25, 272–73). By adopting these esoteric procedures, Menzan gave Zen temples a coherent ritual for the Ghost Festival, one that focuses from beginning to end on relieving the suffering of the dead, has clear scriptural foundations, and avoids any hint of Pure Land Buddhism (Sugimoto 1982b, 2). Moreover, Menzan's ritual is to be performed with proper hand gestures (*mudrās*) and visualizations, the knowledge of which is attained through secret initiations.

### Secret Initiations in Zen

Japanese Zen teachers usually certify the attainment of their students in a formal ritual known as Dharma transmission (*shihō* 嗣法; Bodiford 1991; 2000; 2007). In many Zen lineages this ritual involves a series of secret initiations in which students gain access to esoteric

<sup>17</sup> For Menzan's ritual, see the *Segaki hō* 施餓鬼法, reprinted in *Zoku Sōtōshū zensho* (Zoku Sōtōshū Zensho Kankōkai, ed. 1974–1977, 2: 509–16, “Shingi” 清規).

<sup>18</sup> It begins with an invitation to the three jewels (*bushō sanbō* 奉請三寶), repeated three times, and a verse to invoke the vow to awaken (*chōshō hotsugan* 招請發願). Its eleven *dhāraṇī* consist of: 1) gathering all hungry ghosts (*fushū gaki shingon* 普集餓鬼真言), repeated seven times; 2) breaking the gates of hells and opening throats (*ha jigoku mon kai inkō darani* 破地獄門開咽喉陀羅尼), repeated seven times; 3) sanctifying the food and drink with the unimpeded radiance of innumerable virtues (*muryō itoku jizai kōmyō kaji onjiki darani* 無量威德自在光明加持飲食陀羅尼), repeated seven times; 4) bestowing the ambrosia dharma taste (*mō kanrobō mi darani* 蒙甘露法味陀羅尼), repeated seven times; 5) universal offering for all hungry ghosts (*fuse issai gaki darani* 普施一切餓鬼陀羅尼), repeated twenty-one times; 6) inviting the five *tathāgatas* by their jeweled names (*go nyorai hōgō chōshō darani* 五如來寶號招請陀羅尼), repeated three times for each *tathāgata* along with their Sanskrit names; 7) arousing the mind of *bodhi* (*hotsu bodai shin darani* 發菩提心陀羅尼), repeated three times; 8) bestowing bodhisattva *samaya* precepts (*ju bosatsu sanmaya kai darani* 授菩薩三昧耶戒陀羅尼), repeated three times; 9) secret fundamental *dhāraṇī* of the great jeweled pavilion of well abiding (*daihō rōkaku zenjū himitsu konpon darani* 大寶樓閣善住秘密根本陀羅尼), repeated three times; 10) consecration *dhāraṇī* for the radiant light of all buddhas true words (*shobutsu kōmyō shingon kanchō darani* 諸佛光明真言灌頂陀羅尼), repeated three times; and 11) bequeathing liberation *dhāraṇī* (*hakken gedatsu darani* 發遺解脫陀羅尼), repeated seven times.

lore and make copies of secret initiation documents (*kirikami*, also *kirigami* 切紙).<sup>19</sup> These initiation documents concern a wide variety of topics: *kōan* training curriculums, Dharma transmission, ordinations, consecrations, funerals, prayer rituals, deities, and ritual implements (Ishikawa 2002, 139). They reveal how Zen teachers constructed religious identities out of Buddhist lore, Zen stories, Japanese folk beliefs, and Chinese cosmological motifs (for examples, see Faure 1991, 191–208).

These kinds of initiation documents are not unique to Zen but also exist in other Japanese religious (e.g., Tendai, Shingon, Nichiren, Shugendō, Shintō) and artistic (e.g., theater, poetry, martial art) traditions. In fact, lineages in some of these traditions convey the same initiation documents or closely related documents, indicating that their teachers studied with one another. Cross-fertilization among initiation lineages represents an important but little-studied feature of premodern Japanese esoteric culture.<sup>20</sup> Records of secret initiations allow us to document the ways the vocabulary and concepts of one tradition acquired new interpretations and applications when placed in the context of another tradition. It is difficult to investigate these cases because initiation documents in most of these traditions remain closely guarded secrets, rarely shared with outsiders or published.

In the case of Sōtō Zen, though, recently many old initiation documents have become available to scholars and other outsiders, primarily through the pioneering investigations of Ishikawa Rikizan 石川力山 (1943–1997). These sources allow us to document concrete examples of the ways that Zen teachings were adapted to martial arts (Bodiford 2005b), and how tantric practices (such as the ritual mixing of bodily

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<sup>19</sup> Regarding these documents, see Ishikawa 2000; 2002 and Bodiford 1993, 155–57; 2000; 2005a, 205–207; 2005b, 79–94. The word *kirikami* is written with Chinese glyphs that literally mean “cut paper.” In general use it has two meanings: 1) “sheets of paper,” especially short documents used to initiate disciples in esoteric lore; and 2) “the craft of cutting out paper dolls.” In this latter sense the term has entered the English language under the variant pronunciation “*kirigami*.” Many Japanese-language dictionaries give the first pronunciation for phrases such as *kirikami denju* 切紙傳授 (transmission of initiation documents) and the second one for phrases such as *kirigami zaiku* 切紙細工 (miniature handicraft of cutting paper). In conversation most Japanese seem to say *kirigami* in both contexts. Although this pronunciation is more familiar to Western readers, I find “*kirikami*” preferable because it avoids confusing historical documents with paper dolls.

<sup>20</sup> For an important methodological consideration of the issues raised by cross-fertilization, see Teeuwen 2006.

fluids) informed Zen rituals (Bodiford 2000). Certain explicitly Shin-gon practices, such as notions of “fetal buddhahood” (Sanford 1997), also appear in old Zen initiation documents. Their existence reminds us that Buddhist teachers in premodern times accessed a shared body of esoteric lore, which transcended modern doctrinal and sectarian distinctions.

The reason why these older documents have become accessible is because contemporary Zen teachers no longer value the secret lore they convey. Menzan Zuihō denounced the initiation documents of his day for conveying unorthodox and false teachings,<sup>21</sup> and the documents he denounced gradually fell into disuse. It has been suggested (Faure 1991, 204–205) that Menzan’s rejection of initiation documents arose out of his desire to demythologize Zen. However, just as with the ambrosia gate ritual mentioned above, he composed new initiation documents to convey his own approach to Zen. Menzan’s new initiation documents remain mostly secret (but see Sugimoto 1982a; 1982b). The available evidence suggests that rather than rejecting mythology, Menzan promoted a more rigorous Zen mythos, one that he could defend as internally self-consistent and as being in agreement with Buddhist scriptures. Although unknown to the public, this mythos and the initiation documents that convey its secrets continue to be the esoteric core of Japanese Zen.

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<sup>21</sup> See the *Denbō shitsunai mitsuji monki* 傳法室内密示聞記 (Transcripts of Private Instructions on Dharma Transmission Ceremonies) and *Tōjō shitsunai danshi kenpi shiki* 洞上室内斷紙揀非私記 (Private Record of Rejected Sōtō Initiation Documents); reprinted in the *Sōtōshū zensho* (Sōtōshū Zensho Kankōkai, ed. 1970–1973, 15: 171–92, 15: 197–218, “Shitsuchū” 室中).

## 79. THE TŌJI LECTURE HALL STATUE MANDALA AND THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF MIKKYŌ

Cynthea J. Bogel

The Lecture Hall (Kōdō 講堂) of Tōji 東寺, a monastery in modern Kyoto, houses a group of twenty-one statues unequalled in age and type among surviving esoteric icons in East Asia (figures 1–2).

Once under the direction of the Japanese esoteric, or *mikkyō* 密教, master Kūkai (774–835), Tōji was the first urban center for his Shin-gon 真言 teachings. The present-day Lecture Hall dates to the late sixteenth century but it closely follows the original plan, with the raised altar located over the original altar.<sup>1</sup>

Six of the original statues were destroyed in a fire in 1486; the replacement statues (figure 3, circles in gray) were modeled after the lost works.

Taken together, the interior space and statues, despite repairs and reconstructions, offer the modern viewer a rare experience of the visual relationships between a building and icon altar as designed and apprehended during the early Heian period (794–1185).

The statues were completed around 839, five years after Kūkai's death, under the direction of his disciple and successor at Tōji, Jichie (実恵, alt. Jitsue; 786–847). Only Kūkai had the esoteric knowledge to design the program of icons, recognized in contemporaneous records as a *karma mandala* (*katsuma mandara* 羯磨曼荼羅) of statues, a three-dimensional representation of the perfect buddha realm described in key *mikkyō* texts and Kūkai's essays. The only surviving sculptural project associated with Kūkai, these impressive statues were likely created by a workshop situated within the Tōji monastery from the 820s.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Lecture Hall was extensively damaged and repaired over the centuries. It burned down in 1486 and was subsequently rebuilt by 1598. The history of Tōji is well documented, especially in the *Tōbōki*, a work in eight scrolls compiled in 1352 by Gōhō (1306–1362); it contains all manner of historical documents relating to Tōji, some spurious. The *Tōbōki* is reproduced in the *Zoku zoku gunsho ruijū* (hereafter ZZGR), Kokusho Kankōkai, ed. 1969–1978; and in Fujita Tsuneyo 1972–1976, vol. 2.

<sup>2</sup> We know little about the Buddhist sculptural workshop that produced the Tōji Lecture Hall statues; it was certainly sponsored by the court. *Heian ibun*, vol. 31,



Figure 1. Altar view from the east, *karma mandala* of twenty-one statues. Lecture Hall, Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), Kyoto. Heian period and later; Statues ca. 839–1834, Lecture Hall, ca. 1598 (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 282, pl. 11.1).

There are three groups of five statues arranged across the altar: Five Wisdom Buddhas 五智如来 in the center (figure 4), Five Great Bodhisattvas (Godaibosatsu 五大菩薩) to the east (figure 5, color

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quoted in Tanaka Tsuguhito 1971, 17. We have as scant evidence a document dated 806 that records the temporary transfer of twelve craftsmen from the Office for Construction at Tōji (Zō-Tōji-shi) to Nara for repairs at Tōdaiji. See Tanaka Tsuguhito 1983, 181. Critical essays for study of the Tōji Lecture Hall altar, in chronological order, are: Minamoto 1930; Ono 1934; Nishikawa 1957a, 1957b; Shigeyasu 1961; Shimizu 1964; Takata 1967; Maruo 1973–1997; Kuno 1974b; Hamada 1978; Matsuura 1983; Yamada and Miyaji 1988; Itō 1992; and Mizuno 1992. See also Akamatsu 1961; Sawa 1969a; and Yamagishi 1985a, especially 128–29.





Figure 2. Altar view from the west, *karma mandala* of twenty-one statues. Lecture Hall, Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), Kyoto. Heian period and later; Statues ca. 839–1834, Lecture Hall, ca. 1598.

pl 11), and Five Great Myōō (Godaimyōō 五大明王, Vidyārājas, figure 6, color pl 12), and, Fudō Myōō 不動明王 (figure 7) to the west side of the altar.

The tallest figures are at the center of each pentad. The central seated Dainichi Buddha figure towers over the whole, creating a mountainlike landscape with a central pinnacle within the vast space.<sup>3</sup> At the four corners are the Four Deva Kings (Shintennō 四天王) of the cardinal directions; such figures were similarly disposed on

<sup>3</sup> The Dainichi is *jōroku* size, which refers to the Japanese measure of sixteen *shaku* (approximately 480 centimeters or 16 feet). One *jō* equals ten *shaku*; *roku* means “six” in Japanese, thus *jōroku* is literally one *jō* and six *shaku*. A seated figure is half that; nonetheless, an eight-foot seated buddha and a sixteen-foot standing buddha are both called *jōroku*.

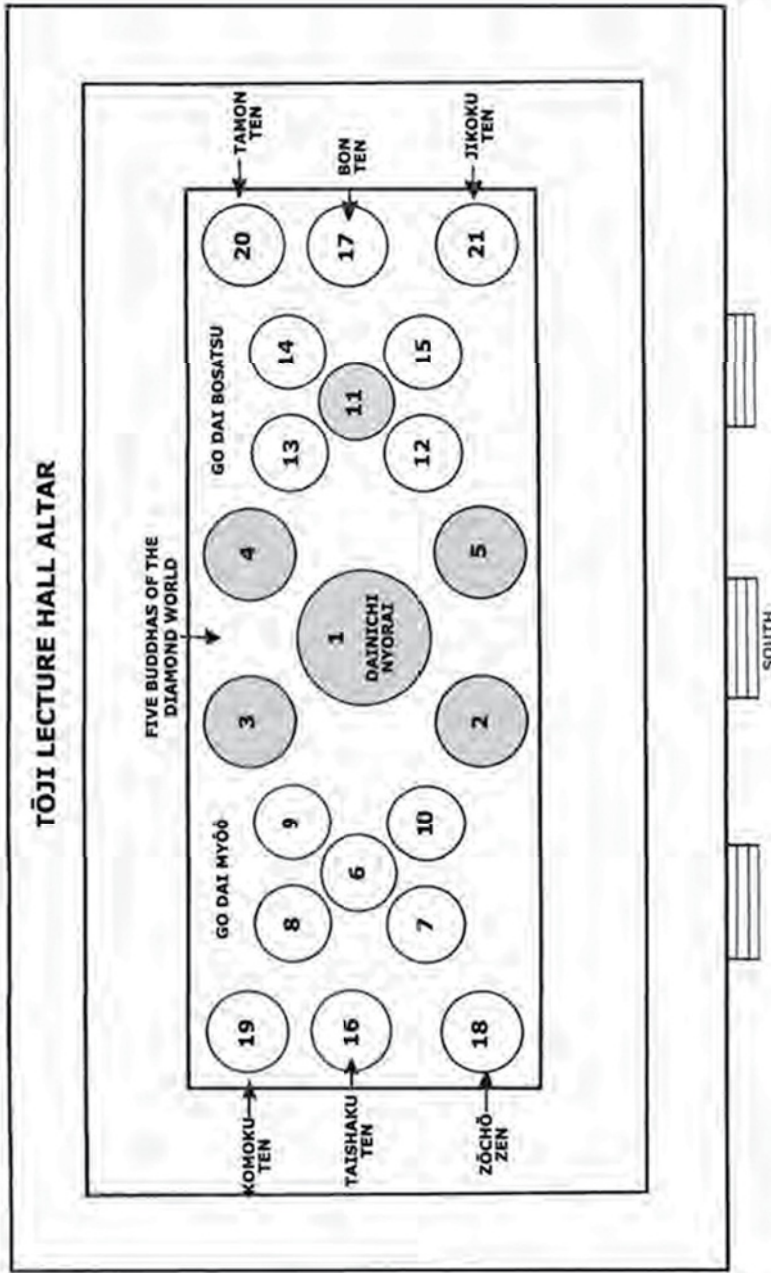


Figure 3. Plan of the *karma mandala*. White circles are ca. 839; gray circles indicate statues made later to replace lost originals. Lecture Hall, Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), Kyoto (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 290, pl. 11.5).



Figure 4. Five Wisdom Buddhas 五智如来 Gochi Nyorai. Lecture Hall, Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), Kyoto. Late sixteenth century except Amida (nineteenth century and earlier parts). Wood (*hinoki*) with lacquer and gold leaf; Dainichi, H 284 cm; Hōshō, H 143.6 cm; Amida, H 138.8 cm; Fukūjōju, H 134.2 cm; Ashuku, H 139.4 cm (Bogel, *Glimpse*, 2009, 283, pl. 11.2).

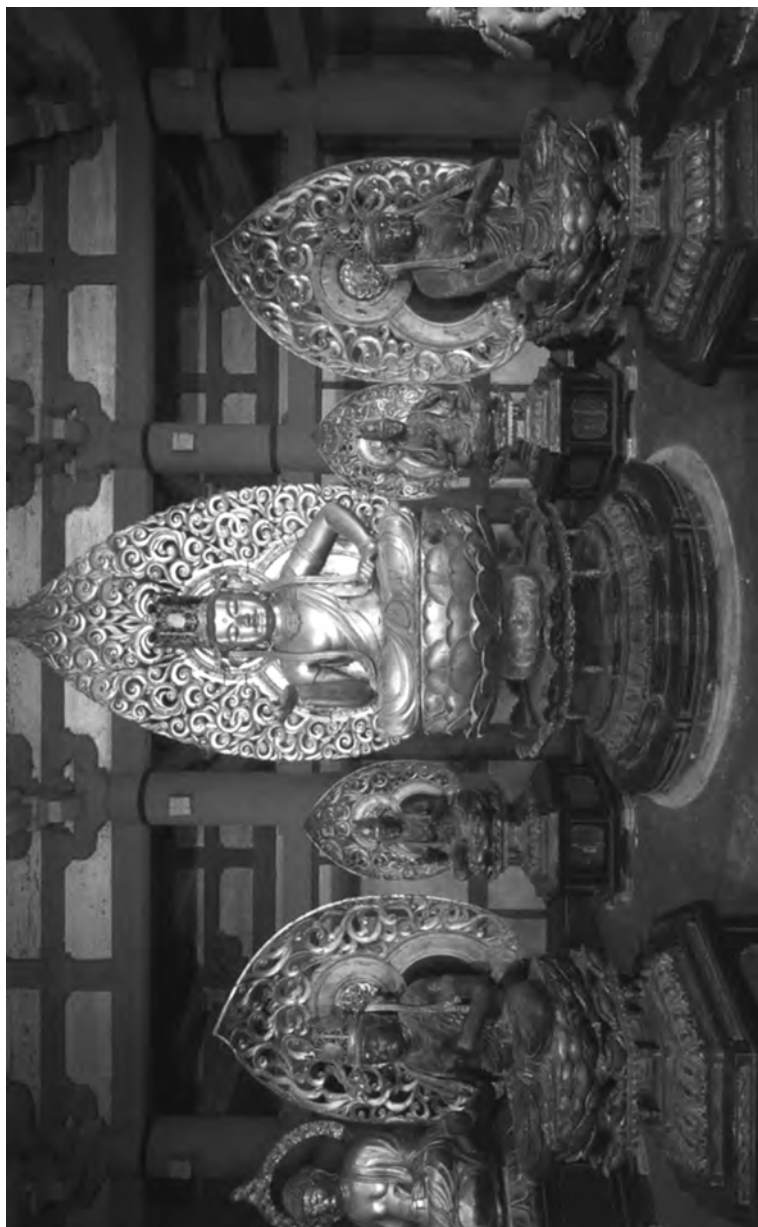


Figure 5. Five Great Bodhisattvas 五大菩薩 Godai Bosatsu. Lecture Hall, Tōji (Kyōgokokuji), Kyoto. Central figure, sixteenth century, Muromachi period, ca. 839. Wood (*hinoki*) with lacquer and gold leaf; central Kongō Haramitsu, H 197.2 cm; Kongōsatta, H 96.4 cm (see color plate 11); Kongōhō-A, H 93.4 cm; Kongōhō-B, H 95.8 cm; Kongōgō, H 94.6 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 283, pl. 11.3).



Figure 6. Five Great Myōō 五大明王. Lecture Hall, Tōji (Kyōgokokuji), Kyoto. Heian period, ca. 839. Wood (*hinoki*) with lacquer and pigments; Fudō (seated), H 175.1 cm; standing figures: Gōzanze, H 178.7 cm; Gundari, H 203.1 cm; Dai'itoku, H 141 cm; Kongō Yasha, H 174.2 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 315, pl. 11.22).



Figure 7. Fudō Myōō 不動明王 (Acalānatha), central statue of Five Great Myōō. Lecture Hall, Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), Kyoto. Heian period, ca. 839. Wood (*hinoki*) with lacquer and pigments, H 175.1 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 284, pl. 11.4).



Color plate 11. Kongōsatta Bosatsu 金剛薩埵菩薩 (Vajrasattva Bodhisattva), one of the Five Great Bodhisattvas 五大菩薩 Godai Bosatsu. Heian period, ca. 839. Wood (*hinoki*) with lacquer and gold leaf. Lecture Hall, Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), Kyoto. H 96.4 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 317, pl. 11.24).



Color plate 12. Dai'itoku Myōō 大威徳明王, one of the Five Great Myōō 五大明王 detail. Lecture Hall, Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), Kyoto. Heian period, ca. 839. Wood (*hinoki*) with lacquer and pigments. H 141 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, frontispiece 1).



Nara-period altars (shown as circles 18–21 in figure 3; Jikokuten 持国天 statue, figure 8).

Additionally, single figures stand at the east and west sides of the altar, Taishakuten and Bonten, respectively (帝釈天, Indra; 梵天, Brahma, figure 9; see figure 3, circles 17 and 16).

On Nara-period altars, these two *devas* were typically placed near the main icon. The modern viewer cannot visually take in the whole assembly when standing in the narrow aisle before the altar and one tends to be visually overwhelmed by this complex assembly. The icons require visual effort—and also *mikkyō* knowledge—in order to comprehend their relationships and meanings.

Kūkai brought new Buddhist teachings to Japan following his two years of study in Chang'an, the capital of Tang-dynasty China. He returned to Japan in 806 and from 809 resided at Takaosanji 高雄山寺, a monastery in the hills northwest of the Heian capital (modern-day Kyoto), until his relocation to Tōji in 823.<sup>4</sup> At Takaosanji Kūkai initiated icon production and building projects, the most famous of which are a pair of mandala paintings that date to around 830, the *Takao Mandara*, based on paintings Kūkai brought back from China. The texts, icons, and ritual goods Kūkai imported were the basis for Shingon Buddhism; his disciples and subsequent adherents would promote Shingon as the only true form of *mikkyō*, with origins in India and China.

Today there is no consensus about the use or meaning of the Tōji Lecture Hall sculptural program. Scholarship on the altar typically presents it as an iconographic program with sources in the textual works brought from China by Kūkai, with an emphasis on the state-protecting function of those texts. Sources for icons are important; however, this pairing can be problematic in two ways: first, icons function in ways unique to images; and second, many of the texts central to Japanese esotericism, and in the Buddhist corpus promoted by the state, also emphasize state protection. Little attempt has been made to understand the relationship of the Tōji statues to *mikkyō* ritual or the foundations for Kūkai's teachings in early Heian-period Japan. In this essay I set out to do this.

<sup>4</sup> Kōnin 14 (823).1.19, *Goyuigo* article 1, *KZ* (1970–1977) 2: 788. Also found in the *Taishū gyōjōshūki*, *Tōji chōshahōnin* I; and the *Tōdaiji yoroku*, vol. 6.



Figure 8. Jikokuten 持国天, one of Four (Deva) Guardian Kings (Shitennō). Lecture Hall, Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), Kyoto. Heian period, ca. 839. Wood (*hinoki*) with lacquer and pigments, H 187.7 cm.



Figure 9. Bonten 梵天 (Brahma) (west side of altar, detail). Lecture Hall, Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), Kyoto. Heian period, ca. 839. Wood (*hinoki*) with lacquer and pigments, H 103.6 cm.

Because the plan for the Lecture Hall had been approved by the court by the time Kūkai was appointed head of construction at Tōji, in 824, he may have decided to install a statue program similar to one he had seen in Chang'an, or he may have formulated a *karma mandala* based on a practice, text, or conceptual design to suit the existing plan for a “traditional” (eighth-century style) nine-by-four bay hall. Yet, with few exceptions, scholars have not looked to the practice of image making or the performance of mandala rites, to the *mikkyō* mandala and its embedded conceptual frameworks, or to possible Chang'an prototypes to understand the meanings of the Tōji Lecture Hall altar.

I propose a holistic visual interpretation of the altar and its visual referentiality to ritual, in a setting in which visual culture is an active participant but where the performance of ritual does not necessarily occur. In this sense, the altar program is highly performative. To move beyond a simple analysis of the Lecture Hall assembly as an icon hall based on new *mikkyō* Sūtras or ritual texts, we must be willing to consider both representation and iconography as a performance of ritual, even as they may be substantiated by textual sources. As a *karma mandala*, and in other ways to be discussed in this essay, the Lecture Hall icons participate in ritual in a manner consistent with choreography. Simultaneously, the icons convey the visual significance of the *mikkyō* teachings through material form and effect. In what we might refer to as visual efficacy, the Tōji Lecture Hall program functions on a level of meaning that references Buddhist goals of state protection and the making of mandala in material, textual, and ritual dimensions.

### *The Early History of Mikkyō Ritual Halls and the Tōji Lecture Hall*

Construction proceeded slowly at Tōji, despite the fact that it was one of only two state monasteries in the new Heian capital.<sup>5</sup> The original temple plan (on a south-north axis) consisted of a South and Middle Gate, a Kondō 金堂, a nine-by-four bay Lecture Hall, northern dormitories for monks, and a North Gate. Only the main hall, or Kondō,

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<sup>5</sup> According to the authors of *NCKSS-jys* (1: 41a and no. 10), who cite *Tōbōki* 1, *ZZGR* 12 (no page given), prior to Kōnin 1 (810) the halls of private temples were ordered to be dismantled and moved to Tōji and Saiji. On Saiji, see, *NCKSS-jys* 1:41–42. During the early years of construction in the new Heian capital, the privately sponsored temples Kiyomizudera and Takaosanji were also being built or expanded. On the use of the Tōji Kondō, see *Tōbōki* 1, *Buppō-jō*, *ZZGR* 12:8b–9b, cited in Ueno Katsuhisa 1994.

was realized before Kūkai's arrival. Completed around 810, its *honzon* 本尊, or main icon, was a seated statue of the Shichibutsu Yakushi (七仏薬師 Seven Masters of Medicine Buddha), flanked by Nikkō and Gakkō bodhisattva statues.<sup>6</sup> The primary icon intended for the unrealized Lecture Hall was probably a Thousand-Armed Kannon statue, which was eventually installed in the Tōji Refectory in 877. Before the Heian period, lecture halls contained a raised altar with statues, and the large surrounding space was used for state rites in which sūtra recitation was the focus, such as the *Shōman-e* held at Hōryūji and the *Yuima-e* and *Saishō-e* held at Kōfukuji. In *mikkyō* monasteries created during the early Heian period, lecture halls continued these earlier functions but they were smaller. Significantly, they gradually came to supplant the main halls (Kondō or Hondō) as the primary hall for the worship of icons.

Nine months after Kūkai arrived at Tōji, a decree from Emperor Junna (786–840) authorized fifty monks of the “Shingon sect” (*Shingonshū* 真言宗)—and no other sect—to reside at Tōji, giving public name and legitimacy to the new teachings.<sup>7</sup> At least twelve of the fifty monks were from Tōdaiji, the head state monastery in the former Heijō 平城 capital (present-day Nara).<sup>8</sup> Their presence among the monks who would populate Tōji was evidence of the affiliations that Kūkai had formed with Nara. Based in part on Kūkai's observations in Tang China, Japanese *mikkyō* temples developed halls for *mikkyō* initiations, or *abhiṣeka*, which are of central importance to Shingon training and transmission. In 822, prior to his appointment at Tōji, Kūkai was permitted to establish the first state-approved *mikkyō* initiation site, or Abhiṣeka Hall (Kanjō'in 灌頂院) at Tōdaiji 東大寺 in Nara,<sup>9</sup> but Tōdaiji itself did not become a Shingon center.

<sup>6</sup> These icons were destroyed in the 1486 fire that destroyed several of the Lecture Hall statues.

<sup>7</sup> For the decree, see *Dajō kanpō jinbushō*, dated Kōnin 14 (823).10.10, *Tōbōki* 7, *Sōhō-jō*, ZZGR 12: 21; and KZ 5: 435. Quoted in NCKSS-jys 1: 59 (*shiryō* 4). See also Hakeda 1972, 55.

<sup>8</sup> *Sōgō chū Tōji bettō sangō* of Jōwa 4 (836).4.5, in the *Tōbōki* 7, ZZGR 12: 141b–142b and cited in Abé 1999, 60–61, 468, n. 165. Given the slow progress of construction at Tōji and at Saiji, the other state-sponsored temple, it is not surprising that so many of the priests assigned to Tōji were Nara clerics.

<sup>9</sup> The name for Tōdaiji's Abhiṣeka Hall has changed over the centuries.

During his time at Takaosanji, Kūkai planned an Abhiṣeka Hall, which was completed during his period at Tōji, between 823 and 835.<sup>10</sup> Unlike most Buddhist halls in Japan, which have an odd number of bays across to allow a *ma*, or space, at the center, the Abhiṣeka Hall at Takaosanji (renamed Jingoji 神護寺 in 824) was an even number of bays wide. This particular use of space and the absence of a sculptural altar in a major worship hall were unprecedented in Japan, and were due entirely to the character of mandalas and *goma* (護摩 fire) rituals. The dimensions of the earlier Tōdaiji Abhiṣeka Hall are not certain, but during the Heian period it had a five-bay chancel with four aisles (*hisashi* 廂), thus it was seven bays wide. It housed two huge nine-*fuku* 幅 mandalas.<sup>11</sup> With Tōji designated as the first urban monastery for the training of Shingon priests, officially sanctioned sites for *mikkyō* rituals to protect the nation multiplied.

New halls for honoring new *mikkyō* divinities such as the Five Wisdom Buddhas or Five Myōō were introduced by Kūkai; the Five Myōō were installed in a hall created for Takaosanji (Jingoji). New pagoda shapes specific to esoteric symbology, and pagodas with painted interiors of mandalas or portraits of the patriarchs of Shingon were also created. These icons and structures were not wholly dependent

<sup>10</sup> The Jingoji Konpon Shingondō (also called the Shingondō and Kanjōdō at different points in its history) was built under Kūkai's direction and completed between 824 and 835. The completion date is in a record of the retired emperor Uda's *Dempokanjō* (initiation), cited in Fujii Keisuke 1988, 125. The dimensions are given in the *Jingoji jōhei jitsurokuchō*, noted in Fujii Keisuke 1988, 118; 1998, 19. The hall is also described in the *Jingoji ryakki*; see Itō Shirō 1992, 102. In the Heian period, the hall was called the Konponshi shingondo (in the *Jingoji jitsurokucho*); see Fujii Keisuke 1988, 118. According to the *Jingoji jōhei jitsurokuchō*, this "Konponshingondo" hall was six bays wide with a *hisashi* on two sides (front and back) and two doors. The *Jingoji ryakki* documents the use of the *raidō* for conferring the *samaya* precepts (which were typically given as initiation before an adherent entered the inner hall for higher-level ordination practices). During the ninth century the Konpon Shingondō, without a forehall structure, was used for rituals. Other *abhisheka dansho* ritual spaces, however, are not six bays. Rather, according to convention, they have a *ma* at the center. At Mount Kōya the second and smaller of two Shingondō housed Dainichi and Shitenno statues but no paintings, so far as we know. A 904 record indicates that both a Kannon and Jizō Bosatsu statue were enshrined at the Tōdaiji Kanjō'in, suggesting that the hall was used until that time. The structure was lost in 1180 when the Taira torched the monastery.

<sup>11</sup> A *fuku* is the width of a bolt of cloth. Ninth- and tenth-century (early Heian) paintings generally used raw silk made on looms, producing cloth about 1.80 *shaku* (54.5 cm) wide; by the late Heian period this changed to 1.61 (48.7 cm) and to 1.54 *shaku* (46.7 cm). The Shingon'in in the palace and the Tōji Abhiṣeka Hall also each had a five-bay chancel plan.

on texts and iconography but also on material precedents in China, nearly all of them lost, and conceptual innovations in Japan. Kūkai introduced distinct *mikkyō* elements into the Tōji layout (*garan* 伽藍) and made plans for halls and icons reflecting *mikkyō* concepts and ritual requirements but few were realized during his lifetime. The initial plan for Tōji included eighth-century-style pagodas at the southeast and southwest corners, but Kūkai's plan replaced the West Pagoda with an Abhiṣeka Hall (Kanjōdō 灌頂堂). Construction began on the pagoda and lecture hall at about the same time. Neither the Tōji Pagoda nor the Abhiṣeka Hall were completed until after Kūkai's death.<sup>12</sup> The Lecture Hall building (but not the statues) was completed by 835, ten years after construction began and two and a half months before Kūkai's death.<sup>13</sup>

The earliest reference to the Lecture Hall statues describes their consecration in 839.6.15: "The nobles of the court gathered together at Tōji for the eye-opening [rite] of the various Buddhas [made] at imperial behest."<sup>14</sup> The statues are next mentioned in a document from the

<sup>12</sup> A pagoda was begun for Tōji around the same time as construction of the Lecture Hall began (i.e., ca. 826). The original pagoda burned in Kanei 12 (1635) and was repaired in Kanei 21 (1645). Originally it is thought to have contained a central pillar (possibly painted) that represented Dainichi; on a raised altar around the central figure were the four Nyorai Ashuku, Hōshō, Amida, Fukūjōju (making up the Five Buddhas of the Diamond World) and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas. Today there are divinities from the Kongōkai mandala painted on the corner pillars and front door, and there are eight patriarch portraits on the interior walls. It is possible that this decoration was the same as Kūkai's original concept. The Tōji Abhiṣeka Hall (Kanjō'in) interior had the seven patriarchs, adding Kongōsatta Bodhisattva and Kūkai, for nine paintings on three of four walls of the inner space. For illustrations of the current pagoda interior, see Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji) Hōmotsukan, ed. 1997, 19, 20 (for the eight patriarchs), 71–72.

