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The Development of Esoteric Buddhist Scholasticism in Early Medieval Japan

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By  
Matthew Don McMullen

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Buddhist Studies  
in the  
Graduate Division  
of the  
University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

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Professor Mark Blum

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# Abstract

The Development of Esoteric Buddhist Scholasticism in Early Medieval Japan

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By

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Doctor of Philosophy in Buddhist Studies

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In the late eleventh century, a scholastic monk at the monastic center of Ninnaji compiled the first catalogue of writings by the cultural hero and revered founder of the Shingon school of esoteric Buddhism in Japan, Kōbō Daishi Kūkai. Among these works, the *Treatise Distinguishing the Two Teachings of the Exoteric and Esoteric* was praised as the premier tractate on esoteric Buddhist doctrine and the foundational document of Shingon school. The *Treatise* continued to play a central role in the formation of a Shingon sectarian identity, inspiring numerous medieval commentaries as well as studies by modern scholars. However, there is no evidence that this seminal doctrinal treatise ever existed before appearing in catalogues in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. In this dissertation, I explore the textual history of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and call into question the legitimacy of its origin. Furthermore, by comparing the content of this text with two late ninth-century compendia on esoteric Buddhist doctrine, I propose that the *Treatise* may have been a polemical response to post-Kūkai developments in the Tendai school. Ultimately, I conclude that esoteric Buddhism in Japan developed as a scholastic discourse regarding the path toward buddhahood. This discourse was not the creation of a semi-legendary founding figure, nor can it be reduced to a single foundational text. Rather, esoteric Buddhism was a scholastic tradition consisting of sundry perspectives and interpretations that developed over the course of centuries. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* reflects a decidedly contentious example of this tradition.

To Asako,  
Thank you for your patience.

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## Conventions and Abbreviations

### Dates:

Years have been converted to the Julian-Gregorian calendar. When referring to a specific date in the primary sources, I have included the imperial date in parentheses for clarification. For example, if the primary text refers to a date Kōnin 6, I render it as 815 (弘仁 6) for the initial reference and just 815 thereafter. For days and months, I follow the Sino-Japanese lunar calendar. Therefore, the twenty-first of the fourth month of 815 would actually be the latter part of May in the Julian calendar. This causes a problem when referring to the first or last month of a year, such as the first month of 835 (承和 2), which was actually the twelfth month of 834. However, for pragmatic reasons, I convert all dates according to the corresponding year in the Julian calendar. When the primary sources use the sixty-day cyclical calendar, I include the date in parentheses. For example, for the sixth day of the first month of 835, I include (壬子) after the sixth. Because this project primarily concerns the events and sources that occurred within the so-called Heian Period, I avoid using the standard periodization of Nara, Heian, Kamakura, etc. whenever possible except when citing secondary sources that do not supply specific dates.

### Names and Titles:

Chinese, Korean, and Japanese names are listed by family or clan name followed by personal name. I include Chinese characters and dates when available for the initial reference of names for historical figures. Names of scholars are cited in the footnotes and bibliography. For the initial reference to a text in the body of the dissertation, I include the full title with Chinese characters, or Japanese phonetics when applicable, and romanization. I translate the title when feasible. I use the standard Hepburn system for romanizing Japanese, Pinyin for Chinese, and McCune-Reischauer for Korean. Throughout the dissertation, I use traditional Chinese characters with the exception of secondary sources. In the case of Japanese scholarly titles, I follow the conventions of the publisher.

### Abbreviations of Collections:

<i>DDZ</i>	<i>Dengyō daishi zensho</i>	傳教大師全書
<i>DNBZ</i>	<i>Dai nihon bukkyō zensho</i>	大日本佛教全書
<i>GSRJ</i>	<i>Gunsho ruijū</i>	群書類從
<i>KDZ</i>	<i>Kōbō daishi zenshū</i>	弘法大師全集 (First edition)

<i>KDDZ</i>	<i>Kōbō daishi den zenshū</i>	弘法大師傳全集
<i>NDK</i>	<i>Nihon daizōkyō</i>	日本大藏經
<i>SNDK</i>	<i>Shinpan nihon daizōkyō</i>	新版日本大藏經 (Suzuki Research Foundation)
<i>Taishō</i>	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i>	大正新脩大藏經
<i>TKDZ</i>	<i>Teihon kōbō daishi zenshū</i>	定本弘法大師全集
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Tendai shū zensho</i>	天台宗全書
<i>SZ</i>	<i>Shingonshū zensho</i>	眞言宗全書
<i>ZSZ</i>	<i>Zoku shingon shū zensho</i>	續眞言宗全書
<i>ZTZm</i>	<i>Zoku tendai shū zenshū mikkyō bu</i>	續天台宗全集密教部
<i>ZZK</i>	<i>Shinsan dai nihon zoku zōkyō</i>	新纂大日本續藏經
<i>ZGSRJ</i>	<i>Zoku gunsho ruijū</i>	續群書類從
<i>ZZGSRJ</i>	<i>Zoku zoku gunsho ruijū</i>	續續群書類從

Abbreviations of Dictionaries and Reference Works:

<i>BDJ</i>	<i>Oda bukkyō daijiten</i>	織田佛教大辭典
<i>BKJ</i>	<i>Bussho kaisetsu daijiten</i>	佛書解說大辭典
<i>MBDJ</i>	<i>Mochizuki bukkyō daijiten</i>	望月佛教大辭典
<i>MDJ</i>	<i>Mikkyō daijiten</i>	密教大辭典
<i>MH</i>	<i>Morohashi dai kanwa jiten</i>	諸橋大漢和辭典
<i>MJ</i>	<i>Mikkyō jiten</i>	密教辭典
<i>RB</i>	<i>Reibun bukkyōgo daijiten</i>	例文仏教語大辭典

Emendations for translations:

( ) text added to the manuscript by scribes or editors.

[ ] text I have added for clarity. Specially, I use brackets to insert subjects or topics implied in a quotation, but that are not a part of the original citation.

{ } my comments or points of clarification that are not a part of the text. Where the author uses abbreviated or formal titles, I have included the most common name or title in braces.

Underlined phrases in the footnotes indicate passages abbreviated in the main text.

## Introduction to the Dissertation

Japanese Buddhism is often said to have a tendency to "shorten the path" toward buddhahood. Feats of practice that traditionally require lifetimes or eons of lifetimes to cultivate and master are abbreviated, simplified, and popularized for practitioners with a broad range of spiritual capabilities. The emergence in the twelfth century of deathbed rites, abridged recitation practices such as chanting the *nenbutsu*, consolidating the array of teachings in the *Lotus Sūtra* into the *daimoku*, and even *zazen* practice were an outcome of this tendency. This process of shortening the path was justified through a variety of doctrinal discourses or "modes of thought" such as "original enlightenment thought" (本覺思想), "source and trace thought" (本迹思想), "discourses on becoming a buddha in the current body" (即身成佛) etc. Fundamental to all of these doctrinal discourses is the question of how to reduce the distance between our world, with all of its suffering and defilements, and the blissful joy achieved when *saṃsāra* is extinguished and buddhahood is achieved.<sup>1</sup>

At the core of the process of becoming a buddha is, of course, the notion of a buddha and how we unenlightened humans, along with other sentient beings, perceive the "awakened one." A buddha takes many forms and preaches various teachings in order to accommodate the needs of the individual. One such manifestation was Śākyamuni Buddha, who awoke to the ultimate reality of the dharma while seated in meditation beneath a pipal tree around two and half millennia ago. He spent the remainder of his eighty-year lifespan preaching this revelation

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1. I have adapted the phrase "shorten the path" from Paul Groner's article regarding the doctrine of becoming of a buddha in Japanese Tendai. See Paul Groner, "Shortening the Path: Early Tendai Interpretations of the Realization of Buddhahood with This Very Body (*Sokushin Jōbutsu*)," in *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and its Transformation in Buddhist Thought* (Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism no. 7), edited by Robert Buswell and Robert Gimello (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), 439-473. Jacqueline Stone discusses deathbed rites and their relation to *nenbutsu* practice and esoteric Buddhist notions of recitation. See Jacqueline I. Stone, "By the Power of One's Last *Nenbutsu*: Deathbed Practices in Early Medieval Japan," in *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha*, edited by Richard K. Payne and Kenneth K. Tanaka (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 77-119 and "Just Open Your Mouth and Say 'A': A-Syllable Practice for the Time of Death in Early Medieval Japan," *Pacific World* (2006):167-189. For a study of Nichiren's view of esoteric Buddhism and the concept of the *daimoku*, see Lucia Dolce, "Criticism and Appropriation: Nichiren's Attitude toward Esoteric Buddhism," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 26/3-4 (1999):351-382.

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through a number of sermons, which were later recorded in the writing as the sutras. Śākyamuni, however, was merely one form of the buddha that happened to be born in our world during the current epoch and still lingers in our historical memory. There were many buddhas before him, and there will be buddhas in the future. There are also buddhas in parallel worlds, such as Amitābha, who abides in a pure land called Sukhāvātī, or Vairocana, who is the manifestation of buddhahood in a secretly adorned land that is only accessible to other buddhas. Therefore, buddhas have appeared and will appear again in our world, while also residing in any number of purified lands throughout the cosmos.

These multifarious buddhas share a common goal of expounding the teachings, or dharma, that will guide sentient beings toward awakening to the same ultimate truth that Śākyamuni realized under the pipal tree and, as a result, become buddhas themselves. Because the buddhas preach this dharma, they and their teachings are collectively known as the body of dharma, or dharma body of the buddha. The tendency in Japanese Buddhism toward shortening the path to buddhahood also plays out in the doctrinal discourse on the bodies of the buddha. In this dissertation, I examine one particular and potentially radical interpretation of this general doctrine, namely, the claim that it is possible for sentient beings, regardless of their level of spiritual capability, to receive the Buddhist teachings directly from the dharma body of the buddha. In contrast to the teachings revealed in the sutras, these teachings were secretly transmitted through a lineage of masters originating with the dharma body of the buddha and continuing to the present. Due to the concealed or exalted nature of these teachings, they are called "esoteric."

This doctrine has long been associated with the early ninth-century intellectual and ritual specialist Kūkai 空海 (774–835). As the revered founder of the Shingon school, Kūkai's writings are cited as the definitive works on esoteric Buddhist doctrine. In particular, one text, the *Treatise Distinguishing the Two Teachings of the Exoteric and Esoteric* (辨顯密二教論, hereafter *Treatise on the Two Teachings*), is hailed for its articulation of an esoteric interpretation of the buddha and lauded as the doctrinal foundation of the Shingon school.<sup>2</sup>

Since the earliest studies of the *Treatise* in the late eleventh century, commentators have approached its doctrine of the dharma body in one of two ways. The first approach considers the *Treatise* to be Kūkai's declaration of a new and independent school of Buddhism. As the *Treatise* itself proclaims, the patriarchs Vajrabodhi (671–741) and his disciple Amoghavajra (705–774) introduced the esoteric teachings to China, which until that time was unaware of this superior

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2. Both 辨 and 辯 are used in manuscripts of the text. I use the prior throughout this study, following the usage in the earliest commentaries. The former character denotes a distinction between two subjects, whereas the latter has a discursive nuance. Both characters are simplified in modern Japanese as 弁. Gōhō discusses the details of this character in his thirteen-fascicle commentary, the *Essay of Inquiries into the First Fascicle of the Treatise on the Two Teachings* (*Nikyōron jō kenkaku shō* 二教論上研覈抄). See ZSZ 18.326a-b.

form of the Buddhist teachings. These teachings briefly thrived, but "the days of this new medicine were few, and the old disease had not yet been cured."<sup>3</sup> In other words, the Nara schools of Hossō, Sanron, and Kegon, which dominated Japan at the time, were founded on the doctrines of the same exegetical traditions in China that the esoteric teachings of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra supposedly replaced. Therefore, Japanese Buddhism had yet to realize the real meaning of the Buddhist teachings. By writing the *Treatise*, Kūkai established this new tradition of esoteric Buddhism in Japan as the Shingon school, just as the Indian patriarchs had done in Tang China. The second approach takes the doctrine of the dharma body and the distinction between the exoteric and esoteric teachings in the *Treatise* as a hermeneutic for classifying the various teachings in the sutras. The text claims that people have yet to comprehend the esoteric teachings transmitted from the patriarchs. Therefore, it is necessary to "suture together the passages from the sutras and treatises into a single hand-mirror" in order to reflect the true meaning in these teachings.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the *Treatise* was meant to be a guide for determining which teachings in the sutras and commentarial tradition were preached by the dharma body of the buddha and which were provisional teachings expounded by various manifestations. These two approaches were never mutually exclusive; in fact, most commentators proposed some variation of both. Nevertheless, the purport of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, according to the commentarial tradition, is that the esoteric teachings are superior because they were preached by the dharma body of the buddha and all other teachings are, therefore, inferior.

From the broader perspective of Mahāyāna doctrines on the bodies of the buddha, however, the claim to a superior version of the buddha dharma in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is problematic. On the one hand, the assertion that the esoteric teachings are preached by the dharma body of the buddha is obvious. If all buddhas appear in this world or another to preach the dharma to sentient beings, then of course their teachings are encompassed by the body of dharma. If this were not the case, such teachings would be heretical and extraneous to the path (外道). In this sense, the so-called esoteric teachings are no different than any other Buddhist teaching; they are a means of liberation from *samsāra*. On the other hand, it was a radical departure from mainstream buddha-body theory to claim that the dharma body has the function of preaching to sentient beings. To put this more specifically, there are four factors distinguishing the doctrine of the dharma body in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* from the normative Mahāyāna view:

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3. This line is from the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. See TKDZ 3.78.

4. See TKDZ 3.76.

## Introduction to the Dissertation

- 1) The assertion that the esoteric teachings are superior to the exoteric teachings: The rhetoric of esoteric versus exoteric was not unprecedented, but comparing these categories in such absolute terms was unorthodox.<sup>5</sup>
- 2) The claim that the esoteric teachings are not adapted to the capabilities of the individual: The claim that the dharma body has the function of preaching requires sentient beings to have the capacity to perceive it. The mainstream Mahāyāna view maintains that if the dharma body has the characteristic of preaching, it is inconceivable to non-buddhas. The *Treatise*, on the other hand, declares that even the most advanced bodhisattvas cannot ascertain the preaching of the dharma body, but also proposes that initiates into the esoteric teachings of mantra can gain access to this secret treasury of the buddha. Therefore, the *Treatise* claims that the dharma body has the function of preaching, but only for the benefit of the esoteric practitioner. Nevertheless, the *Treatise* does not explain how the esoteric practitioner can perceive the preaching of the dharma body if this preaching is not adapted to their individual capabilities.<sup>6</sup>
- 3) The textual sources cited in support of these claims: The *Treatise* "sutures together" several passages from various sutras, treatises, exegetical works, and ritual manuals. In some cases, it dismisses these passages for failing to understand the true meaning of the Buddhist teachings. In contrast, some of the works are praised for their profound interpretations of the sutras, and a few works are quoted at length as proof texts for the doctrine of the dharma body. However, many of these works would have been quite obscure to Kūkai's audience and some had long been considered apocryphal. Furthermore, the *Treatise* ignores passages in mainstream works that do not support its dharma body doctrine.
- 4) The establishment of a new Buddhist lineage: The *Treatise* dismisses the Buddhist scriptures transmitted to China prior to the arrival of Vajrabodhi as "exoteric teachings" transmitted from Śākyamuni Buddha. The esoteric teachings propagated by Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra in the Tang period, however, were originally expounded by Mahāvairocana Tathāgata as the dharma body of the buddha. The *Treatise* declares that

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5. Ōkubo Ryōshun points out that this contrastive and polemical usage of the term "esoteric teachings" is particular to the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. In contrast, the Tendai school applied a more relativistic definition of this dichotomy. See Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, "Tendai mikkyō no ken mitsu setsu" 天台密教の顕密説, in *Fukuhara ryūzen sensei kofukinen ronshū* 福原隆善先生古稀記念論集, *Buppō sō ronshū* 佛法僧論集 (Tokyo: Kabushiki Kaisha Sankibō Busshorin, 2013), 240.
  6. Although he exclusively deals with Indian sources in his study of the buddha-body doctrine, Paul Griffiths defines the dharma body of the buddha as non-relational. The purpose of a manifested body of the buddha is to deliver the dharma in a manner perceivable to its audience. However, the dharma body is only knowable to buddhas. See Paul Griffiths, *On Being Buddha: The Classical Doctrine of Buddhahood* (Albany: State University of New York, 1994), 95-96. If the dharma body had relational qualities (that is, if it can preach to sentient beings and sentient beings have the ability to perceive this preaching), then all sentient beings would by definition already be buddhas.

## Introduction to the Dissertation

these are not the same buddhas and their teachings constitute two distinct lineages. In other words, the *Treatise* claims that the esoteric teachings are not the teachings of Śākyamuni and, therefore, extraneous to the traditional Buddhist lineage.<sup>7</sup>

Traces of these claims in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* can be found among Kūkai's other attributed writings. For instance, the Shingon lineage is the subject of two lineage texts, which many scholars argue were an elaboration upon statements first made in the *Treatise*. Kūkai's writings on taxonomy, which are his most detailed and historically verifiable works, touch on the distinction between the esoteric and exoteric teachings, albeit in much more nuanced terms than the *Treatise*. Most of the textual sources cited in the *Treatise* can also be found in these other writings, in many cases the exact same passages. However, only in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* do we find the doctrine that the dharma body of the buddha directly preaches the esoteric teachings presented in such polemical terms. For this reason, the text has proven to be a potent tool for medieval and modern Shingon apologists when delineating the fundamental doctrine of their school from other traditions such as Hossō and Tendai.

§   §   §

When reading the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, one cannot help but wonder how other schools reacted to these provocative claims. One would expect scholastics in these schools to have responded in kind to the hostile criticism the *Treatise* casts at non-esoteric Buddhism in general and their exegetical traditions in particular. After all, the *Treatise* bluntly accuses Chinese patriarchs such as Zhiyi 智顛 (538–597), Fazang 法藏 (643–712), and Kuiji 窺基 (632–682) of defaming the dharma by purposefully misconstruing the real intent of the Buddhist teachings. Considering the political clout held by the Nara schools at the time the *Treatise* was allegedly written in 815, a relatively unknown and low-ranking monk such as Kūkai would surely have

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7. The Mahāyāna sutras and Chinese exegetical works acknowledge that Śākyamuni is ultimately a manifestation of the dharma body of the buddha. Numerous sources also equate Śākyamuni with Vairocana, asserting that they are simply different names for the same buddha. The *Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Contemplation Sūtra* (*Guan puxian pusa xingfa jing* 觀普賢菩薩行法經), for instance, proclaims that Śākyamuni is none other than the all-pervading Vairocana. See *Taishō* 9.392c15-16. The Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi reiterates this point in his exegesis of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Passages and Phrases of Lotus of the Wondrous Law Sūtra* (*Miaofa lianhua jing wenju* 妙法蓮華經文句). See *Taishō* 34.128a20-29. As Robert Sharf points out, the distinction between Śākyamuni and Vairocana was a Shingon apologetic that attempted to identify Kūkai's school exclusively with Vairocana as the dharma body of the buddha. Shingon scholiasts contrasted the esoteric teachings of Vairocana Buddha with the exoteric teachings of Śākyamuni, which, they claimed, required mediation between the practitioner and the dharma body in the form of skillful means. See Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise*, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism 14 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 276-278. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was the source text for this distinction between Śākyamuni and Vairocana.



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been admonished for such accusations, or at the very least he would have been blocked from advancing through the clerical hierarchy. However, the opposite occurred; Kūkai was appointed to the Office of Monastic Affairs in 824 and promoted three years later with wide support from the Nara clergy.

It has long been assumed that Kūkai succeeded in his efforts to establish his Shingon school due to his introduction of ritual technologies and collections of texts he obtained while in China. The Nara establishment could not compete with these innovations and conceded to Kūkai's new form of Buddhism, ultimately adopting these practices and textual sources into their own canons. Recent scholarship, however, has proposed that this was not the only reason Kūkai managed to avoid the ire of the Nara clergy. In his 1999 study of Kūkai and his relationship with Nara Buddhism, Abé Ryūichi questions the traditional narrative that Kūkai intended to establish a new school of Buddhism. If he had attempted to do so, Abé argues, his unorthodox interpretations of scripture and polemical attacks on mainstream Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* certainly would have been rejected.

As Kūkai's colleague Saichō 最澄 (766–822) discovered when he introduced a new form of precepts, the Hossō monks who controlled the Office of Monastic Affairs were not open to such challenges to the status quo.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to Saichō, Kūkai attempted to position his new form of Buddhism within the parameters of the Nara establishment. Abe argues that Kūkai's views were gradually absorbed into the Japanese Buddhist mainstream, because he situated his doctrinal arguments within a discourse on ritual that was acceptable to Nara elites. Kūkai was successful precisely because he was able to win "the interest of the Nara clergy," and by infiltrating institutions such as the Office of Monastic Affairs that were dominated by Hossō and Sanron clergy, he was able to integrate his ritual system of esoteric rites into the Nara institutions. Furthermore, in order to justify this system, Abé argues that Kūkai's doctrinal treatises, namely the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, offered Nara scholastics a new hermeneutic for reading scripture that would provide a doctrinal basis for the performance of such rites while

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8. When Saichō attempted to establish an independent ordination platform at the Tendai monastery on Mt. Hiei, he came under attack from two prominent Hossō monks. Tokuitsu challenged him on the validity of Tiantai doctrine, while Gomyō, the chief administrator of the Office of Monastic Affairs, blocked his efforts to create a new system of ordination. For an overview of Saichō's debates with Tokuitsu and Gomyō, see Paul Groner, *Saichō: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press), 91-101 and 146-149, respectively.

There are two theories regarding the date of Saichō's birth, 766 or 767. Traditionally, Saichō was thought to have been born in 767 based on a line in his obituary stating that he was 56 at the time of his death in 822 (弘仁 13). However, as Jihon 慈本 (active 1830s) first pointed out in his collection of biographies in the *Tendai kahyō* 天台霞標, this date contradicts a number of other sources suggesting that Saichō was actually born a year earlier. For a detailed discussion of these sources, see Sai Yūshin 左伯有清, "Saichō no tanjōnen" 最澄の誕生年, in Miyazaka Yūshō 宮坂宥勝, Matsunaga Yūkei 松長有慶, and Yoritomi Motohiro 頼富本宏, eds. *Mikkyō taikai* 密教体系, vol. 6 (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 1995), 191-221.

simultaneously promoting his own "esoteric" interpretation of traditional Buddhist texts, thereby inserting a new doctrinal discourse into Japanese scholastic Buddhism.

Abé's revision of Kūkai and the founding of the Shingon school offers a broader depiction of the political activities of elite clergy and how their writings on doctrine played a part in such interactions. Yet, it is still unclear how Kūkai's Nara contemporaries reacted to his writings, in particular the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Why were they so willing to accept him into their ranks without criticizing him in the same manner they did Saichō? Abé proposes that Kūkai's writings should be read as explanations to the Nara clergy of the significance of esoteric Buddhist texts and rituals and concludes that Kūkai must have convinced them that his new form of Buddhism was mutually beneficial for advancing the interests of the Buddhist community at court. Therefore, they overlooked the polemics of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*.<sup>9</sup>

There is, however, another possibility why the Nara clergy did not respond to Kūkai's claims to a superior doctrine: they never read his works. There is no documentation that the Nara clergy ever received or responded to Kūkai's writings, let alone the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Moreover, there is no evidence that any of Kūkai's contemporaries, disciples, or Buddhist exegetes from the Nara or Tendai schools ever read the *Treatise*. In fact, there is no trace of this text for almost three hundred years, when it first appeared in a catalogue of Kūkai's works in the late eleventh century. Before that time, the *Treatise* and its unique doctrine on the dharma body of the buddha were completely absent from the Buddhist discourse.

The development of esoteric Buddhism in Japan is always presented according to a particular historical narrative. In 806, Kūkai returned from China with a collection of new texts, some of which he called "esoteric," established a new system of ritual based on *abhiṣeka* rites that he learned from a disciple of Amoghavajra named Huiguo 惠果 (746–806), and wrote doctrinal treatises explaining how this new form of Buddhism was superior to the other schools in Japan. Kūkai was so successful, according to this narrative, that a generation later Tendai monks were forced to revise Saichō's inchoate form of esoteric Buddhism in order to compete with Kūkai's Shingon school and, in doing so, created a Tendai alternative. In this dissertation, I propose a reevaluation of this narrative. It is clear that Kūkai introduced a new genre of texts and a new form of ritual (although what exactly this consisted of is unknown),<sup>10</sup> but the image of Kūkai as a towering Buddhist intellectual was a much later development. From what we can

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9. The above overview of Kūkai's relationship with the Nara clergy is based on Abé Ryūichi, *Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 41-63.

10. Takeuchi Kōzen points out in a recent monograph that the earliest documentation of procedures for *abhiṣeka* rites in Japan post date Kūkai. Of course, this does mean he did not perform such rites; there is ample evidence that both he and Saichō administered *abhiṣeka* on a grand scale. However, there are no descriptions of the proceedings of these events. See Takeuchi Kōzen 武内孝善, *Kūkai den no kenkyū—go hansei no kiseki to shisō* 空海伝の研究—後半生の軌跡と思想 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2015), 1-13.

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discern from surviving sources, most his writings had very little to no impact on the doctrinal discourse for several centuries. During that time, scholiasts in the Tendai school produced an extensive body of literature regarding esoteric Buddhist doctrine.

It is by no means a radical statement to suggest that Tendai dominated the topic of esoteric Buddhist doctrine in the ninth century; most scholars acknowledge that neither Kūkai's disciples nor their descendants seem to have taken any interest in his doctrinal works. References to Kūkai's works during this period are found exclusively in Tendai critiques of his taxonomical writings. And yet, the sectarian narrative ascribing the foundation of esoteric Buddhism to Kūkai's doctrinal works has endured due to the efforts of medieval and modern Shingon apologists to position Kūkai as the central figure in a movement toward a new and superior form of Buddhism.

In this dissertation, I am less concerned with the historical legitimacy of Kūkai's Shingon school, or whether he intended to found new tradition of Buddhism independent of the Nara establishment. Rather, my objective is to investigate how the later Shingon tradition understood its origins and how the doctrines of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* played a pivotal role in the development of their sectarian identity. In this endeavor, I analyze a wide range of scriptural materials, sectarian polemics and debate, historical documents, and hagiographical works involving the *Treatise*. Although I ground this study by focusing on one particular text, my goal is to broaden the discussion in anglophone scholarship on esoteric Buddhist doctrine beyond the traditional sectarian parameters. By approaching esoteric Buddhism as a scholastic tradition rather than a specific institution based on a single lineage of a semi-legendary founder, I argue that there were actually a multiplicity of interpretations regarding the meaning of the "esoteric teachings" in early medieval Japan. The *Treatise* was just one answer to a broader question concerning the nature of the buddha and how it engages sentient beings on the path toward awakening.

§   §   §

Before launching into an overview of the following chapters, it is necessary to define a few key terms that I frequently use throughout the dissertation. The most obvious is the ubiquitous "esoteric Buddhism." I employ this term interchangeably with "esoteric teachings," and in some cases "secret teachings," as a translation of the Sino-Japanese compounds 密教 (Ch. *mijiao*, Jp. *mikkyō*), 祕密教 (Ch. *mimijiao*, Jp. *himitsukyō*), or 祕藏 (Ch. *mizang*, Jp. *hizō*). This usage is intended to be quite general and does not refer to any specific institution, lineage, text, or set of practices.

The term "esoteric Buddhism" is not a synonym for the Shingon school. Until the late eleventh century, the term "Shingon" simply denoted mantra practice and theories concerning the

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efficacy of such practices. Of course, Kūkai was a proponent of such practices, and, as Abé points out, he managed to convince the Nara schools of the legitimacy of mantra. "Shingon" did not refer to a particular institution. Although monastic centers such as Tōji, Kongōbuji, Daigoji, and Ninnaji gradually became united under the sectarian banner of a Shingon school, this institution developed over the course of centuries. There is no evidence that an independent school of mantra existed outside of the Tendai and Nara establishment during the ninth century. In terms of doctrine, the Tendai school was also the Shingon school in that Tendai scholiasts promoted the cultivation of mantra practice and theorized as to its soteriological significance. For this reason, I translate 眞言宗 as "mantra school" when referring to early usage of the term. From the eleventh century onward, scholastic monks at Ninnaji and other ritual centers began to differentiate Kūkai's Shingon school from the Tendai-Shingon school. Therefore, references in the dissertation to a "later Shingon school" denotes Kūkai's lineage.

Perhaps due to the vagueness of "esoteric Buddhism," there has been a recent trend in the anglophone scholarship to render such terms according to Sanskrit parallels such as "tantra," "Tantric Buddhism," or "Vajrayāna." I avoid these translations for two reasons. First, they are not indigenous to the East Asian Buddhist context. One might argue that the Chinese "*mijiao*" was a translation of the Sanskrit "tantra" or "guhya." However, "*mimi*" and "*mijiao*" were already common parlance among Buddhist exegetes, and there is no evidence that interpretations of these terms changed with the introduction of new sources in the eighth century.<sup>11</sup> A translation of Vajrayāna does appear in ritual manuals related to the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, and Kūkai applied this term as a category in his catalogue. However, in both cases it was used to denote a specific class of text, which typically includes the term "vajra" in the title. Therefore, Kūkai's usage in his catalogue was strictly doxographical and did not specify a tradition distinct from Mahāyāna, nor was this category by any means universal in Japan.<sup>12</sup>

The second reason to avoid such translations is that they invite comparisons with the Tibetan and Nepali Buddhist traditions. Although there may be similarities between esoteric Buddhism in Japan and central Asia, particularly the Newar tradition, such categories have evolved in very different intellectual contexts. As the growing body of scholarship regarding the meaning of "tantra" and "Vajrayāna" in Tibetan, Nepali, and late Indian Buddhism demonstrates,

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11. Misaki Ryōshū makes a similar point, arguing that such terms of "secrecy" had long been used in the Tiantai tradition and translations imported in the Tang would not have seemed unusual to most Chinese intellectuals. See Misaki Ryōshū 三崎良周, *Taimitsu no riron to jissen* 台密の理論と実践 (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1994) 370-371. For an English overview of the Tiantai usage of these terms, see Lucia Dolce, "Reconsidering the Taxonomy of the Esoteric: Hermeneutical and Ritual Practice of the *Lotus Sūtra*," in *The Culture of Secrecy in Japanese Religion*, edited by Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen (New York: Routledge, 2006), 132-142.

12. Kūkai uses this term to refer to Amoghavajra's translations of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and related ritual texts, listing a total of 118 titles. See Kūkai's catalogue in *Taishō* 55.1061a5c2. Abé discusses this category of "Vajrayāna" in Abé, 1999, 182.

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the application of such categories was never static and, like "esoteric" in East Asian Buddhism, always had a polemical connotation. For these reasons, I do not use such terminology in the dissertation.<sup>13</sup>

The compound exoteric-esoteric or exo-esoteric (顯密) Buddhism has also become common parlance in anglophone scholarship. This locution stems from the work of Japanese historian Kuroda Toshio and his theory that medieval Japanese Buddhism consisted of a unified exoteric-esoteric system. According to Kuroda's theory, Kūkai and Saichō introduced new techniques for conducting esoteric rites in the early ninth century. This new system of ritual consisting of elaborate thaumaturgic rites quickly came to dominate the scholastic Buddhist schools in Nara, and by the end of the ninth century even the Hossō school had been absorbed into this system. Esoteric rites, he claimed, gained prominence due to an esoteric ideology that transcended the differences between the doctrines of the various schools in Japan at the time. For Kuroda, original enlightenment thought was esoteric ideology par excellence. Therefore, Kuroda's definition of esoteric Buddhism consisted of original enlightenment thought in conjunction with the performance of thaumaturgic rites, while exoteric Buddhism was simply the specific doctrines of the individual schools.<sup>14</sup>

Kuroda's theory has been widely critiqued and revised, but it continues to be the dominant historical theory regarding the development of medieval Buddhism. In his study of Kūkai, Abé Ryūichi is critical of Kuroda's assertion that the esoteric ideology behind the exoteric-esoteric system was original enlightenment thought. He argues that, because this

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13. To list just a few examples, David Snellgrove suggests that in the Tibetan traditions Vajrayāna was considered a separate tradition from Mahāyāna and that categories of tantras developed within a broader soteriological framework of Vajrayāna. See David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists & Their Tibetan Successors* (Boston: Shambala, 1987), 120. More recently, Jacob Dalton has argued that from its earliest usage in India, "tantra" was always a doxographical category and these categories changed over time. See Jacob Dalton, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8th–12th Centuries," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28 (2005):118. In response to Snellgrove's claims, Christian Wedemeyer points out that Vajrayāna and Mahāyāna were not two distinct traditions, stating that the use of the term "Vajrayāna" was primarily rhetorical. See Christian K. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism: History, Semiology, and Transgression in the Indian Traditions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 202.

14. For an overview of Kuroda's scholarship on medieval Buddhism, see Kuroda Toshio, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System As Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy," translated by James C. Dobbins, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23/3-4 (1996):233-269. Despite his criticism of sectarian scholarship, Kuroda relied almost solely on the work of Tendai scholar Shimaji Daitō for his analysis of Buddhist doctrine. Daitō argued that original enlightenment thought was a distinguishing characteristic of Japanese Buddhism. Kuroda uncritically copied this assertion.

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doctrine developed within the exoteric wing of Tendai, it was incapable of sustaining the exoteric-esoteric system. Instead, Abé contends that Kūkai's hermeneutical strategy for reading Buddhist scripture formed the ideological basis of this system.<sup>15</sup>

Kuroda may have been mistaken in deeming original enlightenment thought an esoteric Buddhist doctrine, but it is not clear what he actually meant by esoteric Buddhist ideology in the first place. Central to his theory were the performance of thaumaturgic rites, which he defined as "esoteric." On the other hand, doctrines concerning the meaning of such rites would inevitably be "exoteric" according to his definition. However, the existence of polemical works such as the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* that argue for a difference between the esoteric and exoteric teachings on doctrinal grounds suggest that his rites/doctrine dichotomy is problematic. He also assumes that these were universal categories in medieval Japanese Buddhism. But, a brief comparison of Kūkai and Tendai notions of what constituted an "esoteric" teaching demonstrates that this was never the case. Even the locution "exo-esoteric" had a wide range of meanings. In the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, it is clearly two separate terms, "exoteric" and "esoteric." The term appears in Tendai works as a synonym for "perfect-esoteric," or the unification of the Tendai perfect teachings and the esoteric teachings (圓密一致). However, later Shingon scholastics used this term as a pejorative to mean a lesser form of esoteric Buddhism that has been blended with the exoteric teachings.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, if "esoteric" denotes the rites forming the foundation of Japanese Buddhist practice and "exoteric" denotes studies of doctrine, then the so-called exoteric-esoteric system is just another way to refer to medieval Japanese Buddhism. For these reasons, I do not use the compound "exoteric-esoteric" in the dissertation.

Finally, I should explain what I mean by the phrase "esoteric Buddhist scholasticism." Defined broadly, scholasticism is the reading and exegesis of scripture. A scholiast might endeavor to preserve a tradition of interpretation, organize a collection of literature concerning a particular doctrine, engage in sectarian polemics regarding such doctrine, or seek to unpack the religious truths in a cryptic passage of scripture. Although the scholiast may have many possible goals, his writings and preaching always pursue liberation as it is documented in scripture. In other words, scholasticism is ultimately concerned with soteriology.<sup>17</sup>

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15. See Abé 1999, 425.

16. Ōkubo explains the various uses of these terms in Ōkubo 2013a, 227-244.

17. For discussions of Buddhist scholasticism, see José Ignacio Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language: A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism* (Albany: State University of New York, 1994), 11-26 and Paul J. Griffiths, "Scholasticism: The Possible Recovery of an Intellectual Practice," in *Scholasticism: Cross-cultural and Comparative Perspectives*, edited by José Cabezón (Albany: State University of New York, 1998), 201-235.

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In early medieval Japan, debates over doctrines regarding buddha-body theory and the expediency in which a practitioner can attain buddhahood were essentially discussions of soteriology. To make claims such as those of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* that the dharma body of the buddha directly preaches to sentient beings thus allowing them to attain buddhahood in their immediate lifetimes, it was necessary to ground this doctrine in canonical sources. Therefore, one of the primary tools of the scholiast was doxography, or the categorizing of texts to determine which are the most essential to the doctrines of one's school. It was also necessary to take into account the doctrines of other schools that may support or negate the primary doctrine. Constructing taxonomies allowed scholiasts to compare these doctrines, while asserting the dominance of their own position. Lineage gives doctrine authority. Whether attributed to a past master or a canonical text, placing a doctrine in a lineage provides legitimacy by rooting this concept in the past, even if by modern academic standards this attribution proves to be ahistorical.

Esoteric Buddhist scholasticism emphasized the tools of doxography, taxonomy, and lineage in an effort to explicate the secret teachings of the buddha. However, which texts, teachings, and lineages were "esoteric" has always been a matter of debate. For instance, in his catalogue, Kūkai classifies Amoghavajra's translations and ritual manuals as documentation of the esoteric teachings. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, on the other hand, includes Mahāyāna sutras and treatises such as the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in this category. The Tendai scholiast Ennin 圓仁 (794–864) considered "esoteric" to be another term for Mahāyāna and included sutras such as the *Lotus*, *Vimalakīrti*, *Mahāparinirvāṇa*, and *Avataṃsaka Sūtras* under this rubric. For Ennin, the only difference between these sutras and the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* was the practices associated with these texts, not their textual authority. Annen 安然 (841–889/915), Ennin's disciple and the architect of the perfect-esoteric system, merged the category of "esoteric" with the classical Tiantai paradigm of the four teachings. He explained this category of text as another component of a taxonomy that encompassed all other taxonomies in which he argued all sutras, buddhas, teachings, and practices were essentially the same. Annen concluded in his taxonomy that the standpoint from which all teachings are realized to be the same is called the "perfect-esoteric teaching." This was in contrast to Kūkai's taxonomy that posited the practice of mantra as the only means for grasping the esoteric teachings of the buddha. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is an outlier among these taxonomies in that it proposes a dichotomy of esoteric versus exoteric teachings and simply rejects other doctrines as inferior.

Regarding lineage, Kūkai rooted his category of esoteric teachings in a transmission originating from the dharma body of the buddha. Annen does this as well, but in contrast to Kūkai's claims to a distinct Buddhist lineage, he includes Śākyamuni and all Buddhist teachings in this lineage that ultimately stemmed from the dharma body of the buddha. These variations on

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the category of esoteric teachings and its relation to other Buddhist teachings were compared and debated by scholastics in Tendai and Kūkai's Shingon schools from the eleventh century onward. For this reason, I refer to this tradition as esoteric Buddhist scholasticism.

§     §     §

I have organized the dissertation in two parts. In the first part, I evaluate the textual history and doctrinal claims of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. The second part is an annotated translation of a critical essay on esoteric Buddhist doctrine called the *Essay on the Similarities and Differences between the Two Schools of Tendai and Shingon* (*Tendai shingon nishū dōi shō* 天台眞言二宗同異章, hereafter *Essay on the Two Schools*). Composed by the late twelfth-century Tendai scholiast Shōshin 證眞 (active 1153–1214), the essay was a cogent retort to the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*.

Chapter One centers on the date of composition for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Recent scholarship has determined that Kūkai wrote it around 815, making it his earliest doctrinal work. This early date theory is based on a comparison of the *Treatise* with other writings attributed to Kūkai, in particular an letter posting a date of 815. Because the content of the letter is similar to the *Treatise*, scholars have concluded that Kūkai must have written them at the same time. This hypothesis differs from the commentarial tradition, which overwhelmingly assumed that the *Treatise* was a later work. Medieval scholastics in the Shingon school proposed that it was composed along with or shortly after Kūkai's more extensive writings on taxonomies of teachings, which can be reliably dated from 830 to Kūkai's death in 835. Another theory proposed that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* as his personal response to debates between Saichō and Hossō monks. Rather than publicize this response, he intended it to serve as a guide in esoteric Buddhist doctrine for his disciples so they would not be deceived by the false doctrines of these schools. In either case, medieval commentators believed that the *Treatise* was one of Kūkai's final works. I conclude in this chapter that the speculative nature of these theories, in addition to an absence of any textual evidence specifying a date of composition, requires us to reconsider the claim that it was an early work of Kūkai.

In the second chapter, I investigate extra-canonical sources for evidence that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* existed prior to eleventh century. The title of the *Treatise* was first attributed to Kūkai in a catalogue of Kūkai works composed by the Ninnaji scholastic monk Saisen 濟暹 (1025–1115). Saisen also wrote the first commentary on the *Treatise* and, other than critiques from Tendai scholiasts such as Annen, was the first author to discuss Kūkai's doctrinal writings. There is only one source possibly predating Saisen that makes reference to the *Treatise*. In a catalogue of manuscripts housed at Daigoji in the early eleventh century, the title appears in a list of random documents housed at the temple. It is possible that this manuscript was the same



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one Saisen listed in his catalogue and used as the basis of his commentary. However, it is impossible to trace where this manuscript came from or how it ended up at Daigoji. Furthermore, there are no references to the *Treatise* or its signature doctrine prior to Saisen. Neither Kūkai's disciples, their protégé, Tendai scholastics, historical documents and diaries from the tenth and eleventh centuries, nor the biographies of Kūkai make a single reference to the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*.

In the first section of the chapter, I examine the so-called "three curricula of the Shingon school," which Kūkai is thought to have developed at Tōji for the study of esoteric Buddhism. The historical documentation of this curricula is suspicious, but even if taken as historically accurate it is clear that the *Treatise* was never a part of this course of study. Writing half a century after Kūkai, Annen addressed some of the doctrinal themes outlined in this curricula, but he never mentions the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* nor does he refer to its doctrine of the dharma body.

In the final section, I evaluate Saisen's commentary on hagiographies of Kūkai in which he notes a possible origin of the *Treatise*. In this commentary, he argues that Kūkai was in fact not dead, but was abiding in a state of suspended animation on Mt. Kōya while awaiting the arrival of the future buddha. As evidence for this claim, he compares stories in various hagiographies. He also argues that this knowledge of an undead Kūkai had been transmitted by his disciples, which, like the supreme teachings of the *Treatise*, were meant to be kept secret from the Tendai and Hossō schools. In other words, he proposes that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was a hidden text, which is why it cannot be found in the historical record. These suspicious claims regarding the origin of the *Treatise* along with the fact that it had no discernible influence on Buddhist thought in the ninth century strongly suggests that it was a later composition.

Chapter Three concerns the doctrine that the dharma body of the buddha directly preaches the esoteric teachings. I begin by emphasizing the problems of this claim in contrast with mainstream Mahāyāna doctrines. Recently, scholars have suggested that the reason the doctrines in the *Treatise* seem so unorthodox is because it was composed in response to a particular critique or question regarding doctrines of Kūkai's Shingon school. One theory posits that Kūkai directed the *Treatise* to Saichō, proposed that the mantra teachings were the same as the singular-vehicle of the *Lotus Sūtra*. According to this theory, Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* as a corrective to Saichō's view of esoteric Buddhism. A second theory proposes that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* as a response to a critical essay by the Hossō monk Tokuitsu 徳一 (ca. 760–835)

regarding the legitimacy of Kūkai's Shingon school.<sup>18</sup> In this essay, Tokuitsu enumerates eleven points in which he finds fault with the claims of this school. According to this theory, Kūkai penned the *Treatise* in response to the ninth point in Tokuitsu's essay, which makes reference to a passage in the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (*Da piluzhena chengfo jing shu* 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏) regarding the nature of the dharma body of the buddha. These theories both have merit. The *Treatise* rejects the notion of the singular-vehicle as an exoteric teaching and explicitly excludes the *Lotus Sūtra* as the preaching of the dharma body of the buddha. Furthermore, although the *Treatise* never refers to the passage in the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, it does address the same line from the sutra as the commentary. Therefore, in a general sense, the *Treatise* appears to be responding to Tendai and Hossō notions of the dharma body of the buddha.

In this chapter, however, I propose a third possibility: the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was a retort to Annen's discussion of bodies of the buddha and theory of the dharma body in his compendia on esoteric Buddhist doctrine. In his *Compendium on the Doctrine of the Bodhicitta in the Garbhadhātu and Vajradhātu in Abbreviated Dialogues* (*Taizō kongō bodaishi gi ryaku mondō shō* 胎藏金剛菩提心義略問答鈔, hereafter *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta*), Annen responds to Tokuitsu's essay on several occasions. In doing so, he borrows from an array of textual sources to explain the passage in the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. I argue that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* should be read as a response to Annen's explanation of this passage, rather than a direct reply to Tokuitsu. Annen wrote this essay toward the end of the ninth century, which means the *Treatise* could not have been a Kūkai work.

The fourth chapter is a re-evaluation of the Shingon lineage. In the early twentieth century, the art historian and Buddhologist Ōmura Seigai questioned the historical legitimacy of this Shingon lineage, pointing out the lack of textual sources for Kūkai's claims to his own transmission of the dharma. Shingon scholars refuted his argument primarily by asserting that the Shingon lineage was never intended to be an historical list of patriarchs. Rather, they claimed it was a metaphor for the religious experience of the *abhiṣeka* rite in which the authority of the teachings were passed from the master to the disciple. In the final chapter, I revisit Ōmura's criticism of the Shingon lineage by exploring how the scholastic tradition addressed concerns of legitimacy. In some cases, the oral transmission of the teachings was deemed superior to the textual documentation of the lineage. But, in many instances Shingon scholastics attempted to locate a textual source for these claims. I conclude that, contrary to the insistence of modern

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18. There is much debate regarding the exact dates for Tokuitsu. The dates above are based on Shioiri Ryōchū's assessment of Tokuitsu's biography in the *Biographies of Eminent Nara Monks* and a late account of his death. See Shioiri Ryōchū 塩入亮忠, "Tokuitsu hōshi zōkō" 徳一法師雜考, in *Tokuitsu ronsō* 徳一論叢, edited by Tamura Kōyū 田村晃祐 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1986), 18-19.

### Introduction to the Dissertation

scholars, the scholastic tradition did not always consider the Shingon lineage to be merely a metaphor, but, as all good scholiasts do, scoured the textual record for proof that the esoteric teachings originated from the dharma body of the buddha.

Finally, the second part of the dissertation consists of an annotated translation of a late twelfth-century work called an *Essay on the Two Schools*. The author of the essay, Shōshin, was the head of curricula on Mt. Hiei and one of the most renowned scholastic monks of his day. He is best known for his thirty-fascicle exegesis of the writings of the Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi. However, in this essay he takes up the issue of the esoteric teachings and their relation to the perfect teaching in Tendai. Using Annen's taxonomy of teachings as a model, he systematically refutes the claims of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* that the esoteric teachings constituted a distinct and superior form of the buddha dharma.

Shōshin's essay led me to reconsider the doctrinal claims made in the *Treatise* and the role it has occupied in modern scholarship on Japanese Buddhism. Although his treatment of Kūkai's Shingon school served his own polemical agenda of promoting the interpretations of the Tendai school as correct, many of his critiques are worthy of consideration. Shōshin's essay also reminds us that there were always multiple perspectives on the meaning of "esoteric Buddhism," and determining how the secret teachings of the buddha were interpreted in medieval Japanese Buddhism requires us to look beyond the celebrated works of founding figures to the vast body of commentarial and exegetical literature.

## **Part I: Esoteric Buddhist Scholasticism**

## Chapter One: The Composition of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*

Among Kūkai's attributed writings, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* has long been held as his primary work on the esoteric Buddhist doctrine. As the title of the text suggests, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is a polemical essay comparing two categories of the buddha dharma in terms of esoteric, or secret teachings, and exoteric, or the revealed teachings. Distinguishing and ranking categories of teachings was not uncommon in East Asian Buddhism. However, the *Treatise* has garnered considerable attention from modern scholars due to its unabashed claims to a superior knowledge of the buddha's preaching and an accelerated path toward buddhahood. For scholars in the Shingon school, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* marks the beginning of their scholastic tradition. For scholars standing outside of the tradition, the *Treatise* denotes a watershed moment in Japanese Buddhist concepts of language and scriptural hermeneutics.

The broad consensus among Kūkai scholars contends that *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was his most important doctrinal work. Yet, even a tentative survey of this scholarship reveals that the origins of the text and the historical context in which it was written are far from certain. There is little to no agreement among scholars of early medieval Buddhism on when and why the text was written. Even the dating of the extant manuscripts proves elusive. None of the manuscripts, the earliest dating to the mid-eleventh century, include a date for an original version. Furthermore, Kūkai did not mention the text in any of his other works, nor did any of his contemporaries allude to the polemical *Treatise* in their writings.