<sup>13</sup> Tenchō 2 (835).4.24. *Shoku Nihon kōki*, KT 8:4, quoted in NCKSS-jys 1:61 (*shiryō* 9). This document is sometimes cited for the date of the Lecture Hall completion but in fact it states only that the hall was completed *by* that date. Nevertheless, construction does not appear to have progressed quickly. *Tōbōki* 1, ZZGR 12:4. No records survive regarding the production of the Tōji statues. Stylistically, the works support a production date in the 830s. Kūkai died on Jōwa 2 (835).6.16. A document of 835.1.6 (*Shoku Nihon kōki*, KT 8:231) requests funds from the government for carrying out "training and lectures on the sūtras" and notes that some halls are completed. Although this is sometimes interpreted to mean that funds were requested for making statues, the document is inconclusive. NCKSS-jys 1:61 (*shiryō* 9).

<sup>14</sup> Entry for Jōwa 6 in *Shoku Nihon kōki*, KT, 88. The *kuyō* (offerings) ceremony for the newly sculpted statues of the Lecture Hall at the Saiji temple was conducted on Tenchō 9 (832).5.7, earlier than that for Tōji (see the *Nihongi* entry for same date). The month and day of the consecration is the traditional anniversary of Kūkai's birth; it is also the death date of Amoghavajra.

Ministry of the Imperial Household dated 844.<sup>15</sup> It gives the court's resolution to a petition from Jichie requesting clothing and food for acolytes serving at a one hundred and six-day offerings service (*kuyō* 供養) at the Lecture Hall. In the document, the statues are referred to as the “imperially sanctioned Shingon statues newly constructed” and the hall as the “newly built Shingon hall.”<sup>16</sup> They are described as “three groups in a row”: “at the altar center, Five Buddhas; to the left, Five Bosatsu; and to the right side, Five Angry Honorable [Ones] (Go fun'nu son 五忿怒尊).”<sup>17</sup> The rest of the statues are not mentioned. The term used for the right-side group today, “Five Great Myōō,” was not yet in circulation. “Five Angry [Honorable] Ones” indicates familiarity with terminology in rituals of Amoghavajra's “translation” of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* (*Ninnōkyō* 仁王經), newly imported by Kūkai. The sūtra uses the term *inu* (威怒, “terrible,” “fierce”); however, a ritual text for the sūtra uses the term *fun'nu* 忿怒 (“honorable”), which is also used in the 844 document.<sup>18</sup> The text is a ritual text for the

<sup>15</sup> Document dated Jōwa 11 (844).6.16, *Dajōkanpu kunaishō*, *Tōbōki* 1, *Buppō-jō*, ZZGR 12: 17b, quoted in NCKSS-jys 1: 64 (*shiryō* 14).

<sup>16</sup> The wide chronological gaps between documents and statements, such as “newly constructed” statues or hall in 844, in reference to a hall that was finished before 835, suggests that governmental attention to the project was lacking, as do petitions for financial assistance.

<sup>17</sup> There is some ambiguity as to the naming of the groups. “At the altar center, Five Buddhas” 中胎五佛 could be interpreted as, “at the center, Womb [mandala] Five Buddhas”; and “to the right side, Five Angry Ones” 右方五忿怒 could be interpreted as “to the right, Directional Five Angry Ones.” *Dajōkanpu Kunaishō*, *Tōbōki* 1, *Buppō-jō*, ZZGR 12: 17b.

<sup>18</sup> The full title is the *Sūtra of Perfect Wisdom for Benevolent Kings Who Wish to Protect Their States* (*Renwang hu guo banrou boluomiduo*, commonly abbreviated to *Renwang jing*; Jpn. *Ninnōkyō* or *Ninnō hanyakyō*). Amoghavajra's translation, with extensive notations (by an unknown hand), is *T.* 246.8:834c–845a. An earlier recension of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* is *T.* 245, Kumārajīva, fifth century. For the English translation of the title, I use *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*, but recognize Charles Orzech's considerable contributions to study of the sūtra and his translation, “Humane Kings.” See Orzech 1996c, 372–80 (portions of section 5 and all of section 8 of the sūtra), and a full translation in Orzech 1998. Ryūichi Abé uses “Virtuous Kings.” There are four ritual commentaries (*vidhi*, *gui-i*, *giki*) on the sūtra, three of which are attributed to Amoghavajra (but were probably produced by his disciples). Of greatest importance in Japan is the *Renwang niansong yigui*, on the *Recitation and Contemplation of the Benevolent Kings [Sūtra]* (*Shinyaku ninnōgokoku hanya kyō daran nenju giki*, commonly referred to as the *Ninnō nenju giki*), *T.* 994.19: 513–19, noted here. Others are *T.* 995.19: 519–22 (*Methods for Chanting the Benevolent Kings Sūtra*); *T.* 996.19:522–25 (*Commentary of the Dharani of the Benevolent Kings Sūtra*); and one by Amoghavajra's disciple Liangbi (discussed later in this chapter), *T.* 1709.33: 429–523 (*Commentary on the Benevolent Kings Sūtra*).



*Benevolent Kings Sūtra*, Amoghavajra's *Ninnō nenju giki* (仁王念誦儀軌 Ritual Commentary [Vidhi] on the Recitation and Contemplation of the Benevolent Kings [Sūtra]).<sup>19</sup>

A document dated 845 from the Ministry of Public Affairs (Minbushō) responds to a request by Jichie, stating that the ministry acts on behalf of the “imperial sanctioned various precious statues of the Shingon sect. . . .”<sup>20</sup> These ninth-century sources confirm that the Lecture Hall icons occupied a significant place in the ritual and visual economy of the capital and were associated with the esoteric Shingon teachings. Other clues to reception can be garnered from historical sources. An 847 record for a “dharma transmission rite” (伝法会 *denpō-e*) identifies the statue group for the first time as a *karma mandala*:

They are the Five Buddhas, Five Great Bodhisattvas, Five Angry Ones (Gofun'nu), Bonten, Taishakuten, and the Four Deva [Guardian] Kings (Shitennō), etc., from within the Vajrayāna teachings. The *katsuma* (i.e., *karma mandala*) statues were respectfully constructed as a vow for the health of our sovereign when he was unwell. After the statues were completed, prayers for the nation were frequently recited and chanted before the statues, and the sūtras of the Secret Vehicle (i.e., *mikkyō*) were explicated and chanted. Although the honorable images were completed and the *shogon* 莊嚴<sup>21</sup> ceremony was carried out the year previous [846], due to a pressing matter<sup>22</sup> the Denpō-e was not conducted at that time.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Ninnō nenju giki*, T. 994.19:513–19.

<sup>20</sup> The Minbushō responds to Jichie's request to sell the Shugei'in (Shugeishuchi'in) school founded by Kūkai. Dated Jōwa 12 (845).9.10, *Tōbōki* 6, *Hōbō-ge*, ZZGR 12: 121, quoted in NCKSS-jys 1: 64 (*shiryō* 15). This document specifies that the yield of the rice fields be donated to the Tōji temple, assuring that “the sūtras, *vinayas*, *sāstras*, and commentaries of the [texts of the] imperially sponsored Shingon sect may be propagated for eternity.”

<sup>21</sup> The Japanese Buddhist term *shōgon*, comprising the characters for “majestic” or “to revere” and “adornment,” may be understood as “pious adornment” or “decorative manifestation of sacrality.” *Shōgon* derives from the Chinese *zhuangyan*, which encompasses two related but distinct concepts in ancient Indian philosophy, *alamkāra* and *vyūhā*. *Alamkāra* refers to the manifestation of the divine or sacred in the earthly, material world. *Vyūhā*, which means “array” or to “complete and make perfect,” often refers to sanctification. Both *alamkāra* and *vyūhā* are used throughout the sūtras. An array of glorious attributes, *vyūhā*, describes the bodhisattva Gadgadasvara (Fine Sound) in Chapter 24 of Kumārajīva's version of the *Lotus Sūtra*. For a discussion of the term, see Mochizuki Shinkō, et al. 1974, 9: 673.

<sup>22</sup> It is unclear to what the phrase “pressing matter” here refers.

<sup>23</sup> The text is informally known as the *Tōji denpō-e hyōhaku*, in *Tōbōki* 6, *Hōbō-ge*, ZZGR, 12: 122a and reproduced in NCKSS-jys 1: 65 (*shiryō* 16).

The 847 ritual record provides other important details. It identifies the twenty-one sculptures by divinity group or name, important not only for iconographic identification but also because listing the names indicates that identities mattered. The earlier government records note only “Shingon statues” or the new *mikkyō* divinities; in the 844 temple record the *karma mandala* is the focus, so each divinity is mentioned. It tells us that upon their completion, sūtras were chanted before the statues. The Denpō-e, a Dharma transmission ceremony, was part of many Buddhist (sectarian) traditions; it has specific parameters in the *mikkyō* ritual corpus relating to the concept of *sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成佛, or “attaining enlightenment in this very body” (i.e. this lifetime)—a key concept in Kūkai’s teachings and one found in the *Diamond Peak Sūtra*. The rite involves sūtra recitation. Although the divinities were new, the rite continued earlier Buddhist praxis: there was continuity between “exoteric”<sup>24</sup> and new *mikkyō* rites, icons, and goals.

Although Kūkai wanted to initiate his disciples at Tōji and at a Shingon mountain training center at Kongōbuji on Mount Kōya 高野山 (present-day Wakayama prefecture), far south of the former Nara capital (map, figure 10), he was part of the state-sponsored clerical hierarchy still based in Nara;<sup>25</sup> moreover, state support for the Abhiṣeka Hall at Tōdaiji in Nara continued.

At the end of his life, Kūkai created a ritual site for lay initiations, the Shingon’in, within the imperial palace. The Abhiṣeka Hall Kūkai planned for Tōji was not completed until 843, under Jichie. Could Tōji have functioned as a primary site (*konpon dōjō* 根本道場) for *mikkyō* practice during Kūkai’s lifetime without an Abhiṣeka Hall? If Kūkai initiated priests in *mikkyō* mandala rituals at Tōji, the occurrences are unrecorded. I will return to this subject below.

<sup>24</sup> The term “exoteric” (Jpn. *kengyō* 顯教) is commonly used in the literature, following the influence of Shingon sectarian writings.

<sup>25</sup> Kūkai was appointed to the chief ecclesiastical order, the Sōgō, in 824, only two years after he established the Tōdaiji Kanjō’in, with the title junior priest general, and is listed as Kūkai of the “Tōji Shingon school.” By 836, the year after Kūkai died, twenty-one *jōgakusō* (fixed appointment priests) were assigned to “Shingonshū Tōdaiji,” indicating the importance of the lineage there; the next year, twenty-one *jōgakusō* 定額僧 were appointed to Tōji (not the fifty originally promised to Kūkai), most of whom were from Tōdaiji.

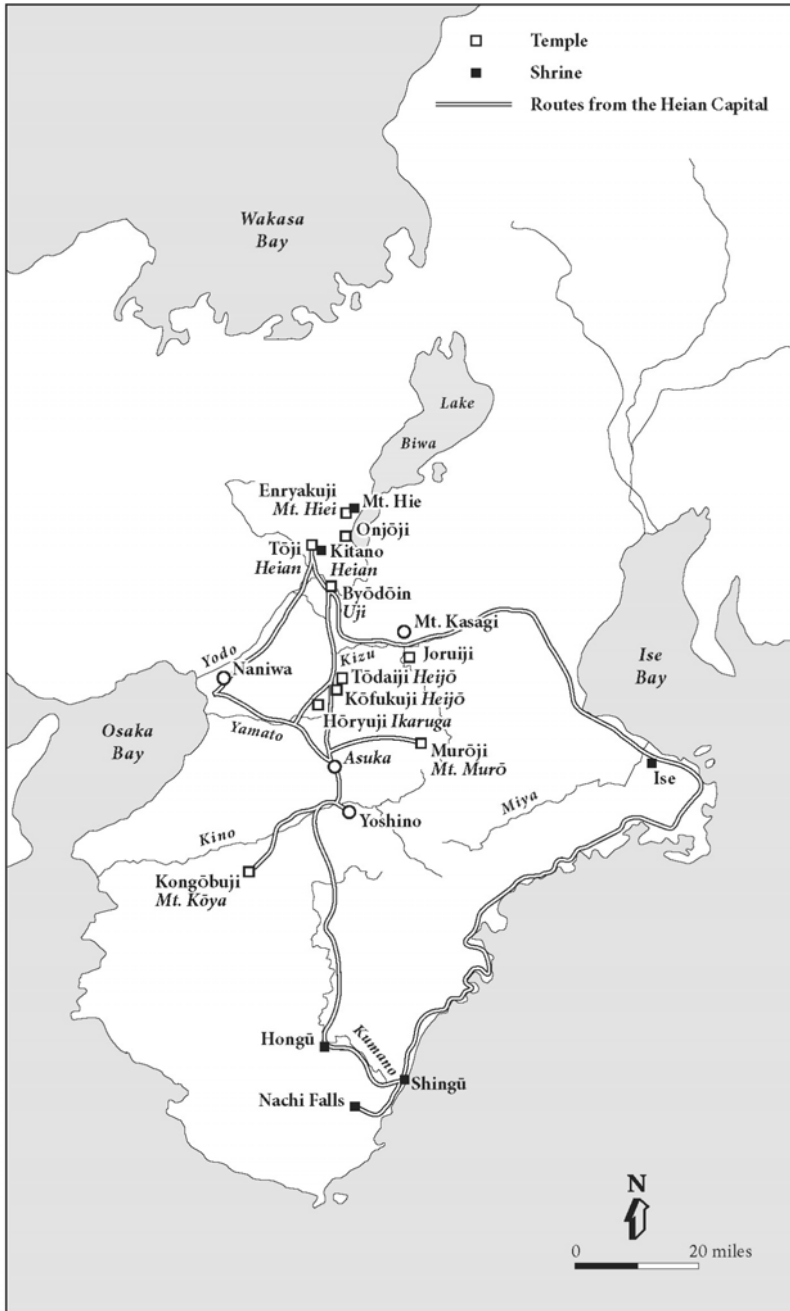


Figure 10. Map of the Kansai region and ancient capitals (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 33).

Abhiṣeka, The Diamond Peak Sūtra, *The Benevolent Kings Sūtra*, and *Rites for the Protection of the Nation*

In the 847 record, the Lecture Hall altar is called a *karma mandala*. As I have proposed elsewhere, the statues excavated at the Chang'an monastery, Anguosi 案國寺 (figure 11), are part of a *karma mandala* and demonstrate a relationship to esoteric aspects of the *Benevolent Kings sūtra*.<sup>26</sup>

One may also note their simultaneous relationship to the divinities featured in *Vajrasekhara sūtra* or *Diamond Peak Sūtra* (Kongōchōkyō 金剛頂經), for example, Ratnasambhava Buddha. Kūkai probably witnessed *karma mandala* assemblies in Tang China. His request to the Japanese court to enact protective rituals for the state in 810 at Takao-sanji, in the wake of a coup attempt on the emperor, was surely one way to establish a national protection site outside the capital by means of *abhiṣeka*. To quote from his petition:

Inside and outside the capital [Tang rulers and officials] built monasteries where mantras are recited to pacify the nation.... The imported sūtras consist of the *Renwang jing* (*Benevolent Kings Sūtra*), *Shouhu-guojiezhū jing*, *Fomu mingwang jing*, among others.<sup>27</sup>

One month before construction on the Tōji Lecture Hall began in 825, Kūkai requested the court's permission to conduct new lectures at Tōji on the *Shugokokkaishū daranikyō* (守護国界守陀羅尼經, Nation-Protecting Lord *Dhāranī* Sūtra) each year during the summer retreat (*ango*) for the protection of the nation, the elimination of calamities, and to benefit sentient beings who will prosper with the Dharma.<sup>28</sup> In his petition, Kūkai noted that similar lectures to protect the nation

<sup>26</sup> The iconography of several Anguosi statues can be linked to the Diamond World mandala/*Diamond Peak Sūtra*, and at least two others to the Womb mandala/*Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, but I believe that the unifying theme derives from the mandala for the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*. See Bogel 2009. At the same time, there are close relationships between the *Diamond Peak Sūtra* and the ritual texts for the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*, so that the *Diamond Peak Sūtra* and related Diamond world mandala iconography may be the most significant aspect of the group.

<sup>27</sup> *KZ* 3: 435–36, dated 810.10.27. We do not know whether permission was granted or the ritual was performed. The sūtras are *T.* 19, nos. 994, 997, and 982.

<sup>28</sup> The sūtra is *T.* 97. Kūkai's petition is dated Tenchō 2 (825).3.10, titled "Angokō Kōdōgyō [shi]," as recorded in the *Tōbōki* 5, *Hōbō-chū*, *ZZGR* 12: 104 and quoted in *NCKSS-jys* 1: 60 (*shiryō* 6). Kūkai's request was granted early in the fourth month, and construction of the Lecture Hall commenced on the twenty-fourth day of the same month.



Figure 11. Eight-armed, three-headed Hayagriva Bodhisattva (Horse-Headed Avalokiteśvara), unearthed from Anguosi, Xi'an, China, in 1959. Beilin Museum, Xi'an, Shaanxi. Tang dynasty, ca. 775. White marble, H 78 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 82, pl. 4.9).

had been sponsored by previous emperors at the Nara temples; he cited imperial sponsorship of lectures on the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* in Enryaku 25 (809, the year Kūkai was called to Takaosanji).<sup>29</sup> In his petition, Kūkai invoked the historical continuity of ritual. I similarly propose that in the Lecture Hall sculpture program, visual and ritual continuity worked together to secure acceptance for Kūkai's new teachings.

Despite the continued prominence of the temples in the former Heijō capital during the early Heian period, the political, symbolic, and rhetorical significance of Tōji—one of only two state temples in the new capital—as a *mikkyō* monastery ensured that the monastery and Kūkai's activities became part of the new sacred ritual economy and visual cosmology of Heian-period Japan. The Tōji Lecture Hall altar was a key visual expression of this cosmology. In order to choreograph continuity at Tōji, the “*Shingonshū*” temple in the new capital, Kūkai seems to have instituted and continued rites for nation protection, especially those featuring the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*. He is thought to have imported several versions of the mandala described in the sūtra, which illustrate the primary divinities in their respective directions.

There are several recensions of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*. The Ninnō-e and Ninnōkyō-hō rituals are based on two different “translations” of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*, but only the latter used mandalas as the basis for its efficacy. Yet one version is not “exoteric” in the early *mikkyō* context, even if the two sūtra translations and their contents—and their goals—are distinguished. Both are part of *mikkyō* praxis and Buddhist goals for state protection. The Lecture Hall altar is strongly linked to the mandala imagery for the *mikkyō* rites of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*.<sup>30</sup>

The *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* and its rituals are concerned with “the hierarchy of cosmic authority as founded on a single underlying continuity and expressed in ‘geographic’ terms,” with numerous plays on conventional “exterior” and “interior” kings or rulers of the mind or

<sup>29</sup> The title *Ninnōgokoku hannyaharamitsukyō* is used, a variant name for the Amoghavajra “translation” of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* imported by Kūkai.

<sup>30</sup> In addition to Ninnō-e (non-esoteric) rites performed there, the Tōji Lecture Hall was described by the monk Kakugyō, which he had witnessed in his youth (late twelfth century) as having painted pillars with one hundred buddhas, one hundred *bosatsu*, and the one hundred *arhats*, a combination seen only in the “non-esoteric” *Ninnōkyō*.

self.<sup>31</sup> The location of Tōji inside the capital, and Takaosanji/Jingoji just outside, was significant. As at Anguosi, there is no evidence that the Tōji Lecture Hall was a site for esoteric *abhiṣeka*. Mandala divinities and concepts are the only likely source for the Lecture Hall altar arrangement. As early as the 1930s, scholars considered the Lecture Hall to be based on texts associated with the esoteric translation of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* and the *Vajraśekhara sūtra* (Diamond Peak Sūtra).<sup>32</sup> Drawings and paintings imported by Kūkai provide visual and conceptual sources for the Lecture Hall assembly—and not only for its iconography. Rather, the *making of the ritual mandala* for the Rite of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* (*Ninnōkyo-hō*) and the concepts that underlie it, specifically that of the Diamond World mandala 金剛界曼荼羅 deriving from the *Diamond Peak Sūtra*, are performed in a choreography of liturgical and representational elements, in both indirect and specific ways, by the Tōji Lecture Hall *karma mandala* statues themselves. The difficulty lies in sorting out the relationships among the visual means, contexts, and ritual texts or activities. Rather than argue for iconographic sources, it is important to understand the over-arching significance of the mandala concept. For the Tōji Lecture Hall, the iconography of the Diamond World mandala seems particularly strong, even if the vehicle for that iconography is in part found within *ritual text(s)*, in particular, the *Ninnō nenju giki*, the ritual text for the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* noted above. In turn, it derives from the *Diamond Peak Sūtra*. An emphasis of either the Diamond or Womb mandala in the visual culture for a hall is consistent in the earliest Shingon esoteric halls, including those on Mt. Kōya, Takaosanji, and Kanshinji. The concept of the *karma* or sculptural mandala is one of four types of mandala given in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*.

The building plan for the Lecture Hall at Tōji was created in 825; that same year Kūkai opened the *Benevolent Kings* lecture (*Ninnōkō 仁王講*) at the palace and in various provinces.<sup>33</sup> The lecture was

<sup>31</sup> Orzech 1996c, 375.

<sup>32</sup> See Minamoto 1930, 99–114; and Ono 1934, 47–58. Recently, Matsuura Masaaki has linked the altar program only to the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*. See Matsuura 1983. Otherwise, all scholars suggest a combination of texts. The first scholar to suggest two textual sources for the altar was Takata 1967. Since then, all scholars except Matsuura have concurred on two or more.

<sup>33</sup> The *Tōbōki* and *Fusōryakkishō*, among other records, indicate 825 as the starting date. “Kōdō,” *Tōbōki* 1, *Buppō-jō*, ZZGR 12: 9a–10a, quoted in NCKSS-jys 1: 60–61 (*shiryō* 7). One date given is Tenchō 2 (825).4.24; an alternate date is 825.4.20.

probably based on the version of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* known during the Nara period. In the next year Kūkai organized the *Benevolent Kings* service, Ninnō-e 仁王会, at Mount Kōya (Tenchō 3.1.11). Kūkai performed the *mikkyō* rite of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*, the Ninnōkyō-hō 仁王經法, for the first time in the ninth month of 812 at an unknown location. The *Record of the Ninnōkyō-hō* cites a second occurrence in 822, at either Tōji or Takaosanji, “for the protection of the nation,”<sup>34</sup> but no details of the ritual performance are known. This was in the same year that Kūkai gave *abhiṣeka* to the retired emperor Heizei, possibly at the new *Abhiṣeka* Hall at Tōdaiji in Nara.<sup>35</sup> In 824, Kūkai performed an esoteric *abhiṣeka* for Saga.<sup>36</sup>

Kūkai performed *abhiṣeka* outside and within the capital, but the sites are not always recorded. Jichie’s letter to the priests at Qinglongsi 清流寺, where Kūkai studied in Chang’an, states that the lay and ordained men and women who received *abhiṣeka* from the master numbered in the tens of thousands, but the actual number will likely never be known.<sup>37</sup> All of these activities were conducted for state benefit. Kūkai’s magnum opus of 830, *The Ten Abiding Stages of the Secret Mind of the Mandala*, was completed when the statues in the Tōji Lecture Hall were underway. It repeatedly notes that “erecting a mandala altar, receiving *abhiṣeka* there, and having the clergy perform *homa* (*goma* 護摩) and other esoteric rituals to benefit his nation constitute the most meritorious acts for a king.”<sup>38</sup> *Abhiṣeka* rites and rites related to the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* were distinct, but both deployed mandala altars, both called out the divinities of the mandala universe, and both concerned the same goals—including protection of the state.

The Ninnō-e rite associated with the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* widely conducted during the Nara period continued to be popular long after Kūkai imported the “new translation” by Amoghavajra. One of many performances of the Ninnō-e took place in 839, the year the Tōji

<sup>34</sup> For the 812 occurrence, see *BDJ* 5:4104c (Kōnin 3, ninth month), which cites the *Ninnōkyō-hō kinrei*. This date also corresponds with the ordinations given by Kūkai to Saichō and others at Takaosanji. For the 822 occurrence, see the *Ninnōkyō-hō nikki*.

<sup>35</sup> Kūkai’s text for recitation of the ordination is the *Heizei tennō kanjōmon*, *KZ* 2: 157-172.

<sup>36</sup> The text is informally known as the *Tōji denpō-e hyōhaku*, in *Tōbōki* 6, *Hōbō-ge*, *ZZGR*, 12: 122a and reproduced in *NCKSS-jys* 1: 65 (*shiryō* 16).

<sup>37</sup> *Tsuikai bunsō* 5, *KZ* 5: 391-92; translation from Abé 1999, 42.

<sup>38</sup> Abé 1999, 332, which cites *KZ* 1: 200, 206. The essay was a response to Emperor Junna’s request for an explanation of the *mikkyō* teachings.



Lecture Hall statues were completed, when Emperor Ninmyō (r. 833–850) had the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* read for seven days in “the fifteen great Buddhist” temples, which included Tōji and Saiji 西寺, the only two state-sponsored monasteries in the Heian capital.<sup>39</sup> The so-called esoteric translation of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* is defined by its addition of ritual texts to the sūtra and emphasis of the protective role played by twenty deities—many of them new, “esoteric” types. The *mikkyō* rite based on the “new translation,” the Ninnōkyō-hō, shares these goals, but the means are very different: the *mikkyō* ritual summons divine intervention in worldly affairs.

In the two sūtras, despite a common role as divine defense for the benevolent king, their *representation* shifts from benign to ferocious, indeed terrifying, under the influence of *mikkyō* and ritual imagery (eg. see color pl 12). Although initially the shift in representation parallels the specific gods *named* in each sūtra, after the protective forces in the newly introduced Amoghavajra translation are represented as ferocious, the whole visual economy of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* ritual world also shifts: the formerly benign “Five Power Bodhisattvas” (五大力菩薩, color pl 12) come to be depicted as *terribilita*, like their Japanese *mikkyō* cousins, the Five Great Myōō. With Kūkai at the helm of Tōji, newly introduced esoteric rites could be conducted in the capital itself with greater ease. The “exterior” and “interior” concepts of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* and its rituals were applied to the performance of rites inside the palace, inside the capital (Tōji), and outside the capital.

The ritual text for the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* gives the details for the making of mandalas, adorning the altar, contemplations, *mudrās*, and mantras. In the Shingon esoteric tradition, the rite follows the prescriptions presented in ritual commentaries brought to Japan by Kūkai, especially Amoghavajra’s *Ninnō nenju giki*, Ritual Commentary on the Recitation and Contemplation of the Benevolent Kings, and also the *Shōmugekyō* (掇無礙經 To Embrace without Hindrance Sūtra), and *Hizōki* (秘藏記 Notes on the Secret Treasury), said to be notes by Kūkai on Huiguo’s teachings.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, aspects

<sup>39</sup> *Shoku Nihon kōki* 2:141, entry for Jōwa 6 (839).4.17.

<sup>40</sup> See an earlier note on commentaries on the *Ninnō nenju giki*, T. 994; *Shōmugekyō*, also known as the *Fudara Kūkaieki*, T. 1067; and *Hizōki*, TZ 1 no. 1. The latter two texts have been variously attributed to Amoghavajra, Huiguo, and Kūkai. In the case of the *Hizōki*, Ryūichi Abé explains that within the Shingon tradition the work is



Color plate 13. One of three extant *Five Power Bodhisattva* 五大力菩薩 (*Godairiki Bosatsu*), *Ryūoku* 龍王吼 (alt. *Muryōriki-ku* 無量力吼). *Yūshi Hachiman Kō Jūhakkain*, Mount Kōya, Wakayama. Heian period, tenth–eleventh century. Hanging scroll, color on silk, L 304.8 cm, W 179.5 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 302, pl. 11.12).

of the latter two texts are linked to texts that feature the divinities of the Diamond World mandala, deriving from the *Diamond Peak Sūtra*. The iconography of ritual texts for the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* and the Diamond World mandala are precisely the two texts that scholars concur are the textual basis for the Tōji statue program. More emphasis should, however, be given to the *Diamond Peak Sūtra*, for many of the divinities on the altar can also be linked to this text.

*The Lecture Hall Altar: Interpretations and Possibilities*

In ancient times, the Lecture Hall altar would surely have induced a sense of awe, as it does today. Order and meaning are achieved by understanding the relationships among the divinities of this *karma mandala* (*katsuma mandara* 羯磨曼荼羅); recall that the 847 record sorts them by name, and by directly addressing “the ocean assembly”—that is, the mandala world—in concept and form. Hamada Takashi and other scholars see the frontal deployment of the statues across the altar as “exoteric,” not esoteric.<sup>41</sup> This characterization, however, is true only in a very narrow, albeit widely accepted, definition of *mikkyō* spaces as something *necessarily different* from those found in pre-*mikkyō* Nara temples. Scholars universally conclude that “whether [based on] just the installation program or [on the] statues themselves, the icons’ character was that of exoteric, ritual images rather than [that of] icons for esoteric services.”<sup>42</sup> Yet knowledge of representational norms for Nara-period Buddhist altars would not aid a meaningful apprehension of the Tōji Lecture Hall program. The icons’ “character” is *not* exoteric. The 844 document quoted above specifically notes the three groups of images: “at the altar center, Five Buddhas; to the left, Five Bosatsu; to the right side, Five Angry Ones. In a row, three groups.” Surely if this were an “exoteric” layout there would be little motivation to label the groups by name and number, as is done in several documents. Such detail goes beyond usual identifications. The six “familiar” icons on the altar *are not named* in the 847 document; moreover, the *katsuma-mandara* is mentioned.

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either regarded as Amoghavajra’s instructions to his pupil Huiguo, or as Kūkai’s handwritten record of the oral instruction he received from Huiguo; there are also other opinions. See Abé 1999, 124–25, 489, n. 60; and Katsumata 1981, 182–210. See also *BDJ* 9: 104c–105a.

<sup>41</sup> Hamada 1980, 72.

<sup>42</sup> Yamada and Miyaji 1988, 73.

To someone familiar with esoteric iconography, the complex disposition of the statues on the Tōji Lecture Hall altar convey and/or suggest groupings, replications, and referents to a mandala through size, placement (pentads, four corners), *mudrās* and hand-held implements, coloration and gilding, pedestals and mandorlas, and artistic style of the statues, among other cues and forms. The four types of mandalas are the great mandala, *mahā mandala* (*daimandara* 大曼陀羅), which represents the divinities in their anthropomorphic form and is usually painted; the symbolic-form mandala, *samaya mandala* (*sanmaya mandara* 三昧耶曼荼羅), which represents the divinities with symbols such as their attributes; the seed-syllable form mandala, the *dharma mandala* (*hōmandara* 法曼陀羅) or *bīja mandala*, which represents the divinities in their Siddham (Sanskrit) seed syllables (*bījas*); and the three-dimensional mandala, *karma mandala*, which represents the universal activity of Mahāvairocana. The *karma mandala* further instantiates ritual with three-dimensional anthropomorphic forms.

An undated, *circa* fourteenth-century drawing, the *Tojikenzaiyō* (figure 12) (hereafter “Contemporaneous Plan”)<sup>43</sup> of the Tōji Lecture Hall altar shows the four circumscribing buddhas of the central pentad and the two *deva* statues to the sides, Bonten and Taishakuten, turned to face inward toward the large central Dainichi Buddha.