This lack of a precise date for the text is not unusual for works attributed to Kūkai. Scholars have long debated the authenticity of such works as the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* (*Sokushin jōbutsu gi* 即身成佛義). Like the *Treatise*, there are no early manuscripts of this work, nor is it mentioned in the writings of Kūkai's contemporaries. However, a text by this title does appear in the works of the Tendai scholiast Annen. Although active half a century after Kūkai, the historical proximity of Annen's citations of the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* gives credence to the traditional attribution of this work to

Kūkai, either as the author or as an orally transmitted teaching. The same cannot be said of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. The title of the text does not appear in catalogues until the late eleventh century, nor does there appear to be any reference to the *Treatise* before that time.<sup>1</sup>

Although it is now widely considered to be one of Kūkai's early writings, there is no evidence that the *Treatise* existed before the eleventh century. In this chapter, I argue that the history of this text, its possible date of composition, and the context within which it was written require further examination. First, I survey recent efforts in the scholarship on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to establish a date of composition and verify its authorship. Identifying some of the problems with these claims, I argue that the lack of evidence for an early date requires us to consider the possibility that the *Treatise* may have been a later work. Examining how the commentarial tradition discusses the historical background to the text, it is clear that even the earliest scholastic writings on the *Treatise* were unaware of when or why it was originally composed. The authorship has never been called into question; both modern scholars and medieval commentators unequivocally have attributed it to Kūkai. However, these sources differ regarding when and why Kūkai wrote it.

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1. The authorship of the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* has long been a matter of debate. In his work on Japanese Buddhist thought, the *History of Japanese Buddhist Doctrinal Studies*, published posthumously in 1933, the Tendai scholar Shimaji Daitō dismissed the commonly held presumption that the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* was strictly an esoteric Buddhist concept that originated with Kūkai. His criticism revolves around three points. The first concerns the problematic textual history of the version published in the *Kōbō daishi zenshū*, later included in the *Taishō daizōkyō*. As the colophon of the text records, the earliest extant version dates to 1660. The editors of the collection additionally note that other versions of the text were based on this copy. See KDZ 3.103-104. Therefore, Shimaji asserted, it is impossible to trace the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* to Kūkai based solely on this late manuscript. The thrust of Shimaji's critique can be found in Shimaji Daitō 島地大等, *Nihon Bukkyō kyōgakushi* 日本佛教教學史 (Tokyo: Nakayama Shobō Busshorin, 2005), 134-137 (originally published by Meiji Shoin in 1933). Although Shimaji's criticism of the textual history of the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* is valid, he failed to note quotations of this work in Annen's writings, which suggest that some form of the text was extant in the ninth century. For a detailed discussion of Shimaji's claims and scholarship on the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body*, see Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, "Nihon bukkyō no kyōgaku kenkyū to bunken" 日本仏教の教学研究と文献, *Nihon no bukkyō* 日本の仏教 5 (1996):1-17.

Annen lists the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* in his catalogue, the *Comprehensive Catalogue of the Sections and Types of Mantra Esoteric Teachings of Various Ācārya* (*Sho ajari shingon mikkyō burui sōroku* 諸阿闍梨真言密教部類總錄), which is the most exhaustive account of esoteric Buddhist texts available in Japan in the early Heian period. See *Taishō* 55.1116b10. Although Annen does not attribute this work to Kūkai in his catalogue, he quotes several passages identical to the extant version in his two compendiums on esoteric Buddhist doctrine, *Compendium on the Doctrine of the Bodhicitta in the Garbhadhātu and Vajradhātu in Abbreviated Dialogues* (*Taizō kongō bodaishi gi ryaku mondō shō* 胎藏金剛菩提心義略問答鈔) and the *Interpretation of the Teachings and Time Periods in the Mantra School* (*Shingonshū kyōji gi* 真言宗教時義). See *Taishō* 75.472a24-b20 and 75.437b-210c8, respectively. Annen does not directly attribute *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* to Kūkai. Nonetheless, Annen's references and quotations of a text by this title suggests that some form this work circulated during or before Annen's lifetime.

Prior to the twentieth century, there were multiple theories concerning the date of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. However, pre-war scholars began to promote the hypothesis that Kūkai may have composed it early in his life, well before his longer doctrinal tracts. Later scholars narrowed the possible date of composition, initially arguing that it was written prior to 821 and finally settling on a date of 815. This date is now universally accepted, and recent reference works have expunged the various theories recorded in earlier sources.<sup>2</sup>

Medieval commentators, on the other hand, emphasized the similarities between the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and Kūkai's taxonomical writings, unanimously agreeing that the *Treatise* must have been one of his final works. Medieval Shingon scholiasts arrived at this conclusion based on the fact that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* has much in common with Kūkai's ten-fascicle *Treatise on the Ten Abiding Minds according to the Secret Maṇḍala* (*Himitsu mandara jūjūshin ron* 祕密曼荼羅十住心論, hereafter *Ten Abiding Minds*) and its shorter companion, the three-fascicle *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* (*Hizō hōyaku* 秘藏寶鑰). In these taxonomical works, which we can reliably date between 830 and Kūkai's death in 835, Kūkai ranks Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachings in a hierarchy of ten stages, positioning his own Shingon school at the top. Likewise, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* distinguishes between categories of teachings. However, rather than posit a hierarchy, the objective of the *Treatise* is to explain how the esoteric teachings of the Shingon school are superior to the other Buddhist schools, particularly Tendai and Hossō. Although Kūkai never combined these two models of taxonomy in his own writings, later commentators fused them into a single system of esoteric Buddhist hermeneutics.

Finally, a third theory on the composition of the *Treatise* suggests that Kūkai wrote it as a response to debates between elites in the Nara and Tendai schools. There is no historical evidence that such debates ever occurred. Rather, this theory conflated the *Treatise* with the *Ten Abiding Minds*, inserting it into the historical narrative of the taxonomical text in an attempt to explain the mysterious origins of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Considering the polemical objectives of these works, in addition to the fact that the *Treatise* has much in common with the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, it becomes clear why medieval Shingon scholastics assumed they were composed as a set. Based on these primary sources, I demonstrate that the date of composition, as well as the claim that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* belongs to Kūkai's early body of writing, should be re-evaluated.

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2. For example, the entry for the *Treatise* in the *Mikkyō jiten* simply notes that it was written between 813 and 815. See MJ 619. Furthermore, in his summary of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to his annotation of the text, Satō Ryūken records that it was written in 815. See Satō Ryūken 佐藤隆賢, "Benkenmitsu nikyō ron kaisetsu" 弁顯密二教論解説, in *Kōbō daishi kūkai zenshū* 弘法大師空海全集, vol. 6, edited by Miyazaka Yūshō 宮坂宥勝 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1983), 599. Similarly, Fukuda Ryōsei simply states in his entry on the *Treatise* of the *Taishōkyō zen kaisetsu daijiten* 大藏經全解説大事典 (p.719) that Kūkai wrote it in 815.

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The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as an Early Kūkai Work

The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is perhaps the best known of Kūkai's works, and most studies of esoteric Buddhism in Japan focus almost exclusively on this text. In one of the first and most influential studies of Kūkai in English, Hakeda Yoshito calls it the "most representative work on the subject" of esoteric Buddhist doctrine. Specifically, he explains that the *Treatise* was Kūkai's earliest attempt to elucidate the doctrines that distinguished his Shingon school from the other Buddhist schools that currently dominated the scholastic discourse. The definitive doctrine of Kūkai's school, Hakeda notes, primarily consisted of the claim that the esoteric teachings were directly preached by the dharma body of the buddha (法身說法), whereas the exoteric teachings were revealed by various manifestations such as Śākyamuni Buddha. Therefore, according to Hakeda, Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* with the intention of proving the superiority of the esoteric teachings and declaring that the exoteric sutras and treatises represent an inferior genre of the buddha dharma.<sup>3</sup>

Following Hakeda's introduction to Kūkai's writings, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* has continued to be the primary focus in anglophone research on Japanese esoteric Buddhism. Perhaps the most extensive treatment of the doctrines expounded in the *Treatise* is David Gardiner's 1994 dissertation, which examines the evolution of Kūkai's views on the esoteric teachings from an early letter, the so-called *Letter of Promulgation* (*Kan'ensho* 勸緣疏), to the more extensive treatment in the *Treatise*. In the letter, Kūkai offered a brief definition of the esoteric teachings, simply stating that they constitute the preaching of the dharma body of the buddha. The letter was then distributed to elite members of the monastic community along with a collection of texts, which Kūkai categorized as the "esoteric treasury" (密藏). According to Gardiner, Kūkai wrote the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in order to further refine this definition of the esoteric teachings in contrast to his Tendai counterpart Saichō and his efforts to incorporate these so-called esoteric works into the Tendai doctrinal system. Therefore, the *Treatise*, Gardiner concludes, was the earliest tract to propose the doctrines specific to the Shingon school, namely the doctrine that the dharma body of the buddha preaches the esoteric teachings.<sup>4</sup>

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3. See Yoshito S. Hakeda, *Kūkai: Major Works* (New York: Columbia University, 1972), 62-64.

4. See David Lion Gardiner, "Kūkai and the Beginnings of Shingon Buddhism in Japan" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1995), 4-10.



Chapter One: The Composition of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*

In his seminal study of Kūkai and the construction of esoteric Buddhism in Japan, Abé Ryūichi also takes the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as representative of Kūkai's view on esoteric Buddhism, stating that the *Treatise* constitutes the core of what he calls the "complementarity of the esoteric and exoteric." According to Abé, Kūkai's distinction between the exoteric and esoteric teachings was primarily functional; he considered the "exoteric" teachings to be those teachings revealed in sutras, commentaries, and treatises that addressed matters of doctrine, whereas the "esoteric" teachings consisted of ritual practices expounded in the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and its associated ritual manuals. Because the latter category of teachings prescribe practices for attaining buddhahood rather than merely describing the buddha's teachings, Kūkai declared them to be superior to the Mahāyāna textual tradition. Nonetheless, Abé argues that Kūkai understood these two components of doctrine and practice to complement each other and suggests that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was intended to demonstrate how the esoteric teachings were in fact fundamental to the exoteric sutras and treatises. Therefore, Abé concludes, Kūkai's notion of esoteric Buddhism included not only a soteriological justification for the performance of ritual, but also constituted a new form of scriptural hermeneutics.<sup>5</sup>

These studies built upon an even larger body of Japanese scholarship that has long considered the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to be the quintessential expression of esoteric Buddhist thought in Japan. For this reason, the content of the *Treatise* and its doctrinal claims are one of the most widely researched topics in Kūkai Studies. However, even the most comprehensive reference works omit details on the history of the text and its reception by the scholastic tradition in Japan. For example, in the *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten*, an exhaustive dictionary of East Asian Buddhist texts, Kambayashi Ryūjō outlines the structure of the *Treatise* based on early commentaries, but does not offer specific dates for extant manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> The *Mochizuki bukkyō daijiten*, an unabridged encyclopedia of Buddhism, lists the dates for later renditions of the text as well as its primary commentaries, but likewise offers no details

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5. See Abé Ryūichi, *Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 10-12.

6. See BKJ 9.375-376. This lack of dates for manuscripts is atypical of this resource.

regarding the original composition.<sup>7</sup> This lack of information on the textual history of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in modern reference works reflects the lacuna in the premodern sources regarding its date of composition.

To compensate for this dearth in historical knowledge regarding the *Treatise*, modern scholars and medieval scholastics have proposed several hypotheses on when and why Kūkai may have written it. In the preface to his Japanese reading of the *Treatise* in the *Kokuyaku issai kyō*, Kamei Sōchū mentions two theories regarding possible dates of composition. The older theory, which I discuss in the next section, suggests that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* as a component of his broader collection of taxonomical works, namely the ten-fascicle *Ten Abiding Minds* and its abbreviated companion, the three-fascicle *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*. Because these texts can be reliably dated to the last five years of Kūkai's life, this theory presumes that the *Treatise* was one of his final compositions as well.

The other theory, as Kamei notes, posits a much earlier date for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. This theory compares the doctrinal assertions in the *Treatise* with other early writings of Kūkai and concludes that, in contrast to the more nuanced arguments and belletristic prose of the *Ten Abiding Minds*, the content as well as brevity and terse style of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* more closely resemble Kūkai's earlier works. Therefore, this argument, now commonly accepted among Shingon scholars, proposes that Kūkai must have penned the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* well before his more mature writings.

### (i) 821 (弘仁 12)

The early-date theory derives a date of composition for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* by linking it to two early Kūkai works. For the *terminus ante quem* of composition, proponents of this theory cite a line at the end of the second fascicle of the *Dharma Transmission of the Secret Maṇḍala Teachings* (*Himitsu mandara kyō fuhōden* 秘密曼荼羅教付法傳, hereafter *Longer Dharma Transmission*), an explication of the Shingon lineage also traditionally attributed to Kūkai. The *Longer Dharma Transmission* consists of three sections: a preface (叙), a collection of biographies for the Shingon patriarchs (i.e., Mahāvairocana, Vajrasattva, Nāgārjuna,

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7. The entry for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in *Mochizuki* notes that the text was copied in the sixth year of Bun'ō (文應 6), but this must be an error in the dictionary because Bun'ō only lasted one year (1260). Perhaps the authors meant the sixth year of Bun'ei (文永 6), which would be equivalent to 1269 in the Julian-Gregorian calendar. The other versions listed were copied in 1320 (元應), 1558-1570 (永錄中), 1616 (元和 2), and 1732 (享保 17). See MBDJ 5.4529b-c. According to the editors of the *Teihon kōbō daishi zenshū*, these copies may have constituted the basis of the *Jūkanshō*, an Edo-period primer on essential writings of the Shingon school. See TKDZ 3.354.

Nāgabodhi, Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, and Huiguo), and a series of questions and responses regarding this lineage. The passage in question appears at the end of the text and includes an ambiguous reference to a "section on the preaching of the dharma body." The final question and response to the transmission text reads:

問。此塔中所有法藏者爲釋迦如來所說耶。何佛說乎。答。非釋迦所說。何以故。應化佛不說內所證法故。問。若非應化佛說爲法身說。答。說此有二義、如法身說法章說。

Question: Was the treasury of the dharma in the [iron] stupa preached by Śākyamuni? Which buddha preached this?

Response: It was not preached by Śākyamuni. Why? Because the response and transformation [bodies] of the buddha do not preach the internally realized dharma.

Question: Is it not the case that the preaching of the response and transformation bodies is the preaching of the dharma body?

Response: In explaining this there are two interpretations, as explained in the section on the preaching of the dharma body.<sup>8</sup>

In this passage, Kūkai delineates between the teachings of his lineage originating in the iron stupa and the traditional lineage narrative beginning with Śākyamuni Buddha. He also implies that these lineages denote two different types of teachings, the internally realized preaching of the buddha transmitted through an esoteric lineage and the teachings expounded in the exoteric sutras. However, Kūkai does not provide further details on the differences between these bodies of the buddha and their respective teachings, but merely refers the reader to an unnamed essay, or section (章), on the preaching of the dharma body.

Proponents of the early-date theory interpret this phrase as an allusion to the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. A correlation first made in the seventeenth-century by the Shingon monk Unshō 運徹 (1614–1693), this interpretation of the passage asserts that the "essay" must be the *Treatise* because it is Kūkai's primary explication of the doctrine that the dharma body preaches. Specifically, Unshō asserts, "The passage on the preaching of the dharma body refers to the

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8. For the original passage, see *TKDZ* 1.116.

interpretation of dharma body's preaching in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*."<sup>9</sup> Therefore, scholars have concluded that Kūkai must have already written it by the time he penned the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text.<sup>10</sup>

Most Shingon scholars accept the argument that the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text references the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, and, therefore, conclude that the *Treatise* must have been written earlier.<sup>11</sup> This conclusion assumes an intertextual connection between the two works. The *Treatise* opens by distinguishing between the exoteric and esoteric views of the buddha dharma, declaring that the teachings revealed by the response and transformation bodies of the buddha are merely provisional, whereas the secret teachings transmitted by the Shingon lineage are the true speech of the dharma body of the buddha. Therefore, the *Treatise* appears to respond to the question left unanswered at the end of the transmission text, or, as the early-date theory proposes, the transmission text refers the reader back to Kūkai's previously written treatise on this subject.

However, the correlation between these two works requires one to adhere to a set of presumptions implied by Unshō's quotation in his commentary, which have since become a matter of fact among modern scholars. First, this connection suggests that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is the only possible referent to the essay in question. However, it is just as plausible that this line denotes a number of possible texts or passages directly cited in the lineage text or the preface to the text itself. Like the opening line of the *Treatise*, the first section of the transmission text declares that the esoteric teachings are directly preached by the dharma body. Therefore, it is possible that the essay (or section) on the preaching of the dharma body simply refers to the opening section of the transmission text, and there is no need to construct a chronology linking this text to another work. Second, the *Longer Dharma Transmission* is commonly believed to have been written prior to 821. However, even if one accepts the premise

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9. See Unshō's essay, *Fuhōden sange* 付法傳纂解, in ZSZ 32.102-103.

10. For a succinct overview of this argument, see Ōyama Kōjun 大山公淳, "Benkenmitsu nikyō ron ni tsuite" 弁顯密二教論について, in *Shingonshū sensho* 真言宗撰書, vol. 2, edited by Matsunaga Yūkei 松長有慶 (Kyoto: Dōkōsha, 1986), 70-71.

11. Most scholars accept this argument that the "essay on the preaching of the dharma body" refers to the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* with the exception of Sueki Fumihiko, who argues that the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text preceded the *Treatise*. However, he does not offer a possible referent for this passage in the transmission text. See Sueki Fumihiko 末木文美士, *Heian shoki bukkyō shisō no kenkyū—Annen no shisō keisei wo chūshin toshite* 平安初期仏教思想の研究—安然の思想形成を中心として (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1995), 93.

that this "essay" refers to the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, this still does not establish a date of composition. The *Longer Dharma Transmission* also lacks a date in the colophon, and, like the *Treatise*, there are no early references to this text.<sup>12</sup>

Establishing a date of 821 for the transmission text requires a series of assumptions regarding the relation between this text and another writing on lineage that prove historically problematic. Shingon scholars, notably Matsunaga Yūkei, have addressed the problem of dating the transmission text by juxtaposing it with another lineage text attributed to Kūkai, the single-fascicle *Shingon Dharma Transmission* (*Shingon fuhōden* 眞言付法傳, hereafter *Shorter Dharma Transmission*). Because the oldest extant manuscript includes a line stating that "it" was written on the sixth day of the ninth month of 821 (弘仁12), scholars have assumed that Kūkai completed the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* on this date. Matsunaga claims that the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text must have preceded this shorter version, which adds Śubhakarasiṃha (637–735), the translator of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, and Yixing 一行 (683–727), his assistant and author of the commentary on the sutra, to the list of Shingon patriarchs.<sup>13</sup>

Matsunaga offers two reasons why the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text must predate the shorter version. First, he simply states that the brevity of the one-fascicle lineage text suggests it was based on the longer and more substantial version. His second argument is more complex. Matsunaga notes that, according to Kūkai's *Catalogue of Imported Items* (*Shōrai mokuroku* 請來目錄), Kūkai returned from China in 806 with portraits of Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, Śubhakarasiṃha, Yixing, and Huiguo.<sup>14</sup> However, a record dating to the fourth month of 821 notes that Kūkai painted, or ordered to be painted, scrolls featuring the images of two of the seven patriarchs, Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi, both of whom were not included in the list of imported images.<sup>15</sup> According to this record, these images were consecrated in a ceremony

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12. A text by this title is listed in a letter attributed to Kūkai and published in the *Kōya Collection of Miscellaneous Writings* (*Kōya zō hitsu shū* 高野雜筆集). However, this text is also undated. See TKDZ 120-121. Gotō Akio cites this letter as evidence that the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text was written in 815 or 816. In part, he bases this date on the assumption that the reference to the "essay on the preaching of the dharma body" at the end of the lineage text references the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and that it was composed in 815. However, the date of 815 is based on the assumption that the *Longer Dharma Transmission* was written prior to 821. In other words, Gotō establishes a date for the lineage text based on the date of the *Treatise*, which was originally based on a hypothetical date for the lineage text. See Gotō Akio 後藤昭雄, "Nittō sō no jūrai shita mono—san to hibun—"入唐僧の従来したもの—讚と碑文—, in *Higashi ajia no naka no heian bungaku* 東アジアの中の平安文学 (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1995), 16-21.

13. See Matsunaga Yūkei 松長有慶, *Mikkyō no sōshōsha* 密教の相承者 (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1973), 54-56.

14. Kūkai lists these images in his catalogue. See *Taishō* 55.1064b17-21.

15. In a dedication text (願文), Kūkai notes that images of the two Indian patriarchs were completed on this date along with a series of mandala and images of various deities, amounting to a total of seventeen images. These were used for rites held on the ninth day of the ninth month of the same year. This dedication text is preserved in the seventh fascicle of the *Shōryōshū*. See TKDZ 8.108-110.

five months later on the ninth day of the ninth month of the same year, or three days after the date recorded at the end of the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* text. Therefore, Matsunaga surmises that Kūkai composed the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* text as a collection of biographies for the seven patriarchs represented in the five imported images and the two created earlier that year to accompany the consecration of these images three days later. By linking these two transmission texts, Matsunaga concludes that the *Longer Dharma Transmission* was written before 821, and, consequently, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* must have preceded both of these works.<sup>16</sup>

Although this theory provides a possible date for the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, it creates more problems than it solves. First, it assumes Kūkai wrote the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* text in 821 based on his earlier *Longer Dharma Transmission*. A comparison of the two lineage texts reveals that the shorter work is primarily an abbreviation of the second section of the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text with the exception of the biographies for Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing. However, Matsunaga does not specify why this resemblance necessarily means the longer text predated the more concise rendition. Based on the same evidence, one could also argue the opposite case; the *Longer Dharma Transmission* was an expansion of the shorter, less detailed version. Rather than adding Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing to the *Shorter Dharma Transmission*, they may have been removed from the longer version. In either case, the absence of these patriarchs from the *Longer Dharma Transmission* should cause one to question the assumption that the shorter text was merely an abbreviation of Kūkai's Shingon lineage.

In the preface to the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, which I argue is the primary candidate for the "section on the preaching of the dharma body," Kūkai asserts that the esoteric teachings had been transmitted to him from the dharma body through the seven Shingon patriarchs. The first patriarch in this list is Mahāvairocana Tathāgata, the personification of the dharma body. Mahāvairocana bestowed these teachings on Vajrasattva, who in turn passed them down to Nāgārjuna, Nāgabodhi, Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, and finally to Kūkai's master Huiguo. It is only through the lineage of these seven great *ācārya*, Kūkai proclaims, that one can gain access to the preaching of the dharma body. However, the *Shorter Dharma Transmission*, which lacks such a preface explaining the doctrinal purport of the lineage, adds Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing to this list. In doing so, the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* effectively contradicts the claim that the preaching of the dharma body was transmitted exclusively through the seven patriarchs specified in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*.

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16. Matsunaga implies that the images of Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi were added to the portraits of the other five patriarchs, but the dedication text does not mention the other images. See Matsunaga 1973, 56.

The coexistence of two lineage narratives in a tradition that places the authority of its doctrine on an unbroken transmission was obviously problematic and required later Shingon commentators to explain this anomaly. The medieval scholiast Raiyu 頼瑜 (1226–1304) tried to account for this conundrum by arguing that the shorter transmission text only concerned the portraits of the patriarchs housed in the *abhiṣeka* hall at Tōji and was not meant to be a record of the Shingon lineage. The longer text, on the other hand, was an account of the transmission of the esoteric teachings, which Kūkai only intended to be seen by his disciples and initiates in this lineage.<sup>17</sup> Matsunaga appears to have devised his portrait theory based on Raiyu's hypothesis. However, this explanation does not clarify why the addition of the new portraits would justify the writing of a new lineage text. Why would Kūkai create a second lineage narrative simply to commemorate the production of two portraits? Even if the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* text was meant to accompany the dedication of the Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi portraits, there would be no need to add the biographies of Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing to the list of patriarchs in the lineage text. Moreover, if Kūkai already possessed portraits of Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing when he returned from China, why would he not have originally included their biographies in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*?

One possible answer to these questions is that the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* text was unrelated to the consecration of the portraits. In a succinct but critical article, Inaya Yūsen proposes that this was probably the case and questions the historical validity of Raiyu's portrait theory. Citing the second fascicle of Gōhō's 杲寶 (1306–1362) *Record of the Treasures at Tōji* (*Tōbōki* 東寶記), Inaya highlights a passage documenting the only recorded instance of the portraits being housed together in the *abhiṣeka* hall at Tōji. According to Gōhō's record, this account dates from 999–1004 (長保間), approximately one hundred-eighty years after Kūkai requested the creation of the two new portraits.<sup>18</sup> Based on this historical evidence, Inaya argues that the other five portraits were possibly not added to the images of Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi in the *abhiṣeka* hall for almost two centuries after Kūkai's death. Therefore, there is no reason to assume that Kūkai composed the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* text to commemorate the completion of these images. Inaya concludes that the creation of the new portraits and the ceremony that occurred in the ninth month of 821 were unrelated to the composition of the

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17. Raiyu poses this explanation in the eleventh fascicle, section thirty-five, of his collection of notes, the *Shinzoku zōki mondō shō* 真俗雜記問答抄. See SZ 36.103.