This may have been the original arrangement. An inward-facing position is rare on Japanese statue altars and may connote illusionism, as in some Tang Chinese relief stele of pentads (figure 13).

If the drawing represents the original layout, then the “exoteric” disposition assumed by scholars is doubly erroneous, as inward-facing divinities would be extremely unusual before the ninth century. Inwardly facing Bonten and Taishakuten on the Tōji altar would leave the Four Deva (Guardian) King statues in their traditional (Nara-period) place and orientation at the four corners (i.e., rotated 45 degrees) and facing forward (south); but they would, in a *mikkyō* mandala conceptual structure, “frame” the altar assembly as a group by directing the gaze (metaphorical or real) from the edges to the center. Painted mandalas use this form.

<sup>43</sup> *Tojikenzaiyō* 当時見在様. *Tōbōki* 1, *Buppō-jō*, ZZGR 12: 11a, reproduced in NCKSS-jys 1: 83 (*shiryō* 51). Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), *Shin Tōbōki*, 113, compares three drawings of the altar. See also Matsuura 1983, 83ff; and NCKSS-jys 1:81.

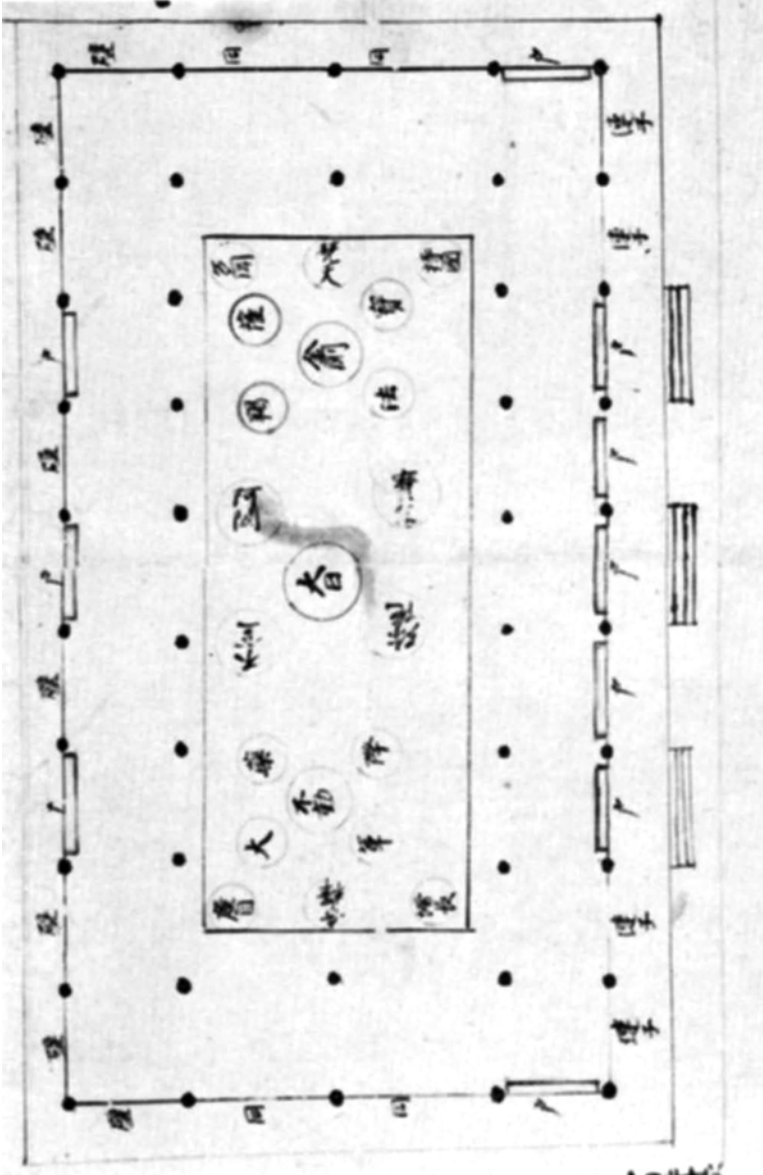


Figure 12. *Tojikenzaiyō* (Contemporaneous Plan), drawing of Tōji Lecture Hall altar. Tōji (Kyōōgokokujū), Kyoto. Ca. fourteenth century. Ink on paper (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 295, pl. 11.8).



Figure 13. Five Wisdom Buddhas stele. Aichi Prefectural Ceramics Research Institute. Tang dynasty. Stone (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 98, pl. 4.24).

Such an arrangement may also explain the presence of Bonten and Taishakuten: Bonten is not paired with Taishakuten *in any of the textual sources* for the altar, a fact that has perplexed scholars. Takata Osamu explains the presence of Bonten as an addition that mimics the “exoteric” arrangement of the two on Nara-period altars; he and others note that it creates a symmetrical visual pairing, one on each side of the altar.<sup>44</sup> One possibility is that the pair, with the Four Guardians, form a border around the edge, in the manner of a mandala.

There is excellent visual evidence for Kūkai’s newly imported *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*. Kamakura-period drawings (*zuzō*) in ink on paper

<sup>44</sup> Takata 1967, 29.

include the *Ninnōkyō gohō shoson zu* (“Illustrations of Various Divinities of the Five Directions from the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*”; hereafter, “Benevolent Kings Five Directions Illustrations”). Two sets of very large scrolls, one version at Daigoji (figures 14, 15) and one at Tōji (figures 16, 17), are in turn copies of lost *zuzō* by the monk Kakuzen (1143–ca. 1219), a priest in the Shingon Ono lineage, noted for his vast compilation of ritual diagrams, guides, and iconography, the *Kakuzenshō* 覺禪鈔, completed in 1219.<sup>45</sup> Each of the five sheets shows a “directional” bodhisattva (Gohō bosatsu 五方菩薩), a *vidyārāja*. The statues of the Five Great Myōō on the Tōji Lecture Hall altar are so close to the same deities’ depiction in extant “Benevolent Kings Five Directions Illustrations” drawings that they undoubtedly share the same source: drawings or paintings imported by Kūkai.

The drawings illustrate a rite for the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*; it is important to note once again, however, that this does not preclude a consideration of Diamond world iconography from the *Vajraśekhara sūtra*, on which the iconography of the ritual text is in part based.

The Lecture Hall statues occasionally reveal contradictory conceptions of two- and three-dimensional rendering; for example, the Fudō Myōō statue has an awkward left-arm pose that would appear to mimic the foreshortening in two-dimensional drawings; one sees the same gesture in the ca. 830 painted mandala, the *Takao Mandara* depiction of Fudō Myōō (figure 18), the central divinity of the *vidyārājas*.

Finally, although the point has been overlooked in scholarship to date, Taishaku’s appearance on the altar (although not textually substantiated) may be explained by the *zuzō* mandala images: in one sheet of each set of the “Benevolent Kings Five Directions Illustrations,” Taishakuten appears with the Four Guardian Kings as a distinct group

<sup>45</sup> *Kakuzenshō* 覺禪鈔, “Ninnō kyō 1,” Bussho Kankōkai, ed. 1912–22, henceforth *BZ* (1978–1983), vol. 46: 228 (i.e., *Kakuzenshō* 2: 716). The *Kakuzenshō* is a compilation of iconographic drawings by Kakuzen completed in 1219. The seven volumes of the *Kakuzenshō* are in *BZ*, vols. 45–51. See also *T.* 2469.78:66a. The *TZ* manuscript is based on that preserved at Kajūji and housed in the Nara National Museum, with four hundred and sixty-four illustrations in one hundred and thirty-six fascicles; the manuscript illustrated in *BZ* has three hundred and sixty-nine illustrations in one hundred and forty-one fascicles and is based primarily on a manuscript preserved at Zōjōji. See Kakuzen shō kenkyū kai, ed. 2004. Inscriptions on the back of four of the Tōji works note Kakuzen’s versions.



Figure 14. *Ninnōkyō gohō shoson zu* 仁王經五方諸尊圖 (Benevolent Kings Five Directions Illustrations), central assembly. Daigoji, Kyoto. Heian–Kamakura period, twelfth–thirteenth century. One of five hanging scrolls, ink on paper, H 154.3 cm, W 105.5 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 304, pl. 11.13).





Figure 15. *Ninnōkyō gohō shoson zu* (Benevolent Kings Five Directions Illustrations), west assembly. Daigoji, Kyoto. Heian–Kamakura period, twelfth–thirteenth century. One of five hanging scrolls, ink on paper, H 154.3 cm, W 105.5 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 305, pl. 11.14).



Figure 16. *Ninnōkyō gohō shoson zu* 仁王經五方諸尊圖 (Benevolent Kings Five Directions Illustrations), central assembly. Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), Kyoto. Probably Kamakura period, twelfth–thirteenth century. One of five hanging scrolls, ink on paper, H 151.8 cm, W 96.7 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 306, pl.11.15).



Figure 17. *Ninnōkyō gohō shoson zu* 仁王經五方諸尊圖 (Benevolent Kings Five Directions Illustrations), south assembly. Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), Kyoto. Probably Nanbokuchō-Muromachi period, fourteenth–fifteenth century. One of five hanging scrolls, ink on paper, H 150.6 cm, W 96.7 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 307, pl. 11.16).



Figure 18. *Fudô Myôô (Acalânatha), Takao mandara, Womb mandala*, detail. Jingoji, Kyoto. Heian period, 829–33. Hanging scroll, gold and silver pigments on *shikon* (*murasaki* root) dyed damask silk; full scroll: H 446.4 cm, W 406.3 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 237, pl. 10.4).

of five. Bonten stands to the rear, as part of Taishakuten's entourage, next to Fudō Myōō.<sup>46</sup>

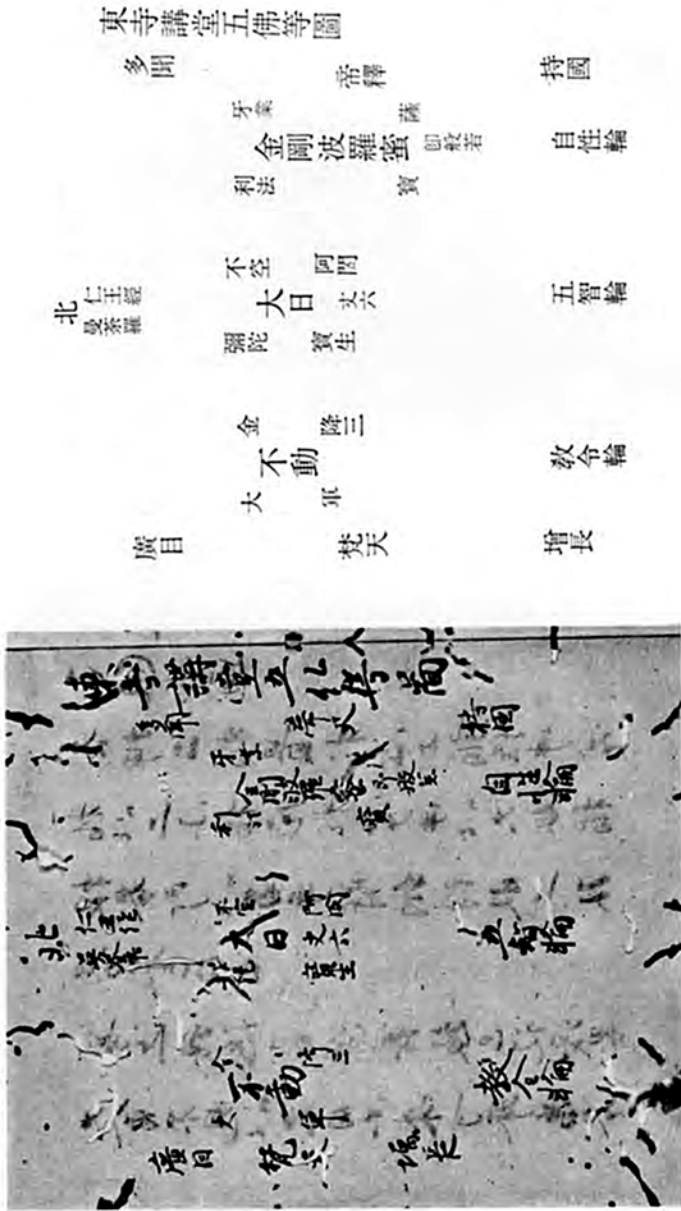
*Representing the Altar: Iconography, Drawings, and Taxonomies*

The iconography of the altar is complex and cannot be adequately discussed in a brief essay. The *honzon* or primary divinity for the Benevolent Kings ritual (Ninnōkyō-hō) varies depending on lineage and ritualist, and is not specified in the texts and drawings. Examples of the painted mandala type described in the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* ritual manual survive at Daigoji and Kumedera. The Kumedera painting shows Fudō Myōō at the center surrounded by ritual implements. Since the ritual text, the *Ninnō nenju giki*, depends significantly on the *Diamond Peak Sūtra* and in turn to the Diamond world Mandala, the Diamond World iconography can be seen as a unifying factor. Among the three central groups of five statues, the Five Wisdom Buddhas correspond to Diamond World mandala imagery, as do four of the Five Great Bodhisattvas. The central figure, Kongōsatta 金剛薩埵 (Vajrasattva), is typically said to correspond to the *Ninnō nenju giki*, along with the Five Vidyārājas (Godai Myōō). The central bodhisattva Kongosatta, and the five Myōō, however, have correspondences in the Diamond World iconography. Although Takata and others have stressed a blending of the two ideologies or iconographies, few have noted the closer relationship of the Benevolent Kings ritual texts and the *Vajrasekhara sūtra*, and the corresponding Diamond World iconography; thus the alleged lack of iconographic unity on the altar may be a problem of relying on specific texts without understanding their scriptural sources.

The oldest dated extant plan of the altar is a diagram dating to 922, created by the monk Shinjaku (886–927) 真寂, and found in the *Fukanreitōki* (figure 19 shows the original at left and a transcription at right), titled *Tōji Kōdō gobutsu tō zu* (“Tōji Lecture Hall Five Buddhas and Other Icons Drawing,” hereafter, *Fukanreitōki* drawing).<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Later works copy this arrangement, such as a drawing in the Cleveland Museum probably from Daigoji. It depicts the Five Great Myōō and the Four Heavenly Kings with Taishakuten, but the eight bodhisattvas (fierce and benevolent) have been reduced to one, Hannya Bosatsu. See Cunningham and Cleveland Museum of Art 1998, 82, plate 51.

<sup>47</sup> *Fukanreitōki* 不灌鈴等記, NCKSS-jys 1: 81 (*shiryō* 49). The *Fukanreitōki* was executed by the monk Shinjaku (886–927). For a color reproduction, see Tōji Hōbutsukan



(仁和寺本)

Figure 19. Tōji Kōdō gobutsu nado zu (Tōji Lecture Hall Five Buddhas and Other Icons Drawing), diagram of Tōji Lecture Hall altar, from the *Fukanreiōki* with transcription. Tōji (Kyōōgokokuji), Kyoto. Ca. 922. Ink on paper (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, pl. 11.9).

Imported drawings or paintings likely served as a basis for not only the appearance of the Lecture Hall statues but also for the creation of a ritual mandala. In effect, the nature of the importation (“Benevolent Kings Five Directions Illustrations” iconographic drawings, few if any paintings of the relevant mandalas, no statue groups), and the fact that Kūkai was transmitting the rites of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra*, the *Vajrasekhara sūtra*, among others, to priests at Tōji, means that the Tōji Lecture Hall altar had a strong visual, conceptual, and performative parallel, at least for the practitioner, to the practice of the rituals associated with the divinities on the altar, even if the altar or the Lecture Hall itself was not used for the ritual. It is also important to remember that the priests studied the drawings and received oral instruction about them.

The 922 *Fukanreitōki* drawing is a simple diagram, providing names for the divinities, sometimes in shorthand. Today’s altar plan differs from the 922 drawing in several ways. The pentads of the Five Wisdom Buddhas and Five Great Bodhisattvas are rotated one position, or 45 degrees, counterclockwise. These and other differences are difficult to explain, but the 922 drawing is logical in that the placement of each divinity in each pentad is in a corresponding and correct (rotated) directional position (e.g., the deities of the south all appear in the southwest position. etc.), so it is most likely the original arrangement for the altar of statues.

At the top of the 922 diagram (figure 19), below the character for “north,” is written “Benevolent Kings Sūtra mandala” (*Ninnōkyō mandara* 仁王經曼荼羅). This label is probably contemporaneous with the diagram, but it is possible that it is a later interpretation. If a contemporaneous notation, it suggests that the altar of statues was considered to represent such a mandala. It also strongly suggests that monks at the time the notation was made “interpreted” the site. The making of the mandala—setting up the platform, painting a picture of the deities, then adorning it with vases, implements, and canopies—is the first activity of a complex sequence of prescriptions for the rite provided in Amoghavajra’s commentary, the *Ninnō nenju giki*. Below each of the three pentads shown in the 922 *Fukanreitōki* diagram (see figure 19)

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1996. Shinjaku 真寂 was the third prince born to Emperor Uda (r. 887–897), and his title was Imperial Prince of the Law (*Hōsan no miya*). “Kōdōzuyō,” *Tōbōki* 1, ZZGR 12: 11a. The *Fukanreitōki* diagram is also included in the *Kakuzenshō*.

are characters for a Buddhist doctrinal theory, the Sanrinshin 三輪身 (alt. Sanrinjin) or Three Cakra Bodies. The Three Cakra Bodies theory (but not the systematic term “Sanrinshin”) is part of the conceptual structure of a ritual contemplation text of the *Diamond Peak Sūtra*, the *Diamond Peak Samādhi (Realization) Sūtra*.<sup>48</sup> The term “Sanrinshin” was not used until the twelfth century. The Three Cakra Bodies concept is also found in the ritual commentaries of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* (both the *Ninnō nenju giki* and the *Ninnōkyōsho*), but these works use different terms for the concept than the sūtra does.<sup>49</sup> Of the early drawings of the Lecture Hall altar of statues, only the earliest, the 922 *Fukanreitōki* diagram, labels the statue program with the Three Cakra Wheels tags. It may be a later addition to the drawing or it may be part of Kūkai’s thinking at the time, although it was not a systematized doctrinal theory. By the twelfth century, the Three Cakra Bodies theory was named and in wide circulation. The Sanrinjin doctrine, according to the based on the Diamond Peak yoga Sūtra (*Kongōchō yugakyō*) asserts that the so-called original nature (compassion) of the Buddha, as represented by the Five Buddhas, has two fundamental “emanations,” benevolence and ferocity.<sup>50</sup> Thus, an enlightened being can express itself in three forms—in a universal, transcendent, or so-called transformation body.

In Tenchō 2 (825), at Junna’s behest, Kūkai officiated at the Rite of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* in the palace.<sup>51</sup> The *Tōbōki* asserts that the esoteric ritual was held at Tōji from the time the Lecture Hall plan was approved in 825 and continuously thereafter, but this cannot be further documented.<sup>52</sup> If Kūkai intended the Tōji Lecture Hall to be the site for rites based on the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* ritual texts he

<sup>48</sup> On the history of the Sanrinshin doctrine and its status during Kūkai’s time, see Inoue (Shimomatsu) 1987. The *Diamond Peak Sūtra (Kongōchō yugakyō)*; the full title is *Kongōchōyuga rishūhannyakyō*, is *T.* 241.8:778–81.

<sup>49</sup> The latter term is used in one text that espouses the idea, the *Mahāyāna samgraha* (J: *Shōdai jōron*) (attributed to Asanga), *T.* 1592 and 1593. See Inoue (Shimomatsu) Tōru, “Tōji Kōdō no shoson to sanrinshinsetsu,” *Mikkyō bunka* 157 (1987): 50–66.

<sup>50</sup> *BDJ* 547, based on the *Diamond Peak Yoga Sūtra*, or *Kongōchō yugakyō* (the full title is *Kongōchō yuga rishū hannyakyō*), *T.* 241. This title can refer to several different texts.

<sup>51</sup> *Ninnōhannyakyō-hō*, in Kūkai, *Seireishū*, *KZ* 3: 514. As the *Seireishū* contains later additions, however, the date is not without question.

<sup>52</sup> *MDJ* 4: 1764, which cites the *Kinrei Tōbōki*, fascicle 5. Continuous occurrences at Tōji are unsubstantiated.



imported, his intention is not recorded. Here we suggest that evidence strongly demonstrates that the hall was closely tied to the Diamond World mandala in terms of both visual intentionality, as a sculptural mandala for the *Benevolent Kings* conceptual and ritual tradition; and visual effect, as a site for national protection. Understanding the relationship between ritual practice, representation, effect, referentiality, visuality, and history are key to understanding the Lecture Hall altar as both form and performance. I am interested in the “original setting” not because of an overarching validity but as a way of conceiving the relationship of Kūkai’s plan to the advent of *mikkyō* visuality in Japan. Based on the commentary in the historical record, we see that the chief priests of Tōji also sought to recreate the original plan.

If the Ninnōkyō-hō rite was not performed there during the ninth century, then the Lecture Hall visually resonates with—indeed, choreographs—the rite and mandala iconography. This can be supported not only by the reasons summarized thus far but also by the fact that in later centuries the rite was actually performed on the statue altar; I take up this point below.

### *Ritual Place*

Only one study of the Tōji Lecture Hall altar, to my knowledge, speculates about the actual performance of rites at the Lecture Hall during the ninth century. Yamada Kōji argues that the hall and its statues were made as commemorative works intended to promote national peace and protection, but that the *Benevolent Kings* rituals could not have occurred in the Tōji Lecture Hall because there is insufficient space for an actual performance of the Ninnōkyō-hō.<sup>53</sup> This conclusion, based on the actual space, overlooks the conceptual and performative nature of visuality and material form. The earliest illustrated description of the rite may be that given by Kakuzen, who gives the 922 *Fukanreitōki* drawing in his ca. 1219 *Kakuzenshō* as the definitive guide for the rite, and reproduces it at the end of the text. He also illustrates and discusses a *Gohō mandara*, or Five Directions Mandala, based largely on the *Ninnō nenju giki*.<sup>54</sup> He gives illustrations of the canopy and the ritual platform and drawings like those said to

<sup>53</sup> Yamada and Miyaji 1988, 129–30.

<sup>54</sup> BZ 46: 191–204 (*Ninnōkyō-jō*, *Kakuzenshō* 2: 677–92). For the opening of the mandara section, see BZ 46: 191 (*Ninnōkyō-jō*, *Kakuzenshō* 2: 679); see BZ 46: 200

be based on Kūkai's works, such as the Daigoji and Tōji "Benevolent Kings Five Directions Illustrations."

The four ritual platforms prescribed by the *Ninnō nenju giki* and shown in the *Kakuzenshō* are illustrated in another source that illustrates the performance of the rite *within* the Tōji Lecture Hall itself. The *Ryakuōgonen ninnōkyōbō zakki* 曆応五年仁王經法雜記, a Momoyama-period copy of a record for a performance of the Rite of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* in the Lecture Hall in 1342 (color pl 13), shows the Lecture Hall *karma mandala* of statues in a manner consistent with the 922 *Fukanreitōki* diagram; there are four ritual *dan* 壇 (platforms), two large and two small, deployed across the altar for the rite.<sup>55</sup> This is the earliest representation known of the Rite of the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* associated with Amoghavajra's translation performed within the Tōji Lecture Hall. It is possible that this tradition developed late in the history of Tōji; we have also noted that the markings on the 922 drawing may be later additions.

One fascinating clue to the possibility of an earlier performance in the hall, which would substantiate the traditional assertions that the rite was performed at Tōji from 825, is found in unpublished reports from recent excavations. When the central five buddhas were moved for repairs begun in 2001, charred remains typical of a *goma* platform were found at the Heian-period levels of packed earth in the altar below the Dainichi statue at the center.<sup>56</sup> There is no record of a *goma* ritual enacted before the altar was completed and the statues emplaced, but it appears that *goma* rites were conducted at the center of the hall. I do not believe that *goma* rites occurred only once, likely first at the consecration of the hall, but that the Lecture Hall served as a ritual focus for the whole of Tōji until the Kanjōin was completed around 843 under Jichie.

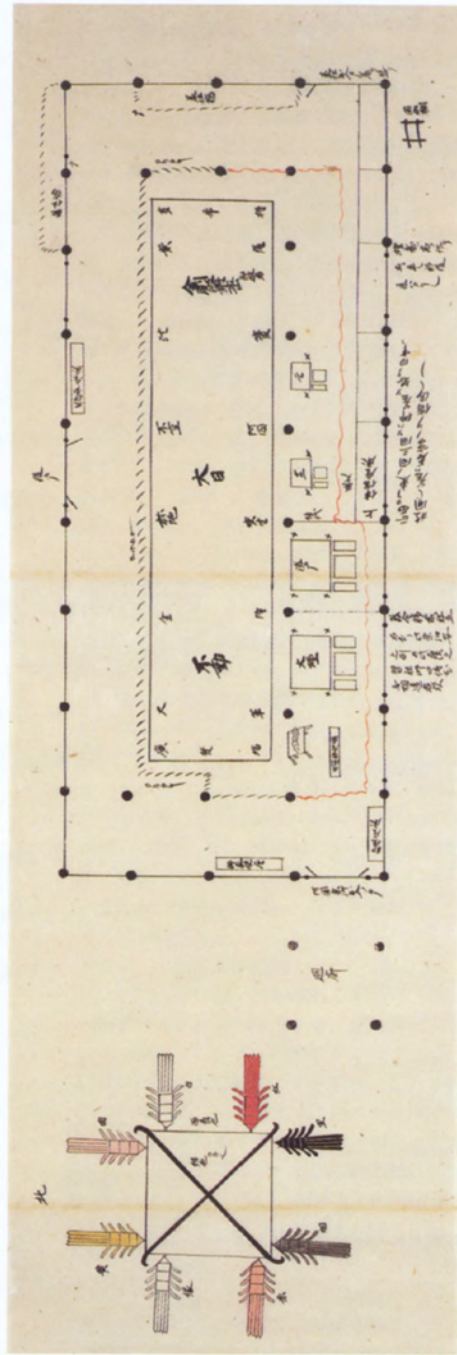
The Lecture Hall sits *at the exact center* of the plan of the early Heian-period monastery. The intention of the altar, thus interpreted, is a *karma mandala* (form/activity) that addresses particular levels of understanding gained by its multiple audiences and their expectations.

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(*Ninnōkyō-jō*, *Kakuzenshō* 2: 688) for the opening of the *Shiki mandara*. For the *Fukanreitōki* drawing, see BZ 46: 228 (*Ninnōkyō-jō*, *Kakuzenshō* 2: 716).

<sup>55</sup> Mitsukoshi honten. *Daigoji ten: Hideyoshi, Daigo no, hanami 400-nen; Inori to bi no denshō* 1998, 120, figure. 93; 189–90.

<sup>56</sup> Discussion with Mr. Ono of the Office for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo, December 5, 2001, London. Findings as yet unpublished.



Color plate 14 (Bogel 79). Illustration from the *Ryakuōgonen ninnōkyōbō zakki* 曆心五年仁王經法雜記 (1342 Rite of the Benevolent Kings Sūtra). Momoyama period. Ink and colors on paper. Handscroll (one scroll), H 28.5 cm, L 723.7 cm (Bogel, *Glance*, 2009, 332–33, pl. 11.29).

I do not suggest specific “plans” or “models” for interpreting the Lecture Hall in these discussions of several visual and spatial parallels to practice and practitioners, but rather a loosely knit body of references and signifiers—spatial, visual, somatic, and conceptual—that would have informed the activities of the makers and users of the hall.

As for the dense program of statues and in a traditional space—seemingly at odds—a comparison of the designs of the ritual practice area in any early *Abhiṣeka* hall with the Lecture Hall altar reveals an interesting similarity. The three primary groups of five statues on the Lecture Hall altar may be seen as both locative and symbolic parallels to the disposition of space and icon function in a ritual hall. That is, each of the altar’s three statue groups—the fierce Myōō Bosatsu, the comparatively benign Godai Bosatsu, and the central Five Wisdom Buddhas—correspond, respectively, to the Diamond and Womb mandalas with platforms, and the central space, often used for *goma* rites. (That *goma* remains are beneath the center of the altar deepen our interest.) Thus, the Lecture Hall altar imitates—*re-enacts*—a mandala *abhiṣeka* space. The intention of the altar, thus interpreted, is mandala activity that addresses particular levels of understanding gained by its multiple audiences, and their expectations.

In keeping with the goals of ritual practice, and arising from the specific metaphorical schema and visual constituents of the Shingon *mikkyō* Buddhist tradition in Japan, the forms, representations, and ideas of the esoteric worship hall and icons may each be understood to exist as ontological equals of a dynamic nexus that includes the universe of divinities, the practitioner, ritual, and image. The Tōji Lecture Hall participates in such a nexus, one that draws upon the representational, performative, and imaginary spaces called mandalas.



EARLY MODERN, MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY  
(EDO, MEIJI, AND UP TO THE PRESENT)



## 80. SANSKRIT STUDIES IN EARLY MODERN JAPAN

Regan Murphy

The study of Sanskrit in Japan prior to the Meiji period (1868–1912), when Japan opened to the West, focused on Siddham<sup>1</sup> script and was tied to a ritual science of sound found in esoteric Buddhism. Siddham script had been introduced to Japan in the early eighth century, but it was only with Kūkai's 空海 (774–835)<sup>2</sup> consolidation of Shingon esoteric Buddhism that the study of Sanskrit developed into a discipline of its own. In contrast to exoteric Buddhism, esoteric Buddhism envisioned a means for realizing buddhahood in the present through rituals for the body, speech, and mind. The link between Sanskrit and the ritual science of mantra<sup>3</sup> ensured that its study would continue within esoteric Buddhist spheres in Japan for the next millennium, but it also gave Sanskrit study a distinct character, as a science of sounds and writing rather than of grammar. Beginning in the Nara period (710–784) and reaching its peak in the Heian period (794–1185), the study of Sanskrit (specifically Siddham) then declined significantly in the following centuries only to be revitalized in the early modern renaissance of the Edo period (1600–1868).

During the renaissance of the early modern period, there was a feverish interest in ancient Japanese language and culture. New methods of study, based on evidential and rational textual analysis, allowed an emerging class of provincial scholars to surpass traditional elite lineages that had transmitted knowledge from master to disciple. Modern

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<sup>1</sup> Many esoteric Buddhist texts that were brought to China and transmitted to Japan were written in Siddham, a North Indian script used for writing Sanskrit from approximately 600–1200 C.E.

<sup>2</sup> The scholar-monk Kūkai is an intellectual giant of early Japanese history, famous for his systematic philosophy that introduced the Japanese to esoteric Buddhist ideas he had learned in China. When Kūkai went to China in 804, he became a disciple of Hui-kuo 惠果, the seventh patriarch of Chen-yen (or Zhenyan; Shingon), and studied Siddham with the Indian monk Prajña. Kūkai is generally thought of as the founder of Shingon esoteric Buddhism but is also recognized for his accomplishments and innovations in lexicography, literature and poetry, literary theory, calligraphy, art, painting, woodcarving, sculpture, music, architecture, and so on.

<sup>3</sup> For more on mantra and dhāraṇī in the Shingon esoteric Buddhist tradition, see Abé 1999.



intellectual historians have described this new and robust interest in ancient Japanese language as a form of nativism that developed broadly in response to shifts within Confucian studies, leaving Buddhism out of the picture. The Buddhist study of Siddham in fact played a critical role in this renaissance, but to date there has been little research on the Buddhist contribution to the early modern study of language or indeed of the transformation of Buddhist scholarship under the influence of new approaches to knowledge.

A focus on the study of Siddham during the early modern period<sup>4</sup> may help to fill this lacuna in previous scholarship. By looking at four case studies (of two Sanskrit scholars, two of ancient Japanese), this chapter aims to suggest future directions for research not only on the transformation of esoteric Buddhism in the early modern period, but also on the contribution of its ritual sciences to the development of Japanese linguistics.

Born nearly eighty years apart, the two Sanskrit scholars introduced here are Jōgon 浄厳 (1639–1702), who stood at the forefront, and Jiun Sonja 慈雲尊者 (1718–1804), who stood at the apex of the revitalization of Sanskrit studies. Both represented the type of new “early modern” scholar-monk who combined a high level of scholarship with an interest in the popularization of Buddhism among the laity through publishing vernacular texts, conducting precept ceremonies, and giving lectures.