18. The *Tōbōki* is an extensive record of rites performed at Tōji, sacred texts housed at the temple and its sub-temples, and administrators of the temple since its founding to the mid-fourteenth century. For this reference to the portraits of the patriarchs, see ZGSRJ 12.51a.

*Shorter Dharma Transmission* text. Rather than a Kūkai composition, he suggests that this work was probably a composite of the *Longer Dharma Transmission* and two biographies for Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing added well after the time of Kūkai.<sup>19</sup>

Art historians have also taken up the issue of the Tōji portraits and their relationship to the lineage texts. The debate among art historians regarding the portraits primarily concerns the authorship of the inscriptions appended to the bottom of the images. At least since Gōhō's fourteenth-century account, it has been assumed that Kūkai personally wrote the inscriptions for all seven portraits. According to the traditional narrative and the official position of the museum at Tōji, Kūkai wrote all seven inscriptions sometime between the fourth month of 821, when he requested the creation of two new portraits, and the ninth month of the same year, when they were consecrated and enshrined in the *abhiṣeka* hall at Tōji.

However, after an extensive study of the portraits and inscriptions in the early twentieth century, the art historian Taki Seiichi argued that the inscriptions reflect different styles of calligraphy. Taki proposed that the inscriptions for the Chinese patriarchs, the five listed in Kūkai's catalogue, were composed in one hand, while the inscriptions for the Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi portraits were done in another. He concluded that this difference might suggest Kūkai wrote the inscriptions for the older portraits while in China and the others were completed at a later date.<sup>20</sup>

Taki's study provoked several responses from post-war art historians and Shingon scholars. Some scholars have argued that this difference in style was due to the fifteen-year interval between the two sets of inscriptions. Despite these subtle distinctions, they conclude all of the inscriptions were written by Kūkai.<sup>21</sup> Others have pointed out that not only do the inscriptions for Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi differ, but the inscriptions for the Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing portraits deviate from the normative Kūkai style as well. This evidence suggests that either these inscriptions were originally written in a different hand or they were composed at a later time.<sup>22</sup> Countering this view, some scholars have claimed that Kūkai may have rewritten these inscrip-

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19. See Inaya Yūsen 稲谷祐宣, "Kūkai saku kōryaku ni fuhōden nitsuite" 空海作廣略二付法傳について, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 11 (1963): 255-258.

20. For Taki's study of the portraits and their inscriptions, see Taki Seiichi 滝精一, "Tōji shichi so gazō no kenkyū" 東寺七祖画像の研究, *Kokka* 344 and 355 (1919), which were later republished in Taki Seiichi 滝精一, *Taki Setsuan bijutsu ronshū nihon hen* 瀧拙庵美術論集日本篇 (Tokyo: Zauhō Kankōkai, 1943).

21. For instance, Iijima Shunkei claims that Kūkai wrote the inscriptions for the imported images while in China and later composed the inscriptions for the Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi portraits in 821. See Iijima Shunkei 飯島春敬, "Kūkai hitsu no fū shinchō to shichi so san" 空海筆の風信帖と七祖讚, in *Nihon shodō taikai* 日本書道大系, vol. 2, edited by Iijima Shunkei (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1971).

22. Specifically, Naitō Kenkichi argues that the Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing inscriptions were also completed in 821 along with the inscriptions for the two new portraits. See Naitō Kenkichi 内藤乾吉, "Shichi so zō san" 七祖像贊, in *Shodō zenshū* 書道全集 vol. 11, edited by Onoe Hachirō 尾上八郎 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1955).



tions when he wrote the new ones. Nonetheless, all of these theories conclude that Kūkai wrote the inscriptions, the only difference of opinion being when and where he wrote them.<sup>23</sup>

Setting aside the problem of defining a "Kūkai style" of calligraphy, this debate over the inscriptions also calls into question Raiyu's portrait theory of the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* text. In addition to their stylistic differences from the imported images, the inscriptions for Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing also stand out due to the fact that they include a date. Although on the whole the inscriptions are quite faded and difficult to read, the year Kōnin 12 (821) is clearly visible following the text of the biographies. The remainder of these lines in both inscriptions are no longer decipherable. However, the position of the line in relation to the preceding script suggests that the year was followed by three or four more characters, likely indicating a month and day of composition for the inscriptions. It is possible that the dates recorded in the inscriptions of the Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing portraits are the same day and month appended to the biographies in the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* text.<sup>24</sup>

Gōhō also notes in his record of treasures at Tōji that the portraits were restored in 1306 when Emperor Go-Uda (r. 1274–1287) became the imperial abbot (門跡) at Daikakuji. According to an addendum to Gōhō's note, these portraits were possibly restored once again in 1375, although the author states that it is uncertain if these were the original portraits or a later copy. It is also unclear if the inscriptions were changed during these restorations. In the case of the 1306 restoration, Gōhō thought they were Kūkai's originals.<sup>25</sup> However, the fact that he documents these restoration efforts along with the textual sources on the history of the portraits suggests that there was a great deal of concern for their preservation. Furthermore, Gōhō explicitly states that Kūkai wrote the inscriptions for the Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi portraits on the sixth day of the ninth month of 821, citing the "original version in the Tōji sutra repository"

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23. For examples of such responses, see Nakata Yūjirō 中田勇次郎, "Shingon shichi so zō san hyō gyōjō mon" 真言七祖像贊并行状文, in *Kōbō daishi shinseki shūsei* 弘法大師真蹟集成 (Kyoto: Hōzōzan, 1974) and Hamada Takashi 浜田隆, "Kōbō daishi to mikkyō bijutsu" 弘法大師と密教美術, in *Kōbō daishi kenkyū* 弘法大師研究, edited by Nakano Gishō 中野義照 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1978). Nishimoto Masahiro discusses these theories in a more recent article, Nishimoto Masahiro 西本昌弘, "Shingon go sozō no shūfuku to saga tennō—Sataishō ko ate kūkai shōjō no kentō wo chūshin ni—" 真言五祖像の修復と嵯峨天皇—左大将公宛て空海書状の検討を中心に—, *Kansai daigaku tōzai gakujitsu kenkyūjo kiyō* 38 (2005):1-23. In contrast to these theories regarding when Kūkai wrote the inscriptions, Nishimoto argues that the inscriptions and titles for the new portraits of Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi as well as the imported images of Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing were written by Emperor Saga at Kūkai's request.

24. The portraits are currently not available in digital format. The best reproductions that I am aware of are published in the catalog for a 2011 exhibition at Tokyo National Museum. See *Kūkai's World: The Arts of Esoteric Buddhism (Kūkai to mikkyō bijutsu ten* 空海と密教美術展) (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 2011), 44 and 47.

25. Gōhō asserts that Kūkai wrote the new inscriptions for the Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi images. The addendum states that they may have been changed during the later restoration, but asserts nonetheless that they should still be revered as if they were written in Kūkai's hand. See *ZZGSRJ* 12.52b.

(東寺經藏本) as his source. Considering that Gōhō also oversaw the cataloging of manuscripts at Tōji, this reference might refer to the oldest extant version of the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* housed in his collection. However, it is curious that Gōhō lists several sources on the portraits and biographies of the patriarchs, including Kūkai's catalogue and his letters, but never cites the lineage text. Both art historians and textual scholars agree that the inscriptions and biographies on the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* text are identical, which is one reason why Matsunaga suggests that the lineage text was composed at the same time as the new portraits as a copy of the inscriptions. Therefore, the line following Yixing's biography in the text stating that "it" was composed in 821 likely referred to the inscription, not the lineage text.

As the editors of the first edition of the *Kōbō daishi zenshū* note in their comments, this date in the Tōji manuscript was later added to the text.<sup>26</sup> This suggests that even if this manuscript dates to the late eleventh-century as they claim, there is no reason to assume that it included this date prior to Gōhō's inventory of documents related to the portraits. In other words, the date of 821 is unrelated to the composition of the *Shorter Dharma Transmission* text, as Inaya has argued, and was perhaps written much later during the restoration of the portraits and their inscriptions. Whatever the reason may have been for creating this alternative lineage text, a critical evaluation of the portrait theory requires us to reassess the assumption that the text can reliably be dated to 821. Without this date, of course, it is impossible to verify an early date for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*.

## (ii) 815 (弘仁 6)

The early-date theory relies on another Kūkai work to provide an even more precise date of composition for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. In addition to a series of circumstantial references and dates in lineage texts, this theory of an early date also compares the content of the *Treatise* with an early letter in which Kūkai requests that his fellow Buddhist intellectuals assist in propagating the esoteric teachings. Because this so-called *Letter of Promulgation* includes a date of 815 (弘仁 6) in the colophon, scholars have suggested that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* must have been composed around the same time.

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26. According to Hase Hōshū, the editor of the first edition of the *Kōbō daishi zenshū*, this manuscript probably was copied some time during the mid to late eleventh century. Hase's dating of the text to the eleventh century, however, is not very reliable. He simply notes that it resembles a manuscript in the repository on Mt. Kōya including a biography of Śubhakarasiṃha and posts a date of 1076. He suggests the Tōji manuscript may have been copied around the same time. See *KDZ* 2.66-67.

In a brief, although influential, article on the *Treatise*, the Shingon scholar Ōyama Kōjun promotes the early-date theory by comparing its distinction between the exoteric and esoteric teachings with other early writings from Kūkai. In many ways, Ōyama's interpretation of this distinction in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* resembles Abé's notion of complementarity. According to Ōyama, Kūkai's definition of the exoteric and esoteric teachings was both contrastive and comparative. On the one hand, Kūkai proposed a contrast between the source of these teachings. In the opening line of the *Treatise* he bluntly states that there are two types of teachings: the exoteric teachings, which are "revealed, cursory, and adapted to the capabilities of the individual," and the esoteric teachings, which are "the secret and profoundly true preaching" of the dharma body of the buddha.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the esoteric teachings are the superior preaching of the dharma body, whereas the exoteric teachings are a less efficacious form of these teachings that are adjusted according to the needs of the individual. On the other hand, the final section of the treatise offers a comparative interpretation of the two types of teachings, asserting that compared to non-Buddhist teachings, Hīnayāna is esoteric. When compared to Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna is esoteric, and so on. Whenever one compares teachings in terms of lesser and greater, this comparative definition contends that the lesser are always exoteric and the greater are esoteric.<sup>28</sup>

Ōyama, as well as subsequent Shingon scholars such as Katsumata Shunkyō and Matsunaga Yūkei, supports an early date for the *Treatise*, in part, because he finds this two-fold definition of the exoteric-esoteric dichotomy to be central to Kūkai's early writings. First, he cites the definition of the esoteric teachings in one of Kūkai's earliest documented texts, his *Catalogue of Imported Items*. The catalogue is primarily a collection of works that Kūkai obtained while visiting the Tang capital of Chang'an between 804 and 806.

In addition to serving as a doxography of esoteric Buddhist texts (as well as non-esoteric sources) imported and, in some cases reimported to Japan, Kūkai also explained his reason for obtaining such works. Following his list of translations and commentaries attributed to Amoghavajra, Kūkai argued that these works were indicative of a new form of Buddhism into which he was initiated while in China. Articulating his reasons for introducing this new Buddhism, he asserts:

法海一味隨機淺深。五乘分鑣逐器頓漸。頓教之中有顯有密。於密藏也或源或派。古之法匠泳派攀葉。今之所傳拔柢竭源。何以故。昔金剛薩埵親受遍照如來。數百歲後授龍猛菩薩。龍猛菩薩授龍智阿闍梨。龍智阿闍梨授金剛智阿闍梨。金剛智三藏大唐開元中始扣五部。

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27. See *Taishō* 77.374c22-375a5, *KDZ* 3.58, or *TKDZ* 3.74.

28. See *Taishō* 77.381a23-b2, *KDZ* 3.88-89, or *TKDZ* 3.109. For Ōyama's definition of the exoteric-esoteric distinction, see Ōyama 1986, 74-77.

The sea of the dharma is a single flavor, but has shallows and depths depending on the capabilities of the individual. The five vehicles divide individuals into tracks of sudden and gradual in accordance with their capabilities. Among the sudden teachings, there are those that are revealed and those that are hidden. As for the secret treasury, in some cases it is the fountain and in some cases it is a stream. Dharma masters of the past swam in the streams, grasping at the leaves. What I now transmit removes the roots and releases the wellspring. How is this possible? Long ago, Vajrasattva obtained [the esoteric teachings] directly from the Tathāgata of Universal Radiance. After many centuries, he bestowed them on Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva. Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva bestowed them on Nāgabodhi Ācārya. Nāgabodhi Ācārya bestowed them on Vajrabodhi Ācārya. The *Tripitaka*-master Vajrabodhi Ācārya then introduced the five divisions [of the Vajradhātu] to the Tang during the Kaiyuan era.<sup>29</sup>

In his earliest definition of the esoteric teachings, Kūkai argues that the esoteric teachings are the secret treasury, or womb (藏) of Mahāvairocana Tathāgata. A variation on *tathāgatagarbha* thought, the secret treasury denotes the matrix through which sentient beings inherently possess the capacity for attaining buddhahood. This matrix is also the channel through which the tathāgata expounds the dharma. By calling this matrix "secret," Kūkai simply emphasizes that this interaction takes place within the mind of the practitioner. However, this term also includes the teachings expounded by the tathāgata during this interaction, i.e. the esoteric teachings, as well as the proof texts that supposedly document these teachings. All other teachings are lesser forms of this ultimate truth of the secret treasury, which has been passed down from the beginningless past through the Shingon lineage. Kūkai goes on to equate the exoteric teachings with the gradual path toward buddhahood, while promoting the esoteric teachings as the supernatural powers permitting one to become a buddha in the current body.

For Ōyama and Katsumata, this statement on the superiority of the esoteric teachings in the catalogue was an early manifestation of Kūkai's distinction between the exoteric and esoteric teachings later articulated in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. However, they consider this nascent explanation to represent the views of Kūkai's master Huiguo, rather than Kūkai's own interpretation of the esoteric teachings. According to Katsumata, Kūkai specifically wrote the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to articulate his own views on the esoteric Buddhist doctrine. In what he calls the "essence of esoteric Buddhism,"<sup>30</sup> Katsumata argues that the distinction

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29. *Taishō* 55.1062c6-12 or *TKDZ* 1.18. For alternative English translation, see Takagi Shingen and Thomas Eijō Dreitlein, *Kūkai on the Philosophy of Language* (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2010), 208-209 and Abé 1999, 181. Abé argues that Kūkai later developed this distinction between the esoteric and exoteric teachings in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and further elaborated on the Shingon lineage in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text.

30. See Katsumata Shunkyō 勝又俊教, *Mikkyō no nihonteki tenkai* 密教の日本的展開 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1970), 52. He makes a similar claim in *Kōbō daishi kūkai chosakushū*, vol. 1, 574.

between the esoteric and exoteric teachings in the *Treatise* formed the hermeneutical basis for all of Kūkai's writings. If the doctrines presented in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* were essential to Kūkai's later works, the text obviously had to have been one of his early writings. However, as I discussed above, the date of composition for the *Treatise* is unknown. Katsumata addresses this problem by comparing the content of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* with another Kūkai text containing similar doctrinal claims, the so-called *Letter of Promulgation*.

The *Letter of Promulgation* is a brief text expounding the merits of the esoteric texts that Kūkai procured while in China and is thought to have been distributed to temples throughout Japan along with copies of these works. Included in the ninth fascicle of the *Zoku henjō hakki shōryōshū hoketsu shō* 續遍照發揮性靈集補闕鈔 (abbreviated as *Shōryōshū*), a compilation of letters, poems, and proclamations written by or addressed to Kūkai, the validity of the letter has never been in question. The *Shōryōshū* is believed to have been initially compiled by Kūkai's disciple Shinzei 眞濟 (800–860) and later edited and appended by the Ninnaji scholar-monk Saisen in 1079. As Unshō explained in his seventeenth-century commentary on the *Shōryōshū*, the last three fascicles of Shinzei's original compilation were lost sometime during the ninth or tenth century. Saisen rewrote the documents in the final three fascicles based on variants and partial copies. Dates are included for most texts in the collection, making the *Shōryōshū* a convenient outline of Kūkai's writing activities. A colophon to the *Letter of Promulgation* posts a date of the fourth month of 815 (弘仁 6), making it one of Kūkai's earliest letters in the collection.<sup>31</sup>

The letter is untitled and opens with a statement of purpose. As a petition to disseminate what Kūkai calls the "secret dharma treasury," the letter issues "a humble request that persons of interest might kindly copy the esoteric dharma treasury amounting to thirty-five fascicles."<sup>32</sup> No list of these works or other copies of the letter have survived and the texts included in these thirty-five fascicles are unknown. Following this request, Kūkai briefly explains the meaning of the "esoteric dharma treasury" that he wishes to distribute. He writes:

夫、教冥衆色、法韞一心。迷悟機殊。感應非一。是故、應身化身、分影隨類。理佛智佛、秘宮受樂。一乘三乘、分鑣駟生。顯教密教、逗機證滅。所謂顯教者、報

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31. Unshō notes that the final three fascicles of the *Shōryōshū* are often referred to as "supplemental" (補闕), having been added at a much later date. See SZ 42.248. Most of the letters between Kūkai and Saichō are included in the supplemental fascicles. Takagi Shingen discusses the historical background to the compilation of the *Shōryōshū*, arguing that although some of its content is wrongly attributed to Kūkai the authenticity of specific entries such as the letter have been confirmed in other sources. See Takagi Shingen 高木諄元, *Kōbō daishi no shokan* 弘法大師の書簡 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1981), 39.

32. TKDZ 8.173. Gardiner translates this line along with the letter in Gardiner 1994, 244-248. The letter does not have a title, but has long been referred to by its opening line: "A letter addressed to those who may have cause to receive writings on the secret dharma treasury in thirty-five fascicles" (奉勸諸有緣衆應奉寫祕密法藏合三十五卷). *Kan'ensho* is an acronym formed from the first character in the opening statement (勸), the addressee of the letter (有緣) and the final character in the letter after identifying Kūkai as author (疏).

應化身之經是也。密藏者、法身如來之說是也。顯則以因果六度爲宗。是則菩薩行、隨他語方便門也。密則本有三密爲教。具說自證理。如義語真實說者也。

The teachings permeate the various forms, and the dharma imbues all minds. The capabilities of the confused and the awakened differ, and the response to them is not the same. Therefore, the response bodies and transformation bodies disperse and manifest according to the type of individual. The principle buddha and wisdom buddha abide in a state of bliss within the secret palace. The singular-vehicle and three vehicles differ in the way they guide sentient beings. In both the exoteric teachings and esoteric teachings, one realizes liberation in accordance with one's capabilities. The so-called exoteric teachings are the sutras of the reward, response, and transformation bodies. The secret treasury is the preaching of the dharmakāya tathāgata. The exoteric takes cause and effect and the six *pāramitās* as its doctrine. These are the practices of the bodhisattvas and the method of the skillful means expressed in accordance with the needs of others. The esoteric takes the original existence of three secret activities as its teaching. It exhaustively preaches the internally realized principle and the ultimate preaching of the meaning and speech of suchness.<sup>33</sup>

In this first half of the *Letter of Promulgation*, Kūkai expands upon his earlier definition of the esoteric teachings in the *Catalogue of Imported Items*. Abandoning the sudden versus gradual distinction through which he explains the esoteric teachings in his catalogue, in this passage he defines his school strictly in contrast to the exoteric teachings of the Mahāyāna schools. The exoteric teachings, he claims, promote the practice of the six perfections (charity, morality, forbearance, effort, meditation, and wisdom) and the use of skillful means to save sentient beings. The esoteric teachings, on the other hand, expound the practice of the three secret activities, which consist of mastering the body (mudra), speech (mantra), and mind (mandala) of the buddha. By emulating the buddha, this practice promises the adherent to the esoteric teachings a more rapid path to buddhahood. Furthermore, this passage in the letter distinguishes between the exoteric and esoteric in terms of the body of the buddha through which they are preached. The exoteric teachings are the numerous teachings expounded in the sutras by Śākyamuni Buddha or other buddhas and sagely beings. In contrast, the esoteric teachings, Kūkai declares, are directly preached by the dharma body.

Katsumata argues that the letter displays all the characteristics of Kūkai's view of the esoteric teaching. He outlines these characteristics in six points. First, in contrast to the exoteric teachings, which are expounded by the multifarious manifestations of the buddha, the esoteric teachings are preached directly by the dharma body. Second, in terms of praxis, the exoteric teachings consist of the six perfections and the bodhisattva path, whereas the esoteric teachings

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33. *TKDZ* 8.173-174. For alternative translations, see Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 308-310 and Gardiner 1994, 244-245.

promote the cultivation of the three secret activities. Third, the exoteric teachings are presented in a language that can be vocalized and understood by others, but the esoteric teachings are only expressed in one's own mind. Fourth, unlike interpretations of awakening in other schools, Kūkai's Shingon school maintains that it is possible to explain the path to buddhahood from the perspective of one who has already attained it, rather than enumerating the practices and stages required to reach this goal. Fifth, the esoteric teachings are an expression of the internally-realized bliss of the dharma (自受法樂) experienced at the moment of awakening. Finally, the sixth characteristic of Kūkai's esoteric teachings, according to Katsumata's definition, is the expediency in which these teachings permit one to attain buddhahood. Whereas the exoteric teachings require three great *kalpa* (阿僧祇劫) to realize this goal, cultivating the esoteric teachings will allow the practitioner to become a buddha in his current body.<sup>34</sup>

Katsumata bases this definition on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, which he considers to be the foundation of Kūkai's view of esoteric Buddhist doctrine. Arguing that all of these elements are present in Kūkai's *Letter of Promulgation*, he concludes that the letter must be an abbreviated form of the *Treatise*. Furthermore, both works refer to a "secret treasury," suggesting that Kūkai's intention for writing both works was to promote his collection of imported texts and his new doxographical category of "the vajra vehicle" (金剛乘).<sup>35</sup> According to Katsumata, these similarities suggest that both documents must have been composed around the same time. He admits that this date is just a guess, which is merely a side note to his broader study of Kūkai's works. However, this claim has since become central to the early-date theory for composition of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*.

Katsumata's hypothesis that Kūkai must have composed the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* at approximately the same time as the *Letter of Promulgation* is problematic for two reasons. First, it is a logical fallacy to presume that two compositions with similar content were necessarily produced in chronological proximity. Even if both works meet Katsumata's six-point definition of esoteric Buddhist doctrine, this does not explain why they were necessarily written at the same time. Could Kūkai, or someone else for that matter, not have written the *Treatise* at a much later date based on the definitions of the esoteric teachings proposed in the letter?

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34. See Katsumata 1970, 38-39. Gardiner summarizes these same points in Gardiner 1994, 17. Katsumata's claim that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was the foundation of Kūkai's doctrinal views is also based on this six point definition, which, of course, he derived from the *Treatise*. He then interprets the *Letter of Promulgation* through this definition of the esoteric teachings.

35. In his catalogue, Kūkai uses the term "vajra vehicle" to refer to the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and Amoghavajra's translations and commentaries on ritual manuals related to this text. Abé Ryūichi argues that this term denotes the doctrinal claim that the teachings recorded in these texts were preached by the dharma body and the Shingon lineage that supposedly traces back to Mahāvairocana. See Abé 1999, 182. However, Kūkai only uses this term as a doxographical category, not a doctrinal one. This use of the term "vajrayāna" should not be confused with the category of texts and teachings in Tibetan Buddhism. Rather it is simply an abbreviation for the title of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and related ritual texts, which usually include the term "vajra."

Moreover, how do we know that the secret treasury referenced in both works signifies Kūkai's intent to disseminate esoteric texts? He uses the same term in his catalogue. Why not assume he wrote the treatise in 806 instead of 815?

The second problem with this argument is that it relies on the claim that the *Treatise* and letter must have been written at the same time because their content is identical. Certainly, these two works have much in common. However, there are also some glaring differences in their descriptions of the esoteric teachings. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* opens by stating the esoteric teachings are preached by the dharma buddha, whereas the exoteric teachings are preached by response and transformation bodies of the buddha. Furthermore, the *Treatise* claims that the exoteric teachings are conditioned by the capabilities of sentient beings to receive them, but the esoteric teachings are the profound and ultimately true speech of the buddha.<sup>36</sup> The letter is not necessarily identical with this assertion in the opening of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. In the *Treatise*, Kūkai asserts that the secret treasury is the preaching of the dharma buddha, a term borrowed from Bodhiruci's translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, and later discusses the secret treasury in terms of the internal nature or internally obtained reward of becoming a buddha (自性・自受用佛), terminology taken from last fascicle of the *Treatise on Consciousness Only* (*Chengweishilun* 成唯識論).<sup>37</sup> The letter, however, discusses the body of the buddha occupying the "secret palace" in terms of principle and wisdom. This distinction between the principle and wisdom of the buddha was common parlance in buddha-body theory for explaining the essence of the buddha, which is hidden or secret from the unenlightened, and the wisdom of the buddha, which actively preaches the dharma.

Perhaps the most significant distinction between the letter and the *Treatise* is their references to the capabilities of the practitioner. As Ōyama points out in his article on the *Treatise*, the opening statement of the text presents a somewhat idiosyncratic view of this concept.<sup>38</sup> Kūkai states that the exoteric teachings expounded by the bodies of the buddha depend on the capabilities of the practitioner, whereas the esoteric teachings, or the "secret treasury," is the ultimate truth of the dharma as preached by the dharma buddha. Therefore, the esoteric teachings do not rely on the interaction or response to the needs of the individual; rather they exist independently. The *Treatise* also states that the preaching of the dharma body is inaccessible to the most advanced bodhisattvas unless they first cultivate the esoteric teachings.

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36. See *TKDZ* 3.74.

37. See Xuanzang's translation in *Taishō* 31.57c21-58a02.

38. See Ōyama 1986, 74. Katsumata does not mention the issue of capabilities in his six-part definition of esoteric Buddhist doctrine.



The letter, however, presents an orthodox Mahāyāna view of the dharma body, simply stating that it is only perceivable to those with the highest level of capability in which skillful means is no longer necessary for transmitting the teachings.

The argument that these two passages are similar is not controversial. They obviously make the same polemical assertion that the esoteric teachings are superior because they were preached by the dharma body. However, to base the dating of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* solely on the resemblance of the doctrinal claims in these passages is hardly conclusive evidence that they were composed around the same time. The similarity between the two passages does not exclude the possibility that the *Treatise* may have been written at a later date, or an earlier one for that matter, a theory that some have entertained.<sup>39</sup> There is no reason to assume that it could not have been composed much later than 815 or 821. In fact, this is exactly what the medieval commentaries on the *Treatise* suggest.

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#### The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as a Late Kūkai Work

The early-date theory for the composition of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* reflects a sectarian polemic that seeks to explain how Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* to clarify the distinction between the esoteric teachings he inherited from his Chinese master Huiguo and their superiority to the teachings of the Nara and Tendai schools. However, this polemic is by no means a modern invention.<sup>40</sup> Twentieth-century scholars have drawn on a long tradition of promoting the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as Kūkai's defining exposition of Shingon doctrine. In contrast to the current view that the *Treatise* represents Kūkai's early views on esoteric Buddhism, medieval scholastics

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39. In the summary to the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in the *TKDZ*, Matsunaga suggests that the text may have even predated the *Letter of Promulgation*. Similar to his argument regarding the dates of the transmission texts, he claims that the *Treatise* may have been written before the letter, because the shorter work summarized the longer text. See *TKDZ* 3.349.

40. Abé Ryūichi, in his study of Kūkai, calls the notion that Kūkai was the founder of a Shingon "school" a modern myth created by scholars to link the doctrines and practices of the contemporary Shingon sects with the teachings of Kūkai. Rather than the founder of a Buddhist sect, Abé argues that Kūkai intended to establish a new way of interpreting Buddhist texts that would doctrinally justify his ritual system. Abé's assessment of Kūkai's intentions may very well be correct. However, the image of Kūkai as the central intellectual figure of the Shingon school significantly predates the modern period. See Abé 1999, 8.

overwhelmingly believed it to be one of his later writings, linking it to Kūkai's works on taxonomies of teachings (教判).

The only reference work mentioning possible dates of composition for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is the *Mikkyō daijiten*. The entry on the *Treatise* refers to a "traditional" account of this older theory, which posits that Kūkai may have composed the text from 830 to 832. These dates, according to the editors of the dictionary, presuppose that the *Treatise* was written in response to an edict issued by Emperor Junna 淳和 (r. 824–833) requesting clarification on the doctrines of the six schools, the so-called *Tenchō chokusen roppon shūsho* 天長勅撰六本宗書.<sup>41</sup>

The Tenchō edict of 830 required each of the six Buddhist schools—Risshū, Sanron, Kegon, and Hossō in Nara plus the Tendai and Shingon schools—to provide detailed explanations of the teachings of their respective traditions.<sup>42</sup> For his part, Kūkai submitted his ten-fascicle magnum opus, the *Ten Abiding Minds*. Although this treatise does not include a date of composition, Kūkai confirmed in the opening verse that he wrote this work as a response to the emperor's request.<sup>43</sup> Because other submissions to the Tenchō edict include a date of 830, it is assumed that Kūkai wrote or submitted the *Ten Abiding Minds* around the same time. Therefore,

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41. The editors of the entry for the *Treatise* cite the first-fascicle of Yūkai's commentary, the *Nikyōron shō* 二教論鈔, as their source for these dates. However, Yūkai never clearly states that the *Treatise* was written in response to the Tenchō edict. Rather, he merely suggests that Kūkai wrote it as an esoteric Buddhist alternative to the Nara and Tendai schools. See *SZ* 12.149-150. Also, the dictionary entry does not provide a reason for restricting the latest possible date of completion to 832. See *MDJ* 1977b-1978a.

42. It is not clear why Emperor Junna's court made such a request. However, the polemical nature of these works suggests that they were written not only as a clarification of their own doctrines but were written as refutations of competing schools as well. For a detailed summary of this edict, see *MBDJ* 5.5077a-b. The six treatises replying to Junna's edict are as follows: 1. Buan 豐安, *Kairitsu denrai shūshi mondō* 戒律傳來宗旨問答, also called *Kairitsu denrai gi* (*Taishō* 74, no. 2347); 2. Gishin 義眞, *Tendai hokke shūgi shū* 天台法華宗義集 (*Taishō* 74, no. 2366), translated into French in Jean Noël Robert, *Les doctrines de l'école japonaise Tendai au début du IXe siècle: Gishin et le Hokke-shū gi shū* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1990) and into English in Paul L. Swanson, *The Collection Teachings of the Tendai Lotus School* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995); 3. Gomyō 護命, *Daijō hossō kenshin shō* 大乘法相研神章 (*Taishō* 71, no. 2309); 4. Fūki 普機, *Kegon ichijō kaishin ron* 華嚴宗一乘開心論 (*Taishō* 72, no. 2326); 5. Kūkai 空海, *Himitsu mandara jūjūshinron* 祕密曼荼羅十住心論; 6. Gen'ei 玄觀, *Daijō sanron daigi shō* 大乘三論大義鈔 (*Taishō* 70, no. 2296).

43. Kūkai writes, "His Majesty has benevolently decreed that I explain this secret interpretation." (奉天恩詔述祕義). See *Taishō* 77.303a12.

the "traditional" view noted in the *Mikkyō daijiten* suggested that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* should be paired with Kūkai's submission to the Tenchō edict, the *Ten Abiding Minds*, as a clarification of the Shingon teachings in relation to the other schools.<sup>44</sup>

In the preface to his Japanese reading of the text in the *Kokuyaku issai kyō*, Kamei Sōchū also discusses the theory that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* may have been written in close proximity to the *Ten Abiding Minds*. The logic behind this claim, he notes, is that the *Ten Abiding Minds* assumes that the reader is familiar with the general distinction between the exoteric teachings outlined in the first nine stages and the esoteric teachings of the final stage. However, this work does not explicitly define the difference between the exoteric teachings and Kūkai's category of the esoteric teaching. Therefore, this theory speculates (by whom Kamei does not say) that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was meant to supplement the longer *Ten Abiding Minds*, possibly as a companion text or written some time afterwards.<sup>45</sup>

### (i) Commentaries

The extensive commentarial tradition on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is unclear when exactly Kūkai wrote it, but most medieval scholastics seem to have thought the *Treatise* should be paired with the *Ten Abiding Minds*. For instance, Dōhan 道範 (1178–1252), a scholastic monk from Shōchiin on Mt. Kōya, began his commentary on the *Treatise* by situating Kūkai's distinction between the exoteric and esoteric teachings within the ten-part taxonomy of teachings in the *Ten Abiding Minds*. In response to the question, "What are the differences between the exoteric and esoteric teachings," he proposed a five-part interpretation of the title. The most basic inter-

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44. In his afterward to the study of Kūkai's *Ten Abiding Minds* in the first volume of *Kōbō daishi kūkai zenshū*, Miyazaka Yūshō briefly discusses the relation between the six works submitted in response to the Tenchō edict. He states that Gomyō, Buan, and Kūkai submitted their treatises in 830 and the remaining three were submitted sometime later. See Miyazaka Yūshō 宮坂宥勝, ed., *Kōbō daishi kūkai zenshū* 弘法大師空海全集, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1983), 739-740. However, this date of composition for the *Ten Abiding Minds* is not without controversy. Both Gomyō and Buan note their age or date of completion in their text, but no such evidence is present in Kūkai's treatise. Furthermore, as Yamakage Kazuo and Nakamura Hōnen point out in their summary of the *Teihon* edition of the *Ten Abiding Minds*, there is evidence that the submissions from Gen'ei and Gishin were completed six years earlier in 824. They suggest that Kūkai may have begun writing his text around this time as well. See *TKDZ* 2.351-355. However, considering the fact that the *Ten Abiding Minds* is incomplete (the final fascicle explaining Kūkai's own school ends abruptly), it is also possible that Kūkai wrote it later and was unable to finish the treatise before his death in 835.

45. See Kamei Sōchū 亀井宗忠, "Ben kenmitsu nikyō ron kaidai" 辯顯密二教論解題, in *Kokuyaku issai kyō, shoshū bu* 國譯一切經諸宗部, vol. 20, 341.

pretation, he noted, is that the lower nine stages of the *Ten Abiding Minds* constitute the exoteric teachings and only the tenth stage represents the esoteric teachings.<sup>46</sup>

This correlation between the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and Kūkai's taxonomical writings is consistent throughout Dōhan's commentary. One of the more controversial and peculiar passages in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is a long quote from the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* (*Shi moheyan lun* 釋摩訶衍論), an apocryphal commentary on the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (*Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論), itself an apocryphal treatise attributed to the second-century Indian scholiast Aśvaghōṣa. Following this obscure quote, Kūkai simply states:

喩曰。已上五重問答甚有深意。細心研覈乃能詣極。一一深義不能染紙、審而思之。

Explication: The above five-part question and response has profound intent. Examining it closely will guide you to the ultimate goal. Because it is impossible to put in writing the details of this profound meaning, you should examine and reflect on it.<sup>47</sup>

The *Treatise* offers no further explanation of this quote from the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* in the *Treatise*, which left later commentators such as Dōhan to ponder why Kūkai included it the first place. Dōhan presumed, as did every other commentator on the *Treatise*, that the content of the five questions and responses in the quotation signified the doctrines of the five Japanese schools—Sanron, Hossō, Kegon, Tendai, Shingon—as outlined in the last five stages of Kūkai's taxonomy. In other words, Dōhan interpreted this quote as a summary of fascicles six through ten of the *Ten Abiding Minds*, and the reason Kūkai included the long quotation in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was simply to cite it as a proof text for his taxonomy. Therefore, he concluded that it was unnecessary to reiterate the details of each of these stages of the taxonomy, because Kūkai had already done so in the ten-fascicle *Ten Abiding Minds*.<sup>48</sup>

Writing a generation later, the Mt. Negoro scholiastic monk Raiyu made a similar comparison of the two treatises, further asserting that they should be combined to form a com-

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46. Dōhan recorded that his commentary, the *Benkenmitsu nikyōron shukyō shō* 辨顯密二教論手鏡抄, was based on an oral transmission from his master Jōhen 靜遍 (1165–1223). See ZSZ 18.275.

47. See *Taishō* 77.375c23-25, or *TKDZ* 3.80. The quotation from the *Shi moheyan lun* can be found in *Taishō* 33.637b-c.

48. In the second half of the first fascicle to his commentary, Dōhan aligns each of the questions and responses in the quotation with the latter five stages in the *Ten Abiding Minds*. He also notes that Tendai scholiasts, namely Enchin and Annen, criticized Kūkai's taxonomy as a misinterpretation of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and Yixing's commentary, but he does not address these concerns. Rather, he refers to Jippan and Chōyō's commentaries on the *Ten Abiding Minds* in which they revise Kūkai's taxonomy to accommodate Tendai critiques. See ZSZ 12.288b-292a.

prehensive taxonomical system. In his commentary, he offered two ways of interpreting the distinction between the exoteric and esoteric teachings in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Similar to Dōhan's basic definition of this distinction, the first interpretation equates the exoteric teachings with the lower nine stages of Kūkai's ten-stage taxonomy and the esoteric teachings with the highest stage. This interpretation, he suggested, has the same purport as the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, which proclaims the esoteric teachings to be superior. The other interpretation, however, is closer to what Raiyu thought was the true meaning of the *Ten Abiding Minds*. He explained that in this interpretation, individuals at any stage in the taxonomy possess the seeds for realizing the esoteric teachings. Thus, all ten stages are essentially esoteric, depending on the circumstances in which the teachings are preached and the capability of the individual who receives them. If one reads the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* based on the definition of the ten stages in the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, then one will conclude that the esoteric teachings are superior to all other teachings. If read through the *Ten Abiding Minds*, which Raiyu seems to favor, the exoteric and esoteric teachings are ultimately the same.

Like Dōhan, Raiyu also addressed the issue of the five-part question and response quote from the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*. The interlocutor asks why the *Treatise* quotes this passage rather than explicate the specific differences between the five schools, to which Raiyu responds:

十住心論十住心既兼存顯密差別。今論顯密分別何廢諸乘淺深耶。依之下文以五重問答淺深證顯密差別矣。兼正隨宜不可局執耶。

The ten stages in the *Ten Abiding Minds* already made a distinction between the exoteric and esoteric teachings. Why would the distinction between the exoteric and esoteric teachings in this *Treatise* dispense with the shallows and depths of the various schools? Based on [the ten stages], the below passage [from the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*] examines the differences between the exoteric and esoteric teachings through a five-part question and response. Therefore, you should not interpret [this quote] in a narrow sense.<sup>49</sup>

Kūkai's ten-stage taxonomy dealt with what he considered to be the specific strengths and weaknesses of the doctrines of his rival schools. In his commentary, Raiyu suggests that it would be redundant to revisit these details in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and warns his interlocutor not to interpret the quotation only in the context of the *Treatise*, but states that it should be understood in relation to Kūkai's broader taxonomical project. In other words, Raiyu assumed that the *Treatise* was written after the *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, because the inexplicable quote from the *Interpretation of the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* only makes sense if interpreted through these longer treatises. Moreover, the definition of the

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49. SZ 12.3.

two teachings of the esoteric and exoteric in the title of the *Treatise* depends on which version of the taxonomy is applied to this dichotomy.

Following the precedents established by Dōhan and Raiyu, the correlation between Kūkai's taxonomy and the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* became a standard trope in later commentaries. In the preface to his commentary on the first fascicle of the *Treatise*, the Tōji monk Gōhō made a similar claim. However, he also noted a significant difference between these texts. He argued that while the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* explains the preaching of the dharma body as distinct from and superior to the preaching of Śākyamuni, the *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* were explications of the dharma body's preaching in ten distinct levels of gradation. Nonetheless, he claimed that together these works constitute the doctrinal basis of the Shingon school.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, the Mt. Kōya scholastic Yūkai 宥快 (1345–1416) further built on these precedents. Unlike taxonomies of teachings in other Mahāyāna schools that sought to situate the preaching of Śākyamuni Buddha over the course of his lifetime, he argued that the Shingon model did not attempt to rank these teachings. Rather, he claimed, the *Ten Abiding Minds* is a typology denoting the level at which each type of practitioner perceives the esoteric teachings. This hierarchy constitutes a vertical taxonomy in which the tenth level is the mind that perceives the esoteric teachings and the lower nine levels consist of those who are only aware of the exoteric teachings. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, on the other hand, presents a hermeneutic for distinguishing the esoteric from the exoteric teachings in each of the lower levels. In other words, Yūkai presumed that the exoteric versus esoteric paradigm was contingent on the taxonomy outlined in the *Ten Abiding Minds*. Similar to Raiyu, Yūkai posited two ways of interpreting this paradigm in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. The first ranks the ten stages according to their degree of esotericism. The other proposes that the exoteric and esoteric teachings can be distinguished within each stage of the taxonomy. Building on the earlier commentaries, Yūkai promoted what became known as the “vertical-horizontal twofold taxonomy” (横 豎 二 判) of the Shingon school.<sup>51</sup>

Admittedly, medieval commentators were less concerned about the chronology of Kūkai's writings than constructing a defense of the doctrinal claims in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Kūkai's taxonomy in the *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* were much more thorough treatments of the doctrines in the four Mahāyāna schools and how, according to Shingon scholastics, they failed to match up to Kūkai's Shingon school. Nonetheless, these interpretations are premised on the assumption that Kūkai composed the *Treatise on the Two Teach-*

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50. For Gōhō's commentary, the *Essay of Inquiries into the First Fascicle of the Treatise on the Two Teachings* (*Nikyōron jō kenkaku shō* 二教論上研覈抄), See ZSZ 18.327.

51. See Yūkai's commentary in SZ 12.149. Although Shingon scholars often attribute this hermeneutic to Kūkai, it is quite common in East Asian scholastic writings.

ings posterior to his taxonomical writings. As Dōhan suggested in his commentary, the axiom that the esoteric teachings of the Shingon school are superior to the exoteric teachings of other schools is mere polemics unless understood in the context of the ten-stage taxonomy. Raiyu's two-part hermeneutic on the exoteric versus esoteric dichotomy in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* reiterates this point by requiring one to be familiar with the version of the taxonomy from the *Ten Abiding Minds* or the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* in order to interpret the *Treatise*.<sup>52</sup>

## (ii) Criticism and Apologetics

Although these Shingon scholastics did not explicitly state their reasons for combining the model of the esoteric and exoteric teachings in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* with Kūkai's ten-stage taxonomy in the *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, they were most likely responding to Tendai critiques. Kūkai based his taxonomy on the title of the first chapter of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, the "Chapter on the Types of Minds for Entering the Mantra Gateway" (入眞言門住心品), which enumerates one hundred sixty types of mind that a sentient being might possess when beginning mantra practice. The sutra declares that each type of mind is defined by one's actions, which then determines rebirth.<sup>53</sup>

In the preface to the *Ten Abiding Minds*, however, Kūkai applies the term "abiding minds" to his taxonomy, stating:

又問。發趣菩提之時。心所住處相續次第幾種。佛具答之。故經初品名曰住心。今依此經顯眞言行者住心次第。顯密二教差別亦在此中住心雖無量。且舉十綱攝之衆

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52. In a recent article, Mukai Ryūken proposes that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was based on the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, both of which were written to further explain the *Ten Abiding Minds*. His reason for this assertion is that the *Ten Abiding Minds* supports a comparative taxonomy, whereas the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* proposes a contrastive typology that simply asserts the superiority of the esoteric teachings. The *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* view of the esoteric teachings is between these two, which leads Mukai to conclude that the *Ten Abiding Minds* was composed first, the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* second, and the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* afterwards. He also suggests that the *Treatise* may have been a response to Ennin's writings. See Mukai Ryūken 向井隆健, "Nikyōron seiritsu no jiki no suitei" 『二教論』成立の時期の推定 *Mikkyōgaku kenkyū* 42/3 (2010):24. Mukai's argument is the only that I am aware of that proposes the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* might be apocryphal. I am not convinced that there is a significant difference in how the *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* describe the stages of the taxonomy, nor is it clear that the *Treatise* responded to Ennin's writings. However, the end of the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* and the opening of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* are strikingly similar, so Mukai's sequence of these three works seems more probable than Katsumata's early date theory.

53. For this passage in the sutra, see *Taishō* 18.2c14-3a28.

毛。一異生羝羊住心、二愚童持齋住心、三嬰童無畏住心、四唯蘊無我住心、五拔業因種住心、六他緣大乘坐心、七覺心不生住心、八一道無爲住心、九極無自性住心、十祕密莊嚴住心。

Another question: When arousing [the mind] to attain awakening, through how many stages does the mind progress? [In the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*,] the buddha answered this question. Therefore, the first chapter of the sutra is called the "abiding minds." Now, based on this sutra, I will reveal the sequence of stages for the abiding minds of the mantra practitioner. Within the differentiation of the two teachings of the exoteric and esoteric, the [types] of abiding minds are innumerable. However, I will tentatively provide ten essential categories, which are included in the following: 1) the mind of the worldlying who abides like a goat, 2) the mind of a foolish child who abides by prohibitions, 3) the mind of a foolish child who abides without fear, 4) the mind that abides by the doctrines that only aggregates exist and there is no self, 5) the mind that abides to uproot the seeds of karma, 6) the mind that abides in the great vehicle that concerns others, 7) the mind that abides having awoken to the non-arising of the mind, 8) the mind that abides unconditioned on the singular path, 9) the mind that abides by the doctrine that ultimately there is no self-nature, 10) the mind that abides adorned with the secret [of the tathāgata].<sup>54</sup>

In this final line of the preface, Kūkai notes that the source for his taxonomy is the first chapter of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. The taxonomy plays on the trope of "abiding minds" to position the various teachings within a ten-level hierarchy. He clarifies that his reason for writing the *Ten Abiding Minds* was to systemize the types of minds listed in the sutra into ten fundamental categories that would account for all sentient beings. He also states that these minds are actually innumerable when distinguished in terms of the exoteric and esoteric teachings. However, it is unclear what he means by distinguishing between the two teachings. Are the lower nine stages exoteric and only the final stage esoteric, or does this statement imply that each stage can be interpreted in terms of the exoteric or esoteric teachings? The ambiguity of Kūkai's statement left

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54. *Taishō* 77.303c24-304a4 or *TKDZ* 2.8. Abé Ryūichi suggests that Kūkai's intention in writing the *Ten Abiding Minds* was not to present a new taxonomy for the Shingon school. Rather, Abé argues that Kūkai wrote it in response to the Tenchō edict as a political treatise meant to offer a new political order based on Buddhist cosmology in an attempt to overthrow the Confucian model of governance established by the Ritsuryō system. See Abé 1999, 326-329. This may in fact have been Kūkai's original motives for writing the *Ten Abiding Minds*. However, he failed to convey this message in the text or elsewhere, and the interpretative tradition, beginning with Tendai criticisms and continuing to present day scholarship, has always understood this work to be a taxonomy of teachings. Furthermore, if Abé's interpretation of this text is correct, one would have to disavow this passage in which Kūkai clearly states that he is writing the *Ten Abiding Minds* as a taxonomy of the categories for states of mind in which the practitioner abides while on the path to buddhahood.



open the question of whether the esoteric teachings occupied each of the ten stages or only the tenth stage.<sup>55</sup>

Although Kūkai did not explicitly differentiate between exoteric and esoteric teachings at each stage, Katsumata argues that references to "shallow" (淺) and "profound" (深) interpretations of these stages is sufficient evidence that Kūkai intended the exoteric versus esoteric hermeneutic to be applied to each level of the taxonomy. Therefore, the debate whether the nine lower stages were exoteric while only the tenth stage was esoteric (九顯一密) or the nine lower stages were both exoteric and esoteric (九顯十密) was merely an issue of terminology. According to Katsumata, saying that nine are exoteric and only one is esoteric, or nine are exoteric and all are esoteric essentially indicate the same concept.<sup>56</sup>

The version of the taxonomy in the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, however, does not make such a distinction in the nine lower stages. For this reason, Katsumata suggests, the allegation that Kūkai's taxonomy does not account for the esoteric teaching at each stage was probably a response to this shorter treatise rather than the *Ten Abiding Minds*. However, Katsumata also claims that the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* alludes to the distinction between the exoteric and esoteric in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. The final line in the sixth through ninth stages quotes the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*. This is the identical passage quoted in the *Treatise*, but divided among the four stages rather than a single block quotation. Like the quote in the *Treatise*, however, Kūkai does not explain this line or how it relates to these stages of abiding minds. According to Katsumata, Kūkai intended this version of the taxonomy in the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* to be interpreted through the hermeneutic of the exoteric versus esoteric distinction in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and cites the passages from the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* as guideposts referring the reader back to the earlier use of the text in the *Treatise*. In other words, Katsumata's claim that the *Treatise* predates the taxonomical

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55. Ōkubo Ryōshun briefly discusses the difference between Kūkai's model of the ten abiding minds and Tendai responses. Ōkubo argues that most scholars assume that the ten abiding mind taxonomy is based on Kūkai's *Ten Abiding Minds*, but actually medieval Shingon scholastics interpreted this model through Tendai critiques. Specifically, Kūkai never explained how the esoteric and exoteric teachings were distinctly different forms of Buddhism, but simply proposed in his taxonomy that the lower nine stages are exoteric and only the tenth stage is esoteric (九顯一密). Tendai, on the other hand, proposed that the lower stages were both exoteric and esoteric, depending on the capabilities of the practitioner at each stage, and the tenth stage was esoteric (九顯十密). See Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, "Shingonshū" 真言宗, in *Shin hasshū kōyō* 新八宗綱要, edited by Ōkubo Ryōshun (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001), 118-120.