Although sources on Jōgon are severely limited,<sup>5</sup> we know that he entered Mt. Kōya, the headquarters of Shingon esoteric Buddhism, at age ten and spent the next twenty-three years there, leaving only after the death of several of his mentors and the failure of his efforts to revitalize the study of Sanskrit on the mountain.<sup>6</sup> He is best known

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<sup>4</sup> Although quantitatively incomparable to Confucian studies, the study of Siddham swelled in the Edo period, producing such scholar-monks as Jōgon 浄厳 (1639–1702), Donjaku 曇寂 (1674–1742), Kōryū 興隆 (1759–1842), Jakugon 寂厳 (1702–1771), Jiun Sonja (1718–1804), Gyōchi 行智 (1778–1841), and Daijaku 大寂 (1740–1821), among others. See Takakusu 1918.

<sup>5</sup> Jōgon’s compiled works are not available in publication. What is readily available to the student of Jōgon are a few secondary works that tend toward hagiography and a limited selection of his texts that have been published. See bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> Jōgon described his efforts in the colophon of the *Tozenin Shittanshō* 東禅院悉曇抄, which he copied in the first month of Kanbun 11 (1671). He wrote (quoted in Ueda Reijō 1979, 7):

[L]ast year in the southern mountain we revitalized the sermons on Siddham, but at the time there was a person who opposed our efforts and it finally ended. Ah,

for his mass precept ceremonies, which were said to have assembled as many as 340,055 people (Ueda Reijō 1979, 8). Jōgon is reputed also for his rigorously evidential study of ritual manuals<sup>7</sup> and his studies of Siddham, which led to the publication of his major study on Siddham, the *Shittan Sanmitsushō* 悉曇三密鈔,<sup>8</sup> a text that would prove to be influential both within and outside Buddhist circles.<sup>9</sup> His study of Sanskrit was an integral part of his vision of the superiority of esoteric Buddhism over exoteric Buddhism. While exoteric Buddhism viewed language as a limited tool that could only point toward but never capture the ultimate truth,<sup>10</sup> esoteric Buddhism introduced a ritual science involving language that aimed at realizing the original unity of nirvana and samsara.<sup>11</sup>

Jōgon was representative of the intellectual trends of his day, which were focused on the restoration of ancient thought, as were such Confucian scholars as Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁斎 (1627–1705),<sup>12</sup> Itō Tōgai 伊藤

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the extent of the degeneration of the dharma—the true way declines. There is too much to lament! It is not enough just to be sad! What regret...

<sup>7</sup> The aim within Japanese Shingon esoteric Buddhism is to realize buddhahood in this body via the ritual practices for body, speech, and mind. Central to these ritual practices are knowledge of mandalas, *mudrās*, and mantras. The correct methods were transmitted orally and in manuals, both of which multiplied in number since Kūkai's time. The few manuals produced by Kūkai are found in the *Kōbō Daishi Zenshū* 弘法大師全集, but the great majority of ritual manuals and records of oral transmissions extant today come from the Ono and Hirosawa traditions and are mostly the products of great scholars after Kūkai. Jōgon spent much of his life researching the oral transmissions and manuals of the medieval scholars, correcting mistakes in this inherited knowledge. Ekō 慧光 (1666–1734), who was to become the head of Reiuji after Jōgon, recalled that “all the hairs on my body stood up” when he heard Jōgon's explanation of ritual manuals at Tamonin in Edo at the age of twenty-one. The radical evidential method that Jōgon employed, which countered the tradition of face-to-face transmission, caused this dramatic response. Ekō further notes that Jōgon's publishing activities, through which he actively sought to introduce the laity to Shingon teachings through vernacular texts, elicited the remonstrance of authorities at Mt. Kōya (see Ueda Reijō 1979, 9).

<sup>8</sup> As a result of Jōgon's activities, the traditional Siddham primer, the *Shittan Jiki*, became a popular object of lectures. Jōgon is also known for his Siddham-Chinese dictionary.

<sup>9</sup> Keichū, Norinaga, and Jiun had all read Jōgon's *Shittan Sanmitsushō*.

<sup>10</sup> This discussion gives a generalized overview of the distinction between esoteric and exoteric Buddhist views of language. For more nuance, see Abé 1999; Murphy 2009.

<sup>11</sup> His discussions of exoteric and esoteric Buddhism reflect the influence of Kakuban's 覺鑿 (1095–1143) writings (Ueda 1979, 10).

<sup>12</sup> Itō Jinsai was an early Edo-period Confucian scholar and educator who founded the Kogigaku (Study of Ancient Meaning) school, which is considered part of the Kogaku (Ancient Learning) school. He was skeptical of the Zhu Xi interpretation of

東涯 (1670–1736),<sup>13</sup> Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728),<sup>14</sup> and the so-called “father of nativism,” the esoteric Buddhist monk Keichū 契沖 (1640–1701).<sup>15</sup> Jōgon’s Sanskrit studies were linked to an effort to clear away historical accretions and retrieve the original meaning of ritual manuals; the study of Siddham was critical in gaining a correct understanding of the mantra and *dhāraṇī* found in these texts.<sup>16</sup> Jōgon<sup>17</sup> took an evidential approach that prioritized textual rather than oral authority<sup>18</sup> in sifting through the great accumulation of ritual manuals and oral transmissions.

Jōgon’s study of Siddham began from an emphasis on a positive evaluation of language, not only as a manifestation of the *dharmakāya*

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Confucianism and encouraged his students to read Confucian classics, such as the *Analects* and *Mencius*, directly. He established a private school in Kyōto called the Kogidō.

<sup>13</sup> Itō Tōgai (1670–1738), the eldest son of Itō Jinsai, was a mid-Edo-period Confucian scholar and teacher. He maintained and consolidated his father’s teachings.

<sup>14</sup> Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728) was a mid-Edo-period Confucian scholar who attacked the entire Neo-Confucian tradition and insisted on a return to the *Six Classics*.

<sup>15</sup> Ueda Reijō notes several indirect personal connections between Jōgon and Ogyū: Ogyū was the vassal of the *daimyō* Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu, who was Jōgon’s patron. The head of the Nishidai prefecture in Kawachi, Honda Tadamune 本多忠統, was both a close friend of Jōgon’s disciple Rentai 蓮体 and a disciple of Ogyū. Based on Ueda’s analysis, Jōgon and Ogyū were part of the same early modern renaissance, but it is not clear if one influenced the other directly (Ueda 1979, 13).

<sup>16</sup> The Hirosawa tradition tended to privilege ritual manuals over oral transmissions; the Ono tradition favored oral transmissions over ritual manuals. Jōgon insisted that ritual manuals provide a foundation for criticism of the various traditions and, based on his research, created new manuals and oral transmissions (Ueda 1979, 8).

<sup>17</sup> Jōgon had a wide following in all levels of society and was at the forefront of early modern publishing of ritual manuals, often working with the publisher Ōbakusan Inbō. See Ueda 2000.

<sup>18</sup> Jōgon admonished his disciples in the chapter on previous sūtras and rituals in his *Myōkyokudō Kyōkai* 妙極堂教誡 (quoted in Ueda 1979, 8):

[T]hose who study Esoteric Buddhism should first look at the original sutras and rituals of the various gods. . . . [N]ext they should learn the oral secrets of the houses and the teachers’ secret teachings. During the period of degenerate law (*mappō*), the sacred degenerates into the secular, pearls are ground to powder and mixed. Therefore, if one does not first seek the correct understanding of the sacred teachings, one will not be able to tell beans from barley. The true and the false will become confused and one will not be able to make sense of all the hundreds of derivative teachings.

This sentiment suggests a Buddhist way of articulating the reason behind the broader movement in the intellectual sphere aimed at clearing away derivative teachings and returning to an original embedded in ancient texts.

but also providing a model for correct understanding of the world.<sup>19</sup> In this vision, language functioned as a microcosm for explaining the phenomenal world. Central to his argument was the theory of the original non-arising of the letter *A* (*ajihonbushō* 阿字本不生) found in the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (Jpn. *Dainichikyō-sho* 大日經疏) and Kūkai's *Voice, Letter, Reality* (*Shōji jissōgi* 声字実相義).<sup>20</sup> He writes in the third scroll of his *Benwaku Shinan* 弁惑指南, "Esoteric Buddhism takes the original non-arising of the letter 'A' as the basis for all things" (quoted in Ueda Reijō 1979, 11). According to this teaching, all letters form by differentiating themselves from the original *A*, the origin of no origin; i.e., all letters have relational identity (dependent co-origination) rather than substantial independent self-presence. Jōgon's discussion of Siddham emphasized the potency of language, and particularly Sanskrit, as a model embodying esoteric Buddhist teachings.

In his *Shittan Sanmitsushō*, Jōgon makes this connection clear, explaining the teaching of the original non-arising of the letter 'A' in his introduction of a fifty-sounds chart.<sup>21</sup> Students of modern Japanese will recognize the fifty-sounds chart as an arrangement of the Japanese syllabary according to *a-i-u-e-o* and *ka-sa-ta-na-ha-ma-ya-ra*. Variations of this chart were used throughout Japanese history by esoteric Buddhist scholars of Siddham, who were intent on maintaining the correct pronunciation of mantra and *dhāraṇī*. Only in the early modern period was the fifty-sounds chart introduced to the study of Japanese, and it did not replace the *iroha* poem<sup>22</sup> as the way of arranging

<sup>19</sup> Ueda Reijō notes that whereas Kūkai had discussed this concept in terms of the six elements, Jōgon tended to emphasize the teaching of the original non-arising of the letter *A* (*ajihonbushō*) (Ueda 1979).

<sup>20</sup> For an English-language introduction to the concept of the original non-arising of the letter *A* in the Japanese esoteric Buddhist context, see Abé 1999, 288–93.

<sup>21</sup> The fifty-sounds chart that appears in the *Shittan Sanmitsushō* is based on traditional explanations of phonetics. However, pairing it with an explanation of the production of sounds according to the Shingon philosophy of *A* as originally non-arising is Jōgon's innovation (Ueda 1979, 11).

<sup>22</sup> Before the use of the fifty-sounds chart, the Japanese phonetic script was arranged into a poem:

- (1) I Ro Ha Ni Ho He To  
Chi Ri Nu Ru Wo
- (2) Wa Ka Yo Ta Re So  
Tsu Ne Na Ra Mu
- (3) U Yi No O Ku Ya Ma  
Ke Fu Ko E Te

the syllabary in the emerging field of Japanese linguistics until the mid-Edo period. In fact, Jōgon's friendship with the father of Japanese linguistics (and the subject of our second case study), the esoteric Buddhist monk Keichū, was critical to this revolutionary shift. Their close relationship is evidenced in Keichū's writings, which both follow Jōgon's explication of sound production and acknowledge his assistance in finding a publisher for Keichū's study of ancient usage of the phonetic script, the *Wajishōranshō* 和字正濫鈔.<sup>23</sup>

Most scholarship on Keichū describes him as the "father" of what has come to be understood as an anti-Buddhist nativist movement (Kokugaku 国学), based on his revolutionary studies of the earliest Japanese texts. Keichū's writings are found in the *Keichū Zenshū* 契冲全集,<sup>24</sup> and he is frequently mentioned in secondary sources on Kokugaku, though there are few studies that provide a strong introduction to the role of Buddhism in his scholarship.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, scholarship on this topic tends to discount Keichū's Buddhist affiliations as an anomaly.<sup>26</sup> His writings, however, reveal a deep commitment to esoteric Buddhism, and his studies of the Japanese language are explained according to a logic of equivalence in which the study of Japanese was considered particularly efficacious in teaching esoteric Buddhist truths to the Japanese people. Keichū extends esoteric Buddhist theories relating to Sanskrit to the study of Japa-

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- (4) A Sa Ki Yu Me Mi Shi  
Ye Hi Mo Se Su

Abé 1999, 392 translates this poem as follows:

- (1) Although its scent still lingers on  
The form of a flower has scattered away
- (2) For whom will the glory  
Of this world remain unchanged?
- (3) Arriving today at the yonder side  
Of the deep mountains of evanescent existence
- (4) We shall never allow ourselves to drift away  
Intoxicated, in the world of shallow dreams.

<sup>23</sup> Keichū had participated in Jōgon's lectures on ritual manuals in 1678. He also borrowed, read, and copied ritual manuals written by Jōgon. Ueda Reijō (1979, 10) claims that while Motoori Norinaga praised Keichū as the father of nativism, in fact Keichū learned his evidential scholarly method from Jōgon's research on ritual manuals.

<sup>24</sup> Tsukishima's *Keichū Kenkyū* (1984) should be consulted first, as it corrects several mistakes in Hisamatsu's introduction to Keichū's work found in the *Zenshū*.

<sup>25</sup> The best secondary sources for information on Keichū's understanding of esoteric Buddhism are Inoguchi 1996; Tsukishima 1984; Murphy 2009.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Nosco 1990; Seeley 1975.

nese and employs technologies transmitted for its study to the study of Japanese. In this way, he functioned as a critical pivot between traditionally Buddhist studies and an emerging popular interest in early Japanese writing.

Like Jōgon, Keichū insists on the superiority of esoteric Buddhism over exoteric Buddhism and views the study of language as critical in a ritualized understanding of the self and the world. In Keichū's work, language is viewed as a model for the world—like Sanskrit, Japanese provided a clear model for understanding relational identity (in contrast to Chinese ideographs, which posited an independent and substantial external reality that writing mimicked). As with Jōgon, the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and Kūkai's *Voice, Letter, Reality* found a central place in Keichū's explication of language as mantra. He also cites the thirteenth-century compilation of short stories, the *Shasekishū* 沙石集 by Mujū 無住 (1226–1312),<sup>27</sup> in reference to the equation of Japanese *waka* poetry with *dhāraṇī*. Together with the *On the Interpretation of Mahāyāna* (*Shakumakaenron* 釈摩訶衍論),<sup>28</sup> these texts provided the doctrinal foundation for his assertion

<sup>27</sup> Selections from the *Shasekishū* are available in English translation. See Morrell 1985.

<sup>28</sup> Keichū ends his discussion of language in his study of the *Man'yōshū*, the *Man'yō Daishōki*, by asserting that truth can be found in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist works. The claim relies on a passage found in *On the Interpretation of Mahāyāna* (*Shakumakaenron*), which refers to the five types of language:

*Commentary on the Book of Changes* 易繫辭 says: One asked: "Writing does not exhaustively express speech, nor speech exhaustively express intent. Therefore, can the intent of the sages not be discovered?" Another answered: "The sages established signs in order to exhaustively express intent, and hexagrams in order to exhaustively express true and false, idioms in order to exhaustively express speech, changing and transmitting them in order to exhaustively bring benefit, and dynamically applying them in order to exhaustively express mind." In these lines, "writing does not exhaustively express speech, nor speech exhaustively express intent" is equivalent to the four types of understanding of language as phenomena, dreams, attachment, and beginning-less, found in the five explanations of language in *On the Interpretation of Mahāyāna*. From "the sages establish signs" onward is like truth of the fifth explanation of language as truth itself (*nyogi gonsetsu*). Those who understand the significance of this [last explanation] find truth in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist works. Those who only think of separating from language never reach the deep meaning of either. *Waka*, too, should be compared to this. There are all sorts of deep meanings; among all those who study *waka*'s deep meanings, who will be able to attain them? If one leaves behind falsehood and makes one's mind in accord with that which inspires truth, then that truth becomes so important that even gods will reverently receive them. [KZ (1978) 1: 216; italics added]

that the study of non-Buddhist texts could in fact be a Buddhist practice.

The study of Siddham was critical to Keichū's innovative approach to the research of ancient Japanese. Prior to Keichū, Japanese textual study was conducted within elite circles in which secret knowledge was transmitted from master to disciple. These earlier scholars relied on a system of phonetic transcription (*Teika kanazukai* 定家仮名遣) handed down by the Kamakura-period (1185–1333) poet Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家 (1162–1241), which sought to make sense of Heian-period phonetic transcription.<sup>29</sup>

Based on his evidential approach to the study of ancient Japanese texts, Keichū noted a discrepancy between the historical use of the phonetic script and the Teika system. He introduced a fifty-sounds chart based on Siddham versions but intended for the study of Japanese, and showed that it provided a superior method for differentiating between similar sounds than the traditional arrangement of the syllabary in the *iroha* poem. Problem sounds in the Teika system, such as the difference between “e” and “we” and “i” and “wi,” whose pronunciation had merged early on, became immediately clear when arranged in the fifty-sounds chart. Further, Keichū employed categories used in the study of Sanskrit phonetics in his study of Japanese, including the division of sounds into three types: guttural, lingual, and labial.<sup>30</sup>

The shift away from the *iroha* poem to the fifty-sounds chart sparked new questions about a rational order behind the ancient Japanese language. No longer did the secret teachings of elite lineages hold sway. Scholars from an emerging middle class employed the fifty-sounds

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<sup>29</sup> The poetry of the tenth and early eleventh century, which tended to be recorded in the phonetic script, became a model for later poetry. Because some sounds had merged, from the end of the Insei period onward the people of Kyōto could no longer spell in the Heian court style according to their contemporary pronunciation. The origins of the study of the ancient use of the script or *kanazukai* are found in the efforts to overcome this obstacle. The first record of this kind of study is Fujiwara no Teika's *Gekanshū* 下官集; and especially after its systemization in the Kamakura period by poet and linguist *Gyōa* 行阿 (n.d.), Teika's system of *kana* usage became the chief authority for poetic compositions and interpretation of ancient texts in medieval poetic studies. The medieval study of ancient literature, which was passed from master to disciple, relied on the Teika system.

<sup>30</sup> This explanation was called *sannaisetsu*. Keichū also benefited from the emerging study of the *Inkyō*, a compilation of charts imported from China, which became part of a popular interest in divining auspicious names. The *Inkyō* introduced a division of sounds into five (rather than three) types. For more information, see Kuginuki 2007.

chart and an evidential approach to clarify the correct pronunciation and sounds of the ancient Japanese language. These scholars, who tended to live in the provinces rather than in the traditional cultural capital of Kyōto, elevated the sounds of the early Japanese language, finding in these sounds the potential to re-embodiment a time before foreign influence.

The prominent nativist scholar Norinaga Motoori 宣長本居 (1730–1801), known especially for his rigorous studies of ancient Japanese texts, acknowledged the necessity of training in Siddham for studying the sounds of Japanese. In his *Kanji Sanonkō* 漢字三音考, Norinaga writes, “I will first explain the fundamentals of the study of Siddham because its terms will be frequently cited herein; all those who study phonetics must study Siddham” (quoted in Takeda 1937a, 44–45). Further, his research on geminated consonants as well as the syllabic nasal relied on categories gained from the study of Siddham (see Takeda 1937a, 1937b). Indeed, his famous discovery of the inversion “o” and “wo” on the fifty-sounds chart developed from questions on the three guttural lines “a,” “ya,” and “wa” in the chart first raised by Keichū (see Kuginuki 2007).

In one of the few articles to focus on the influence of Siddham studies in Norinaga’s work, Takeda Tessen argues that Keichū’s scholarship, rooted in the study of Siddham, played a critical role in Norinaga’s approach to phonetics.<sup>31</sup> Introduced to Keichū’s writings by his Confucian teacher, Hori Keizan 堀景山 (1688–1757), Norinaga assiduously read his works from 1752 through 1757.<sup>32</sup> Thereafter, he reviewed works on Siddham, including Annen’s *Shittanzō* 悉曇藏,<sup>33</sup> Ennin’s *Zaitōki* 在唐記,<sup>34</sup> and Jōgon’s *Shittan Sanmitsushō*.

<sup>31</sup> Takeda Tessen shows that it was likely through his research of Keichū’s texts, and not from receiving training or transmission, that Norinaga learned the fundamentals of Siddham (Takeda 1937a, 41). Like Keichū, Norinaga had also studied the *Inkyō*, mentioned above.

<sup>32</sup> Norinaga read the *Seigo Okudan* 勢語臆断 (fifth month of Hōreki 2), the *Makura Kotoba shō* 枕詞抄 (eleventh month of Hōreki 2), the preface to the *Kokin Yozaishō* 古今余材抄 (third month of Hōreki 3), the *Koganshō* 厚顔抄 (seventh month of Hōreki 6), the *Kankanshō* 改観抄 (twelfth month of Hōreki 6), the *Man’yō Daishōki* (1690), and the *Kokin Yozaishō* (seventh month of Hōreki 7). See Takeda 1937a, 38.

<sup>33</sup> Annen produced the first comprehensive study of Siddham in Japan, called the *Shittanzō*, in 880.

<sup>34</sup> The Tendai priest Ennin, better known by his posthumous name Jikaku Daishi, wrote the *Zaitōki*, which, among other topics, discusses Sanskrit sounds.



Although Norinaga's studies of early Japanese texts have been the object of robust scholarly interest, secondary work generally leaves unchallenged the assumption that he rejected Buddhism absolutely. As McNally (2005) has recently shown, however, much of the modern image of Norinaga and early modern Kokugaku was constructed by later (nineteenth century) and more vigorously xenophobic nativist scholars. Stripping away these later layers allows for inquiry into Buddhist influences, such as the study of Sanskrit, in the discussion of early Kokugaku studies of ancient Japanese language and literature. Kuginuki (2007), for example, argues that it was the rationality of the fifty-sounds chart that first sparked questions about the ancient Japanese language; it provided the key to sweeping away the flawed Teika system that had been used since the Kamakura period. Ironically, later Kokugaku scholars enveloped this chart in mystery, elevating it as a divine text.<sup>35</sup>

Jiun Sonja, an esoteric Buddhist scholar-monk and contemporary of Norinaga, brought the early modern study of Sanskrit to its peak. Like Jōgon, Keichū, and Norinaga before him, Jiun radically reevaluated received knowledge and employed new research techniques, aiming to achieve an accurate grasp of teachings in their original form, free of the obfuscating layers of historical interpretation. The urgency of this task led him later in life to reformulate Buddhism itself, arguing that all Buddhist truths were encompassed in the simple, ethical path of the ten precepts.<sup>36</sup> He was active in popularizing his vision of Buddhism among the laity in the form of precept ceremonies, lectures, and the publication of vernacular texts.

Jiun gained some understanding of Sanskrit grammar (not just its pronunciation or inscription) and diligently compiled available sources on the study of Sanskrit. He was early introduced to Siddham script as a teenager, but it was not until his forties that he dedicated himself to the study of Sanskrit. Around the age of thirty-nine, Jiun received from Shingen 真源 (1689–1758) of Mt. Kōya, an acquaintance from his research on precepts, the Sanskrit version of the *Fugengyōgansan* 普賢行願讚 brought by Kūkai from China. Though Jiun was not

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<sup>35</sup> For more on the fifty-sounds chart and the influence of Siddham studies on nativist scholarship, see Kuginuki 2007; Mabuchi 1993; Yamada Yoshio 1938; Takeda Tessen 1937a, 1937b; Murphy 2009.

<sup>36</sup> The ten precepts include a prohibition on killing, stealing, adultery, lying, frivolous speech, slander, equivocation, greed, anger, and wrong views.

immediately able to read it, it is said that he reviewed it repeatedly until he began to sense its grammar.<sup>37</sup> From his early forties through his mid-fifties, Jiun lived in seclusion, working on his momentous thousand-page study of Sanskrit, the *Bongaku Shinryō* 梵学津梁.<sup>38</sup>

Although his compiled works (*Jiun Sonja Zenshū* 慈雲尊者全集) do not include this lengthy study of Sanskrit,<sup>39</sup> it does provide an index of its contents, which notes an entire chapter dedicated to Jōgon's *Shittan Sanmitsushō*. Jiun's lectures for his disciples on Sanskrit grammar, found under the titles *Shichikyū ryakushō* 七九略抄, *Shichikyū mata ryaku* 七九又略, and the *Shichikyū kokujishō* 七九国字抄 in the *Bongaku Shinryō*, attest to his achievement in this area (Sakuma 2007, 70). Sakuma Kazuharu's 2007 study of Jiun's study of Sanskrit describes these lectures as the product of his extensive research, which reveal an understanding of declension, conjugation, and the rules of *sandhi*<sup>40</sup> based on a comparison of Sanskrit texts at his disposal and fragmentary information on Sanskrit grammar found in sūtras.

Modern scholars have portrayed Jiun as a lone and idealized figure against a backdrop of degenerate Buddhism. This scholarship on Jiun categorizes him as a "revitalizer" of Buddhism but offers no in-depth explanation of how his emphasis on the historical Buddha meshed with his understanding of esoteric Buddhism. There has been little attempt to show how Jiun's studies and refiguring of Buddhism were part of a broader movement in the intellectual sphere. Clearly his study of Sanskrit diverged from Jōgon's emphasis on the ritual potency of the sounds of Sanskrit, but how did Jiun's overall understanding of esoteric Buddhism change with this interest in the literal meaning of Sanskrit?

This overview began from the premise that the focus on Confucianism and Kokugaku in the study of early modern intellectual history

<sup>37</sup> For more on Jiun's study of Sanskrit, see Sakuma 2007; Kodama 2000; Takakusu 1984, vol. 4.

<sup>38</sup> The *Bongaku Shinryō* brought together all literary data on Siddham and the Sanskrit language found in Chinese and Japanese sources. Jiun patiently classified this vast mass of material, copying out each text himself and adding comments and critical remarks. For more information, see van Gulik 1980.

<sup>39</sup> In the section covering Jiun's Sanskrit studies in the *Jiun Sonja Zenshū*, Hase printed about a dozen of Jiun's treatises on Siddham but left out the *Bongaku Shinryō*, which was too bulky for inclusion.

<sup>40</sup> *Sandhi* is a term that covers a number of phonological processes at word boundaries, such as the fusion of sounds across these boundaries or the alteration of sounds caused by sounds in adjacent words.

has left Buddhism out of the picture. The history of the study of Sanskrit during this period provides one avenue for filling in this gap. However, Sanskrit study during this period of Japanese history cannot be adequately approached without a strong understanding of ritual as found in esoteric Buddhism, nor can it be separated from the more general renaissance in the intellectual sphere. Both of these areas—the transformation of ritual in early modern Japan and the contribution of Buddhist language theories to the early modern study of Japanese linguistics—are inviting fields for future research.

81. SHUGENDŌ AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE  
JAPANESE ESOTERIC SECTS:  
A STUDY OF THE RITUAL CALENDAR OF AN  
EDO-PERIOD SHUGENDŌ SHRINE-TEMPLE COMPLEX

Gaynor Sekimori

Given the historical circumstances that led to the development of Shugendō as a discrete religious institution in Japan, it is often difficult to distinguish it from the esoteric Tendai and Shingon sects. Since the institutional formation of Shugendō has been the subject of considerable scholarly attention, I will give only a brief summary of it here.<sup>1</sup> With the growing importance of Kumano and Yoshino as pilgrimage centers from the eleventh century, mountain ascetics (*gyōja* 行者, *shugenja* 修験者) gathered there and formed loose associations of *sendatsu* 先達 (pilgrim guides) and *oshi* 御師 (resident *shugenja* who provided pilgrim lodgings). Over time, some *sendatsu* gained authority to the extent that they controlled rights over *shugenja* and pilgrims in a particular geographical area (“parish”: *kasumiba* 霞場, *dannaba* 檀那場). During the course of the fifteenth century, the Kyōto Tendai temple Shōgoin 聖護院, which held the hereditary office of the Kumano superintendent (*kengyō* 檢校) that was first granted to the Onjōji (Miidera) priest Zōyo 增誉 (1032–1116) around 1090, came to exert control over many of these *sendatsu* groups. Subsequently, Shōgoin became the headquarters of the Honzan group (Honzanha 本山派), the “school” of Shugendō that was closely associated with Tendai, at first in an administrative capacity but by the Edo period in terms of liturgy and doctrine as well.

On the other hand, a second “school,” the Tōzan group (Tōzanha 当山派), which in the Edo period was linked closely with Shingon through its head temple, the Sanbōin of Daigoji 醍醐寺三宝院, grew out of regional Shugendō associations (Tyler 1989, 161–63); however, the Tōzan group was not necessarily limited to Shingon doctrine and

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<sup>1</sup> The following description is based on Miyake 2005, 45–68; see also Miyake 1996, 121–34.

organization, at least before the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> Previous scholarship has tended to distinguish the two groups on the basis of Tendai and Shingon doctrine, but we can no longer make such an assumption for the medieval period or even the Edo period.<sup>3</sup>

Another factor that must be considered when discussing the relationship of Shugendō and the esoteric sects is that Shugendō was not a monolithic entity but a diverse mass of beliefs and practices associated with specific mountains and areas. While esoteric modes and rituals underlie much of what is “visible” in Shugendō, we must beware of assuming that Shugendō automatically subscribes to what might be termed the philosophical base underlying the esoteric traditions. As we shall see, fully ordained Shugendō priests undertook the post-ordination training called *shido kegyō* 四度加行 in common with all Tendai and Shingon priests.<sup>4</sup> This then became the basis of their ritual structure, whether they lived at the head temple or in a village temple, and a tool to be employed for a variety of ritual modes—and not necessarily the formal rites performed in strictly Tendai and Shingon temples.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the “philosophical” interpretation of ritual meaning was not necessarily understood by Shugendō and the esoteric sects in the same way.

It is the purpose of this brief article to demonstrate this assertion through an analysis of the ritual calendar of a Shugendō shrine-temple complex, Jakkōji 寂光寺 on Mt. Haguro. Though its traditional ritual calendar was lost following its conversion to a shrine in 1873, three important sources remain that allow us to reconstruct the Jakkōji calendar: *Hagurosan nenjū gyōji* 羽黒山年中行事 (1687);<sup>6</sup> *Nenjū hōyō*

<sup>2</sup> See Sekiguchi 2000 (English version forthcoming) on the formation of the relation between Daigoji and Tōzanha.

<sup>3</sup> A study of the contents of the Koshikidake archive, a collection of records and texts from a Tōzanha village temple in present-day Yamagata prefecture, provides evidence of the eclectic nature of Edo-period Shugendō. A detailed analysis, however, must await further research. See Sekimori, forthcoming.

<sup>4</sup> See Payne, “The Fourfold Training in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism,” in this volume. The fourfold training (in *mudrās*, mantras, visualizations): the eighteen paths (*jūhachidō* 十八道), the Womb Realm (Taizōkai 胎藏界), the Diamond Realm (Kongōkai 金剛界), and *goma* 護摩. For a description of the ritual process, see, for example, Saso 1991, Payne 1991, and Sharf 2001.

<sup>5</sup> For a summary of rituals performed within Shugendō as a whole, see Miyake 1989.

<sup>6</sup> *Shintō taikai, Jinja-hen, Dewa Sanzan* 1982, 305–22; dated Jōkyō 4.7.2, based on the Kezōin manuscript. An almost identical version appears in the *Shinbutsu bunri shiryōshū* 神仏分離史料集 and also in the *Nihon sairei gyōji shūsei* 日本祭礼行事集成.

*tebumi* 年中法用手文 (ca. 1820);<sup>7</sup> and *Miuchi zaitaku gyōjiki* 御内宅行事記 (n.d., possibly 1850s?).<sup>8</sup> The *Hagurosan nenjū gyōji* represents both the liturgical conversion of Haguro to Tendai modes and the ritual incorporation of existing Shugendō practices, while the *Nenjū hōyō tebumi* and the *Miuchi zaitaku gyōjiki* are both essentially memoranda. The former, based closely on the *Hagurosan nenjū gyōji*, was formulated under the auspices of the reforming Bettō Kakujun 覚諄 (1762–1847); the latter belonged to the Saizōbō 西藏坊, one of the highest ranks of the married *shugen* of Tōge and a direct retainer of the *bettō*; this was essentially a guide to the etiquette required of *shugenja* vis-à-vis temple administration.

Edo-period Jakkōji was a mature shrine-temple complex with institutional roots in the medieval period. It was centered on a shrine to the deity of Mt. Haguro, possibly the Ideha Shrine mentioned in the “Register of Kami Names” in the *Engishiki* 延喜式 (927), which, by at least the twelfth century, was worshipped as an avatar (*gongen* 権現) of Kannon. The name “Jakkōji” first appears on a bell inscription dated 1275, though its history is probably considerably older. Haguro *shugenja* are mentioned specifically in a *bakufu* record of 1297, and a number of records of *shugen*-type ascetic practices also date from around this time. The earliest contemporary topographical description dates only from 1560.