56. Katsumata points out that in the third to ninth fascicles of the *Ten Abiding Minds* Kūkai states that there are both shallow and profound interpretations of each stage. However, in most cases he does not explain how these stages are esoteric. In the case of the eighth stage, which signifies the Tendai school, he merely cites a mantra for Avalokiteśvara as the profound interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. See Katsumata 1970, 207-210.

writings is exactly the opposite of Dōhan and Raiyu, who argue in their commentaries that the exoteric versus esoteric hermeneutic in the *Treatise* should be interpreted through the ten-stage taxonomy.<sup>57</sup>

Tendai scholastics in the generation following Kūkai clearly read his taxonomy as differentiating between the nine lower exoteric stages and the highest stage, which alone is esoteric. Enchin 圓珍 (814–891), who is thought to have been Kūkai's nephew, was the first to criticize the taxonomy of the ten abiding minds. He notes that the typology of minds listed in the first chapter of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* encompasses of all Buddhist teachings, including Hīnayāna. In the third fascicle of his commentary on the sutra, Yixing explains precisely how the sutra incorporates all other Buddhist teachings such as the Yogācāra notion of the eight consciousnesses, the teachings of Mahāyāna sutras such as the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* and *Prājñāpāramitā*, as well as the doctrines of buddha nature, the singular-vehicle, and the secret treasury of the tathāgata. The gateway of mantra (i.e. Shingon), he states, pervades all of these teachings, the only difference being a matter of degree. He later explains in the fifth fascicle that the sutras only differ in regards to their specific wording, but ultimately all words preached by the buddha are mantra.<sup>58</sup>

In his *Synopsis of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (*Daibirushana kyō shike* 大毘盧遮那經指歸), Enchin states that Kūkai's notion of the secret treasury of the tathāgata differs considerably from Yixing's use of this term in his analysis of the "Abiding Minds" chapter of the sutra. According to Enchin, Yixing's interpretation of the secret treasury of the tathāgata necessarily includes all Buddhist teachings. However, Kūkai excludes the doctrines of the Mahāyāna schools of Kegon, Tendai, Hossō, and Sanron from his category of the "mind that abides adorned with the secret of the tathāgata," which exclusively denotes his Shingon school. In particular, Enchin takes issue with Kūkai's diminutive ranking of the Tendai school and its primary sutras, the *Lotus Sūtra* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, at the eighth stage of his taxonomy, or the "the mind that abides unconditioned on the singular path." The problem with Kūkai's taxonomy, Enchin argues,

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57. See Katsumata 1970, 214-216. In each of these passages in the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, Kūkai fails to identify the source of the quote, simply attributing it to Nāgārjuna. Elsewhere in the text, he regularly cites the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*, which is also attributed to Nāgārjuna. However, his reference to the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* is deceptive, leaving the reader to think that he is citing the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*. Perhaps he neglects to cite his source text because the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* had been rejected by Saichō and the Nara establishment as apocryphal.

58. There are actually two versions of the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. The version of Yixing's commentary published in *Taishō* 39, no. 1796 arrived in Japan in the late eighth century, and was utilized by Kūkai and Saichō. Ennin later imported a second version, the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (*Piluzhena chengfo shenpian jiachi jing yishi* 毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經義釋, or *Darijing yishi* 大日經義釋), which is published in *ZTZm1*. Occasionally, doctrinal disputes between Tendai and Shingon scholiasts arise due to the differences in these two versions of the commentary. However, the passages noted above are identical. See *Taishō* 39.612b1-2 or *ZTZm1*.87b-88a. The latter passage is in the fifth fascicle of the *ZTZm1*, but the seventh fascicle of the *Taishō* version. See *Taishō* 39.656b19-24 or *ZTZm1*.198a.

is that it does not sufficiently explain why the lower nine stages are exclusively exoteric. According to Yixing's commentary, the canonical interpretation of the "abiding minds" trope, the singular path or singular-vehicle (一乘) of the *Lotus Sūtra* and the buddha nature doctrine of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* are equal to the secret treasury of the tathāgata.<sup>59</sup>

Writing around the same time or slightly after Enchin, Annen further criticized Kūkai's taxonomy of the ten-abiding minds. In his compendium on esoteric Buddhist doctrine, Annen highlights five major errors with Kūkai's claims. For the most part, he points out the same shortcomings in Kūkai's interpretation of the term "abiding minds" in the first chapter of the sutra and his lack of references to Yixing's commentary on this concept. Annen's main issue with Kūkai's taxonomy, however, is that Kūkai's summary of the taxonomies of the Sanron, Hossō, Kegon, and Tendai schools is, in his opinion, inaccurate. Annen claims that Kūkai simply labels these schools as "exoteric" interpretations of the buddha dharma and dismisses them as inferior to his Shingon school. Specifically, he asserts that Kūkai misinterprets Tendai doctrine by ranking it below Kegon. The hierarchy of these schools was particularly important for Annen's view that the esoteric teachings are identical to the perfect teachings in Tendai. Therefore, he argues that Yixing interprets the "secret treasury" to equal the singular-vehicle, which in terms of doxography means that the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* are both esoteric teachings. After listing his grievances at length, Annen blatantly accuses Kūkai of not understanding the specifics of the doctrines and taxonomies of teachings in the Mahāyāna schools.<sup>60</sup>

The reason the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* became such an essential text for medieval Shingon scholastics was that it served as a proof text for responding to criticism from Tendai scholiasts regarding the shortcomings of Kūkai's taxonomies. By applying the *Treatise* to address critiques of the *Ten Abiding Minds*, medieval commentators constructed an apologetic that defended Kūkai's taxonomy while giving him the final word in doctrinal disputes that arose in the decades after his death. Enchin and Annen criticized Kūkai for providing insufficient support for his taxonomy, noting that it often differs from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and its commentary. Annen in particular found Kūkai's treatment of the taxonomies in the Mahāyāna schools to be insufficient. Based on his interpretation of Yixing's commentary, the Tendai school could account for the esoteric teachings at the eighth stage. Later Shingon scholastics revised Kūkai's taxonomy

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59. See *DNBZ* 26.671-672. Like most works attributed to Enchin, there has long been a debate regarding the authenticity of the *Synopsis on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. However, Ōkubo argues that it is probably an early writing of Enchin. See Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, *Taimitsu kyōgaku no kenkyū* 台密教学の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2004), 132-136.

60. See Annen's *Interpretation of the Teachings and Time Periods in the Mantra School* (*Shingonshū kyōji gi* 眞言宗教時義, more commonly called the *Shingonshū kyōji mondō* 眞言宗教時間答) in *Taishō* 75.402b01-403c15. Annen's refutation of Kūkai's taxonomy is quite long, but he never completely rejects the ten-stages paradigm. He devotes most of this passage to arguing that Kūkai should have ranked Tendai at the ninth level rather than Kegon. According to Ōkubo, neither Enchin nor Annen were attempting to completely repudiate Kūkai's taxonomy. Rather, they had a problem with his interpretation (or lack thereof) of the Yixing's commentary. See Ōkubo 2001, 120.

to account for Annen's criticism.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, by bringing the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to bear on this issue, Shingon scholastics such as Raiyu argued that the taxonomy could be interpreted from both an exoteric and esoteric perspective. From the perspective of the exoteric teachings, the practitioner cultivated the teachings appropriate to a particular stage until gradually realizing the esoteric teachings. From the perspective of the esoteric practitioner, however, the lower nine stages as well as the three great *kalpa* supposedly required to transcend them are included in the tenth stage. In other words, medieval commentators tended to pair the *Treatise* with the taxonomical writings. Their reason for doing so was strictly polemical. Nonetheless, in lieu of any historical data on the composition of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, the proposition that it was composed as a companion to the *Ten Abiding Minds* should be considered a possibility.<sup>62</sup>

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### The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as a Response to Sectarian Debate

Another theory regarding the date of composition of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* proposes that Kūkai may have written it as a direct response to doctrinal debates between Buddhist institutions in Nara, particularly the Hossō school, and Saichō's Tendai school on Mt. Hiei. Nasu Seiryū was one of the first modern scholars to promote this theory, suggesting in the preface to his study of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* that Kūkai composed the *Treatise* following a series of exchanges between the the Hossō scholiasts Tokuitsu and Gomyō 護命 (750–834) and

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61. For instance, Chōyo 重譽・朝譽 (d. 1143) revised Kūkai's ten-stage taxonomy in response to Enchin and Annen's criticisms, expanding the definition of the esoteric teachings to include the eight and ninth stages. For a study of Chōyo's view of the ten-abiding minds taxonomy and Annen's influence on his view of esoteric Buddhist doctrine, see Tado Taichi 田戸大智, "Chōyo ni okeru kikon no mondai" 重誉における機根の問題, *Kansei bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 感性文化研究所紀要 7 (2012):15-44.

62. Raiyu proposes this theory in a comment on the passage from the preface to the *Ten Abiding Minds* in his sub-commentary on Yixing's *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, the *Compendium on the Heart of the Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (*Dainichi kyōsho shishin shō* 大日經疏指心鈔). See *Taishō* 59.731b14-25.

Saichō. Presuming the monks in these schools to be Kūkai's intended audience, Nasu concludes that Kūkai likely would have written the *Treatise* after the earliest of these debates began in 817 and before Saichō's death in 822.<sup>63</sup>

Saichō engaged in a debate with the Hossō school on two fronts. In a protracted exchange with Tokuitsu, he advocated for the Tendai taxonomy of teachings and systems of practice based on the writings of the Tiantai patriarchs Zhiyi and Zhanran 湛然 (711–782) as well as the authority of the *Lotus Sūtra*, while criticizing Hossō doctrine and texts. On the other front, he was attacked by Gomyō for his petition to create a new initiation platform on Mt. Hiei. Responding to this opposition occupied the majority of Saichō's time in his final years. However, Shingon commentators on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, for reasons that are unclear and historically specious, seem to have believed that Kūkai was involved in these debates, or at least his *Treatise* was a response to the exchanges between the two Hossō monks and Saichō.<sup>64</sup>

### (i) "An Old Record"

The most emphatic assertion of this sectarian narrative of the *Treatise* and Kūkai's role in such debates can be traced to the writings of the Mt. Kōya scholar-priest Yūkai, who provided a brief comment on the background to the *Treatise* in the preface to his thirty-fascicle commentary. Yūkai writes:

舊記中南北二宗論時、大師作二教論也。護命見此釋哭見。然者彼宗論因有御製作歟云云。

According to an old record, the Great Master wrote the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* during the debates among the southern and northern schools. It has been reported that

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63. Saichō first responded to Tokuitsu in 817, but did not write a retort to Gomyō until 820. Nasu does not clarify why Kūkai could not have composed his treatise after Saichō's death or have received notice of these debates prior to the written account. See Nasu Seiryū 那須政隆, *Benkenmitsu nikyō ron no kaisetsu* 『辨顯密二教論』の解説 (Tokyo: Chūō Koron, 1987), 9-10. For details on Gomyō's life and works, see Paul Groner, *Saichō: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press), 72.

64. For an overview of Saichō's debates with Tokuitsu and Gomyō, see Groner 1980, 91-101 and 146-149, respectively.

Gomyō wept when he saw this *Treatise*. So it is with this *Treatise* that our school was established.<sup>65</sup>

The claim that Gomyō, a prominent scholar monk in the Hossō school, was so overwhelmed by the brilliance of Kūkai's *Treatise* that he burst into tears should be read as a hyperbolic statement declaring the supremacy of the Shingon school rather than historical fact. There are no records that Gomyō ever read or responded to the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, nor does the *Treatise* ever state that the Nara priesthood was his intended audience. Nonetheless, Yūkai depicts Gomyō as a dejected Nara monk who upon receiving Kūkai's explication of the esoteric teachings realized that all of his scholastic training had been in vain. His purpose in recounting this tale is clearly apologetic, implying that Kūkai's explanation of the esoteric teachings in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* marked the beginning of the Shingon school and its doctrinal triumph over its exoteric counterparts in Nara and on Mt. Hiei.

Yūkai does not offer a source for this story, but simply attributes it to an "old record" (舊記). In a short article on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, Matsuzaki Keisui surmises that Yūkai may have been referring to a passage in a biography of Saichō, which states that Saichō participated in a doctrinal debate with other scholar monks in the first month of 814 (弘仁 5). Following the debate, participants were encouraged to document their views in writing. Matsuzaki concludes that Yūkai cites this event as a possible catalysis for Kūkai to write the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. However, the passage in the biography makes no mention of Kūkai, only that Saichō was summoned to the palace along with other monks to discuss the "essentials of the dharma explained in the treatises" (俱令對論法要). Furthermore, the passage does not refer to Gomyō, nor any other participants by name. Ninchū 仁忠 (active 824), Saichō's disciple and author of the biography, clearly notes that this event was attended by both monastics and laity, suggesting that it was a large public assembly rather than specific doctrinal dispute among Saichō, Gomyō, and Kūkai.<sup>66</sup>

A more likely candidate for this "old record" is a passage in the earliest commentary on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, an *Essay Reflecting the Treatise Distinguishing the Two*

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65. This passage is from Yūkai's thirty-fascicle commentary, the *Nikyōron shō* 二教論鈔. See SZ 12.149-150. In his other commentary on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, the *Nikyōron kōkoku shō* 二教論興國鈔, Yūkai elaborates on this story, offering two possible interpretations. First, he notes that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* in opposition to the other seven schools (the six schools based in Nara and the Tendai school to the north). The second interpretation states that the northern and southern schools may refer to the Faxiang and Sanlun schools in Tang China, Faxiang denoting the northern school and Sanlun the southern, and their intellectual descendants in Japan, the Hossō and Sanron schools in Nara. In either case, Yūkai's point is that Kūkai's *Treatise on the Two Teachings* superseded the doctrines of the other schools, rendering them inferior forms of the buddha dharma. See SZ 12.397.

66. See Matsuzaki Keisui 松崎惠水, *Heian mikkyō no kenkyū—Kōgyō daishi kakuban wo chūshin toshite—平安密教の研究—興教大師覚鑿を中心として—* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2002), 104-105. For the original passage, see the appended texts in *DDZ* 5.29-30.

*Teachings of Exoteric and Esoteric (Benkenmitsu nikyōron kenkyō shō* 辨顯密二教論縣鏡抄 hereafter, an *Essay Reflecting the Treatise*).<sup>67</sup> Like subsequent commentators, the author, Ninnaji scholar-monk Saisen, was uncertain when or why Kūkai wrote the *Treatise*. However, he seems to have assumed, just as Yūkai does in the above quotation, that it was written as a response to sectarian debates.

Saisen was primarily concerned with outlining the structure of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and identifying its references, but occasionally his comments provide clues regarding a possible date and motivation for its composition. The main section of the *Treatise* was structured according to quotations from various treatises and commentaries. Following these quotes, the *Treatise* occasionally provides a brief explication of the passage. In some cases, it argues against the claims made in the quote, and in other cases it cites such sources to support the doctrinal assertions in the text. In a few instances, such as the aforementioned five-part question and response from the *Interpretation of the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, the analysis of the passage is insubstantial. Toward the end of the first fascicle, the *Treatise* cites a second passage from the apocryphal treatise on the *Awakening of Faith*, and again provides no analysis of this lengthy citation. Rather, this comment merely entreats the reader to carefully consider the profound meaning of this text, asserting that it will "acutely dispel the illusions of those wise individuals of the exoteric teachings" (顯教智者詳而解迷).<sup>68</sup>

In his commentary, Saisen breaks from his line-by-line exegesis to speculate to whom these "wise individuals of the exoteric teachings" may have referred. He indicates two possibilities. First, he suggests that Kūkai may have been referring to the debate between Saichō and Gomyō regarding precepts, citing a passage from Saichō's *Treatise Revealing the Precepts (Kenkairon* 顯戒論) as evidence.<sup>69</sup> In the opening summary of his text, Saichō attaches a memorial submitted to the court on the fifth month of 819 (弘仁 10) by Gomyō on behalf of the Office

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67. The *Bussho kaisetsu* lists another commentary on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* attributed to Saisen, but it appears not to be extant. See the index to the *BKJ* 9.278. The *Taishō* attributes another work, *Questions and Responses on the Distinction between the Exoteric and Esoteric (Kenmitsu shabetsu mondō* 顯密差別問答), to Saisen in *Taishō* 77, no. 2435. However, as Horiuchi Noriyuki points out, this work was probably written a generation later by a monk from Hōshōbō named Kyōjin 教尋 (d. 1141). See Horiuchi Noriyuki 堀内規之, "Kenmitsu shabetsu mondō to Kenmitsu shabetsu mondō shō" 『顯密差別問答』と『顯密差別問答鈔』について, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 50/2 (2002):546-549. Although it is often listed among commentaries on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, the *Questions and Responses on the Distinction between the Exoteric and Esoteric* actually does not refer to the *Treatise*, but is a series of questions and responses regarding Kūkai's taxonomy in the *Ten Abiding Minds*.

68. See *Taishō* 77.378b8-9, or *TKDZ* 3.93. For the original passage from the *Interpretation of the Awakening of the Faith in the Mahāyāna*, see *Taishō* 32.605c25-606b9. For an English translation, See Giebel 2004, 39-41.

69. Saisen's commentary refers to this document as *Kenshikiron* 顯識論, but this is clearly an error. The partial quote references Gomyō's memorial in Saichō's treatise and the content is unrelated to Paramārtha's partial translation of the *Vidyānirdeśa-śāstra*, which is referred to by this same title of *Xianshilun* in *Taishō* 31, no. 1618.

of Monastic Affairs. As the current head of the office responsible for overseeing the ordination of monks, Gomyō was infuriated with Saichō for having circumvented his authority by directly petitioning the court to establish an independent platform on Mt. Hiei for conferring the bodhisattva precepts. In the memorial, Gomyō recounts the eastern flow of Buddhism from India to China and finally to Japan, emphasizing that throughout this history Buddhism has always worked closely with the state to spread the buddha dharma and that maintaining the four-fold Dharmagupta Vinaya was essential to preserving this tradition. Moreover, he sardonically notes that Saichō never made it to the capital Chang'an during his visit to China, suggesting that his lineage and training in the vinaya were divergent from the normative Buddhist tradition. Therefore, Gomyō concludes, Saichō should not be permitted to establish his own ordination platform in Japan. In response, Saichō's interlinear comments emphasize his credentials and attempt to give credence to the bodhisattva precepts as best suited for Mahāyāna Buddhism, asserting that Gomyō was ignorant of the multiple lineages and styles of ordination available in China.<sup>70</sup>

In his *Essay Reflecting the Treatise*, however, Saisen does not take up this debate over precepts. Rather, his purpose for citing this episode was to highlight what neither Saichō nor Gomyō mention in their hostile exchange over lineage and the authenticity of the precepts, namely the doctrines of becoming a buddha in this very body and the preaching of the dharma body of the buddha. He writes:

而如法相明近等者、唯許一分有佛性衆生之成佛義、而不許一切衆生皆成佛教義也。人執三祇廣劫成佛及應化身說法義、而不許即身成佛義及法身說法義也。...而此等明德皆不受真言宗所立即身成佛等深義也。

For those adhering to the Hossō explanation, they only account for one component of buddha-nature in their interpretation of buddhahood for sentient beings. They do not account for the interpretation that all sentient beings become buddhas.<sup>71</sup> [The Hossō school stipulates that] a person requires three great *kalpa* to become a buddha and that this is the preaching of the response and transformation bodies. They do not allow for the interpretation of becoming a buddha in this very body and the doctrine of the preaching of the dharma body...These schools, like the luminous virtuous ones,<sup>72</sup> did not receive the

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70. For Saichō's response to Gomyō, see *Taishō* 74.590a28-591a7 or *DDZ* 1.33-39.

71. Saisen is probably referring to the doctrine of the five natures (五性・姓) in the Hossō school. The doctrine of the five natures is a Yogācāra concept stipulating that sentient beings are endowed with one of five fixed natures (定性): that of a bodhisattva, a pratyekabuddha, a śrāvaka, that which is indeterminate among these three vehicles, and those who lack the capability of obtaining buddhahood (Skt. *icchantika*). In Japan, the doctrine of five natures was commonly used as shorthand for the Hossō school. See *RB* 312b-c.

72. The referent of this term is unclear, but Saisen is probably referring to Kumārajīva, Xuanzang, and the other Chinese translators mentioned in Gomyō's memorial petition. His point, reflecting a similar claim in the *Treatise*, is that Chinese Buddhists did not accurately understand the buddha dharma until Vajrabodhi and Śubhakarasiṃha translated the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*.



profound interpretation of becoming a buddha in this very body established by the Shingon school.<sup>73</sup>

Saisen presents Gomyō's memorial, a blistering attack on Saichō's petition to establish a new precept system, as evidence that Hossō and the other Nara schools could not account for the doctrine of 'becoming a buddha in this very body' and the accompanying doctrine of the 'preaching of the dharma body', concluding that the elite scholiasts who signed the memorial must not have been familiar with the Shingon position on these doctrines.

Like Yūkai's brief comments on the origin of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, Saisen proposes that Kūkai composed this work as a response to the Nara schools, specifically the Hossō claim that three *kalpa* of practice are required to obtain buddhahood. They both note that Gomyō and the other Nara intellectuals were not familiar with the esoteric teachings when they responded to Saichō. If he were familiar with the esoteric teachings, why would Gomyō not mention them? Moreover, why would Saichō not bring up these doctrines in his retort? The sectarian narrative of Kūkai's writings stipulates that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* superseded these debates, and, therefore, relegated the doctrines of the Nara and Tendai schools to an inferior position in the esoteric versus exoteric teachings taxonomy.<sup>74</sup>

## (ii) "Those Wise Individuals of the Exoteric Teachings"

Considering this premise that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* as a response to these debates, which occurred over the two years before Saichō finished compiling his record in 820, Kūkai would have had to have composed it sometime after this date. This date resonates with the traditional view noted in the *Mikkyō daijiten*. The editors' reference to a "traditional view" of the *Treatise*'s composition probably denotes Yūkai's description of Gomyō's weeping reaction to receiving Kūkai's text. In other words, the editors of the dictionary appear to have interpreted Yūkai's suggestion that Kūkai composed the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as a response to debates between the northern and southern schools as a reference to the Tenchō edict of 830.

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73. *Taishō* 77.457b08-c02. I have omitted a line in this above passage in which Saisen simply repeats the same comment regarding Sanron.

74. Although Saichō was familiar with the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and Yixing's commentary as well as initiated into several esoteric practices, he did not discuss these doctrines in his writings. Saichō devised his own theory of rapid buddhahood. For a study of Tendai theories on 'becoming a buddha in this very body' see Paul Groner, "Shortening the Path: Early Tendai Interpretations of the Realization of Buddhahood with This Very Body (*Sokushin Jōbutsu*)," in *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*, eds. Robert E. Buswell and Robert M. Gimello (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), 439–473.

Saisen may have had this edict in mind when citing Gomyō's memorial, considering the fact that Gomyō submitted the Hossō response to the edict. Buan 豐安 (d. 840), another elite Nara monk who signed Gomyō's memorial, penned the Risshū response. In fact, as Moriyama Shōshin first pointed out in his study of Kūkai biographies, the pre-modern Shingon school traditionally considered Kūkai to have been quite close with these Nara monks. One theory posits that Kūkai received the tonsure from the Sanron monk Gonsō 勤操 (758–827), whose name also appears on Gomyō's memorial along with another Hossō member of the Office of Monastic Affairs, Shuen 修圓 (d. 835).<sup>75</sup>

Saisen may have been thinking of the doctrinal treatises of the six schools when arguing that the Nara schools did not account for the doctrines of becoming a buddha in this very body or the preaching of the dharma body. None of the works included in the imperial collection directly address these concepts, including Kūkai's submission, the *Ten Abiding Minds*. Therefore, the debate narrative suggests that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was a companion text to Kūkai's other major treatise dealing with taxonomies of teachings, all of which he wrote in response to debates with Saichō and elite Nara monks.<sup>76</sup>

Moriyama also mentions a theory contending that the doctrinal treatises of the six schools were actually composed after a series of formal debates.<sup>77</sup> If this were the case, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* could have been a byproduct of this exchange. Moriyama does not identify a source for this theory. However, commentaries on the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* may provide a clue to why the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was associated with the sectarian debates between Saichō and Gomyō. In the preface to his commentary, *Exegesis of the Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* (*Hizōhōyaku kanchū* 祕藏寶鑰勘註), Raiyu alludes to a story that

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75. Moriyama also notes that this theory contends that Kūkai learned the *Kokuzō monjihō* 虚空藏聞持法, a practice consisting of one million recitations of a mantra for the bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha, from Gonsō. See Moriyama Shōshin 守山聖眞, *Bunkashijō yori mitaru kōbō daishi den* 文化史上より見たる弘法大師傳 (Tokyo: Buzanha Kōbō Daishi Issen-hyakunen Goonki Jimukyoku, 1933), 431-436. Gonsō and Kūkai met again after the latter returned from China; in 816, Kūkai conducted *abhiṣeka* rites for Gonsō and his disciples. Abé briefly discusses this event in Abé 1999, 45. Gonsō was also one of the few Nara monks who had a cordial relationship with Saichō. Although he was supposed to sign Gomyō's memorial, he was actually not present when the document was submitted. See Groner 1980, 148 and 35.

76. Fujii Jun argues that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* addresses doctrinal issues in Hossō and Sanron that were posed in Gomyō and Gen'ei's treatises. If this is the case, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* would have to have been written after these texts. See Fujii Jun 藤井淳, *Kūkai no shisō teki tenkai no kenkyū* 空海の思想的展開の研究 (Tokyo: Transview, 2008), 206-208. However, it is not clear that the *Treatise* necessarily refers to these works.

77. Moriyama states that this theory possibly stemmed from a letter sent to China by Kūkai's disciple Jichie 實慧 (786-847). He does not clarify to which letter he is referring, but he probably means Jichie's obituary for Kūkai. A line noting that Kūkai encountered much resistance from the other schools of Buddhism in Japan is a likely candidate for the earliest reference to such debates. See Moriyama 1933, 607-608. Abé discusses Jichie's letter, calling it the first biography of Kūkai. See Abé 1999, 41-42.

claims the doctrinal tracts associated with the Tenchō edict actually had their beginnings in the previous era. According to this legend, Emperor Junna's predecessor and half-brother Emperor Saga 嵯峨 (r. 810–824), ordered representatives from the five scholastic schools to gather at the palace and debate the merits of their schools' doctrines.<sup>78</sup>

Although brief, Raiyu's description of a gathering of these renowned Buddhist intellectuals, all of whom later penned treatises defining the doctrines of their respective schools, suggests that such an exchange may have taken place prior to the Tenchō edict of 830. A more detailed version of this story appears in the preface to another commentary on the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*. Shōjuku 政祝 (active 1434), a monk from Hōshōin in present-day Nagoya, writes that after Kūkai returned from China he wrote the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body*. Because the other schools were skeptical of Kūkai's claims in this work, Emperor Saga invited them to the palace in 810 to debate this topic. Gomyō, Gen'ei, Gishin, Fūki, and Kūkai took turns lecturing on the doctrines of their respective schools, and, according to Shōjuku, each lecture was followed by auspicious signs. Having directly benefited from the merit of these teachings, the emperor ordered that the doctrines of each the five schools be put in writing.<sup>79</sup>

Writing a generation prior to Shōjuku, Yūkai documents a similar origin story for Kūkai's taxonomical writings in his commentary on the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, stating that they were the result of sectarian debates at the palace during the reign of Emperor Saga. However, he rejects this early date, stating that Gomyō, who provided the only precise date of composition for his work, mentions nothing about such debates and clearly identifies the Tenchō edict of 830 as the catalyst for producing these texts. It is safe to assume, Yūkai asserts, that the other texts, including *Kūkai's Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, were written around the same time.<sup>80</sup>

Although the debate narrative might explain why these six Buddhist intellectuals from the early ninth century each wrote doctrinal treatises, it is difficult if not impossible to verify. First, there are no official records that Emperor Junna or Saga ever issued such an edict. Their biographies never mention them, nor do any historical records. Second, Buddhist histories and biographies of these individuals are often in conflict regarding the details of when and why the texts

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78. Raiyu does not identify the source of this story by name, simply stating that it was passed down from "a virtuous one of the past" (古徳). See SZ 11.69.

79. See Shōjuku's commentary, *Personal Records on the Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* (*Hizōhōyaku shiki* 秘藏寶鑰私記) in SZ 11.265. He refers to the same story in the preface to his commentary on the *Ten Abiding Minds*, the *Jūjūshinron shiki* 十住心論私記. See ZSZ 12.3. In an Edo-period version of this story, Shūō 秀翁 states that these six works were the culmination of multiple debates. He claims that the heads of the schools gathered first in 809 at the request of Emperor Heizei, again for Saga in 824, and finally presented their doctrinal disputes in writing to Junna in 833. However, he does not provide a source for this information. See ZSZ 13.2-4.

80. For Yūkai's discussion of this story in his commentary, *Hizō hōyaku shō* 秘藏寶鑰鈔, see ZSZ 19.3-5.

were written. Third, the primary sources for the Tenchō edict story are the prefaces to the works themselves. In both the *Ten Abiding Minds* and the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, Kūkai states that he wrote these works at the request of the emperor. Gishin also hints that he wrote his text on Tendai doctrine in response to an official request and notes that this request occurred in the Tenchō era. Gen'ei notes at the end of his preface that he wrote his text on Sanron upon official request. Gomyō states that he wrote his text at the age of 80 (he was born in 750) in response to an imperial decree.<sup>81</sup>

Despite the sparse evidence for the Tenchō edict account, the early twentieth-century scholar Shimaji Daitō concluded that the texts were probably written at different times in the 820s to 830s, rather than on a specific date. Although unspecific, these sources suggest that these texts were written in response to some kind of official edict. Whether it was issued by Emperor Junna or not is questionable. Regarding the motivations of such an edict, Shimaji agrees with Yūkai and dismisses the story in Raiyu and Shōjuku's commentaries as a post-Kūkai sectarian polemic. The fact that there were several versions of the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* suggests that there was a variation of interpretations of this concept in the generations following Kūkai. By devising a story that identifies Kūkai as the rightful author of the authentic version, later Shingon apologists could claim both doctrinal and political authority over this concept.<sup>82</sup>

Shimaji also points out that the earliest source of the Tenchō edict story is a note in a seventeenth-century catalogue indicating that Saisen listed five of the Tenchō works (like Raiyu and Shōjuku, he does not include Buan's text) and notes that they were written in response to an edict in the Tenchō era requesting that the leading monks of the major schools compose treatises of their essential doctrines. If Saisen was responsible for perpetuating the claim that these works were products of the Tenchō edict, he may have also speculated that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was a byproduct of the same doctrinal disputes. The fact that the historical sources cannot even account for the composition of the Tenchō edict documents leaves open the possibility that the *Treatise* was also a product of such exchanges between the different schools, or a later work written in support of Kūkai's taxonomy in the *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*.

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81. For instance, in his *The Continuation and Origin of the Transmission of the Buddha's Teaching in the Three Countries* (*San koku buppō denzū enki* 三國佛法傳通緣起), Gyōnen 凝然 (1240–1321) states that Gen'ei, Buan, and Gishin wrote their treatises in response to the Tenchō edict, but does not mention the edict in the biographies for Kūkai, Gomyō, and Fūki. In the *Account of the Śākya from the Genkō Era* (*Genkō shakusho* 元亨釋書), Kokan Shiren 虎關師鍊 (1276–1346) only refers to Gomyō, Kūkai, and Gishin's texts as responses to the Tenchō edict. In his *Biographies of Eminent Monks in Japan* (*Honchō kōsō den* 本朝高僧傳), Mangen Shibān 卍元師蠻 (1626–1710) does not mention Fūki and Buan's texts. Shimaji discusses these sources in Shimaji Daitō 島地大等, *Kyōri to shiron* 教理と史論 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1931), 417–422.

82. See Shimaji 1931, 424.

In addition to a clarification of the esoteric teachings in contrast to the exoteric teachings of the Nara and Tendai schools, Saisen also suggests that the "wise individuals of the exoteric teachings" may refer to Tokuitsu. Unlike Gomyō and the other scholiasts referenced in the legend of Kūkai's sectarian debates, Tokuitsu spent most of his career in the provinces. He notoriously engaged in an ongoing dispute with Saichō beginning in 817 regarding the validity of the doctrines of the Tendai school. Although few of his works survive, it is thought that he authored numerous commentaries and writings on doctrine while living away from the capital. This productivity has led many scholars to believe that he must have been in correspondence with Kūkai as well.<sup>83</sup> In particular, scholars have proposed that many of Kūkai's works such as the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body*, the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text, and the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* were perhaps a direct response to Tokuitsu's *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School* (*Shingonshū miketsu mon* 眞言宗未決文), a critical essay outlining eleven faults with textual sources for the Shingon School.

The relationship between Kūkai's *Treatise* and Tokuitsu's critical essay is the subject of one of the more contentious debates among scholars of early medieval Buddhism. This scholarship is divided mainly along sectarian lines. Tendai scholars tend to support the claim that Tokuitsu wrote his essay as a final retort to Saichō, perhaps after his death in 822.<sup>84</sup> The prevalent view among Shingon scholars had long been that Kūkai did not address the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to any particular recipient, but wrote it to explain the doctrinal basis of his new school. Recently, however, scholars have suggested that Kūkai may have composed the *Treatise* as a response to Tokuitsu, who in his essay *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School* questioned extra-canonical treatises and commentaries that were foundational to the development of the Shingon school. Although scholars have previously entertained the possibility that the *Treatise* was a reply to Tokuitsu, it has only recently become an established view in Kūkai Studies.<sup>85</sup>

For instance, Abé Ryūichi proposes that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in response to the ninth inquiry in Tokuitsu's essay. In this passage, Tokuitsu is critical of a passage in Yixing's commentary regarding the nature of the dharma body of the buddha.

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83. Based on the tone and formality of a letter from Kūkai addressed to Tokuitsu, Takagi Shingen concludes that the two men maintained a respectful correspondence. This letter was supposedly sent with the *Letter of Promulgation*. See Takagi 1981, 40-44.

84. Shimaji was probably the first Tendai scholar to propose that Tokuitsu wrote his essay as a response to Saichō. See Shimaji 1931, 206. Sueki Fumihiko discusses this scholarship in Sueki 1995, 90.

85. Moriyama was probably the first Shingon scholar to make this claim. See Moriyama 1931, 459. Katsumata 1970, 146-147 and Matsunaga 1978, 7 later reiterate this point.

According to Abé, Tokuitsu posed this question as well as the other ten after receiving Kūkai's *Letter of Promulgation*. The *Treatise*, therefore, was a response to Tokuitsu's question regarding references to bodies of the buddha in the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*.<sup>86</sup>

This compelling narrative presents an exchange between two renowned Buddhist intellectuals regarding doctrinal issues such as the expediency of buddhahood and the nature of the dharma body. However, in his commentary on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as well as his retort to Tokuitsu's essay, Saisen never mentions such an exchange, nor does he make a direct correlation between these works. Rather than an inquiry into esoteric Buddhist doctrine, *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School* was primarily a critique of passages in two treatises that were seminal to Kūkai's view of esoteric Buddhism: the *Treatise on Giving Rise to Anuttarā-samyak-sambodhicitta through the Vajrasekhara Yoga* (*Jingangding yujia zhong fa anouduoluo sanmiaosanputi xin lun* 金剛頂瑜伽中發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心論, hereafter *Treatise on Bodhicitta*) and Yixing's *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*.<sup>87</sup>

Saisen quotes Tokuitsu's third inquiry regarding the concept of becoming a buddha in this very body. In this passage, Tokuitsu is critical of the claim in the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* declaring that the mantra practitioner can leap from the lowly stages of worldlings (凡位) to become a buddha without completing the bodhisattva path. Questioning the attribution of this treatise to Nāgārjuna, Tokuitsu dismisses it as apocryphal and, thereby, casting doubt on the claim that the practitioner of mantra can in fact become a buddha in his current body without fully cultivating the stages of the bodhisattva path.<sup>88</sup>

After quoting Tokuitsu's critical essay, Saisen simply suggests that the "wise individuals of the exoteric teachings" may have been a general reference to scholastics such as Tokuitsu who did not accept the legitimacy of Kūkai's new doxographical category of esoteric texts. For this reason, Saisen suggests that Kūkai may have composed the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* "as a new medicine" to "cure the old diseases" of doubt in the supremacy of the esoteric teachings.<sup>89</sup> In other words, Saisen's reference to Tokuitsu was polemical rather than an historical claim to the interaction of these two early ninth-century intellectuals. There is no evidence that Kūkai ever responded to Tokuitsu's essay, nor does Tokuitsu directly address Kūkai's definition of the

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86. See Abé 1999, 204-213.

87. Traditionally attributed to Nāgārjuna, the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* was translated by Amoghavajra and introduced to Japan by Kūkai. It is published in *Taishō* 32, no. 1665.

88. For Tokuitsu's critique of the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*, see *Taishō* 77.863c.4-6.

89. This line regarding "new medicine" to "cure the old diseases" is from the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, which denotes the biography for Amoghavajra in the transmission texts. In the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, Kūkai constructs an historical narrative of the esoteric teachings, stating that Amoghavajra faced detractors when he sought to establish the teachings in Tang China. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* compares Kūkai's efforts to those of the patriarch. See *Taishō* 77.375b11-21.

esoteric teachings in the *Letter of Promulgation*. Saisen's point was to demonstrate that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was the final response to the doctrinal issues of Kūkai's day and that the doctrines presented in the *Treatise* are irrefutable proof that only the esoteric teachings of the Shingon school allowed one access to the superior and secret domain of the dharma body's preaching.

### Conclusion

Studies of esoteric Buddhist doctrine have placed paramount importance on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and its claim that the dharma body of the buddha directly preaches the esoteric teachings. Hakeda, for instance, states in his overview of Kūkai's works that this doctrine was the core of esoteric Buddhist thought in Japan. With his notion of the complementarity of the exoteric and esoteric, Abé proposes that Kūkai understood this doctrine to be fundamental to the interpretation of the exoteric teachings as well. In his seminal study of Kūkai's view of esoteric Buddhist doctrine, Katsumata argues that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* establishes the intellectual foundation for esoteric Buddhism in Japan. These depictions of the *Treatise* and its central role in the development of esoteric Buddhist thought assume that it was one of Kūkai's most influential writings, both for his later works on taxonomy and the esoteric Buddhist tradition. However, as I have demonstrated in this chapter, there is no evidence that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* prior to 830. In fact, there is no evidence that he wrote it at all.

Ōyama, Katsumata, and Matsunaga suggest that the text could be dated by comparing its content with that of other early Kūkai works. In addition to the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text marking the latest date of composition, they contend that the content of the *Treatise* resembles the distinction between esoteric and exoteric teachings in Kūkai's *Catalogue of Imported Items* and the *Letter of Promulgation* in the appended fascicles of the *Shōryōshū*. Based on these similarities, they hypothesize that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* might have been composed between 815 and 821.

However, this claim relies on a series of tenuous connections between the lineage texts, the portraits of the Shingon patriarchs, and references to the portraits in Kūkai's letters and other records. In order for this theory to hold up, the following must be true. 1) The passage at the end of the *Longer Dharma Transmission* referring the reader to a "section on the preaching of the dharma body" must only denote the opening of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. 2) The *Longer Dharma Transmission* text must have been written before the *Shorter Dharma Transmission*. 3) The *Shorter Dharma Transmission* must have been composed on the sixth day of the ninth

month of 821 to commemorate the completion of two new portraits of Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi. 4) The biographies of Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing must have been added to the other five patriarchs to account for the inclusion of their portraits in the consecration ceremony in the *abhiṣeka* hall at Tōji on the ninth day of the ninth month of 821. However, as I have outlined in this chapter, any of these claims can easily be disproved based on Gōhō's records of the treasures at Tōji and the inscriptions on the portraits.

The tendency among scholars of esoteric Buddhism to focus primarily on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is by no means a modern phenomenon. The praising of the text permeates medieval commentaries, and when catalogers began compiling collections of texts fundamental to their school the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* appears at the top of the list. For instance, the fourteenth-century reformer of the Shingon school on Mt. Kōya, Yūkai, wrote two lengthy commentaries on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Never one to refrain from hyperbole, Yūkai claimed that the content of Kūkai's *Treatise* was so powerful and revolutionary to Buddhist thought that scholastic monks in the Hossō school were reduced to tears upon reading it. Earlier commentators, although less dramatic, similarly speak of the profound depths of the *Treatise*. The authors of these medieval commentaries were undoubtedly influenced by the earliest study of the *Treatise*, the *Essay Reflecting the Treatise on the Two Teachings*. The author of the commentary, Saisen, argued that until Kūkai returned from China in 806, Japanese Buddhism had been limited in its comprehension of the true meaning of the buddha dharma. He extolled the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as the necessary medicine to cure the illness plaguing the Tendai and Nara schools by differentiating between the sacred teachings in terms of their exoteric and esoteric meaning.<sup>90</sup>

Moreover, the commentaries proposed that the distinction between the exoteric and esoteric teachings should be interpreted via the taxonomy in the *Ten Abiding Minds*. Saisen mentioned this relationship between the texts, but it is more fully explored in later commentaries. By the time Yūkai produced his commentaries in the fourteenth century, the exoteric versus esoteric dichotomy in the *Treatise* and the ten-stage taxonomy had developed into a single doctrinal system.

The debate theory was constructed by blending stories and legends of how the emperor invited Kūkai and his contemporaries to compose treatises defining the doctrines characteristic of their schools. The narrative of the Tenchō edict provided an answer to why Kūkai wrote the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. For both Saisen and Yūkai, suggesting that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was a response to the Hossō-Tendai debates served to provide Kūkai with the final word in these doctrinal disputes. Likewise, by including Tokuitsu's criticism of the *Treatise*

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90. For Saisen's preface to his commentary, see *Taishō* 77.421c28-422.a9.



Chapter One: The Composition of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*

on *Bodhicitta* in this narrative, Saisen proposed that the *Treatise* eradicated all doubts that the esoteric teachings of the Shingon school were superior to all other schools. There is no historical evidence to support this claim, but it is no more or less convincing than the early date theory.

Katsumata and others have tried to establish an early date of composition for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. By placing the *Treatise* at the beginning of Kūkai's career, scholars create a timeline of Kūkai's works in which the polemical *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is fundamental to his later writings. However, the argument for an early date is speculative at best. The assertion that the esoteric teachings are superior to the exoteric teachings in the *Letter of Promulgation* and the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* apply similar wording. However, so does the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*. In fact, in many regards the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* has much more in common with the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* than the letter or other early writings of Kūkai.

Furthermore, the commentaries seem to imply that the *Treatise* was in fact a later work. By claiming that the *Treatise* explains the "differentiation of the two teachings of the exoteric and esoteric" in the *Ten Abiding Minds*, medieval Shingon apologists could use the *Treatise* to respond to Tendai critiques of the taxonomy. Curiously, Tendai scholiasts in the ninth and tenth centuries never criticize the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, which is arguably more dismissive of Tendai doctrine than the *Ten Abiding Minds*. In fact, if we rule out the line at the end of the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text, there are no extant references to the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* until the eleventh century. This absence of any response to, quotation of, or reference to the *Treatise* whatsoever requires us to reconsider its significance to the development of esoteric Buddhist doctrine. The lack of textual history and lacuna of evidence that it existed prior to the eleventh century should also cause us to rethink its attribution to Kūkai.

## Chapter Two: A Paratextual History of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*

In the previous chapter, I surveyed three theories attempting to answer the questions of when and why Kūkai may have written the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Modern scholars generally agree that it was written early in Kūkai's career as a Buddhist intellectual, whereas medieval scholastics overwhelmingly assumed that it was a much later work. None of these theories, however, address a fundamental issue regarding the textual history of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. That is, where did the text come from? Both modern scholars and medieval scholastics agree that it was the defining work on the doctrines of Kūkai's Shingon school. Therefore, one would assume that after writing the *Treatise* Kūkai would have either disseminated this work to his counterparts in Nara and on Mt. Hiei, or passed it on to his disciples. Yet, there are no records of anyone receiving, reading, or responding to this work for over two and half centuries.

The first Shingon-affiliated scholiast to comment on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, and Kūkai's works in general, was the Ninnaji monk Saisen. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, Saisen suggested that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* either as a response to debates between Saichō and Nara monks, or as a reply to Tokuitsu's critique of the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* in the *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School*. However, this was mere speculation; he clearly did not know when the *Treatise* was actually written, nor did he state how this text came into his possession. The same can be said for most of Kūkai's writings. Saisen apparently discovered, for the first time, the doctrinal works that supposedly represent the establishment of a new school of Buddhism in early ninth century Japan.

In this chapter, I reconsider the historical narrative of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Putting aside the question of whether it was an early or late composition by Kūkai, I examine how the text came to play a central role for medieval scholastics in the Shingon school. The first issue I address concerning the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is not when Kūkai wrote it, or even if he in fact wrote it at all, but how it came to the fore as the representative work on esoteric Buddhist doctrine. There is no evidence that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* existed prior to the eleventh century. The earliest extant manuscript dates to this time, and the title does not appear in

any catalogues or lists until the latter half of the century. Moreover, other than the speculative theories outlined in the previous chapter, Kūkai did not mention the *Treatise* in any of his other works, nor did any of his contemporaries allude to the polemical *Treatise* in their writings. By tracing the possible origins of the extant versions of the text, it becomes evident that, in the centuries following his death, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* does not appear anywhere in the historical record. It first surfaced in the mid eleventh century and shortly after was attributed to Kūkai in the following decades when Saisen began collecting his writings and documenting them in his catalogue.

In the first section, I reconsider the historical narrative of Kūkai Studies as it developed, or failed to develop, in the century after his death. Shingon scholars often lament the dearth of available commentary on Kūkai's teachings following his death. Other than collections of Kūkai's letters and a couple of questionable biographies, his disciples were mostly silent regarding their master's teachings. In the latter half of the ninth century, esoteric Buddhist doctrine, as presented by this historical narrative, was exclusively the domain of scholiasts in the Tendai school. Ennin, Enchin, and, in particular, their disciple Annen wrote extensively on texts that Kūkai had classified as "esoteric," such as the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, and *Treatise on Bodhicitta*, as well as sources not previously considered to be esoteric, such as the *Susiddhikara Sūtra* (*Suxidi jieluo jing* 蘇悉地羯羅經). They further compared these sources with the *Lotus* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtras*, both central to the Tendai school, as well as the exegetical writings of Tiantai patriarchs. This division between Kūkai's writings on esoteric texts and the interpretations of Tendai scholiasts is often depicted as the beginning of two distinct schools of esoteric Buddhism in Japan. However, in this section, I propose that esoteric Buddhist scholasticism developed as a continuity between Kūkai's writings and the Tendai scholiasts, rather than a bifurcation. In other words, there was a tradition of commenting on Kūkai's teachings in the ninth century, but it took place on Mt. Hiei and not at Tōji or Kongōbuji.

In the second section, I trace Saisen's possible source for obtaining a manuscript of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to a collection of texts stored at Mandaraji on Mt. Daigo. Mandaraji was founded by the ritual specialist Ningai 仁海 (ca. 950–1046), who was famous for performing rainmaking rituals. Although the most influential Shingon monk of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, few of his works survive. However, based on the sources available, it is clear that Ningai and his disciples were focused on collecting ritual manuals and comparing variations in *abhiṣeka* rites among different lineages and temples. Ningai's efforts to consolidate these variations into a comprehensive ritual system resulted in the formation of the Ono lineage. A catalogue listing the sacred teachings (聖教) of the Ono lineage includes numerous ritual manuals, some of which are purported to have been copied by Kūkai, as well as other miscellaneous writings. Among these appended collections of miscellaneous writings is the earliest evidence of a manuscript of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*.

Finally, the anomaly of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as a discovered text prompts us to consider a second issue. If the *Treatise* was insignificant prior to Saisen, why did he and later medieval scholastics hold it in such high regard? To answer this question, it is necessary to consider how Saisen and later Shingon intellectuals perceived Kūkai, both as the author of the *Treatise* and a revered patriarch. In the final segment of this chapter, I explore how the cult of Kūkai, posthumously revered as Kōbō Daishi (弘法大師), and the belief that he was an advanced bodhisattva with supernatural capabilities informed Saisen's interpretation of his writings, particularly the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*.