At that time a number of temples were located on Mt. Haguro: Jakkōji, centered on the main shrine as well as in its inner precinct, Kōtakuji 荒沢寺 (both Shingon-affiliated), was on the summit; two Tendai temples and a Rinzai temple were located in the village of Tōge 手向 at the foot. All were part of a “single-mountain” (*issan* 一山) form of governance under the supervision, from 1583, of the *bettō* 別当 (a sub-temple of Jakkōji called Hōzenbō 法前坊), and not subject to the control of an external main temple (*honzan* 本山). Mt. Haguro did not have any single sectarian affiliation; its lines of ascetic tradition and doctrine were permeated by both Shingon and Tendai elements, as well as by Yoshida Shintō in the sixteenth century. Thus, though the Shingon-affiliated Jakkōji controlled the religious and

<sup>7</sup> Gorai 1983, 84–95. *Shugendō shiryōshū* 修験道史料集 [I], *Higashi Nihon-hen* is essentially a *tebumi*, a collection of short notes intended to act as a reminder of the main points of a ritual process, and was edited under the auspices of Kakujun (*bettō* 1813–1825). The original is in the archive of Togawa Anshō, who made a handwritten copy in 1952 that is now in the library of Tōhoku University.

<sup>8</sup> Gorai 1983, 95–103.

ritual activities of the main shrine, Tendai ritual and liturgical elements were not excluded from worship there. Temple activities centered on fully ordained priests who served Kannon and lower-ranking clerics who served the *gongen* and traveled to Haguro parishes scattered around northern Japan to maintain contacts with lay supporters. There were also a small number of shrine priests and *miko* 巫女 serving the *kami*.

At the end of the civil war period, Haguro was plagued by political squabbles that laid waste to the mountain, in both environmental and administrative terms, and which loosened traditional alliances among lay supporters and branch temples in the localities. With the restoration of order under Tokugawa rule, successive *bettō* made it a priority to stop further disintegration and win back old alliances. Moreover, though Tokugawa religious policy vis-à-vis Shugendō was to force all temples to affiliate either with the Honzanha or the Tōzanha, certain powerful centers, such as Mt. Hiko, Kinpusenji at Yoshino, and Mt. Haguro, resisted this and lobbied to maintain their independence.

In an environment where the growing preeminence of Tendai was a political fact, Jakkōji maneuvered to be made a branch temple of Kan'eiji 寛永寺 (Tōeizan 東叡山) in Edo, the preeminent Tendai temple in Japan. This campaign came to fruition in 1641, and as a result Jakkōji became a Tendai temple, incorporating all the former temples and sub-temples of the mountain and bringing all affiliated *shugenja*, both in Tōge and in the parishes, under its control. A wholesale retelling of the doctrinal and liturgical narrative occurred at that time, and it is probably no accident that very little detailed documentary evidence of pre-Tendai liturgies, rituals, or the conduct of mountain-entry practices remains.

A series of documents dated 1744–1747 gives a broad picture of Edo-period Jakkōji.<sup>9</sup> According to these, “Tendaishū Hagurosan Hōzen’in” consisted of thirty-one sub-temples of Tendai priests, three hundred and thirty-six households (*bō* 坊) of married *shugenja* in Tōge, three *nenbutsu* 念仏 (funerary) temples, and two *gyōha* 行派 (lifelong ascetic) temples. In addition, there were seventeen branch temples and two thousand eight hundred and forty-four village *shugenja* distributed predominantly in northern Japan.

<sup>9</sup> *Aratame ninbetsuchō* documents in *Dewa Sanzan shiryōshū* 1994, 119–20, 221–24, 225–30.

All the sub-temples were occupied by *seisō* 清僧 (“pure priests”), fully ordained Tendai priests with Shugendō qualifications. Most were the younger sons of village *shugenja* who had as youths become the *deshi* of a particular sub-temple. They were formally registered as *shugenja* in a rite called *taigyō* 太業 and ordained as Tendai *shami* 沙彌 (novices), after which they were trained in the principle liturgies, the *Hokke senbō* 法華懺法, and the daily services. They then did the *shido keygō* at Haguro according to the *Hōman-ryū* 法曼流 but went to Kan'eiji in Edo or Mt. Hiei to receive higher transmissions (such as *nyūdan kanjō* 入壇灌頂 and *kaidan denpō* 開壇伝法). They could only receive the highest priestly ranking by taking part, as could the village *shugenja*, in the *Hokke sanjūkō* 法華三十講, at which time they received certain secret Shugendō transmissions and could serve as a protagonist (*matsu hijiri* 松聖) in the Winter Peak ritual.

Eldest sons of *shugenja* were similarly registered at birth and were given the five lay precepts. Their fathers generally instructed them in sūtra recitation, *goma*, and other ritual procedures (called *kirikami denpō* 切紙伝法). They received their credentials as *shugenja* upon taking part in the Autumn Peak (*Akinomine* 秋峰) ritual in their fifteenth year. This was the only way to gain *shugenja* qualification. After this, they were called *ubasoku* 優婆塞 (lay ordained) and put on the roster for shrine duties; their *shugenja* ranking depended solely upon their participation in the *Akinomine*. This division between temple *shugen*-priests and married *shugenja* in the institutional makeup of Mt. Haguro is well reflected in the organization of the ritual calendar.

The conversion of the mountain to Tendai and its incorporation as a branch temple of Tōeizan did not have much impact on the religious practices of the married *shugenja*, but it brought great changes for the fully ordained priests. The ritual calendar shows a clear division between ritual performed at the main shrine according to Tendai or Taimitsu forms by the priests, and those belonging to the Shugendō tradition, in particular the mountain-based rituals of the Four Peaks, centering on the *shugenja* themselves (while they were still an integral part of temple activity). High-ranking *shugenja*, as direct retainers of the *bettō* (*miuchi* 御内, *onbun* 恩分), were required to attend memorial services for personages such as Tenkai, Tendai Daishi, Saichō, and Tenyū, usually held at the *honbō* (the *bettō* temple) rather than at the main shrine. Ritual performed by *shugenja* within their lodgings or halls was considered private, and so was not recorded. The lack of a written record does not mean, however, that the *shugenja* did not also



have a regular schedule of sūtra recitations and *goma* performances, especially during the pilgrimage season.

Since Jakkōji was a Taimitsu temple, rituals were carried out according to both *Lotus* and *goma* rites. *Goma* platforms existed within the main shrine and the *honbō*, as well as within all the sub-temples and *shugen* lodgings. Indoor *goma* was not performed during rituals associated with the four peaks of Shugendō practice; when performing *shugen* ritual, outdoor *goma* (*saitō goma* 柴燈護摩) was always employed. Both indoor and outdoor *goma* were generally dedicated to Fudō and were structured as rites of identification, whereby the *shugenja* could, having first been purified by the symbolic quenching of the flames of the passions, obtain the power of the deity and use it for the realization of prayer requests (*kitō* 祈禱) of clients.

The Haguro *saitō goma* (performed during the Autumn Peak) was considerably different: it was dedicated to the Founder (Nōjo Taishi/Shōken Daibosatsu); mediated through the ritual leader, the *daisen-datsu* 大先達; and its purpose was to bring *shugenja* participants to rebirth through ritual cremation. Though no *goma* services are recorded specifically in the materials under examination, probably because they do not lend themselves to mass participation, such as, for example, sūtra chanting, they would have formed the core of “applied” ritual that was performed by individuals for specific purposes.

Most services centered on the liturgy; both the *Hagurosan nenjū gyōji* and the *Nenjū hōyō tebumi* place great importance on laying out exactly which sūtras and so on were to be chanted during which rites. The basic liturgy consisted of the *Lotus* repentance rite (*Hokke senbō*) with the *Heart Sūtra*, the (*sanbon* or *kyūhon*) *shakujō*, the *Kannon Sūtra* (either in full or just the verse section), and the recitation of the names and *shingon* of the divinities of the Three Dewa Mountains, as well as other shorter verses, such as the “Hymn to Original Enlightenment” (*Hongakusan*) and the “Verse of the Tathāgata” (*Nyoraibai*).

This liturgy shares many features with the regular Tendai liturgy (see Fig. 2). It was performed, with minor variations, at the regular morning services at the main shrine (1st–7th, 12th–18th, 28th); at the monthly services for Mt. Haguro (18th), Tōshōgū (17th), and the Founder (20th); and on special occasions, such as New Year’s Day and the *sekku* days. It was also performed each night of Autumn Peak retreat (VII, 21–VIII, 1), which meant that *shugenja* were very familiar with the sūtras and the verses they contained. An abbreviated version called *hōraku* 法樂, minus the *Lotus* repentance liturgy

and with added specific verses, was recited at the monthly services for Mt. Yudono (8th).

Temple priests were also required to learn the Tendai liturgy when undertaking the *shido kegyō*; certainly mantras such as the *kōmyō shingon* were part of the repertoire of all *shugenja*. Services, such as the *nehan-e* (II, 15), the *urabon-e* (VII, 15), and the monthly Taizō Mandala services (14th), had completely different liturgies that incorporated some Tendai liturgical items, such as the *Jikage*, *Jūnyoze*, and *Endonshō*. Some commemorative rituals, especially those tied closely to the Tendai tradition, such as the *sannō-e* 山王会 and the memorial services for Saichō (VI, 4) and Tendai Daishi (XI, 24), employed the *Hokke hakkō* format, based on a *mondō* 問答 rite (*sanmon ittō* 三問一答), since it was considered to promote felicity after death (see Tanabe 1984).

Another ritual closely tied to Tendai was the *Hokke-e* 法華会 (*Lotus Sūtra* ritual, based on the *Lotus samādhi*), which was held on IV, 8 and VIII, 11. It seems to have consisted principally of the recitation of *gāthā* and sūtras “in the same tone” (*dōon* 同音). Memorial services, such as for Tenkai (X, 2) and Tenyū (X, 24), consisted of the *Lotus* repentance ritual, homage to the relics of the Buddha (*shariraimon*), *Jikage*, and transference of merit (*ekō* 廻向). In addition, the ritual “reading” of the *Great Wisdom Sūtra* (*Daihannya tendoku*) was held on the fifteenth of each month after the regular service to pray for the military strength of the Shōnai lord and the peace and prosperity of the mountain and village. It was performed regularly on other occasions as well, such as at the first service of the year for Haguro Gongen (I, 18) and the Founder (I, 19), and once specifically for the Shōnai lord (V, 6).

The importance of the *Lotus* tradition is evident when we consider the ubiquity of the *Lotus* repentance ritual (*Hokke senbō*), a penitential rite based on repentance of the six sense organs.<sup>10</sup> As we have seen, it was performed for most memorial rites, in the regular morning services, for New Year ceremonies at the main shrine, during the Spring Peak, and twice nightly during the Autumn Peak. Based on the *Lotus samādhi* practice (*Hokke zanmai*), it is the most important liturgy of Tendai and Tendai-influenced Shugendō, and doubtless

<sup>10</sup> English translation by Peter Johnson, “The Confessional Samadhi of the Lotus Sutra,” <http://www.tientai.net/lit/hksmsg/HKSMSG.htm>.

came to Haguro as a result of the sociopolitical situation in the early seventeenth century, when Jakkōji developed institutional ties with Tōeizan.

The importance of this liturgy to Haguro Shugendō cannot be overestimated: The *Hagurosan nyūbu kudokishō* 羽黒山入峰功德鈔 (1829) states that a person's defilements vanish as a result of reciting and listening to the liturgy during the Autumn Peak practice. An important point to note is that the musical form of the Lotus repentance ritual makes it much more accessible to non-specialist practitioners than the more austere and difficult forms in the Tendai school (Ōuchi forthcoming). We cannot know for certain whether the musical form used during the Autumn Peak among the *shugenja* was the same as that used in temple services, though it very likely was.

The ritual structure of the temple also included a number of *kami* elements. Four shrine priests (*shajin* 社人) and two *miko* received stipends for services to the complex. The men were hereditary shrine priests (*negi*, *hafuri*) with *shugenja* qualifications and names; the women were married and passed their positions to their heirs. The *mikos*' main functions were to provide music for rituals at the main shrine (though they were not allowed to enter the inner sanctuary) and at Tōshōgū several times a year, and to perform *yudate kagura* 湯立神楽, a form of divination using hot water. They usually conducted these in tandem with the *gyōnin* 行人, a temple sub-class that was in charge of ritual preparations.

On New Year's Day *gyōnin* performed the *kudagayu* ritual, a divination for the harvest and the weather, by themselves, but on the morning of I, 7 another divination, *yonemaki*, was enacted by both groups. A *gyōnin* scattered white rice in the inner sanctuary to bring prosperity to heaven and the earth, and at the conclusion of the rite, the *miko* and *shajin* played music and performed a *yudate kagura* to divine the fortunes of the realm and the mountain. The *shajin* performed a lion dance for the Tōshōgū (IV, 17) and Haguro Gongen (VI, 14–15) festival and played a central role in the Oriidō festival (XI, 9), where they performed *yudate kagura*.<sup>11</sup> They also provided sacred dances at the main shrine for summer visitors.

The Shugendō year at Haguro centered on the "Four Peaks" (see Earhart 1965; Sekimori 1995, 2005). The Spring Peak had formerly been a time of seclusion, but the focus had shifted from the *shugenja* to the

<sup>11</sup> For a study of *yudate kagura*, see Suzuki forthcoming.

senior temple priests, coming under the influence of the Tendai New Year ritual, the *shushōe* 修正会. In the calendar the rite is called *zasue* 座主会, and it was held between the fifth and ninth days of the New Year. The priests made offerings before scrolls depicting the Founder and the three *gongen*, and performed an abbreviated liturgy without the *Hokke senbō*. This was followed by a shared meal and *ennen* 延年 (sacred dance?). On the seventh day, participants circumambulated the altar of the main shrine reciting the *Hokke senbō*.

The Summer Peak was held between IV, 3 and VIII, 8 and involved both temple priests and *shugenja*; the former performed in rituals such as the official mountain opening and closing services at Arasawa and the ritual climbing of Gassan on VII, 13; the latter performed activities related to guiding and providing services for the large numbers of pilgrims who visited the area at this time. A local custom related to the opening was *sakamukae* 坂迎. Representatives from various Tōge neighborhoods climbed Gassan on IV, 2 after undertaking purificatory exercises in their homes, and they gathered flowers from the mountain, which they cut into small pieces to distribute to villagers on IV, 4. Another seasonal custom, possibly related, was the presentation of ninety-six vases filled with water from a sacred well at the main shrine in IV, 8. These vases continued to be filled until VI, 14, the eve of Haguro's annual festival, where again flowers form the central motif. Clearly this series of rites symbolizes the descent and veneration of the *kami* (and the ancestral spirits), and this symbolism is repeated through the medium of fire in the *saitō goma* held on Gassan on VII, 13, just prior to the *urabon* service on VII, 15.

The Autumn Peak ritual was the most important for *shugenja*. The number of items concerning it appearing in the calendars attests to its centrality as an activity integral to the identity of the complex, though all ritual detail, as “secret,” is omitted. The rite lasted from VII, 20 to VIII, 5, and was held in three different lodgings (*shuku* 宿). Ritual practices were twofold—journeys to sacred places within the complex and on the mountains, and long nighttime *sūtra* recitations, which were both purificatory and incantatory. The process represented the threefold ascent of the *shugenja* through the ten realms of enlightenment through an integral drama of death and rebirth enacted within it.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The practice was recorded on DVD in 2003 and 2004, *Haguro Shugendō: The Autumn Peak* (Tokyo: Visual Folklore). An English version has also been made. The transcript can be downloaded at [http://www.mfj.gr.jp/web/film/narration\\_haguro\\_f.pdf](http://www.mfj.gr.jp/web/film/narration_haguro_f.pdf).

The Winter Peak ritual was originally a cold-weather retreat practiced by only the most experienced *shugenja*, but at Haguro the achievement of spiritual or supernatural power was absorbed into popular New Year divination rites, which were performed by two senior *shugenja* (*matsu hijiri*) who oversaw festivities on the last night of the year. They were required to complete one hundred days of asceticism (IX, 20 to XII, 30), maintaining a separate fire for their food and performing thrice daily bouts of ablutions (*mizugōri* 水垢離) and sūtra recitation. The powers they attained were tested in proxy by *genkurabe* 験比べ, enacted as a form of divination. This involved both the young men from the village and representatives of the *shugen*; the former fought a tug-of-war; the latter, dressed as rabbits, vied in a contest to leap the highest that was performed in the main shrine.

At the end of the *Hagurosan nenjū gyōji*, its editor noted that

service at the main shrine is the responsibility of the village *shugenja* and branch temples. About one hundred and eighty people are rostered [over the year] to attend one day and one night, and they receive the donations made that day. The three duties [of all *shugenja*] are the Autumn Peak, *taigyō*, and temple duty (*bannori*). Those who do not perform these are not recognized as *shugenja*.

This is a helpful indication of the relationship between the temple and the *shugenja* as a whole. Though most rituals in the main shrine were attended only by ordained priests, *onbun shugenja* were expected to be present at a number of services, most of which were held at the *honbō*. Since the latter comprised only around one-sixth of the total *shugenja* population of Tōge, we might be tempted to think that the *shugenja* as a whole were outside the ritual structure. Yet they were closely involved in the Summer and Autumn Peak rites, at which they acted as competent ritualists, alongside the temple priests themselves. The rituals conducted by the Haguro *shugenja* derived from tantric modes, but their interpretation and enactment was not related to the doctrine of *sanmitsu* 三密 so much as to that of purification and possession. Today, as a revival of Shugendō is occurring in a number of places, the question of its relationship with the esoteric sects is exercising the minds of practitioners, and the revival of combinatory religious forms can be seen as one way of clarifying this relationship.

Shugendō	Taimitsu/Tendai	Kami/Popular
<b>Spring Peak</b> <i>Zasue</i> (I, 5–9) <i>Genkurabe</i> (I, 7)	New Year services and rituals (XII, 30–I, 1–7).	<i>Kudagayu</i> (I, 1) and <i>Yonemaki</i> (I,7) divinations
<b>Summer Peak</b> Gassan mountain opening (IV, 3)	Regular services (monthly 1–7, 11–18, 28)	<i>Hiagari, sakamukae</i> rites
<i>Akai</i> ritual (IV, 6) Offering of 96 vases (IV, 8–VII, 14)	Yudonosan Gongen service (monthly, 8) Year-end service (XII, 7–8)	Haguro Gongen festival (VI, 14–15), <i>shishimai</i>
Summer Peak proper (VI, 2–3 to VII, 14)	Taizō Mandara service (mostly monthly, 14)	Horseback archery (“ <i>genkurabe</i> ”) (IX, 9)
<i>Sanjūkō</i> (VI, 11–15)	<i>Daihannya tendoku</i> (monthly, 15)	Oriidō festival (XI, 9) <i>Yudate kagura</i>
<i>Saitō goma</i> , Gassan (VII, 13)	Services at Tōshōgū (monthly, 17) Festival (IV, 16–17)	<i>Shōreisai</i> (XII, 18–30)
Gassan mountain closing (VIII, 8)	Hagurosan Gongen service (monthly, 18) Year-end (XII, 16–17)	
<b>Autumn Peak</b> Preparations (VII, 16–19) First Lodging (VII, 20–24) Second Lodging, (VII, 24–VIII, 1)	Services at Founder’s Hall (monthly, 20) Anniversary service (X, 19–20), <i>Hokke zanmai</i>	
Initiation service, Fukigoshi (VII, 28)	<i>Sekku</i> services (III, 3; V, 5; VII, 7; IX, 9)	
<i>Saitō goma</i> (VIII, 1)	<i>Hokke-e</i> (IV, 8; VIII, 11)	
Third Lodging (VIII, 1–3) Sangōzawa pilgrimage	Sannō Gongen festival ( <i>Hokke hakkō</i> ) (mid. IV)	
Certification (VIII, 4–6)	<i>Nehankō</i> (II, 15)	
Ajarikō (X, 10–20)	Dengyō Daishi service (VI, 4)	
<b>Winter Peak</b> (XII, 28–30)	<i>Urabon-e</i> (VII, 15)	
<i>Genkurabe</i> (XII, 30)	Jigen Daishi (Tenkai) service (X, 2) Tenyū service (X, 24) Tendai Daishi service (XI, 24)  Year-end services for Gassan (XII, 14–15)	

Sources: *Hagurosan nenjū gyōji* 羽黒山年中行事. Shintō taikai, Jinja-hen, vol. 32, pp. 305–22; *Nenjū hōyō tebumi* 年中法用手文, *Shugendō shiryōshū* 修験道史料集 [I], pp. 84–95, *Higashi Nihon-hen*; *Miuchi zaitaku gyōjiki* 御内在宅行事記 *Shugendō shiryōshū* 修験道史料集 [I], *Higashi Nihon-hen*, pp. 95–103.

Figure 1. The Ritual Calendar of Hagurosan.

Haguro regular liturgy	Tendai regular liturgy
<i>Early night</i>	<i>Morning</i>
<i>Heart Sūtra</i> (Sanbō Kōjin mantra)	Three verses of the <i>shakujō</i> ( <i>sanjō shakujō</i> )
<i>Hokke senbō</i>	<i>Kannon Sūtra</i> , verse section
<i>Amida Sūtra</i>	<i>Heart Sūtra</i>
Hymn to Amida ( <i>Midasan</i> )	The name of Chishō Daishi
Verse of the Tathāgata ( <i>Nyorai bai</i> )	Dedication of merit
Triple refuge ( <i>sanrai</i> )	
Verse of the Seven Buddhas ( <i>Shichibutsu tsukaige</i> )	
In Praise of Original Enlightenment ( <i>Hongakusan</i> )	
Three verses of the <i>shakujō</i> ( <i>sanjō shakujō</i> )	
<i>Kannon Sūtra</i> , verse section	
Mantras*	
Holy names†	
<i>Late night</i>	<i>Evening</i>
<i>Heart Sūtra</i> (Sanbō Kōjin mantra)	<i>Sangemon</i> (Verse of Repentance)
<i>Hokke senbō</i>	<i>Kaikyōge</i> (Verse on Opening the Sūtras)
Hymn to Śākyamuni ( <i>Shakasan</i> )	<i>Junyoze</i>
Verse of the Tathāgata	<i>Jigage</i>
Triple refuge	Hymn to Amida ( <i>Amidasan</i> )
Verse of the Seven Buddhas	<i>Endonshō</i>
Homage to the relics of the Buddha ( <i>shariraimon</i> )	Homage to the relics of the Buddha ( <i>shariraimon</i> )
Nine verses of the <i>shakujō</i> ( <i>kujō shakujō</i> )	<i>Kōmyō shingon</i> (mantra of light)
<i>Kannon Sūtra</i>	Zuigu darani
Mantras*	In Praise of Original Enlightenment ( <i>Hongakusan</i> )
Holy names†	<i>Kankyōmon</i> (from the <i>Contemplation Sūtra</i> )
	<i>Nenbutsu</i>
	Dedication of merit

\* Mantras: *butsugan*, Dainichi, Amida, Yakushi, Kannon, Founder, Joma Dōji, Kongō Dōji, Fudō, Jizō, Daikokuten, Bishamon, Nitten, Gatten, *hannya*, *sanbu*, *shōten*.

† Holy names: Amaterasu, Hagurosan, Gassan, Yudonosan, Founder, Joma and Kongō Dōji, Sangō Daihi Henshō, Arasawa Fudō, Arasawa Jizō, Koganedō Kannon, sixteen good deities of wisdom, Yakushi, protector deities of the mountain, all protector deities, all the deities of Japan.

Figure 2. Liturgy: Haguro Shugendō and Tendai (Jimon).

## 82. SHINGON BUDDHISM IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

Barbara Ambros

Scholars of Japanese religions tend to assume Buddhist sectarian boundaries were very clear from the early Edo period, when head-branch temple hierarchies supplanted earlier lineage-based affiliations. The relationships between the various schools of Shingon Buddhism—officially divided into Kogi Shingon 古義真言, Shingi Shingon 新義真言, and Shingon Ritsu 真言律 at the time—and the relationship between Tōzanha Shugendō and the Shingon temple Sanbōin at Daigoji suggest otherwise. Even though the Tokugawa regime established sectarian hierarchies in the seventeenth century, the institutional relationships between the Shingon schools remained complexly intertwined.

The Shingon school split into two schools in the late thirteenth century: the Kogi, or “Old Rite,” school based at Mt. Kōya, and the Shingi 新義, or “New Rite,” school based at Negoroji 根来寺. The latter traced its lineage back to Kakuban (1095–1143), who invigorated Mt. Kōya and established Daidenpōin 大伝法院 on the mountain but faced opposition from the clerics at Kongōbuji 金剛峰寺. In 1288, Daidenpōin was moved to Negoro, which became one of the great powerful monastic complexes during the medieval period (George Tanabe 1998, 47). Negoro was razed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1585.

The Shingi Shingon school subsequently divided into two branches: Buzanha 豊山派, based since 1588 at Hasedera 長谷寺 in Yamato province; and Chisanha 智山波, based at Chishakuin 智積院 in Kyōto (having been moved there from Negoroji in 1601 with the patronage of Tokugawa Ieyasu).<sup>1</sup> In addition, though they formally belonged to the Kogi Shingon school, Tōji, Ninnaji, and Daigoji remained influential Shingon complexes throughout the medieval period. Daigoji in particular expanded the reach of its lineage in the Kantō region, including Sagami, Musashi, Shimōsa, and Shimotsuke provinces (Kasahara 2001,

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<sup>1</sup> For the relationship between the Chizan and Buzan branches, see Kushida 1979, 615–28.



165). These networks of temples would eventually be integrated into both the Kogi Shingon and the Shingi Shingon schools.

In the first two decades of the seventeenth century, the newly established Tokugawa regime promulgated numerous ordinances (*hatto* 法度) to regulate Buddhist schools. In the case of the Kogi and Shingi Shingon schools, the *bakufu* issued ordinances for the major monastic complexes in the Kansai region, including Mt. Kōya, Daigoji, Tōji, Hasedera, and Chishakuin, as well as the Kogi and Shingi Shingon temples in the Kantō region. These ordinances eventually applied to the Shingon school as a whole (Ishii 1981, 50–58).

Around this time the *bakufu* also recognized the central head temples of each school and established hierarchical systems of head and branch temples. Mt. Kōya functioned as the central head temple of the Kogi Shingon school, but Tōji, Daigoji, and Ninnaji in Kyōto were also important head temples in the school with strong branch-temple networks (Sakamoto Masahito 1989, 85–86). Chishakuin in Kyōto and Hasedera in Yamato province functioned as the headquarters of the Shingi Shingon school.

However, despite the division into Kogi and Shingi Shingon, many Shingi Shingon temples were affiliated with temples on Mt. Kōya or with Tōji, Daigoji, and Ninnaji. In the Kantō region in particular, the temple networks linked to Daigoji dating since the Kamakura period remained connected with Daigoji even if they were formally affiliated with the Shingi Shingon school (Jiinhonmatsuchō kenkyūkai 1981, 60–151, 1377–1813). These head-branch temple networks cut across sectarian boundaries because certain temples had been linked through ritual lineages to Tōji, Daigoji, and Ninnaji since the medieval period, but now were identified doctrinally as Kogi Shingon or Shingi Shingon (Sakamoto Masahito 1989, 85–86; Sakamoto Katsushige 1979b, 293).

The large head temples of the Kogi and Shingi Shingon schools were responsible for the training of clerics. Among the head temples, Mt. Kōya held a special role because it also functioned as the educational head temple of the Kogi Shingon school for many Kogi Shingon temples in Sagami. Temple networks that had Tōji or Ninnaji as their ritual-lineage head temple (*jisō honji* 事相本寺) were still connected to Mt. Kōya as their doctrinal head temple (*kyōsō honji* 教相本寺). This meant that even though these temple networks were linked to Tōji and Ninnaji as their ritual-lineage head temples, the monastic training of the clergy took place on Mt. Kōya (Jiinhonmatsuchō kenkyūkai 1981, 37–49, 1073–85; Sakamoto Masahito 1989, 85).

Furthermore, a system of regional academies (*dangisho* 談義所) was established in the Kantō region to facilitate the training of provincial clerics. By 1633, there were thirty-four Kogi Shingon academies in Sagami, Musashi, Izu, and Kōzuke provinces. About half were located in Sagami (Jiinhonmatsuchō kenkyūkai 1981, 37–58). A similar system of forty-eight regional academies in the Shingi Shingon school existed in eastern and northeastern Japan.<sup>2</sup>

Based on head-branch temple registers from the late eighteenth century, it appears that the Shingi Shingon school, with approximately fifteen thousand temples, was larger than the Kogi Shingon school, with approximately ten thousand temples. While the former was primarily concentrated in eastern and northeastern Japan, the latter was numerically strong in the west. However, Kogi Shingon temples outnumbered Shingi Shingon temples in Sagami, Izu, Suruga, Tōtōmi, and Mino provinces (Sakamoto Masahito 1979a, 26–31, 42–43). In comparison, the Shingon Ritsu school was very small; Reijunji 霊雲寺 in Edo served as its head temple and it had fewer than fifty branch temples, scattered mostly in the Kantō region. Another small network consisting of Sennyūji 泉浦寺 in Yamashiro as head temple and sixteen branch temples in Yamashiro, Sagami, and Suruga provinces is recorded for 1633 (Jiinhonmatsuchō kenkyūkai 1981, 151–54, 1373–76).<sup>3</sup>

Given that scholars of Japanese Buddhism often take sectarian boundaries very much for granted, the fluidity between the Shingi Shingon and Kogi Shingon schools is significant. In the early to mid-seventeenth century, when the head-branch temple system had not yet been fully established, the distinction between Shingi Shingon and Kogi Shingon was seen as a doctrinal rather than a lineage-based

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<sup>2</sup> Depending on the Buddhist school, academies were known by various names. For example, in the Jōdo and Nichiren schools, they were known as danrin 談林 (also 檀林). Particularly in the Edo period, these referred to temple complexes that served to train clerics in sectarian teachings. Most of the existing research on these educational facilities deals with the Jōdo, Nichiren, and Tendai schools. For an overview of the development of Jōdo and Nichiren academies, see Sakurai 1977. For the development of provincial Shingi Shingon academies, see Sakamoto 1972 and Kushida 1979, 669–704. For more on how this educational system was implemented, see Ambros 2009. For the functioning of a particular academy in its regional context, see Ambros 2008.

<sup>3</sup> The Shingon Ritsu network may have been slightly larger than this. The Shingon Ritsu school emerged out the Saidaiji community centered around Eison 叡尊 (1201–1290) as a revival of the ancient Ritsu school, but Saidaiji is absent from the head-branch temple registers of the Edo period. For more on Eison and the Saidaiji community, see Groner 2001, Groner 2005, and Quinter 2007.

difference. Temples could switch from one affiliation to another depending on the training of the resident abbot, regardless of which lineage affiliation the temple previously held. There were also examples of temples belonging to both schools, with the branch temple or sub-temples divided among the two (Kushida 1964, 872–73; Kushida 1979, 670–771). In Sagami province, for example, the Shingon temples at the Tsurugaoka Hachiman complex in Kamakura were split: eighteen belonged to the Kogi Shingon school and six were affiliated with the Shingi Shingon school.

All temples were ritual-lineage branches of Ninnaji, but while the Kogi Shingon temples were affiliated with Kōyasan as their doctrinal head temple, the Shingi Shingon temples were linked to Negoroji (Ashida 1977, 6: 221–23; Jihinonmatsuchō kenkyūkai 1981, 37–38, 1603). In the mid-eighteenth century, a temple might have officially belonged to the Kogi Shingon school but if the abbot was affiliated with the Shingi Shingon school, the temple was under the control of the Shingi Shingon *furegashira* 触頭 in administrative matters. Gradually, however, the distinction between the two schools solidified in the eighteenth century. By the early nineteenth century, appointments of abbots were generally segregated between the two schools (Kushida 1964, 873–74).

Little research has been done on the actual training of early modern Kogi Shingon clerics, but recently Ogasawara Hiromichi examined the equivalent training mechanism in the Shingi Shingon school. The Shingi Shingon school mandated that in order to attain the status of a teacher (*nōke* 能化), provincial clerics from the Kantō were required to complete twenty years of study, of which a minimum three years had to be completed at the sectarian headquarters. Only those who had completed more than three years' study at headquarters were allowed to give lectures at provincial academies. Even then, those who had just completed the required three years could only give a single lecture; those who had completed four to five years could lecture occasionally. Only those who had studied at the sectarian headquarters for at least six years could become regular lecturers at the provincial academies.

In addition to residency at the central head temple, clerics also had to participate in biannual retreats, *hōonkō* 報恩講, held in the winter and summer, in order to deepen their learning and advance in rank. As the number of participants for the Kantō region increased during the Edo period, mandating exclusive participation at the central headquarters became impractical. Trainees could instead attend equivalent

retreats at regional academies and still continue to advance in rank. The repeated issuance of admonitions against failure to participate seems to indicate that some clerics neglected to attend retreats regularly or misrepresented the training they had obtained at provincial academies. Furthermore, provincial academies did not always offer regular retreats, in part because the resident abbots were incapable of conducting the proper lectures, thus limiting training opportunities for provincial clerics (Ogasawara 2007, 395–417). While the system was not completely immune to subversion, in general it ensured a standardized level of training for provincial clerics.

A similar system appears to have existed in the Kogi Shingon school. Sectarian regulations (*hatto*) from 1609, such as *Kantō Shingonshū kogi shoji hatto* 關東真言宗古義諸寺法度 issued by the *bakufu* and the *Kantōchū honji hōrongi shokeshū okitegaki* 關東中本寺法論議所化衆掟書 issued by Mt. Kōya, recognized academies in the Kantō region as places of study for provincial novices from that region, but a minimum three-year residency at Mt. Kōya was mandatory to attain the status of a qualified teacher (*nōke*), who were then dispatched to staff provincial temples (Kanagawa-ken kikaku chōsabu kenshi hensanshitsu 1979, 671–72).

The training period was intended to educate novices in the teachings and rituals of their school. Ideally, novices were to study the major Shingon scriptures and commentaries as well as the writings of Kūkai, the sectarian founder. In addition to esoteric texts, novices were also encouraged to study the Buddhist canon at large, including the commentaries and treatises of the Hossō, Sanron, Tendai, Kegon, Ritsu, Kusha, Zen, and Jōdo schools. Students were to internalize this knowledge through practice and debates. In addition, they had to master Siddham calligraphy and learn rituals, including initiations. Regular attendance at the two annual retreat periods in the winter (9.15–12.1) and the summer (4.15–7.1)<sup>4</sup> were of particular importance for advancing in seniority (Kanagawa-ken kikaku chōsabu kenshi hensanshitsu 1979, 671–74; Shoshū kaikyū 1907, 1: 375–76).

Sectarian regulations enacted in 1609 and expanded in 1802 stipulated an ideal career for Kogi Shingon clerics on Mt. Kōya: from the age of ten to forty, they were generic clerics (*shubun* 衆分), either novices ordained on the mountain or clerics from the provinces who

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<sup>4</sup> Dates given according to traditional lunisolar calendar.

had come to study in their late teens early twenties; from the age of forty, they could become (*nyūji* 入寺);<sup>5</sup> from fifty to seventy, they could attain the high rank of preceptor (*ajari* 阿闍梨). The most illustrious titles derived from monastic court ranks of the *ritsuryō* system were reserved for those over seventy. Lower and mid-level temples with land grants less than thirty-five *koku* 石 could be staffed by young clerics who had to continue their studies after their appointment, but temples with more than thirty-five *koku* had to be staffed by clerics who had completed at least two years of study at an academy. Famous temples had to be staffed by clerics that had completed more than two years of training and had attained the rank of *nyūji* (Shoshū kaikyū 1907, 1: 370–72).

The early modern Shingon Ritsu school was reinvigorated by Jōgon 淨嚴 (1639–1702), who founded Reiunji in 1691 with the patronage of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, amid a growing interest in precept study in all the Buddhist schools during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> According to regulations from 1802, the Shingon Ritsu school led by Reiunji had its own educational and ranking systems that were based on orthodox Buddhist precepts. Novices were called *shami* 沙弥 (*śrāmaṇera*). Between the ages of seven to thirteen, they were known as *kūshami* 驅烏沙弥. The novices resided with other clerics without taking any precepts. At the age of fourteen, they took the ten precepts, donned monastic robes, and were given ritual implements, and were known as *ōbōshami* 応法沙弥. At the age of twenty, they took the two hundred and fifty monastic precepts and were henceforth known as *biku* 比丘 (monk, *bhikṣu*).

Similar ranks existed for women practitioners. After making the determination to become ordained, they did not take the precepts for three years and were known as *gakuhōnyo* 学法女 or *shikishamana* 式叉摩那 (*śikṣamāṇā*). Female novices were *shamini* 沙弥尼 (*śrāmaṇerikā*) upon taking the ten precepts. Eventually, there were nearly five hundred precepts required for full ordination as nuns (Shoshū kaikyū 1907, 1: 287–88). Further research is needed to deter-

<sup>5</sup> *Nyūji* also has the broader meaning of being appointed as an abbot of a temple. In this context, however, the term has a special meaning as a monastic rank between *ajari* 阿闍梨 (*ācārya*) and the lowest ranking monks (*shūbun*).

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed discussion of the monastic precept revival within Shingon Buddhism, see Shayne Clarke 2006.

mine the extent to which this was borne out in practice and where this curriculum was implemented.

*Early Modern Shingon Innovations: Keichū and Kokugaku and Precepts Revival*

The upheavals of the Meiji Restoration had a profound impact on the Shingon schools. Between the third and fifth months of 1868, the new Meiji regime issued orders that forced Buddhist clerics serving at shrines to either leave their shrines or become laicized if they wished to continue as shrine priests. Moreover, shrine priests and their families were required to hold Shintō instead of Buddhist funerals. The new legislation also demanded the removal of Buddhist images, Buddhist implements such as bells and gongs, and combinative titles or names for deities at Shintō shrines, such as *gongen* 権現, *Gozu Tennō* 牛頭天王, and *bosatsu* 菩薩 (*bodhisattva*). These had to be replaced by more orthodox Shintō names and objects of worship (Tamamuro 1977, 120–25). The Shingon clergy, many of whom administered shrines as intendants (*bettō* 別当), were deeply affected by these new rules.

For example, during the early modern period, Hakone Gongen 箱根権現, the divinity of Mt. Hakone (Ashigarashimo district, Sagami province), was administered by a Kogi Shingon intendant (*bettō*) at Kongōōin 金剛王院, a major Kogi Shingon center in the region. The complex had been designated as one of thirty-four Kogi Shingon academies in the Kantō region in the early seventeenth century. It had also been awarded two hundred *koku* by shogunate decree (*goshuin* 御朱印) as a grant for the administration of the shrine (*sharyō* 社領) to Hakone Gongen. Half of the grant was to be divided between the intendant and six ritual clerics (*kusō* 供僧) responsible for rites at the shrine. The other half went to several *shugenja* and shrine priests. Nine additional lower-ranking Buddhist clerics (*shūto* 衆戸) also resided at the site but had no share of the grant (Jinhonmatsuchō kenkyūkai 1981, 39).

By the 1830s, the Hakone intendant and six ritual clerics remained at Kongōōin, but the cultic site also included six shrine priests, including a *kannushi* 神主 (head shrine priest) and *shasō* 社僧 (shrine clerics). There was an additional contingent of Honzanha and Tōzanha *shugenja* associated with the site, three of whom resided in town and twelve others in nearby villages (Ashida 1977, 2: 107; 1: 225, 260, 279). A combinative site of such complexity became a target during the

disassociation of *kami* and buddhas. In the early Meiji period the Hakone intendant laicized, took the name Hakone Tarō, and became the head shrine priest. The former temple precinct and temple buildings were turned over to him as possessions, but he eventually sold them off to other laymen (Tsuji 1983, 590–91).

Furthermore, as a result of the Meiji Restoration, temples lost much of their land and stipends. In 1871, temples with land awarded by decree of the shogunate (*goshuin* 御朱印) saw those holdings turned into public land; however, they were granted permission to use the confiscated land free of charge in 1876 (Moriyama 1973, 701, 704; Hardacre 2002, 157). In the eleventh month of 1872, the Meiji authorities ordered that temples without abbots or parishes were to be abolished and clerics were prohibited from almsbegging (Miyake 2006, 48).

Temples with sizable funeral parishes were able to separate themselves from their roles as shrine administrators. Unfortunately, not all Shingon temples had sufficient funeral parishes. Japanese historians assume that an early modern cleric would have needed about a hundred to one hundred and fifty households to sustain himself (Hardacre 2002, 42; Matsushita 1984b, 202). According to Tamamuro Fumio's analysis of a national head-branch temple register (1870–1871) in the *Shaji torishirabe ruisan*, Shingon temples in the Sakura domain (Shimōsa province) had parish averages of 42.1 households, far fewer than the 96.7 households of an average Jōdoshin temple, 63.1 of a Nichiren temple, or 56.7 of a Sōtō temple. Even though the Shingon schools averaged larger parishes in some domains (for example, 81.6 households in the Fukuyama domain, Bingo province), they were generally smaller (such as in the Takada domain, Echigo province, and in the Kumamoto domain, Higo province).

Tamamuro concludes that this indicates that despite the large number of Shingon temples, the Shingon schools did not fare well because their temples were barely sustainable. He suggests that with such small parishes, clerics could not have survived on the fees for funerals alone but must have supplemented their income through farming and cultivation. He also argues that in addition to losing income from the administration of shrines, Shingon temples also lost their function as facilitators of the Mt. Kōya pilgrimage confraternities, due to the decline of the pilgrimage during the early Meiji period. This led to further revenue loss (Tamamuro 2006, 13–15, 17).

Meiji Restoration policies not only invented Shintō and Buddhism as independent traditions by forcing institutions and clerics to identify

with one or the other, they also redefined what it meant to be a Buddhist cleric. Suddenly, family ties superseded religious identities. In 1871, Shingon temples whose abbots were of imperial or aristocratic lineage—for example Ninnaji and Daikakuji—were stripped of this privilege, while aristocratic and imperial clerics were made to revert to the corresponding lay status (Moriyama 1973, 701). The ban against clerical marriage was lifted in the fourth month of 1872.<sup>7</sup> In 1874, all clerics were reintegrated into their natal family registers, and their special status as clerics was thus removed (Moriyama 1973, 703).<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, the Meiji regime eradicated status differentiations between the various types of Buddhist religious specialists common in the premodern Shingon school. On Mt. Kōya, clerics were divided into *gakuryo* 学侶 (highly educated ritual specialists), *gyōnin* 行人 (administrative specialists), and *hijiri* 聖 (fundraising specialists), but in 1869 the new regime abolished these distinctions by decree and all clerics were designated as *gakuryo*. Monastic court ranks for clerics were abolished in 1873 (Moriyama 1973, 699, 703). The decision to incorporate *shugenja* into the Buddhist clergy also fit into the overall policy to standardize the clergy and remove their privileges.

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<sup>7</sup> Eventually, the practice became accepted in the first decades of the twentieth century (Jaffe 2001, 109, 154–59, 193, 214).

<sup>8</sup> Those whose natal origins were unclear and those who did not wish to rejoin their natal family register could opt to be registered at their current place of residence, but they had to be registered like everyone else.



## 83. TŌZANHA SHUGENDŌ IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

Barbara Ambros

In the early modern period, there were two major Shugendō branches: Honzanha 本山派 and Tōzanha 当山派, respectively affiliated with Tendai and Shingon Buddhist *monzeki* temples, Shōgoin 聖護院 and Sanbōin 三宝院. By order of the Tokugawa regime, in 1613 most regional Shugendō networks had to identify themselves with one of these (Miyake 2005, 69–70).<sup>1</sup> Honzanha has received far greater attention than Tōzanha in the scholarship on Shugendō. In order to expand our knowledge on the latter, this essay focuses predominantly on Tōzanha. The institutional history of early-modern Tōzanha is distinctive; however, some of the greater characteristics also apply to Honzanha Shugendō.

In this period, *shugenja* settled in villages and were treated as peasant cultivators in official census documents until the late eighteenth century (Hardacre 2002, 44; Kiyohara 1932, 524). While Honzanha had seen much growth in the late medieval period into the mid-seventeenth century, the expansion of Tōzanha began only in the early part of the seventeenth century (Miyake 2005, 70), when Tōzanha won independence from Honzanha oversight. Tōzanha was able to grow in the Kantō region following a dispute that challenged Honzanha's right to charge licensing fees for the performance of certain rituals (Sekiguchi 2000, 33–48; Sekiguchi 2008). Many local *shugenja* in the Kantō region probably chose to affiliate with Tōzanha to escape the fees and restrictions imposed by the Honzanha.

In the early seventeenth century, Tōzanha became affiliated with Sanbōin, a Shingon *monzeki* temple at Daigoji in Kyōto. From the late medieval period, before Sanbōin's eventual connection with Tōzanha Shugendō, Daigoji was home to *yamabushi* who wore special robes emulating Fudō Myōō and who were considered low-ranking monastics providing guard functions for the temple. They were not regarded

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<sup>1</sup> Haguro Shugendō remained independent.

as fully on par with other Buddhist clerics, but they were also unrelated to Tōzanha (Sekiguchi 2000, 35–37, 43).

During the late medieval period, twelve *shōdaisendatsu* 正大先達 temples in central western Japan controlled Tōzanha *shugenja* through lineage-based networks in each province. They had initially sought affiliation with Sanbōin to gain leverage in legal disputes with the Honzan branch and its *monzeki* leader, Shōgoin. Eventually, however, Sanbōin began competing with the *shōdaisendatsu* for authority. Ranks of regional *shugenja* were awarded annually at a gathering in Ōmine. Initially, the Shingon temple merely approved the rankings awarded by the *shōdaisendatsu* but eventually began to grant its own independent licenses to *shugenja*.

In 1700, Sanbōin merged the abbotship of a Shugendō temple in Edo with one at Yoshino that was the resting place of the purported sectarian founder Shōbō 聖宝. The resulting temple, Edo Hōkakuji 鳳閣寺, served as an administrative representative (*furegashira* 触頭) and liaison with the *bakufu* in Edo and counterbalanced the power of the *shōdaisendatsu* temples (Miyake 2001, 31–32; Miyake 2005, 70–73). During the late seventeenth century, Sanbōin's influence extended to doctrinal and practice-related matters. The Sanbōin *monzeki* Kōken 高賢 (1639–1707) is particularly noteworthy. Kōken participated in two *nyūbu* retreats on Ōmine and compiled a prayer manual of Tōzanha Shugendō, the *Tōryū denju kirigamishū* 当流伝授切紙集 (Nakada 2008, 31).

Once settled in villages, many *shugenja* served as priests at tutelary village shrines and officiated during cyclical village rituals to grant protection from agricultural pests and ensure adequate rainfall. They also conducted life-cycle rituals for children; provided cures for illnesses through spells, incantations, exorcisms, and divination; and performed various other rituals for this-worldly benefits. Furthermore, *shugenja* pursued their ascetic training not only in the Ōmine mountain range but also at regional sacred sites. They distributed talismans and items such as medicines and tea from regional shrines and temples with which they were affiliated, as well as from the Ōmine Mountains. They also acted as pilgrimage guides for villagers (Miyake 2005, 80–85).

According to the sectarian regulations from 1802, Tōzanha *shugenja* entered their religious careers as disciples before the age of twenty. They took the tonsure (*tokudo* 得度), shaved their heads, vowed to follow the five or ten Buddhist precepts, and adopted a religious name (*bōgō* 坊号) (*Shoshū kaikyū*, 2:441). Diligence in observing mountain

entry (*nyūbu* 入峯) retreats was mandated by *bakufu* regulations of Tōzanha Shugendō from 1613 and 1722, though the latter regulations also noted that this stipulation was ignored by some (Ishii 1981, 63, 65). Sectarian regulations from 1802 stipulated that Tōzanha *shugenja* could rise in rank, culminating in *hōin* 法印, based on the number of mountain entries observed at Ōminesan in Yamato (*Shoshū kaikyū*, 2:441–442).

Unlike Buddhist clerics, most *shugenja* were not celibate and relied on family relationships for succession. According to the 1722 *Tōzankata shugen gojōmoku* 當山方修驗御條目 (Articles for the Tōzan Shugen), *shugenja* could appoint their offspring or designate disciples as successors (Ishii 1981, 65). Similarly, regulations from 1802 noted that *shugenja* were usually married and passed their profession on to their sons, whom they took as their disciples (Kosho Hozonkai 1907, 2: 444).<sup>2</sup>

Another important institutional difference from Buddhist clerics was that the *shugenja* claimed no funeral parishes but instead held so-called *kigan danka* 祈願檀家. This referred to patron households that chose habitual but voluntary affiliation with a particular *shugenja*, who controlled a territory where he distributed amulets and performed prayer rituals, divinations, exorcisms, and so on for his patrons. Because individual contributions from patron households were quite small, prayer parishes tended to be much larger than the funeral parishes of Buddhist temples, which were usually limited to a village or neighboring villages where the temple was located. In contrast, a *shugenja*'s prayer parish could span a much wider territory across a region. Members of these parishes were also greater in number than those of the average funeral parish. A document listing Shingon temples and *shugenja* temples and their parishes in Western Sagami province in 1872 shows that while the average Shingon temple had about thirty funeral parishioners, Tōzanha *shugenja* in the area had five to ten times as many prayer patrons (Chikan 1984).

Before the dissociation of *kami* and buddhas, this patron income would often have been supplemented with funds obtained through the administration of village shrines and participation in regional shrine festivals. For example, several Tōzanha *shugenja* scattered through

<sup>2</sup> The same applied to Honzanha *shugenja* (see Kosho Hozonkai 1907, 2: 438).

southwestern Sagami province participated in rituals for Hakone Gongen 箱根権現, the divinity of Mt. Hakone (Ashigarashimo district, Sagami province) (Hayashi 1972, 1: 225, 1: 260). Many early modern *shugenja* were peasant cultivators whose ritual activities were essentially side work. They did not gain a status independent of the peasantry until 1794, when they were treated as religious professionals akin to Buddhist clerics (Hardacre 2002, 44; Kiyohara 1932, 524).

The dissociation of *kami* and buddhas affected both Shingon and Tōzanha Shugendō temples, many of which had administered village shrines and combinative cultic sites during the Edo period. Between the third and fifth months of 1868, the new Meiji regime issued orders that forced Buddhist clerics serving at shrines to either leave their shrines or become laicized if they wished to continue as shrine priests. Moreover, shrine priests and their families were required to hold Shintō instead of Buddhist funerals. The new legislation also demanded the removal of Buddhist images, Buddhist implements such as bells and gongs, and combinative titles or names for deities at Shintō shrines (such as *gongen* 権現, *Gozu Tennō* 牛頭天王, and *bosatsu* 菩薩). These had to be replaced by more orthodox Shintō names and ritual objects (Tamamuro 1977, 120–25).

The dissociation of *kami* and buddhas decimated Tōzanha because of the combinative nature of their tradition. According to Tamamuro Fumio's analysis of a head-branch temple registry included in the early Meiji *Shaji torishirabe ruisan*, only 241 Tōzanha temples remained in Japan by 1870. Of those, most were located in the Tōhoku (29 percent), Chūgoku (26 percent), and Shikoku (17 percent) regions. Only eight temples (3 percent) were documented for the entire Kantō region. Tamamuro suggests that this represents a drastic decline from the early modern period due to the dissociation of *kami* and buddhas (Tamamuro 2006, 8).

To the Meiji authorities, inherently combinative religious practices such as that of Shugendō were considered heterodox and were singled out as the primary objects of the dissociation of *kami* and buddhas. In the ninth month of 1872, Shugendō was outlawed, and *shugenja* were forced to join the Buddhist Tendai and Shingon orders. At the same time, the kinds of rituals and activities that commonly sustained *shugenja* were prohibited. In the eleventh month of 1872, collecting donations on almsrounds was banned. In 1873, various rites involving divination and spirit possession were prohibited, soon followed by

prohibitions against healing rituals (Miyake 2006, 48). In 1874, former *shugenja* were prohibited from renting accommodations in towns and designating them as temples (Moriyama 1973, 703).

Both Shingon clerics and *shugenja* lost control of village shrines unless they chose to laicize and become Shintō shrine priests. However, Shingon clerics had a greater chance of survival as religious professionals than *shugenja* because they could rely on funeral parishes and tight-knit temple networks formed by the head-branch temple system. In western Sagami province, of 206 temples extant in the 1830s, 174 temples (84.5 percent) survived into 1872. In contrast, of 48 Tōzanha Shugendō temples extant in the 1830s, only 18 (38 percent) survived until 1872. In both cases, most of the losses occurred on the village level (figures based on Hayashi 1972 and Chikan 1984).

Based on comparable evidence from Honzanha in the region, it is very likely that many *shugenja* became shrine priests or were completely laicized. For example, Chin'ei 珍榮, the resident *shugenja* at Gyokuryūbō, an important Honzanha temple in Odawara that controlled most Honzanha temples in Sagami during the early modern period, laicized and became the shrine priest of the Matsubara Myōjin 松原明神 shrine in Odawara, where he had previously served as intendant (Tsuji 1983, 599–601). Similarly, the *shugenja* at Sennōin 仙能院, a Honzanha temple in Yokono village, Ōsumi district, who had served as the intendant for a village shrine, chose to become its shrine priest in 1869 (Hadano shishi hensan iinkai 1992, 34).

Among *shugenja* in general, scholars estimate that about 10 percent identified themselves as Buddhist clerics, 30 percent became shrine priests, and the remaining 60 percent gave up their lives as religious specialists completely (Sekimori 2002, 211). Many of those who became Buddhist clerics eventually did not survive the change because they had no funeral parishes to sustain themselves and had to give up their profession as religious specialists. For example, Kichijōji 吉祥寺, a Tōzanha Shugendō temple in Shibusawa village (Sagami province), had become a Shingon temple but was forced to close its doors in 1873 because it had no funeral parishioners and offered insufficient income for the resident cleric, who became a farmer instead (Hadano shishi hensan iinkai 1992, 14).

The differences in training made full integration of *shugenja* into the Shingon school difficult to achieve. Indeed, even though *shugenja* were reeducated in the sectarian practices and teachings and wore sectarian robes, they were ranked below Buddhist clerics and were not

permitted to attain high-ranking offices. In the fifth month of 1873, all former *shugenja* under Sanbōin's control were surveyed. In 1874, Sanbōin gathered these *shugenja* and performed monastic ordinations for them. Afterward, the use of the title *shugenja*, performance of combinative rituals, wearing Shugendō robes, and conducting divinations and geomancy were prohibited.

In 1878, the former *shugenja* were given a distinct status within the school due to objections from Shingon clerics, who feared that former *shugenja* would have equal status with clerics. They were barred from wearing certain styles of monastic robes, conducting certain esoteric rites, and attaining high monastic ranks (Miyake 2006, 49). After the end of the Second World War, Shugendō underwent a period of revival. However, whereas the former Honzanha reorganized under the administration of Shōgoin and Kinpusenji 金峰山寺, the former Tōzanha remains incorporated into the Shingon Daigojiha 醍醐寺派 (Miyake 2006, 54).

## 84. THE FOURFOLD TRAINING IN JAPANESE ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

Richard K. Payne

Contemporary priestly training in Shingon (Tōmitsu 東密) and the esoteric portion of Tendai (Taimitsu 台密) is organized around four main ritual performances, as indicated by the name, “the fourfold training” (*shido kegyō* 四度加行). The term *kegyō* renders the Sanskrit *prayoga*, understood as “joining together” and “practice” (Todaro 1988, 7). The four are the *jūhachidō* 十八道, *kongōkai* 金剛界, *taizōkai* 胎藏界, and *goma* 護摩. This is the order in which they are practiced in the Shingon tradition, while in the Tendai the middle two are performed in the reverse order, with the *jūhachidō* being performed last (Toki 1899, 2). The early form of the Shingon training sequence as recorded in the *Shingon denju sahō*, attributed to Kūkai, included an additional rite between the *jūhachidō* and the *kongōkai*. This was the *issonbō* 一尊法, a rite devoted to a single deity. Sometime around the middle of the twelfth century, prior to the end of the Heian era in 1185, the *issonbō* was dropped from the training sequence, and the current fourfold structure was mandated (Todaro 1988, 7–8).

The *jūhachidō* and *kongōkai* rituals evoke the deities of the Vajradhātu Mandala, while the *Taizōkai* evokes the deities of the Garbhadhātu Mandala. The two sets of deities are then brought together in non-dual union in the *goma*. This idea of non-dual union of the two mandalic systems in the ritual training is typical of Shingon conceptions built around the semiotic pairing of the Vajra and Matrix realms. The conceptual structure of the Taimitsu system is informed by the teaching of the three truths (*santai* 三諦) developed by Zhiyi: emptiness (*kūtai* 空諦), provisional (*ketai* 假諦), and middle (*chūtai* 中諦) (Abé 1995, Swanson 1989).

As an initiatory sequence, the practitioner is expected to have completed three initiations prior to beginning the training.<sup>1</sup> *Kechien kanjō* 結緣灌頂, which is intended to establish a karmic connection between

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<sup>1</sup> In large part the description here is based on my own training at Yochi-in 櫻池院 temple (see <http://www007.upp.so-net.ne.jp/yochiin/english/index.html>) on Kōyasan

the initiate and one of the five *tathāgatas* (*pañcatathāgata*, *gonyorai* 五如来), is widely taken by lay adherents, some of whom it is my impression take this initiation more than once. This ritual is held annually in May, in the Kondō 金堂 (Golden Hall) on Mount Kōya, and replicates the “flower throwing” rite that Kūkai reports having performed during his own training in China. This is followed by the two rituals that mark entry into the Buddhist order as a novice (*śrāmaṇera*, *shami* 沙彌). The first of these is *tokudo* 得度, receiving a dharma name, and the second is *jukai* 授戒, taking the ten precepts. In my own case these rituals were performed in the temple where I was training, the requisite number of ten ordained monks being drawn from the residents and other students of the temple’s master.

At some point prior to entry into the formal training period, the practitioner takes the threefold set of precepts. At least on Kōyasan, the three sets of precepts are taken over a period of three days, beginning with the tantric precepts. The second day is devoted to the bodhisattva precepts, while the third day is the *prātimokṣa* precepts. This marks the transition from *śrāmaṇera* to *bhikṣu* (*biku* 比丘). The existence of the threefold set of precepts is an important marker of continuity within Buddhist tantra, and can be considered the defining characteristic of the institutional existence of tantric Buddhism.<sup>2</sup>

Preliminary practices, at least in the Shingon tradition, include breath-counting meditation (*susoku kan* 数息觀), full moon visualization (*gachirin kan* 月倫觀), and visualizing the syllable “A” as written in Siddham script (*ajikan* 阿字觀). Breath-counting meditation is effectively pan-Buddhist, though it can take a variety of different specific forms. In my own case I was instructed to focus attention on the inside of the tip of the nose, where one can feel the breath passing, count to one hundred, and then repeat. Full moon visualization requires that the practitioner first gaze upon and then create a mental image of a full moon circle, a practice very similar to the *kaṣiṇa* meditations described by the medieval Theravādin master Buddhaghosa (Ñāṇamoli 1975, 118–172). *Ajikan* itself is practiced as an independent practice as well, and the symbolism of the syllable “A”

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during the summer of 1982, which has been supplemented by both conversations with other trainees, during that time and later, and by further research.

<sup>2</sup> There have been several studies of the threefold precepts in the Tibetan tradition. See Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé 1998, Ngari Panchen and Pema Wangi Gyalpo 1996, and Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen 2002.



is found throughout Buddhist tantra (Payne 1998, 1999b; Yamasaki 1988). These preliminary practices have no set duration, unlike the formal fourfold training rituals, which take place over a hundred-day period.

Upon entry into the formal training period, each of the rituals is to be performed three times a day. Progress through the hundred days proceeds in a stepwise fashion. The four phases of the training have an introductory step, itself called *kegyō* 加行, of two weeks, during which the practitioner continues with the practice being done from the prior phase; this is followed by the main training step, called *shōgyō* 正行, of one week, in which the practitioner moves on to practicing the ritual of that phase. This works out as follows.

First Week: *Rishukyō kegyō* 理趣經加行:

Invocation of the *Rishukyō* (the *Adhyardaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*, a tantric Perfection of Wisdom text).<sup>3</sup>

Second Week: *Goshimbō kegyō* 護身法加行:

Protection of the practitioner's body.

Third Week: *Raihai kegyō* 禮拜加行 prostrations.

The prostrations that are practiced are from standing to supporting oneself on knees and elbows, with one's forehead also touching the ground. This is known at least colloquially as the "five points" (*gotai tōji no rai* 五體投地の禮).

Fourth and Fifth Weeks: *Jūhachidō kegyō*:

Continue *raihai*.

Sixth Week: *Jūhachidō shōgyō*:

Practice of the *jūhachidō* rite itself.

Seventh and Eighth Weeks: *Kongōkai kegyō*:

Continue *jūhachidō* rite.

Ninth Week: *Kongōkai shōgyō*:

Practice of the *kongōkai* rite itself.

Tenth and Eleventh Weeks: *Taizōkai kegyō*:

Continue the *kongōkai* rite.

Twelfth Week: *Taizōkai shōgyō*:

Practice of the *taizōkai* rite itself.

<sup>3</sup> The version translated by Conze is not the one used in contemporary Shingon temples. For a translation of the latter, T. 243, see Miyata 2004.

Thirteenth and Fourteenth Weeks: *Goma kegyō*:

Repeat *jūhachidō*, *kongōkai*, and *taizōkai*, one in each of the three daily training sessions.

Fifteenth Week: *Goma shōgyō*:

Practice of the *goma* rite itself.

During these hundred days of training, the practitioner is to continue to attend the daily services of his training temple. There are two additional practices to be maintained at this time as well, a daily circuit of the buildings of the *garan* 伽藍 (*saṃghārāma*) and a visit to Oku no in 奥の院 once every three days. The *garan* is the original core of Kōyasan, being the location where the foundations of the mountain complex were first established. It is the location of the *kondō* 金堂, *daitō* 大塔, and other historically important buildings, and continues to serve as the symbolic and ritual center of Kōyasan (Nicoloff 2007). Oku no in is perhaps the most famous cemetery in Japan, and includes the mausoleum of Kōbō Daishi Kūkai 弘法大師空海, founder of the Shingon tradition.<sup>4</sup>

Completion of the one hundred days of training in the fourfold rituals qualifies the practitioner for status as *ajari* 阿闍梨 (*ācārya*). This status is conferred in a ritual known as the *denbō* (*ajari*) *kanjō* 傳法 (阿闍梨) 灌頂 (dharma transmission), or *ajari i kanjō* 阿闍梨位灌頂 (*ācāryābhiṣeka*).

The rituals of the fourfold training employ the metaphor of feasting an honored guest as their fundamental organizing structure and symbolism. While other religious traditions also practice making sacrifices or votive offerings of various kinds, the historical connections for the Buddhist tantric rituals in this group lies in Vedic ritual practice. These practices were transformed in the late Vedic period (the period of the Upaniṣads and the rise of the *nāstika* traditions, which rejected the authority of the Vedas in favor of a lineage of teachers) with increasingly internalized understandings (Samuel 2008), sometimes also referred to as “interiorization.” An explicit example of this internalization of ritual is found in the interpretation of digestion as an internal instantiation of the ritual fire. This creates a set of symbolic

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<sup>4</sup> See Tinsley “Kūkai and the Development of Shingon Buddhism,” in this volume.

homologies: food is equated with the ritual offerings, the mouth with the outer rim of the altar-hearth, the heat of digestion with that of fire, and so on.

Other aspects of the symbolism of feasting an honored guest are the offering of water to wash the feet; powdered incense to spread on the guest's body; and flowers, incense, lights, and music for their enjoyment. The ritually central action, though it may not fall at the literal center of the ritual performance, is union between the practitioner and the deity evoked into the ritual enclosure. This ritual identification of practitioner and deity (*nyūga ganyū* 入我我入; *ahaṃkāra*) is found in all forms of tantra, both Hindu and Buddhist—except those with a clearly dualistic worldview, such as Śaiva Siddhānta, according to which there is an unbridgeable metaphysical gap between the practitioner and the deity (Brunner-Lachaux 1963–1977).

*The Impact of These Rituals: Yoshida Shintō and Omiwa Shintō*

Both of these medieval Shintō traditions integrated ritual practices from tantric Buddhism. Indeed the three rituals of the Yoshida 吉田 or Yuiitsu Shintō 唯一神道 (“One and Only” Shintō) corpus (*sandan gyōji* 三壇行事) are clearly modeled on the four described here (Grapard 1992a, 1992b). These include the *jūhachishintō* 十八神道, the *sōgen gyōbō* 宗源行法, and the *yuishintō daigoma* 唯神道大護摩. The *jūhachishintō* replicates the *jūhachidō* (Payne 2010a), the *sōgen gyōbō* is a Northern Dipper 北斗 ritual, and the *yuishintō daigoma* replicates the Shingon *goma*. For its part the Omiwa had its own version of the *goma* as well.

The ritual training programs of both Kōyasan and Hieizan have remained understudied. A multitude of monks were either trained in or their religious worldview deeply informed by these esoteric traditions—including but certainly not limited to the familiar Kamakura era founders, Hōnen, Shinran, Nichiren (Dolce 2002), and Dōgen. An understanding of the ritual training they participated in would provide an important insight into the formation of Buddhism from the medieval period onward.

85. THE ROLE OF ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN  
CONTEMPORARY JAPAN:  
WHETHER ESOTERICISM APPEARS OR REMAINS  
CONCEALED IN THE WORLD DEPENDS ON THE  
TREND OF THE TIMES

Thierry Robouam

Reflecting on contemporary Japan includes the risk that an article, when published, will already be history. Here, I offer a brief reflection on the notion of “contemporary” from my standpoint, which is in Japan. This is followed by a description of how the different esoteric traditions in Japan find themselves involved in the weaving of contemporary Japan. The last section shows how contemporary scholarship plays an important role in the deconstruction of mainstream discourse and representations of Japanese esoteric Buddhism.

In the present contribution, the “contemporary” is not to be understood as one segment of a linear development of history. In Japan, the contemporary is the interface between fossilized positions and emerging dispositions. For example, the recent and rapid changes in China’s economic development have forced the Japanese to reconsider their positions on China. The new positions in the making do not necessarily imply a sense of change; more often they include a positive affirmation that the new positions are what Japan has always held on the subject. In brief, the contemporary in Japan is the constant making (and re-making) of the Japanese-ness of its positions.

Since the time of Kūkai, Saichō, and their early disciples, the Buddhist esoteric traditions have found themselves involved in the constant weaving of positions and their legitimacy, since contributing to the making of a Japanese ethos comes in part from that role. For example, a recent work edited by Yoshihara Hiroto 吉原浩人 and Wang Yong 王勇 (2008) shows how the Tendai tradition has constantly participated in the construction of Japanese culture. Needless to say, esoteric Buddhism is not the most influential factor shaping the form and openness of contemporary Japan. No single tradition, whether religious, philosophical, or scientific, can be acknowledged as the favored source of insights for guiding the Japanese in their decisions. However,

two facts are certain. Since the 1990s a renewed interest in esotericism (*mikkyō* 密教) in Japan has manifested in the forms of publications, exhibitions, documentaries, and pilgrimage. Furthermore, the esoteric traditions of Japanese Buddhism have in turn renewed their interest in contemporary Japan, trying to adapt their teachings and practices to the needs of a rapidly changing society.

In this fashion, the word “*mikkyō*” has begun to be used in a new way, one that reveals in the minds of many Japanese a coherent conceptual landscape that renews the reflection on identity and offers a sense of belonging. “*Mikkyō*” is thus visible for a general public in bookstores, concert halls, museums, public events, and as tourist attractions. Scholars too have enriched their understanding of “*mikkyō*” by opening new fields of specialized studies such as Tibetan esoteric Buddhism, and also by renewing their interest in the esoteric Buddhist traditions of China, India, and the Silk Road. This scholarly research affects the general public through high-quality television programs and DVDs that introduce a vast set of Buddhist sites and artifacts.

In this sense, the addition of the “Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range” to the UNESCO World Heritage List was much more than a matter of national pride. The official UNESCO declaration justifies the inscription to the World Heritage List of this mountain range by mentioning a “unique fusion between Shintoism and Buddhism.” Though the concept of fusion might not be the best way to express the relationships the Japanese have created between different religious planes, it is true that the Kii Mountain Range testifies to the fact that the arrival of esoteric Buddhism in Japan was not accompanied by the suppression of existing religious attitudes dear to the ancestors of the Man'yōbitō 万葉人 (the literati of the Asuka and Nara periods).

What may be seen as contemporary, in this sense, is that esoteric Buddhism is less confined to the interiors of temples and *garans* 伽藍 but can be found more in the open, at natural sites of pilgrimage, exhibition halls, or concert halls. For example, who could have imagined that Shingon and Tendai monks would travel around Japan and the world to perform esoteric Buddhist chants (*shōmyō* 声明) in concert halls and Christian churches?

At a more popular level, posters in trains and public places and advertisements for exhibitions on Buddhist artifacts (most often esoteric art) contribute to maintaining an esoteric flavor in Japanese daily life. Esoteric symbols have penetrated most of Japanese popular cul-

ture and can be found, for example, in tattoos, depicted in *manga* 漫画 (Japanese graphic novels), and painted on trucks. In this sense, esoteric Buddhism is truthful to its vocation to keep the Buddhist teachings alive in all aspects of Japanese culture, especially when most Japanese are incapable of explaining what Buddhism is or to what “*mikkyō*” refers. In contemporary Japanese society, the esoteric traditions maintain a Buddhist influence that is far from being limited to elites.

At a scholarly level, studies of esoteric Buddhism have moved from the narrow spaces of sectarian research to the more open and critical spaces of nonsectarian, multidisciplinary academic research. The period encompassing the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries has been a very insightful one for the study of Japanese esoteric Buddhism. Some of the characteristics of recent studies have included a distancing from sectarian analyses and an emphasis on methodologies such as literary criticism, linguistics, and semiotics. This is also the case concerning studies about Kūkai and his tradition of esoteric Buddhism.

The research of Ryūichi Abé has played an important role in liberating studies on esoteric Buddhism from the uncritical repetition of sectarian positions. In 1999 Abé published the result of years of research on Kūkai, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse*. Abé’s Kūkai is much more than the founder of a new Buddhist sect in Japan; he shows that all aspects of Japanese society, including politics, literature, and the arts, have received a lasting influence from Kūkai’s writing. This richly suggestive study focuses on the legendary figure of Kūkai during medieval Japan and shows that Kūkai’s thoughts in general and his philosophy of language in particular played an important role in the assimilation of Buddhism in Japanese culture. Abé offers a very original reading of Kūkai’s major works and convincingly defends the thesis that Kūkai tried to offer Japan an alternative model for a political system that was not based on Confucian principles.

In 1997, three years before the publication of Abé’s epoch-making work, however, Takeuchi Nobuo 竹内信夫, a specialist of French literature (he has translated Mallarmé’s works) and poetry who teaches comparative literature at Tokyo University, published his *Kūkai Nyūmon: Kōnin no Modanisuto* 空海入門-弘仁のモダニスト. This work reflects Takeuchi’s passion for the Buddhist priest Kūkai and his usage of Sanskrit. Takeuchi also spent time on Mt. Kōya 高野山, the sanctuary of the Shingon tradition and one of the most visited sites

of pilgrimage in Japan, and found the courage to deconstruct the official narratives about Kūkai. He depicts a very humane Kūkai, admirable not so much for his superhuman powers but for his responses to change and to the unknown. Takeuchi's unorthodox interpretation of Kūkai's texts paved the way for a renewal of studies about the great master, even among those who were charged with maintaining what Abé called the "sectarian teachings."

Faculty members of Kōyasan University, the most important university of the Shingon tradition, have recently published studies on Kūkai that also depart from the usual sectarian teachings. The philosopher Murakami Yasutoshi 村上保壽, a Descartes specialist, ordained as Grand Master of the Dharma Transmission in the Shingon Lineage 伝燈大阿闍梨, has published a set of studies of Kūkai's major works from a philosophical perspective (1996, 2003). Murakami has focused on key concepts such as wisdom (*chi* 智) and logos (*kotoba* ことば). He is the first Japanese Shingon scholar to consciously offer in-depth explanations of Kūkai's teachings for an audience that is not destined to embark on the ascetic path of Shingon practices (*gyō* 行), and for lay readers. He avoids the style and specialized vocabulary of traditional scholarly sectarian presentations of Kūkai's teachings and, at the same time, departs from the autobiographical and condescending style used by Shingon or Tendai priests when writing introductory works on Shingon, Tendai, Kūkai, or Saichō for the laity.

Murakami's studies are based on at least two important premises. For him, Kūkai's concept of wisdom is not limited to a rational construction but is fundamentally a form of grace received after a long period of ascetic practices. Wisdom is unworldly, fully genuine, and gives a sense of familiarity to all aspects of nature. The second premise is related to the characteristics of wisdom, because embodying wisdom transforms the way one understands language. Kūkai needed to go beyond teachings about wisdom in order to find a way to be the *word* of wisdom. Thus, Kūkai reflected on the wisdom-logos (ことば) and showed that it could not be reduced to human language. This wisdom is heard, felt, and thought; it is present in all things without being reduced to one thing, cosmic without being the cosmos. Kūkai had to create a new philosophy of language or, more precisely, a new poetics, as a propaedeutic to his understanding of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Another scholar of Kōyasan University, also a Shingon priest and historian, Takeuchi Kōzen 武内考善 published in 2006 a massive study on Kūkai called *Kōbō Daishi Kūkai no Kenkyū*. This study is

the result of decades of research and publications on historical documents related to Kūkai and Kōyasan. Using the tools of the historical method, Takeuchi spent a good part of his life editing and analyzing primary sources related to Kūkai. However, Takeuchi did not limit his research to scriptorium studies but decided to accompany other Shingon priests to the different sites where Kūkai had lived, including sites in China. His travels included walking from the Chinese coast where Kūkai had landed more than a thousand years ago through the Chinese countryside, as far as the former imperial capital of Xi'an (Chang'an) where the great master had lived, studied, and received ordination.

Takeuchi's last publications deal with the most controversial results of his studies. *Kōbō Daishi Kūkai no Kenkyū* focuses on four topics: the first part of the book is dedicated to Kūkai's family and place of birth; the second part clarifies the reasons Kūkai went to China as an exchange student; and the third part sheds new light on the relationship between Kūkai and Saichō. Finally, the fourth part of the book offers a better understanding of the foundation of Mt. Kōya. According to Takeuchi, Kūkai was born and educated in the rich and powerful household of the Abé family to which his mother belonged. Kūkai was thus brought up close to the capital, belonging to one of the most respected clans at the time, and received the best possible education.

Takeuchi traces Kūkai's determination to go to China to a religious experience he had at the age of twenty, when he recited the mantra invoking Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha (Kokūzō Bosatsu 虚空藏菩薩) during an intense period of practice. In China, Kūkai encountered the teachings of Master Huiguo (Keika 惠果) and realized that he had found an answer to his quest. He brought back to Japan the teachings of Huiguo, and with it a new approach to Mahāyāna Buddhism. Regarding the relationship between Kūkai and Saichō, Takeuchi underlines the fact that they were close friends and greatly admired one another. However, they could not agree on questions related to the teachings and their transmission. Finally, for Takeuchi the foundation of a *garan* on Mt. Kōya is Kūkai's first and most significant act in the promotion of his new Buddhist teachings.

The studies above mainly come from the Shingon traditions of esoteric Buddhism and are representative of a new trend in esoteric studies. The study of the esoteric plane of the Tendai tradition, also called Taimitsu 台密, reveals that at present Tendai studies on esotericism remain confined to circles of specialists. Probably one of the



most interesting loci for understanding the subtle differences in the way Taimitsu and Shingon Tōmitsu 東密 affect contemporary Japanese society is to be found in the publication in the last decade of the twentieth century of several anthologies of sermons given by Tendai and Shingon priests during important events such as funerals. The edited volumes give hundreds of examples of short sermons (from one to five minutes) and reveal how the different traditions invite devotees to go through joyful or difficult moments in life.

The studies introduced above are just a few of the works that are critical for understanding the role of esoteric Buddhism in contemporary Japan. Such works offer contemporary scholarly research fresh insights into the ways in which new patterns are woven into the Japanese cultural fabric. These insights may offer a corrective to contemporary studies on esoteric Buddhism that remain limited by sectarian and linguistic compartmentalization. Such studies and reflections on the more apparent expressions of esoteric Buddhism presented at the beginning of this article converge to show that the influence of esoteric traditions in contemporary Japan is fluid and has spread beyond the limits of temples and sects.

86. THE SEA OF ESOTERICISM IS OF ONE FLAVOR  
BUT HAS DEEP AND SHALLOW ASPECTS:  
“TANTRA” AND NEW AGE MOVEMENTS  
(FROM AGONSHŪ TO ASAHARA SHŌKŌ)

Thierry Robouam

In their ordinary usage in Japanese, concepts of “religion” (*shūkyō* 宗教), “esoteric” (*mikkyō* 密教), and “new” (*shin, atarashii* 新) share a common characteristic: ambivalence. These concepts have at the same time both positive and negative connotations. This is obvious for the contemporary usage of the concept of *shūkyō*. For most Japanese, religions are understood as important aspects of human cultures; at the same time, religions may be perceived as threatening or dangerous. In a similar way, since its introduction during the Nara period, *mikkyō* has been a source of fascination and at the same time perceived as potentially dangerous or labeled a decadent form of Buddhism. Finally, the concept of “new” is also ambivalent, especially in the context of a reflection on religion, when it implies that the Japanese became conscious of something of which they were not aware in the past. *Shin* 新 expresses the fact that, at one point in history, the Japanese were able to recognize and experience something that might have existed for a long time but of which they were not conscious.

Furthermore, the concept of *shin* is often associated with magnifying a work of imagination and thus associated with the possibility of transforming existing cosmologies, policies, and social organizations. Because of the uncertainty associated with the concept of *shin*, what is new is also what is potentially dangerous. For example, in the case of the emergence of new Buddhist traditions in Japanese history, such as Pure Land or even Zen, the reaction has not been of immediate acceptance; more often there were long periods of rejection and even persecution before those Buddhist schools became part of the traditional landscape of Japanese culture. Any reflection on New Age movements or what the Japanese called the new religions (*shin shūkyō* 新宗教) must take into account this profound ambivalence.

The present article briefly introduces the “dark” side of esoteric traditions in Japan, and then shows that these esoteric traditions have

created a favorable terrain for the emergence of new religious traditions in the twentieth century. Finally, I will introduce some of the so-called new religions that claim a direct influence from esotericism or tantra, showing that *mikkyō* maintains its role of relating the center and the periphery, orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

For most Japanese, *mikkyō* is not spontaneously associated with a set of doctrines or with a Buddhist sect or even religious practices. The presence of *mikkyō* in Japanese conversations is more a kind of evanescent eruption when speaking, for example, of calligraphy, incense, flower arrangement, or Japanese music. It is also associated with the wild landscapes of Japanese mountains, which are felt to be inhospitable to ordinary people. Similarly, esoteric rituals such as the fire ceremony (*goma* 護摩; see Payne and Orzech, “Homa,” in this volume) are perceived as mysterious practices belonging to an extraordinary realm of reality that is not directly accessible to ordinary Japanese; such practices escape from the control of Japanese institutions.

In novels, movies, and television programs, the character of an esoteric Buddhist priest often appears as an evil presence who uses spells and rituals to support evil causes. Questions about the relationships between *mikkyō*, politics, and the economy also cause Japanese to be suspicious about this aspect of Japanese culture. This “dark” side of esotericism is not yet well studied and documented, despite the fact that Japanese popular culture has never been unilaterally positive about *mikkyō*. In that sense, *mikkyō* has always been an ambivalent entity in the minds of the Japanese, and it is impossible to clearly distinguish what would be a pure form of esotericism (*junmitsu* 純密) from a tainted one (*zōmitsu* 雜密).

Contemporary esotericism is a set of institutions claiming to possess the orthodox version of *mikkyō*, and these institutions are officially recognized by the Japanese government as legal religious associations (*shūkyō hōjin* 宗教法人). As such, they are exempt from paying taxes, allowed to establish private schools, and have the right to receive donations from the business world. Most of these institutions run schools and universities and have a say in matters related to education and social welfare. Furthermore, these institutions are informally connected to diverse political organizations in order to maintain their influence in Japanese society.

Those officially recognized legal organizations associated with the center as orthodox expressions of *mikkyō* also nurture and protect heterodox forms of practices. For example, high priests of esoteric

temples train exorcists (拝み屋) and fortune tellers (占い師) for substantial sums of money. In another area, medical students who are involved in animal experimentation, vivisection, and other research activities involving the taking of life are often taken by their schools to esoteric temples in order to attend rituals that are believed to mitigate the bad karma they have accumulated by killing animals. Yet most of these students have little or no interest in Buddhism.

*Mikkyō* played an important role in creating a favorable terrain for the acceptance of the new religions that emerged in twentieth-century Japan. Most of the new religions do not claim any direct relationship to *mikkyō*; however, new religious lay associations put a great emphasis on healing. These religious groups attract many members because they offer a solution to their physical or psychological problems. *Mikkyō* in all its institutional forms has been the herald of an immense hope for the Japanese: the hope that miracles are possible. Popular culture keeps alive legends about the miraculous deeds of Kūkai 空海 (also known as O Daishi Sama お大師様) and many other Buddhist figures attached to esoteric traditions.

Thus, the “dark” side of *mikkyō* is not just a source of fear but is also an important source of hope. Cancer might be declared incurable by the medical establishment, but there is still hope that the performance of fire ceremonies by a wise esoteric priest can destroy the negative effects of the illness. A child might have difficulties in performing well at school and might have become a drop-out; prayers on Mt. Hiei 比叡山 can give that child another chance. In brief, *mikkyō* is seen as a rich reservoir of salvific energies available not just to the elite of accomplished Buddhist priests but to everyone. This constitutes a favorable terrain for new religions, which portray their founders or leaders as individuals of great integrity who possess extraordinary powers. Even if a new religion does not claim a direct relationship to *mikkyō*, its success nevertheless depends on the lasting belief generated by the esoteric traditions that religious practices can have such salvific powers.

The esoteric traditions of Japan have created not only a favorable terrain for new religions but have also directly inspired some of their founders. Among the new religions that have been directly influenced by *mikkyō*, the most famous are the Gedatsukai 解脱会, Bentenshū 辯天宗, Agonshū 阿含宗, Shinnyoen 真如苑, and to a certain extent AUM Shinrikyō オウム真理教. For example, the Bentenshū began as a lay missionary Shingon movement and continues to maintain a

strong relationship with the Shingon school. The direct influence of esotericism on these religious movements can be traced to famous places of pilgrimage; to temples in Kyōto; to Kōyasan; and, to a lesser extent, to Hieizan.

The Daigoji 醍醐寺 of Kyōto has been a particularly important temple for the founders of new religions. The founder of the Gedatsukai, Okano Seiken 岡野聖憲 (1881–1994), received *tokudo* 得度, the basic rite of entry in the Buddhist community, in the Great Hall of the Sanbōin 三宝院 of the Daigoji. Similarly, the founder of the Shinnyoen, Itō Shinjō 伊藤真乘 (1906–1989), trained at Daigoji and was ordained as a Shingon high priest (*daiajari* 大阿闍梨; *mahācārya*) in 1941. The Daigoji also played an important role in the creation of the most important “stars ritual” (*hoshi matsuri* 星まつり) of Agonshū. Its founder, Kiriyaama Seiryū 桐山靖雄, born in 1921, found his inspiration in the rituals of the Daigo branch 醍醐派 of Shingon Buddhism.

These new religions give great importance to extraordinary spiritual powers (超能力). Depending on the personality of the founders, the teachings about these powers vary greatly. For example, the founder of Agonshū, Kiriyaama Seiryū, claims that he has gained powers that ordinary human beings, including his followers, cannot possess. On the contrary, the founder of Shinnyoen, Itō Shinjō, claims that the spiritual powers he was able to cultivate can also be acquired by his followers.

Most of the new religions introduced above have been able to extend their activities beyond Japan and have very often been more successful than more traditional schools of esoteric Buddhism in recruiting foreign members. Other religious foundations influenced by the Shingon school are less known but still have influence in some parts of Japan. This is the case, for example, in the different branches of the new religious movement Shingoshō 身語正系. These movements are influential in Kyūshū and in Wakayama prefecture, and they claim to have a strong connection with Kōyasan.

The AUM Shinrikyō movement offers a good example of the complex relationship between established esoteric traditions and new religious movements. It is not the place here to discuss the reasons why the AUM movement turned violent and was involved in the 1995 sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway, though there is no reason to think that esoteric teachings had a direct influence on the violent behavior of AUM members. I am more interested in the fact that the 1995 attack

marks a turning point in the attitude that established esoteric schools have adopted toward the new religions. Before that tragic event and the emphasis on the AUM movement's relationships to Kōyasan and the Shingon establishment in the press, Shingon scholars had published articles claiming that the AUM movement had no Buddhist esoteric component.

Since then, the traditional esoteric schools have been even more cautious in their relationship to new religious movements. Any attempts by new religions to establish temples on Kōyasan or close to famous traditional esoteric centers have been severely condemned. In this sense, the complex relationship between esoteric orthodoxy and heterodoxy reflects the ambivalent attitude that contemporary Japan has toward religion of any kind. Furthermore, this relationship might mirror a growing difficulty for the center to deal with the problems of the periphery, and it may also explain why movements such as Sōka Gakkai 創価学会 that have no relationship to esoteric traditions are growing very quickly, while movements related to esotericism are slowly losing their influence.

87. FROM VEDIC INDIA TO BUDDHIST JAPAN:  
CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES IN  
ESOTERIC RITUAL

Richard K. Payne

*Prefatory Note*

By examining the continuities of esoteric Buddhist ritual culture across the broad sweep of Buddhist movement from India to Japan, I intend in this essay to work against the grain of the organizational structure of this collection. The dominant mapping for both religious studies and Buddhist studies remains primarily geo-cultural, an organizational principle that is, understandably, reinforced by the demands of language specialization, and it provides the organizing rubric for this volume—China, Korea, Japan.<sup>1</sup> Like all such organizing systems, however, the benefits of grouping some things together comes at the cost of keeping other things apart.

Perhaps at least partly in response to the tendencies toward essentializing religion into geo-culturally defined “traditions,” recent scholarship has tended to focus close attention on specific contextualizing factors, including geographic, cultural, social, historical, literary, economic, and artistic. Within the geo-cultural framework, the intent for this collection has been to emphasize context and define locale. Once close attention to context comes to be taken for granted, however, it is in danger of losing its function as a critical corrective and results in the collection of a great deal of isolated information—all trees, no forest. Dialectically, at this point, this approach is in need of its own critical corrective. Attention to the historical continuity of ritual praxis<sup>2</sup> across

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<sup>1</sup> In the background of these geo-cultural categories is a kind of nativism, which tends to impose an assumption that there is a normative form of Buddhism to be found within these geo-cultural areas. Even further in the background, one may frequently discover a style of the comparative study of religion based on sweeping generalizations built on unfounded presumptions regarding religious universals—common narrative structures regarding founders and their teachings, and the progressive institutionalization and decay of the purity of those teachings into empty ritualism.

<sup>2</sup> The term “praxis” is used here to refer to the ways in which religious ideology and practices mutually interact. This dialectic relation between religious ideas—itsself

the boundaries of religious cultures—informed by close attention to context—may provide one such corrective.

*Issues in Theory and Method*

There has been a great deal of scholarly discussion, and consequently scholarly disagreement, over the question of how to understand tantric, esoteric, or Vajrayāna Buddhism. Different approaches to the question are possible, of course, and need not be seen as mutually exclusive, as each yields different results. For example, doctrinal and ideological studies, textual studies, and institutional and sectarian histories are all well-established approaches and valuable sources of knowledge. An approach that remains underutilized, however, is ritual studies.<sup>3</sup>

What has been called the ritual “technology” of tantric Buddhism (Sharf 2002a, 269) is an area of inquiry requiring not just additional attention but also the development of new theoretical and methodological tools to facilitate that study. A key aspect of this is, I believe, an emphasis on historical continuity that counters the rhetoric of rupture created by the implicitly nativist emphasis on the putatively unique character of a Chinese, Korean, or Japanese form of Buddhism.

From this perspective it is possible to see that the ritual technology of Buddhist tantra originated in India, drawing on Vedic ritual culture as perhaps its major influence, was adapted into Buddhism (Gonda 1965, 452–55), and was carried by Buddhists to East Asia. However, tantric Buddhist ritual was just one part of a much larger ritual corpus that was transmitted to East Asia, and it is this larger ritual culture of East Asian Buddhism that acts as the institutional and conceptual context within which tantric ritual exists.<sup>4</sup> For example, the Shingon

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a broader category than doctrines, which tend to be explicit assertions—and practice does not mean that every idea is expressed in practice or that every practitioner is consciously aware of the background ideology informing his/her practice. Indeed, much of the reason that people engage in religious activities is either “because my teacher told me to” or “because we’ve always done it this way.”

<sup>3</sup> Historically, the Romanticism that informed the study of East Asian Buddhism had the effect not only of raising a particular form of meditation to paradigmatic status as the Buddhist practice (on par with prayer for Christianity) and promoting the idea that spontaneity exemplified the goal of Buddhist practice, but it also actively obstructed the study of Buddhist ritual, creating categories and representations that marginalized ritual practice as irrelevant to the goal of awakening (that is, the Romantic goal of spontaneity) and a sign of decadence. See Payne 2005b.

<sup>4</sup> Systems theory, with its ideas regarding nested systems and semipermeable boundaries between systems, offers a theoretical framework for the analysis of these



initiatory sequence includes three sets of vows: the basic pan-Buddhist set, the Mahāyāna bodhisattva vows, and specifically tantric vows. The Shingon school, however, has given this system its own context by placing the tantric vows first, followed by the bodhisattva vows, and concluding with the *śrāvaka* vows.<sup>5</sup>

Methodologically, the study of ritual entails at least four distinct approaches—textual, archeological, material culture and art historical, and ethnographic. Textual studies, which to date have largely been seen to serve doctrinal questions, can also be applied to questions regarding practice generally and ritual in particular. Indeed, it seems that what we find in the tantras is more like an instruction manual than a doctrinal exposition. The common Western presumption of the priority of thought to action has tended to carry over to a similar presumption that religious doctrine has priority over practice.<sup>6</sup>

On a more metaphorical level, rituals can be subject to the same kind of closely detailed studies as texts. Just as different versions of a text, such as for example the eight versions of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama sūtra*, can be closely analyzed for textual affinities and the historical implications of such affinities, so also can ritual practices be studied in their different versions. While the analogy may not be perfect—for example, we may not be able to establish ritual affinities in the same manner or detail as textual ones—this approach may reveal other aspects of the history of Buddhism otherwise invisible to us.

Archeology tends to be an area to which Buddhist studies have given little attention, due no doubt to the preference for textual studies. Epigraphic studies have begun to change this (e.g., those by Schopen and Davidson), but even more broadly archeological findings can inform us of the organization of the physical settings of ritual practice. Attention to ritual practice may also lead to (re)considering the meaning of archeological information. The archeological reports of Taxila, for

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relations between, for example, the ritual corpus of Shingon Buddhism in Japan and the ritual corpus of East Asian Mahāyāna.

<sup>5</sup> When and why the order was converted from what might be considered the more “natural” sequence of *śrāvaka*, bodhisattva, *tantrika* is in need of further research. On Shingon understandings of the *vinaya*, see Klaus Pinte, “Shingon Risshū: Esoteric Buddhism and Vinaya Orthodoxy in Japan” in this volume, and Shayne Clarke 2006.

<sup>6</sup> This presumption is seen, for example, in the rationale for only translating the first chapter of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, which is the chapter with doctrinal content, all the rest having to do with ritual practice (see Tajima 1936, 12; Wilhelm K. Müller 1976, 2).

example, seem to simply identify “hearths” in various locations, without indicating whether these are for cooking or for the performance of *homa*. While it may be that these are indeed all simply domestic hearths, one suspects that the question of their possible other use was never raised.

Attention to material culture has broadened the scope of art historical studies in the recent past. It has long been suggested, for example, that the introduction of tantric ritual to Japan by Kūkai was broadly influential in stimulating technological developments such as casting, weaving brocades, brush-making, and so on. The introduction of these technologies in the service of ritual culture would have allowed them to spread beyond their most obvious uses and thereby have a much broader cultural impact.

### *Examining Continuities*

When considering the issue of the continuity of tantric practice, the first impulse of a scholar such as myself, whose training and focus is Japanese Buddhism, is to think in terms of a single linear process of development, matching up history and geography. The inherited model is that things Buddhist began in India, spread to China, and then arrived in Japan. This “three countries” model is inherited from Japanese Buddhist historiography (Stone 1999b), which placed itself at the end of a developmental sequence—though not necessarily progressive, as Western historiography would commonly have it, but instead frequently cast in the rhetoric of decay (*mappō* 末法). While the three-countries model is itself problematic, most obviously for marginalizing Korea, adding presumptions of progress or decay only compounds the historiographic distortions.

Rather than *any* linear geo-historical model, which is informed by issues of legitimacy resolved by reference to competing claims of authoritative lineal descent (the rhetoric of lineage transmission), a model of catalytic reactions might be more useful.<sup>7</sup> This model would present the spread of tantric practice as neither having a single originary location nor a single developmental trajectory, but rather as moving in a variety of directions simultaneously and constellating into

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<sup>7</sup> The criterion here is utility for the generation of new understanding, i.e., a heuristic criteria, being the only one relevant to such models, not some notion of truth in the abstract.

different forms depending upon local conditions. Vedic practices, for example, form an important source of tantric practice, but this adaptation did not take place in any single location or event. As with the category “Mahāyāna” itself, the unity now perceived has been retrospectively constructed.

Thus, what we have is something more akin to the diffusion of an understanding of practice that reshaped existing practices as well as creating new ones, but largely in the context—at least for Buddhist tantra—of the religious teleology of Mahāyāna. Before examining one particular ritual practice, a few examples of the spread of tantric Buddhist religious culture into East Asia will suggest the nature of this process.

#### Abhiṣeka

It makes sense that *abhiṣeka*, the tantric rite of initiation, would not be modeled after the “second birth” of the Brahmins, that is, an initiation closed to those not born of Brahmin fathers. Instead the themes of kingship and ascent to royal power inform tantric initiations (Davidson 2002a; Orzech 1998). The consecrations that involve the anointing of kings would seem to have their roots in medieval India.

#### Homa

If there is any one element that comes close to being the defining characteristic of tantra, it is *homa* (*goma* 護摩), a votive ritual in which offerings are made to a deity by burning them ritually. *Homa* is found in all forms of tantra—geographically across the entirety of the “tantric world” and in all sectarian forms, whether Hindu or Buddhist. It is one of the tantric practices that are most clearly part of a continuity of ritual practice dating from Vedic India and lasting into the present day.

In what we have been calling in this volume the penumbra of Buddhist tantra, we find two instances of *homa* revealing different directions of appropriation. One of these is the *homa* of the Northern Dipper (Mollier 2008, 141–46). While the Northern Dipper played no role in Indian Buddhism, it was a very important constellation in Chinese religious culture. Thus, the existence of a *homa* of the Northern Dipper in the Shingon ritual corpus indicates a new creation within tantra responding to its surrounding religious culture, that of China, in this case.

The second instance is the development of *homa* within the sixteenth-century Shintō school of Yuiitsu Shintō. In this case a ritual is appropriated from the tantric ritual corpus for use in a newly created religious tradition. While certain adaptations were made, the basic structure and much of the content of the ritual remained the same.

### *Feeding Hungry Ghosts*

The imagery of hungry ghosts (*preta*; *gaki* 餓鬼) as one of the six realms of rebirth derives from the cosmology originating in India and is shared by both Buddhist and Hindu tantric traditions (see Teiser 1988b). The continuity from India through Buddhist China to contemporary Japan involved here is not, however, limited to conceptions of the nature of the cosmos but extends to the ritual practices involved in the feeding of hungry ghosts (Payne 1999a).

### Phalayāna

One of the continuities running through tantric Buddhism and therefore (probably) coming from India is the idea of taking the result as the cause, *phalayāna*. This is seen in Kūkai's work as well as Tibetan explanations. Since there is no reason to believe that there was direct contact between these two instances, it is reasonable to conclude a common ancestor.<sup>8</sup> Ritually, this takes the form of identification between the practitioner and the buddha invoked (*ahaṃkāra*; *nyūga ganyū* 入我我入), one of the ideas that has been taken as a marker for tantric Buddhism.

This idea seems to have become pervasive in medieval Japanese Buddhist thought, what Paul Groner has called the foreshortening of the path (1992), which is then the common rhetorical structure of not only the explicitly tantric or esoteric Buddhisms, Taimitsu and Tōmitsu, but is also Shin and Zen.

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<sup>8</sup> The only alternative is independent creations and convergence.

*Interiorization of Ritual*

The transition from Vedic ritualism to tantric yoga is often equated with the interiorization of ritual (Payne 2002). This process began in India very early; references to it are found in the *Upaniṣads*. According to Yael Bentor, the Vedic fire ritual already had an internalized form by the time *homa* was adapted into a tantric Buddhist context (Bentor 2000, 595). Ritual practices may be interiorized in a variety of ways (Bentor identifies five, 596), including homologies between human physiology (such as bodily heat or *gtum mo*, and the digestive processes) and the votive fire, and a mentally visualized performance of a ritual. While in some Indic interpretations this internalized ritual became not only an acceptable substitute but was even more highly valorized than a physical performance of a ritual, in at least Yixing's understanding the physical performance was preferable (Strickmann 1983, 443).<sup>9</sup>

*Integral Ritual Technology: Mudrā, Mantra, Mind, and Mandala*

It has been argued convincingly that while the doctrinal system of tantric Buddhism does not differ significantly from mainstream Mahāyāna Buddhism, the ritual technology of the former does distinguish the two. Conceiving of the cosmos as a mandala and one's performance of *mudrā* along with their attendant mantra and visualizations as the three mysteries (*sanmitsu* 三密), that is, the identity of the practitioner's body, speech, and mind with the body, speech, and mind of the deity, constitutes not simply a list of characteristic tantric ritual elements but a coherently organized whole. This is why, when looking at the continuities of the ritual culture, we are dealing with something other than a collection of characteristics.

Additionally, by focusing on ritual as an organic, integrated whole, we can avoid the problems involved in attempting to define tantra in terms of particular elements, as has been the common practice in the

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<sup>9</sup> In the psychologized religious culture of the contemporary West, it is all too easy for interiorization to be misperceived as a kind of tantric psychology. However, this involves a suppressed interpretive step. When, for example, the "winds" (*prāṇa*, *chi*, *ki* 氣) are interpreted into a broader "proto-psychological" category such as "energy," which is then itself given psychological valence, the middle step is usually elided. Esoteric physiology is, therefore, a distinct category and it usually employs very different metaphors for internal processes.

past. Thus, it is not mantra in isolation that defines tantra, any more than *mudrā* or mandala in isolation do so. By focusing on rituals as a whole we can also avoid thinking that we have discovered connections when all we have found is a similarity. Furthermore, even a “continuity of elements does not signify identity of rites,” as Gudrun Bühnemann has noted (1988, 31).

*Extraordinary Language: From Mantra and Dhāraṇī to Nenbutsu and Daimoku*

Indic philosophy of language informed Buddhist praxis from the time of the Buddha Śākyamuni forward. Protective invocations, calling on the extraordinary powers of the Buddha, constitute a very early stratum of Buddhist literature, the *parittas*. *Dhāraṇīs* are found as the valued possessions of bodhisattvas in such Mahāyāna works as the *Lotus Sūtra* (Payne 2001). These ideas regarding the efficacy of extraordinary language contributed to the importance of mantra in tantric Buddhism, and these ideas and practices were brought from India to East Asia as part of Buddhist culture.

The continuity of form of ritualized linguistic usages is particularly noteworthy. Sanskrit expressions such as *namas* (*namu* 南無) are not only found in tantric recitations but extend to the practices of Japanese Buddhist sects that specifically identify themselves in contrast to tantra—comprising a part of the “penumbra” of tantra in East Asia. One instance is the Pure Land practice of reciting the name of Amida, the *nenbutsu* (念仏), “to keep the Buddha in mind.” The term “mantra” itself is explained in terms of this mnemonic function. The extension of Indic philosophies of language to East Asia is not limited either to the simple repetitive use of linguistic forms or to terminology for identifying those forms. Pure Land understandings of the efficacy of keeping the Buddha in mind, as found in the *Contemplation Sūtra*, for example, are also another expression of the idea that a ritualized identification with the buddha transforms the practitioner. Much the same can be said for the Nichiren practice of reciting the title of the *Lotus Sūtra*, commonly known as *daimoku* (題目).

That there is a direct historical link in these examples, rather than just a vaguely defined “influence,” is suggested by the fact that Hōnen and Shinran, the founders of Japanese Pure Land, and Nichiren were all trained as Tendai monks on Mt. Hiei. It is, then, more a matter of sectarian rhetorics of rupture than of historical continuity that

contrast these practices with those of tantric Buddhism. These seven instances—*abhiṣeka*, *homa*, feeding hungry ghosts, ritual identification, interiorization of ritual, integral ritual technology, and extraordinary language, to which others could be added<sup>10</sup>—indicate the character of the continuities between Indian tantric Buddhism, with its roots in Vedic ritualism, and East Asian tantric Buddhism, which interacted with local traditions and followed its own course of development. We turn now to a specific instance that exemplifies this continuity: construction rites.

### *Building Rites*

At the very end of the Shingon *Soku Sai goma* manual is a short section entitled “Ritual for Creating the Altar.” The text explains that

When starting a new hearth, after sitting down, it is proper to perform the following ritual prior to the universal homage.

- [1] First, hoe *mudrā* and mantra. *Vajra* fist, thumbs and index fingers extended straight.

Mantra twenty-one times: *oṃ nikhana vasudhe svāhā* (*oṃ* dig the earth *svāhā*)

- [2] Next: *mudrā* and mantra to empower the clay. Two hands in *añjali*. The two ring and two index fingers are bent so that the two phalanges of each are pressed together. The two thumbs are extended straight and withdrawn from the index fingers so as to form a shape like a mouth.

Mantra twenty-one times: *oṃ amṛta udbhava hūṃ phaṭ svāhā* (*oṃ* nectar producing *hūṃ phaṭ svāhā*)

- [3] Next: the “great thunderbolt wheel” (*mahāvajra cakra*) *mudrā* and mantra.

- [4] The class of various deities: The thirty-seven deities who are requested to come down to the altar are each represented by a seed syllable (*bija* mantra). Note this single representation is used as a support for practice. (The thirty-seven deities are Mahāvairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitāyus, and Amoghasiddhi, together with the thirty-two deities of the Vajradhātu Mandala.)

- [5] The *devas* of the world: The twelve *devas*, together with the seven celestial lights and the twenty-eight lunar mansions.

Here in this ritual element, rarely used but still retained within present-day standard Shingon ritual manuals, the historical continuity of

<sup>10</sup> For example, skull imagery and skull magic is another instance of continuity between Indian and East Asian tantra. See Gray 2006.

esoteric ritual practice is evident. In this brief set of actions—digging the earth, purifying the clay, establishing the foundation, and installing both the deities of the lineage in the form of a *bija* mantra mandala, together with the Vedic deities—are found ritual references to building rites that date from Vedic ritual practices.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, the final set of deities evoked into the altar site is clear evidence that the cosmology and astrology informing the ritual extends back to Vedic India. Included here are the twelve Vedic deities, such as Brahmā, Vāyu, Sūrya, and so on, as well as the two sets of asterisms the seven celestial lights and the twenty-eight lunar mansions. The seven celestial lights are the sun, moon, and five visible planets, while the lunar mansions are the conventional twenty-eight days of a lunar month. (As the lunar cycle does not actually correspond exactly to a set period of days, the Tibetan system of calendrics uses twenty-seven. See Henning 2007, 356–57.) The *mudrā* described in the second ritual action is the *mudrā* of Hayagrīva, the horse-headed form of Avalokiteśvara (see Nayar 2004).

In addition to this rite for constructing the altar, there is a corresponding rite for its dissolution, which is employed at the end of the sequence to twenty-one performances that is done in the training of Shingon priests. A closing vow is recited:

On this the seventh and final day of the ritual performance of this *homa*, I make this concluding vow to the chief deity Ācala Vidyārāja (Fudō Myōō 不動明王) and his guardians. Beginning with the host of the chief deity Ācala, the four great and eight great guardians have brought and transferred their vows here to me and given *siddhi* to me. I request the holy guardians return to their own mandalas. From the beginning of this rite until this concluding day, the hosts of mysterious forces have surely brought their influences to bear. Thus, beginning with the five classes of *vajra* rank in the outer circle of the mandala, for the heavenly monarchs and hosts of the nine heavens in all three realms...

The recitation then proceeds as usual with the final invocation. At the very end of the rite, and in place of dissolving the ritual boundaries

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<sup>11</sup> The texts that focus on the construction of Vedic altars constitute a separate class of texts known as *śulbasūtra* (or, in some cases, *śulvasūtra*). (Personal communication via e-mail with Michael Witzel, February 12, 2008.) Gonda notes that the *śulbasūtras* are directly attached to the *śrautasūtras* and belong to the latest period of Vedic textual production. They “contain minute rules regarding the measurement and construction of the fire-places and sacrificial grounds” (Gonda 1977, 470).



that opens the ritually defined enclosure, the practitioner (or his designate) performs the following:

The practitioner first washes the top of the altar and the mouth of the hearth with the water for purification (*argha* water; *aka misu* 鬪伽水).

Visualize the syllable *hām* above the altar. This changes, becoming a wind *cakra*. This wind blows, destroying the hearth as well as everything on top of the altar.

Next, *dharmakāya gāthā*:

Everything that exists is a composite event  
 Proceeding by way of causes and conditions,  
 And all events mutually cause and condition one another.  
 This fact is not understood by foolish people.<sup>12</sup>

Next, take the wood pincers and draw them around the rim of the hearth, destroying it. (According to an earlier explanation, this was done with the single-pronged *vajra*. Follow your master's direction.)

The way in which these construction rites are organized points to a mimetic understanding of how ritual is effective. These are ritual (that is, symbolic) actions, but they work at the interface between mimicking actual actions, such as hoeing up weeds to clear a space of ground, and an imaginal realm of actions, such as installing the various deities into their locations in the ritual space. Beyer refers to these two as “public world” and “divine world” (Beyer 1973, 103). The ritual performance then takes place at the mimetic interface between these two realms, the actual and the imaginal.

Such construction rites for altars—or for dwellings and monasteries—seem to have been given relatively little attention, apparently because most research has taken place in an existing ritual setting, dwelling, or monastery. The Vedic background becomes relevant here because, as practiced by an originally nomadic culture, Vedic altars were regularly established anew. However, in Japan, where the same altars may have been in use for centuries, the question, “How does one get started?” rarely arises, and so this ritual element is rarely used.

How, then, does one establish one location, one place as appropriate for the performance of such rituals? Clearly, since there is a corresponding rite of dissolution, this was thought to be not only a significant action but a definitive one as well—what might be called

<sup>12</sup> *Lalitavistāra*, XIII.96.

a “socio-ontological” shift, that is, a change in ontological category for some particular social group. In the Vedic tradition the establishment of the three (or five) *śrauta* fires constituted a change that seems to have been ambiguously identified with the fires themselves and with the practitioner.<sup>13</sup>

*Mandalization of the Lived World: Altars, Dwellings, and Monasteries*

The anthropocosmic vision of the Vedic practitioners lies in the background of such construction rites, creating homologies between the human body, the mandala, the altar, and dwellings (Meister 2003). These homologies are concretized, for example, in the geometrics involved in laying out a Vedic altar and the very similar geometrics used to lay out a mandala.<sup>14</sup>

That such rites formed a major concern of tantric Buddhists is reflected in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, a text dealing with constructing a monastery, including finding an appropriate site and locating sound building materials. At the same time, however, the instructions

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<sup>13</sup> This at least is how I understand the ambiguity about whether the initial establishment of the *śrauta* fires (*agnyādheya*) changes the social status of the one offering sacrifice or has to do with the fires themselves. As an initiatory rite, the *agnyādheya* should change the status of the sacrificer permanently. On the other hand, the fires could become extinguished or “wear out,” and thus need to be ritually reestablished (*punarādheya*). “Nevertheless the texts do not recommend the *punarādheya* as a remedy, but only yearly offerings with certain mantras. Apparently the ritualist, though still recognizing the need for a periodical renewal, held on to the position that the *śrauta* fires are to be established once for all” (Sparrebom and Heesterman 1989, 98). In other words, although the fires would need to be rekindled, such an action could not change the social status of the sacrificer, who had already achieved the status of a *śrauta* sacrificer. It is worth emphasizing, however, that this may be more of a problem for us today since we draw a sharp distinction between social and ontological realms, a distinction that was perhaps not made or not made as sharply by the Vedic authors.

<sup>14</sup> In Japan the term “*mandara*” is used for a variety of geographic representations (see ten Grotenhuis 1999; Orzech 1996a; Gardiner 1996). Given this rather unique usage, one wonders whether the mathematical part of the ritual tradition did not make it to Japan, hence providing the freedom of adapting the term “*mandara*” to a variety of geographic representations. Apparently under the influence of Romantic preconceptions regarding the nature of religion, much of the attention to East Asian Buddhism has focused on its aesthetic and doctrinal aspects, leaving unexamined ritual practice and the attendant cultural knowledge required. This entire field, including the question of mathematical knowledge, is an area requiring additional research to determine what kinds of mathematical texts did get translated into Chinese and then conveyed to Japan.

extend beyond what we might consider to be the practical aspects of construction to include such fundamental issues as finding an appropriate teacher (Tanemura 2004, 16–42). This suggests that the text was written at least in part as a guidebook for the lay sponsor of the new monastery as well as a ritual manual for the teacher (*ācārya*) who then is in charge of the balance of the construction.

The brief ritual sequence from the Shingon *homa* described above has its direct corollaries in the structure of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*'s ritual activities. Tadeusz Skorupski (2002, 7) summarizes these, indicating that

the main purpose of the rituals performed is to transform the monastic ground, the monastic building, and its images into a perfect abode inhabited by Buddhist deities. The ritual master transmutes the site into the *vajra*-ground and dissolves into it the nature of emptiness and buddhahood. Similarly, the foundations of the monastery are permeated with the Vajradhātu *maṇḍala*, and special arrangements are devised for the gods of the *traidhātuka*, men, and, surprisingly, for the *pretas*. The guardian gods of the ten directions, the planets as deities, and all the other deities are brought in and engaged to invest their respective powers for the benefit of the monastery, and indeed for the benefit of the whole world. The monastic building is transformed into a perfect *maṇḍala* palace fully protected by a host of fierce deities distributed on all sides.

The transmutation of the monastic building into a mandala through the emplacement of deities is directly comparable to the creation of the altar for the *homa*.

As suggested elsewhere, continuities of ritual culture do not follow unilinear paths, but are rather more like a catalytic process that may proceed in a variety of directions simultaneously. Hence, another example of the pervasion of tantric conceptions within construction rites is provided by contemporary Nepalese practices. Slusser (1982, 129) emphasizes the religious significances of all construction in the Kathmandu Valley:

Even in such seemingly secular matters as raising a farmhouse or digging a well, construction is hemmed with the same sanctions and rituals that accompany the building of a temple. The differences are essentially of degree, not kind.

Slusser notes the ritual continuity of Newar construction rituals with their Indian forebears, referring specifically to the fact that “Elaborate rituals such as those laid down in the Indian *gṛhasūtras* (rules

for domestic conduct) precede the building of a house” (Slusser 1982, 133). Writing about the building practices of the Kholagaun Chhetri, a contemporary Nepalese group, John Gray (2006, 73–74) notes that they

construct their houses in a complex spatial milieu consisting of the worldly space manifest by the cardinal directions and the reigning deities enclosing and defining it, the physical site for the house, the vital force (*bhūmi*) of the ground upon which it is built, serpent deities (*nag*) that lie beneath it, impurities of lower caste construction workers and lingering presences of other beings occupying the site. In building a house in such a space, there are five stages of construction: assessing the site, preparing it for construction, positioning the house on the site, building the house, beginning with the foundation, and inhabiting the house. The aim of each of these stages is not just to erect the material structure but also to ensure it is auspicious, that is, to build a harmonious conjuncture of person and house with time and space.

### *Some Thoughts toward a Conclusion*

It is a theoretical decision whether to employ the rhetoric of rupture or that of continuity. Both can be employed for political advantage—either the symbolic resonances of being fresh, new, and relevant to the present day, or the resonances of being well-established, tested, reliable, and traditional. From an academic perspective, however, neither should be taken as the given, unproblematized format for organizing the representation of history. The study of Buddhism, and perhaps especially tantric Buddhism, has been largely molded by the rhetorics of rupture—ruptures across geo-cultural and linguistic boundaries, ruptures across sectarian developments, ruptures across political and historical eras. This essay has attempted to point toward an alternate historiography of continuity.

In examining the Vedic sources for the *homa* altar construction rites, as well as other tantric rituals, it is tempting to hope for what might be called “strong” connections, clear and specific similarities between the ritual practices of the two traditions. To date such strong connections have not been identified (see, for example, Payne 2004). Speculating on the nature of the transition from Vedic ritual culture to tantric, one of the factors that is perhaps most important is the traditional division of Vedic rites between *ghṛhya* and *śrauta* (domestic and solemn). One would expect that early tantric ritual innovators would have had more personal experience with the domestic rites, and would therefore have

drawn more on those practices than on the solemn rites.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, of course, some awareness of the character of the solemn rites could have also been integrated into tantric ritual practices.

Despite their appropriation into different religious contexts, the basic structures of Vedic ritual practice have remained relatively constant. Interiorization of ritual by all forms of tantra, and its integration into conceptions of the Buddhist path and goal, has resulted in the adoption, adaptation, or substitution of ritual contents. Ritual structures, however, have remained largely constant. More broadly, however, the ritual culture of medieval Indian Buddhism was imported into East Asia and spread throughout the region. Its penumbral effects included the appropriation of East Asian elements and its appropriation into other religious traditions.

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<sup>15</sup> The predominance of research on Vedic rituals seems to have focused on the *śrauta* rites. If this hypothesis is to be pursued, more work on the *grhya* rites will be useful.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Many of the major research collections in the field have been published in multiple editions, and many of these are commonly cited by abbreviation. To avoid confusion concerning which edition is intended we have added the date of the edition after the first occurrence of the abbreviation in the author's text. Thus, one might read "BZ (1912–22)" or "BZ (1978–83)" depending on the edition being used.

### BDJ

*Bukkyō daijiten* 佛教大辭典, 7 vols., Mochizuki Shinkō 望月信享, ed. 1931–1937. Tokyo: Bukkyō daijiten hakkōjō.  
*Mochizuki Bukkyō Daijiten*, 10 vols. 1974. Mochizuki Shinkō, Tsukamoto Zenryū, et al. eds. Tokyo: Sekai Seiten Kankō Kyōkai.

Beijing Numbered manuscripts from Dunhuang held in the National Library, Beijing.

### BZ

*Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho* 大日本佛教全書. Tokyo: Bussho Kankōkai, 1912–1922. 150 vols.

*Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho* 大日本佛教全書. Tokyo: Meicho Fukyūkai, 1978–1983. 151 vols.

*Dai Nihon bukkō zensho* 大日本佛教全書, Suzuki Gakujutsu Zaidan 鈴木學術財團 (comp.). 1970–73. 100 vols. Tokyo: Kōdansha

CDZ *Chishō Daishi zenshū* 智證大師全集, 4 vols. BZ 25–28.

CKS *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 朝鮮金石總覽, Chōsen sōtōkufu 朝鮮總督府, ed. 1919–1976, 2 vols. Seoul: Asea Munhwasa.

CT *Concordance du Tao-tsang: Titres des ouvrages*. Schipper, Kristofer M. 1975. Paris: École française d'Extrême Orient.

DDZ *Dengyō daishi zenshū* 伝教大師全集, by Saichō 最澄 (767–822). Tokyo: Tendaishū shūten kankōkai, 1912.

DMWJ *Dunhuang mizong wenxian jicheng* 敦煌密教宗文獻集成, Lin Shitian 林世田 and Shen Guomei 申國美, comp. 2000. 3 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua quanguo tushuguan wenxian shuweifuzhi zhongxin. Companion volume, same compilers, year and publisher is *Dunhuang mizong wenxian jicheng xubian* 敦煌密宗文獻集成續編, 2 vols.

DNK *Dai nihon komonjo* 大日本古文書. 1901-. Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo 東京大學. 史料編纂所, ed. Tokyo: Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku.

DNS *Dai nihon shiryū* 大日本資料. 1901. Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo 東京大學. 史料編纂所 ed. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppan kai.

DSML *Dazu shike mingwen lu* 大足石刻銘文錄. 1999. Chongqing Dazu shike yishu bowuguan 重慶大足石刻藝術博物館 & Dazuxian wenwu baoguan 大足縣文物保官 comp. Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe.

DSYW *Dazu shike yanjiu wenji* 大足石刻研究文集, ed. 1993–2006. Liu Changjiu 刘长久; Hu Wenhe 胡文和; Li Yongqiao 李永翹 eds., 5 vols. Chongqing: Chongqing Chubanshe.

DZ *Daozang* 道藏 as cited according to Schipper, Kristopher and Franciscus Verellen, eds. *The Daoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*. 3 vols. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004.

EZFW Electronic version of the ZFW.

FDC *Foguang da cidian* 佛光大辭典. 1988. Xingyun dashi 星雲大師. Ciyi 慈怡. Cizhuang 慈莊, comp. 8 vols. Gaoxiang: Foguang chubanshe.

- FMZ *Fudō Myōō Zō* 不動明王像. 1986. Nakano Genzō 中野玄三. Nihon no Bijutsu no. 238. Tokyo: Shibundō.
- GMZ *Godai Myōō Zō* 五代明王像. 1997. Nakano Genzō 中野玄三. Nihon no Bijutsu no. 378. Tokyo: Shibundō.
- GR *Gunsho Ruijū* 群書類從. 1898–1902. Hanawa Hokiichi 塙保己一 ed. 19 vols. Tokyo: Keizai zasshisha.  
*Gunsho Ruijū*, 1959–1970. Ed. Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai 續群書類從完成會. 29 vols. Tokyo: Zoku
- HKC *Haedong kosūng chōn* 海東高僧傳. T. 2065.
- HPC *Han'guk pulgyo chōnsō* 韓國佛教全書. 1981–2001. Han'guk pulgyo chōnsō p'yōnch'ōn wiwōn hoe 韓國佛教全書編纂委員, comp. 13 vols. Seoul: Tongguk t'aehakkyō ch'ulp'ansa.
- HPIS *Han'guk pulgyo inmyōng sajōn* 韓國佛教人名辭典. 1993. Yi Chōng 李政 comp. Seoul: Pulgyo Sidaesa
- HPSS *Han'guk pulgyo sasang sa* 韓國佛教思想史. 1975. Sungsan Pak Kil-chin Paksa Hwagap Kinyōm Saōphoe 崇山朴吉眞博士華甲紀念事業會 eds. Iri: Wōn Pulgyo Sasang Yōn'gwōn.
- INST *Iwanami Nihon Shisō Taikei* 岩波日本思想大系. 1970–1982. 67 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- IBJ *Iwanami Bukkyō Jiten* 岩波仏教辭典. 1995. Ed. Nakamura Hajime 中村元, et al. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- KD *Kokushi Daijiten* 國史大辭典. 1986. Ed. Kokushi Daijiten Henshū Inikai 國史大辭典編集委員會. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.
- KDCZ *Kōbō Daishi Chosaku Zenshū* 弘法大師著作全集. 1997. Ed. Katsuma Shunkyō 勝又俊教. Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin.
- KZ *Kōbō daishi zenshū* 弘法大師全集. 1909–1911. Ed. Hase Hōshū 長谷寶秀. 6 vols. Ōsaka: Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo. (Repr. 1966.)  
*Kōbō Daishi Zenshū* 弘法大師全集. 1923. Ed. Sofū Sen'yōkai 祖風宣揚會 ed. 6 vols. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.  
*Kōbō Daishi zenshū*. 1970–1977. Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo 密教文化研究所, ed. 5 vols. Wakayama-ken Kōyasan: Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo.  
*Kōbō Daishi Zenshū*. 1978. Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo, ed. 8 vols. Kyōto: Dōhōsha.  
Teihon Kōbō Daishi zenshū 定本弘法大師全集. 1991–1997. Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo, ed. 10 vols. Wakayama-ken Kōyasan: Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo.
- KS *Koryō sa* 高麗史. 1990. Han'guk Hak munhōn Yōn'gu, ed. Chōng Inji 鄭麟趾, et al. comp. 3 vols. Kochōn taehak kangdōk kyochae 7, Seoul: Asea Munhwasa.
- KT *Kokushi Taikei* 國史大系, 1929–1967. Ed. Kuroita Katsumi 黑板勝美. 60 vols. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.
- KYL *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄. T. 2154.
- MDJ *Mikkyō daijiten* 密教大辭典. 1931–1933. Matsunaga Shōdō and Mikkyō Jiten Hensankai 密教辭典編纂會, eds. 3 vols. Kyōto: Mikkyō Jiten Hensankai. (Repr. 1945, 1979.)  
*Mikkyō daijiten*. 1968–1970. Mikkyō Jiten Hensankai, Mikkyō Daijiten Saikan Inikai 密教大辭典再版委員會, and Mikkyō Gakkai 密教學會, eds. 6 vols. Kyōto: Hōzōkan.  
*Mijiao da cidian* 密教大辭典. 1979. Mijiao cidian bianzuanhui (Mikkyō Jiten Hensankai) 密教辭典編纂會, eds. Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe. (Repr. of 1968–1970 ed.).  
*Mikkyō daijiten*. 1983. Mikkyō Gakkai 密教學會 and Mikkyō Jiten Hensankai, eds. 1 vol. Kyōto: Hōzōkan.

- MJ *Mikkyō Jiten* 密教辞典. 1981. Ed. Sawa Ryūken 佐和隆研. Kyoto: Hōzōkan.
- MSK *Miwa-ryū Shintō no kenkyū: Ōmiwa Jinja no shinbutsu shūgō bunka* 三輪流神道の研究：大神神社の神仏習合文化. 1983. Ōmiwa Jinja shiryō henshū iinkai 大神神社 史料編修委員会 ed. Sakurai: Ōmiwa Jinja shiryō henshū iinkai.
- MSL *Ming Shilu* 明實錄. 1964–1966. Zhongyang yanjiuyuan. Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo 中央研究院历史语言研究所校印本, ed. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan. Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo.
- MVS *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra*. T. 848.
- NCKSS-jys *Nihon chōkokushi kiso shiryō shūsei: Heian jidai; Jūyō sakuhinhen*. 日本彫刻史基礎資料集成・平安時代. 重要作品篇 1973–1997. Maruo Shōsabarō 丸尾彰三郎, ed. 5 vols. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan.
- NDZ *Nihon daizōkyō* 日本大藏經. 1914–1921. Matsumoto Bunzabarō 松本文三郎, Nakano Tetsue 中野達慧, eds. 51 vols. Tokyo: Nihon Daizōkyō hensankai.  
*Nihon daizōkyō*. 1973–1978. Suzuki Gakujutsu Zaidan 鈴木学術財団, ed. 100 vols. Tokyo: Suzuki Gakujutsu Zaidan.
- NKBT *Nihon Kōten Bungaku Taikei* 日本古典文學大系, 1968–1978. Iwanami shoten 岩波書店 ed. 102 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- OJS *Ōmiwa jinja shiryō* 大神神社史料. 1967–1991. Ōmiwa Jinja shiryō henshū iinkai 大神神社史料編修委員會, ed. 10 vols. Sakurai: Ōmiwa Jinja shiryō henshū iinkai.
- P. Numbered manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Pelliot collection (Fond Pelliot chinois) held in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris.
- PM *Pulgyo misul* 佛教美術. Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo Panmulgwan.
- QDJ *Qianlong Da zang jing* 乾隆大藏經. 1997–2002. Chuanzheng youxian gongsi bianji bu 傳正有限公司 編輯部 ed. Taipei: Bao yin fo jing liu tong chu; Chuanzheng youxian gongsi.
- QLW *Quan Liao wen* 全遼文. 1982. Chen shu 陳述 ed. Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju.
- QTW *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文. 1983. Dong Gao 董誥. Beijing: Zhonghua shu-ju.
- S. Numbered manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Stein collection held in the British Library, London.
- SGSZ *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. 2061.
- SGYS *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事. 1979. Han'guk pulgyo chōnsō p'yōnch'ōn wiwōn hoe 韓國佛教全書編纂委員, comp. In *HPC* 6:245a–369c. Seoul: Tongguk t'aeahakkyō ch'ulp'ansa.
- SHY *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿. 1987. Xu Song 徐松, et al., comp. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- SNKBT *Shin Nihon Kōten Bungaku Taikei* 新日本古典文學大系. 1999. Ed. Satake Akihiro 佐竹昭広. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- SS *Song shi* 宋史. 1995. Tuotuo 脫脫 (Toghto), et al., comp. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- ST *Shintō Taikei* 神道大系, 1977–1994. Shintō Taikei Hensankai 神道大系編纂會, ed.. 120 vols. Tokyo: Shintō Taikei Hensankai.
- STTS *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha*. (alt. *Vajrasekhara*). T. 865, 866, 882.
- T. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. 1924–1935. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎, et al. eds. 100 vols. Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai.
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- TLZ *Tang Liu Benzuan zhuan* 唐柳本尊傳. Zujue 祖覺. In DSML. 201–10.
- TPGJ *Taiping guang ji* 太平廣記. 1961. Li Fang 李昉, et al., comp. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- TY *Tosŏn yŏn'gu* 道說研究. 1999. Kim Chigyŏn 金知見, ed. Seoul: Minjŏksa.
- TZ *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō Zuzō* 大正新修大藏經圖像 [Taishō Iconographical Supplement]. 1932–1934. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Ono Genmyō 小野玄妙, eds. 12 vols. Tokyo: Daizō shuppan.
- X. *Wan xu zang jing* 卍續藏經. 1975. 150 vols. Taipei: Xinwenfeng Chubanshe. (Repr. of ZZ 1905 1912.)
- YDFL *Yunnan Dali fojiao lunwen ji*. 雲南大理佛教論文集. 1991. Lan Jifu 藍吉富. Gaoxiang: Foguang chubanshe.
- YS *Yuanshi* 元史. Song Lian 宋濂. 1976. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- ZDJ *Zhonghua dazang jing* 中華大藏經. 1982–1987. Zhonghua dazangjing bianji jubian 中華大藏經編輯局編. 220 vols. Beijing Zhonghua shuju.
- ZFW *Zangwai fojiao wenxian* 藏外佛教文獻, Fang Guangchang 方廣錫, ed. 1995–2003. First Series, vols. 1–9. Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe. 2008–. Second Series, vols. 10–13 and ongoing. Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe.
- ZGR *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū* 続群書類従. 1902–. Hanawa Hokinoichi 塙保己一, ed. Tokyo: Keizai zasshisha.  
*Zoku Gunsho ruijū*. 1923–1933. Hanawa Hokinoichi and Ota Toshiro 太田藤四郎, ed. 33 vols. Tokyo: Zoku gunsho runijū kanseikai.  
*Zoku Gunsho Ruijū*. 1936. Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai.  
*Zoku Gunsho Ruijū*. 1957–1959. Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai 続群書類従完成會, ed. 34 vols. Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai.
- ZZT *Zoku tendaishū zenshō* 続天台宗全書. 1987. Tendai shūten hensanjo 天台宗典編纂所, ed. 1987. Tokyo: Shunjūsha.  
*Zoku tendaishū zenshō*. 1993. Tendai shūten hensanjo, ed. 15 vols. Tokyo: Shunjūsha.
- ZZGR *Zoku Zoku Gunsho Ruijū* 續々群書類従. 1906–1909. Kokusho Kankōkai 國書刊行會, eds. 16 vols. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai.  
*Zoku zoku gunsho ruijū*. 1969–1978. Kokusho Kankōkai, eds. 16 vols. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai.
- ZZ. *Dainippon zokuzōkyō* 大日本續藏經. 1905–1912. Maeda Eun 前田慧雲 and Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧, eds. 750 vols. in 150 cases. Kyoto: Zōkyō Shoin. (Repr. X.).  
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