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### Kūkai Studies and the Development of Esoteric Buddhist Scholasticism

The uncertain textual history of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is illustrative of a larger problem confronting research on Kūkai's works. One of the great mysteries in Kūkai Studies is why, in the centuries following his death, Kūkai's writings received so little attention from his disciples and their immediate descendants. Unlike his contemporary Saichō, whose disciples incorporated many of his interpretations of Tendai doctrine into their numerous commentaries on esoteric texts, there were no parallel attempts among Kūkai's disciples to further elaborate on his doctrinal positions. For more than two centuries, Kūkai's writings on doctrine were effectively ignored by so-called Shingon monks.<sup>1</sup>

Scholars tend to favor one of two explanations for why Kūkai Studies took so long to develop. The normative view maintains that Kūkai wrote treatises such as the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* to explain the doctrinal significance of the esoteric texts and rituals that he had inherited from his master in China. In his study of esoteric Buddhist history, Toganoo Shōun suggests that, because Kūkai had successfully transmitted the orthodox or pure (純) lineage of the esoteric teachings to Japan, his writings on doctrine did not require further explanation. According to Toganoo, Kūkai's disciples were tasked with the study of ritual manuals and perfecting the ritual techniques of his Shingon system in

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1. Ōkubo Ryōshun outlines Saichō's influence on Ennin and Annen in their construction of a Tendai interpretation of esoteric Buddhist doctrine. Although Annen primarily engaged Saichō's writings through the works of his master Ennin, he nonetheless applied several of Saichō's interpretations of Chinese Tiantai commentaries. See Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, "Annen to saichō," 安然と最澄, in *Tada kōbun meiyō kyōju koki kinen ronbunshū—Tōyō no jihi to chie* 多田孝文名誉教授古稀記念論文集—東洋の慈悲と智慧 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2013), 324-325.

order to perform thaumaturgical rites for the imperial court, rather than composing doctrinal treatises. In other words, Kūkai's disciples did not expand on his view of esoteric Buddhist doctrine because they did not have to. Unlike Saichō's nascent form of esoteric Buddhism, which motivated Ennin and Enchin to return to China for further training and texts, Kūkai's form of esoteric Buddhism was already complete. Therefore, according to Toganoo, Kūkai's disciples did not need to further expound on his writings or augment them with additional sources, because Kūkai's works comprehensively and irrefutably elucidated the supremacy of the esoteric teachings.<sup>2</sup>

Toganoo's claim that Kūkai's writings were exempt from criticism or not in need of additional explication is a common apologetic strategy. However, his assertion that Kūkai's disciples were occupied with the performance of rituals has historical merit. Revisiting Toganoo's study of Shingon history, Matsunaga Yūkei elaborates on this point, noting that until the late tenth or early eleventh centuries the designation of "Shingon monk" denoted a ritual specialist trained in a system of esoteric rites. These rites included levels and variations of *abhiṣeka*, rites for protecting the realm, rites for warding off illness, and insuring long life for the emperor. Matsunaga also notes that Kūkai's Shingon system obtained imperial support when in 823 the Office of the Great Council of State (Daijōkan 太政官) officially permitted fifty monks to reside annually at Tōji to study the esoteric teachings. By the beginning of the tenth century several temples such as Ninnaji and Daigoji had been charged with further developing the ritual calendar with expanded versions of Kūkai's ritual system. Moreover, the economic success of these temples relied on their ability to deliver rituals at the behest of the imperial court. By the end of the tenth century, Matsunaga suggests, Shingon temples in and around the capital competed for patronage through the performance of thaumaturgical rites, leaving the monks at these temples very little time to compose treatises on doctrine. Therefore, Matsunaga claims, the doctrinal discourse on esoteric Buddhism in the ninth and tenth centuries was dominated by Tendai scholiasts, while Shingon monks focused exclusively on the development of their ritual repertoire.<sup>3</sup>

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2. Toganoo speculates that the study of Kūkai's writings was prompted by the popularity of Genshin's *Ōjōyōshū*. He claims that Shingon scholastics such as Saisen, Shinshō, and Jippan revived the study of Kūkai's writings to offer a Shingon alternative to the rise of Pure Land thought. Kakuban, according to Toganoo, was the culmination of their efforts, and through his writings on an Esoteric Pure Land, esoteric Buddhist doctrine underwent a revival. See Toganoo Shōun 桐尾祥雲, *Himitsu bukkyō shi* 祕密佛教史 (Kyoto: Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo, 1982), 288 (originally published in 1933).
  3. Matsunaga claims that the fortunes of the Shingon school shifted in the late ninth century under the reign of Emperor Uda. Uda established Ninnaji in 888, originally under the control of Mt. Hiei, but transferred control to Tōji in 899. Uda later took the tonsure and resided at Ninnaji, creating a precedent for imperial monasteries (門跡). See Matsunaga Yūkei 松長有慶, *Mikkyō no rekishi* 密教の歴史 (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1969), 209-211.

### (i) Two Esoteric Buddhisms

This historical narrative is premised on two assumptions. First, Toganoo and Matsunaga assume that Kūkai's "pure" form of esoteric Buddhism and Saichō's inchoate version of *abhiṣeka* rites and study of esoteric texts developed along two mutually exclusive sectarian paths. Therefore, Tendai monks such as Ennin and Enchin traveled to China to obtain additional initiations in esoteric rites and ritual manuals in order to compete with Kūkai's more advanced Shingon school. In retrospect, this was the reality of their journeys; they both returned to Japan with hundreds of esoteric texts, mandalas, and images that neither Saichō nor Kūkai had previously possessed. However, Tendai monks did not travel to China because they thought Saichō's version of esoteric Buddhism was insufficient. Traveling to the Tang was a state sponsored activity that allowed them to study with Chinese masters and acquire texts, images, and ritual technologies that would elevate their positions within the Buddhist establishment.

As Paul Groner describes in his study of the tenth-century reformer Ryōgen 良源, Japanese Tendai was beset with factionalism and conflict over leadership in the decades following Saichō's death in 822. Enshu 圓修 (n.d.), who along with Enchō 圓澄 (771–836) left Mt. Hiei to reside at Murōji in Nara after being demoted from abbot, spend two years on Mt. Tiantai. His goal was to procure documentation from a Chinese Tiantai master that he could use as leverage in reclaiming his former position as head of the Tendai school. Ennin had already left for China four years earlier in 838, but was denied entry to Mt. Tiantai. Instead, he travelled to Chang'an where he studied with Faquan 法全 (n.d.) at Qinglongsi, the same temple where Kūkai had resided thirty years earlier. While Ennin was in China, Enchin worked his way through the ranks to become head of Shingon studies on Mt. Hiei. However, after Ennin's return in 847, the elder monk overshadowed him in the performance of esoteric rites and knowledge of esoteric texts. This loss of status may have been one reason Enchin left for China in 853. Therefore, as Groner suggests in his overview of internal conflicts in the Tendai school, Tendai monks travelled not only to obtain initiations in esoteric rites or accumulate esoteric texts, although having done so was a major part of their legacy in Japanese Buddhism. Rather, factionalism and competition for rank were the primary factors motivating such expensive and dangerous excursions.<sup>4</sup>

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4. Groner discusses the schisms and conflicts among the second generation of Tendai monks in detail. Although it is often thought that the relationship between Ennin and Enchin was tense, Groner notes that such depictions were probably based on later sources and represent the divisions of Tendai esoteric Buddhism. See Paul Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 16-33.

The second problem with the Shingon sectarian narrative is that it neglects to mention that Tendai partisans were not the only Japanese monks who entered Tang-dynasty China. In fact, most monks who traveled to mainland Asia in the mid-ninth century were disciples of Kūkai or their protégé. Two of his closest disciples, Shinzei 眞濟 (800–860) and Shinzen 眞然 (804–891), intended to join Ennin on the 838 envoy, but were excluded from the trip when their vessel was destroyed in a storm before their departure.<sup>5</sup> One of Kūkai's lesser known disciples, the former crown prince Shinnyo 眞如 (799–ca. 865), left for China in 862 and eventually made his way to Chang'an two years later. Unable to find a temple to sponsor his stay, Shinnyo embarked for India but died en route.<sup>6</sup> Another disciple, Engyō 圓行 (799–852) arrived in China along with Ennin in 838 as a member of an envoy headed by Fujiwara no Tsunetsugu 藤原常嗣 (796–840). Jichie 實慧 (786–847), Kūkai's chief disciple and successor at Tōji, had ordered Engyō to deliver a letter to Qinglongsi, presumably announcing Kūkai's death. Upon delivering the letter Engyō was sent back to Japan with a collection of texts that had not been included in Kūkai's *List of Imported Items*.<sup>7</sup> Among the second generation of Kūkai's disciples, Eun 惠運 (798–869) and Shūei 宗叡 (809–884) both imported many times the number of sources as Kūkai had decades earlier. Their collections constituted a majority of the works listed in Annen's catalogue of esoteric works, the *Comprehensive Catalogue of the Sections and Types of Mantra Esoteric Teachings of Various Ācārya* (*Sho ajari shingon mikkyō burui sōroku* 諸阿闍梨眞言密教部類總錄, hereafter *Catalogue of Mantra Esoteric Teachings*). Therefore, if this narrative assumes Ennin and Enchin went to China to compensate for the shortcomings of Saichō's esoteric Buddhism, then Kūkai's teachings must have been equally insufficient for his disciples and Shingon monks based at Tōji.<sup>8</sup>

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5. There are several theories regarding Shinzen's date of birth, ranging from 795 to 818. See Wada Shunjō 和多秀乘, "Shinzen daitoku no go shōgai" 眞然大徳の御生涯, in *Kōyasan dai nisei—Dento kokushi shinzen daitoku den* 高野山大二世—伝灯国師眞然大徳伝 (Wakayama, Japan: Kōyasan Shuppansha, 1990), 1-17.
  6. Shinnyo, or Prince Takaoka 高岳親王, was the eldest son of Emperor Heizei. Heizei had named Takaoka his successor, but after abdicating in 809 due to illness his younger brother was enthroned as Emperor Saga. After recovering from his illness, Heizei attempted a coup. However, Saga successfully thwarted these efforts, and as punishment forced Heizei to take the tonsure and Takaoka was disinherited. In 822, Takaoka took the tonsure and became a disciple of the Hossō monk Shuen and later Kūkai. For Takaoka's biography, see the twenty-third chapter of the volume on emperors in the *Koji ruien* 古事類苑, pp.1386.
  7. Ryūichi Abé mentions Engyō's brief stay in Changan. See Abé 1999, 461n.82. For more on Engyō's journey and stay in Changan as well as an explication of Jichie's letter, see Takada Jun 高田淳, "Nittō engyō kankei bunsho no shōkai—tsuki, engyō koden" 入唐円行関係文書の紹介—付、円行小伝, *Journal of Kokugakuin University Library* 6 (1994):31-73.
  8. Yoritomi Motohiro provides a concise overview of Kūkai's disciples and their travels after his death in Yoritomi Motohiro 頼富本宏, "Nihon mikkyō no seiritsu to tenkai" 日本密教の成立と展開, in *Nihon mikkyō* 日本密教 (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 2000), 36-39.

The assumption that Tendai monks traveled to China to compensate for deficiencies in Saichō's esoteric Buddhism is a part of a broader anachronistic representation of esoteric Buddhism stemming from fourteenth-century histories of Japanese Buddhism. According to the prevailing historical narrative, esoteric Buddhism was established in Japan along two distinct lines of transmission within either the Tendai school, the so-called *taimitsu*, or the Shingon school, referred to as *tōmitsu* after the Shingon temple Tōji located in present-day Kyoto. According to this narrative, these traditions began in the early ninth century when Saichō and Kūkai traveled to China in 804 to study with Chinese masters. Kūkai arrived in the capital Chang'an, where he received initiation into two esoteric Buddhist lineages associated with the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and their respective mandalas, the Garbha and Vajradhātu Maṇḍalas. Saichō journeyed to Mt. Tiantai, where he studied the Tiantai teachings. Before returning to Japan, however, he claims to have received transmissions into other traditions, including lineages of esoteric Buddhism.<sup>9</sup> Upon returning to Japan, they both wrote extensively and founded monastic centers for the study and practice of their respective traditions. Kūkai, under imperial order, began a training program at Tōji in 823 for the

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9. In his 2009 monograph on Saichō and Tendai esoteric Buddhism, Chen Jinhua calls into question the legitimacy of Saichō's initiation into *abhiṣeka* rites and documentation of this event. Chen's argument centers on the authenticity of two certificates of transmission (付法文) allegedly composed by the Chinese *ācārya* Shunxiao as proof of Saichō's credentials for conducting *abhiṣeka* rites. According to Chen's analysis, these certificates were forgeries produced by Saichō's disciples or later generations of Tendai esoteric scholastics as a part of an effort to strengthen his ties to a Chinese esoteric Buddhist tradition and establish an authoritative Tendai esoteric Buddhist lineage. Chen notes that the colophon in Saichō's Yuezhou catalogue is the primary record for Saichō initiation into esoteric Buddhism. Unlike later versions of this event, this early account is a straight forward historical account of Saichō's interaction with Shunxiao. Writing in the third person, Saichō states:

右件念誦法門等并念誦供養具樣等。向越府龍興寺。詣順曉和上所。即最澄并義真。逐和上到湖鏡東峰山道場。和上導兩僧治道場。引入五部灌頂曼荼羅壇場。現蒙授真言法。又灌頂真言水。便寫取上件念誦法門并供養具樣。勘定已畢。

In the section on the right are listed the ritual implements and images for recitation practices and rites. We traveled to Longxingsi in Yue Prefecture, and were directed toward Master Shunxiao. Accordingly, Saichō and Gishin followed the master to the *bodhimaṇḍa* on the eastern mountain of Lake Jing. The master instructed both monks on constructing the *bodhimaṇḍa*, and they entered the platform of the mandala of the five-fold *abhiṣeka*. At that time, they obtained the methods of mantra as well as the mantra and sprinkling of *abhiṣeka*. Thereupon, they documented the ritual implements and images of the recitation practices and rites noted above. Finally, they collated and organized these works. (DDZ 4.381)

The colophon goes on to note that before returning to Japan, Saichō requested a statement of verification (印信) that he might display to other disciples seeking this teaching. The important thing to note is Saichō's reference to a mandala platform and five-fold *abhiṣeka* rite using mantra. Even if the extant verification forms are forgeries, as Chen argues, Saichō's catalogue attests that he and Gishin received initiation into some type of *abhiṣeka* rite involving the incantation of mantra and use of mandala. See Chen Jinhua, *Legend and Legitimation: The Formation of Tendai Esoteric Buddhism in Japan* (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 2009) 4-12, 36-37. Ōkubo also discusses this colophon in Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, "Ikyō e" 異境へ, in *Sange no daiishi saichō* 山家の大師最澄, edited by Ōkubo Ryōshun (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Bunkan, 2004), 74-78.



performance of rites and liturgies related to the *Vajrasāekhara* cycle of texts. Saichō, on the other hand, established a monastic training system based in one part on the study of Tiantai texts such as the *Mohezhi guan* 摩訶止觀, the *shikangō* (止觀業), and another part on the esoteric teachings of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and its commentary, the *shanagō* (遮那業).

This division of esoteric Buddhism into two distinct Tendai and Shingon sectarian lineages has long been the normative view presented in histories of Japanese Buddhism. However, the earliest attempts to delineate between *taimitsu* and *tōmitsu* traditions did not appear until the fourteenth century. In fascicle twenty-seven of his medieval history of Buddhism, *An Account of the Śākya from the Genkō Era* (*Genkō shakusho* 元亨釋書), Kokan Shiren 虎關師鍊 (1276–1346) used the term *tōmitsu* to denote the tradition associated with Kūkai and his training program at Tōji, which expanded to include Daigoji (Ono 小野) and Ninnaji (Hirosawa 廣澤), and *taimitsu* to refer to Saichō's *shanagō* system transmitted through the patriarchs Ennin and Enchin.<sup>10</sup>

Kokan's narrative was perhaps based on a similar history of the Tendai and Shingon schools in Gyōnen's 凝然 (1240–1321) *The Continuation and Origin of the Transmission of the Buddha's Teaching in the Three Countries* (*San koku buppō denzū enki* 三國佛法傳通緣起).<sup>11</sup> Although he did not use the terms *taimitsu* and *tōmitsu*, Gyōnen emphasized the continuity between esoteric Buddhist lineages in China and the transmissions of these traditions through the Tendai and Shingon schools. Moreover, in the *Essentials of the Eight Schools* (*Hasshū kōyō* 八宗綱要), his celebrated treatise on the doctrines of the eight schools of Buddhism in Japan, he closely associated the esoteric teachings with Kūkai and his lineage at Tōji.

However, even as late as the thirteenth century, Gyōnen acknowledged that there was considerable overlap between Kūkai's writings and the Tendai scholiasts concerning esoteric Buddhist doctrine. For instance, in the first line of his section of the Shingon school, Gyōnen writes:

問。何故名眞言宗。答。此以大日經蘇悉地經等祕密眞言教、爲其所憑故云爾也。

Question: Why is this called the Shingon school.

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10. For Kokan's account of *tōmitsu* and *taimitsu*, see *DNBZ* 101.468b. Ōkubo Ryōshun discusses this reference in *Shin hasshū kōyō* 新八宗綱要 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001), 111, as does Lucia Dolce in "Taimitsu: The Esoteric Buddhism of the Tendai School," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, eds. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 744. For an overview of this work and Kokan Shiren's polemical agenda, see Carl Bielefeldt, "Kokan Shiren and the Sectarian Uses of History," in *The Origins of Japan's Medieval World: Courtiers, Clerics, Warriors, and Peasants in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Jeffrey P. Mass (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 295-317.

11. For Gyōnen's historical overview of the Tendai and Shingon Schools, see *DNBZ* 101.126b-130b.

Response: Because it is based on the teachings of secret mantra in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and *Susiddhikara Sūtra*.<sup>12</sup>

Curiously, Gyōnen does not mention the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* or any of its ritual manuals, which are usually the mainstay of esoteric Buddhist doxography. Instead, he includes the *Susiddhikara Sūtra* along with the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* as the principle texts of the Shingon school. Both Saichō and Kūkai included the *Susiddhikara Sūtra* in their catalogues. However, they classified it as a vinaya text, not an esoteric work. In his catalogue, Annen lists the *Susiddhikara* as its own category, which includes not only the three-fascicle sutra but Ennin's commentary along with several ritual manuals and *dhāraṇī* texts. Most of these texts were imported by Ennin and Engyō, which suggests that in the interim between Kūkai and Saichō's studies in China and the 838 envoy mantra and recitation rites based on this sutra became a significant component of ritual protocols in the Tang.<sup>13</sup>

One reason Ennin petitioned to study on Mt. Tiantai may have been to learn more about the *Susiddhikara Sūtra* and its associated practices. Although Saichō based the Mt. Hiei curricula on the *Mohezhiḡuan* and *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, the structure of these courses were supposedly designed according to guidelines specified in the *Susiddhikara Sūtra*. In the *Treatise Revealing the Precepts* (*Kenkairon* 顯戒論), Saichō cites a passage from the sutra dictating that ordinands should spend up to twelve years cultivating incantation practices to insure that any remaining obstacles to the efficacy of these rites can be overcome. Saichō comments on this line, stating that even the most dull-witted practitioner should be able to properly perform incantations and

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12. *DNBZ* 3.37a-39b. Ōkubo discusses his passage in the *Essentials of the Eight Schools*, noting that, although Gyōnen was probably mistaken not to include the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, his inclusion of the *Susiddhikara Sūtra* suggests that he considered Tendai esoteric Buddhism, in particular Ennin's addition of this text to his esoteric Buddhist doxography, to be under the rubric of the Shingon school. See Ōkubo 2001, 112.

13. See *Taishō* 55.1116c11-1117b9. This list also includes mandalas, but it is unclear what mandala these texts might refer to. There are not any known mandala associated with this text and its significance to Tendai esoteric Buddhism, see Misaki Ryōshū 三崎良周, *Tamitsu no kenkyū* 台密の研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1988), 483-515. In his entry for the *Bussho kaisetsu*, Kambayashi Ryūjō compares the structure of the three extant versions of the *Susiddhikara Sūtra*, concluding that the content is mostly identical and therefore were all based on the same translation. However, he does not mention if the original text is still extant. See BKJ 7.8-12. There is a Tibetan translation, but whether or not this translation is based on a Sanskrit original or on the Chinese translation is unclear.

*goma* rites after twelve years of training. The purpose of these rites, as he notes, was to protect the nation. A twelve-year retreat would allow ordinands ample opportunity to master such rites and, therefore, generate the maximum benefits for the nation.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, other than the twelve-year period of study, Saichō did not provide specific prescriptions for the *shanagō* curricula. In the fifth month of 818, he wrote in the *Regulations in Six Articles* (*Rokujō shiki* 六條式) that the *shanagō* consisted of reciting mantra from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, *Great Buddha Peak Dhāraṇī Sūtra* (*Da foding tuoluoni jing* 大佛頂陀羅尼經), *Sūtra of the Mahāmāyūrī Vidyārājñī* (*Kongque mingwang jing* 孔雀明王經), and the *Sūtra of Mantras for the Supernatural Powers of Amoghapāśa* (*Bukong juansuo shenbian zhenyan jing* 不空羼索神變真言經).<sup>15</sup> Mantra in these sutras, he notes, are designed to protect the nation. However, just three months later he penned another version of this document. In the *Regulations in Eight Articles* (*Hachijō shiki* 八條式), Saichō simply states that the *shanagō* involves cultivating recitation rites to the three divisions (三部). Presumably, this is a reference to the buddha, lotus, and diamond families of buddhas in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, but considering Saichō does not explain this curricula any further this merely a guess. All that is known about the *shanagō* is that ordinands were expected to devote twelve years to this program.<sup>16</sup>

Toganoo and Matsunaga's historical narrative of Kūkai Studies contends that Kūkai's disciples and their immediate descendants did not explain or comment on Kūkai's writings, because it was not necessary. Kūkai introduced a form of pure esoteric Buddhism that did not require further explication. In contrast, Saichō's form of esoteric Buddhism was perfunctory. Therefore, it was imperative that his disciples make up for the deficit in esoteric Buddhist text and ritual technologies between Tendai and Shingon schools.

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14. For Annen's category of *Susiddhikara* texts, see *DDZ* 1.153-154. Ōkubo discusses this passage in the *Treatise Revealing the Precepts* in Ōkubo, ed., 2004, 195. According to Ōkubo, one of Ennin's purposes for traveling to China was to further train in this textual lineage of the *Susiddhikara* and his commentary on this text was based on the same passage cited by Saichō in the *Treatise Revealing the Precepts*. For the passage from the *Susiddhikara* quoted in Saichō's text, see *Taishō* 18.633a1-3.

15. The last of these *dhāraṇī* texts was translated by Bodhiruci and includes similar mantra and descriptions of mandala to the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 20, no. 1092. I discuss the other *dhāraṇī* texts in the section below.

16. See *DDZ* 1.12-14. Misaki summarizes the content of the *shanagō* in Misaki Ryōshū 三崎良周, "Saichō to birushanakyōgō" 最澄と毘盧遮那經業, in *Sange no daishi saichō* 山家の大師最澄, edited by Ōkubo Ryōshun (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Bunkan, 2004), 5. Groner also discusses the *shanagō*, noting that Saichō changed the content of the curricula at least once in 818 and compared to the *shikangō* appears to have been a less developed program. See Groner 1980, 70-71. Groner translates Saichō's references to the *shanagō* in the *Six Article Regulation* and the *Eight Article Regulation*. See *ibid.*, 121 and 133.

This narrative of two distinct esoteric Buddhisms dates to the histories of thirteenth and fourteenth scholars, such as Kokan and Gyōnen, who wrote in a Kamakura-period context defined by sectarian bifurcation. Their histories tend to reflect these bellicose divisions, rather than the institutions of the ninth to eleventh centuries. This theory of the development of Kūkai Studies also privileges Kūkai's works as the origin of a scholastic discourse on esoteric Buddhist doctrine. Ultimately, the problem with discussing the trajectory of Kūkai Studies is that it assumes a linear development within specific institutions. However, even as late as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when a scholastic tradition based on Kūkai's works began to distinguish itself from the Tendai school, Shingon scholiasts still relied on the writings of the Ennin and Annen. Therefore, the question of why Kūkai Studies took so long to develop points to a problem with the category of *tōmitsu* and *taimitsu*, not a lacuna in the historical narrative.

## **(ii) Nominal Kūkai Works and the Problem of Authenticity**

Some Shingon scholars have proposed an alternative narrative for the development of Kūkai Studies, arguing that Kūkai's disciples did in fact perpetuate his writings on esoteric Buddhist doctrine. In a recent study, Horiuchi Noriyuki reconsiders the received historical narrative presented by Toganoo and Matsunaga, which claims that the doctrinal discourse surrounding Kūkai's writings on doctrine was stalled until the eleventh century. On the contrary, Horiuchi argues, the lack of scholastic writing on Kūkai's works in the century after his death demonstrates the success of his efforts to establish a Shingon school. Horiuchi points to the lack of commentarial and apologetic writings expounding on and defending Kūkai's views as evidence of their dominance. Echoing Toganoo and Matsunaga, he suggests that, in contrast to the nascent form of esoteric Buddhism introduced by Saichō requiring subsequent generations to expand on his claims, Kūkai established a pure form of esoteric Buddhism that did not require further explanation. In other words, Horiuchi proposes that nobody discussed Kūkai's ideas, because his arguments for the superiority of the esoteric teachings were self-evident.

In addition to this claim to the infallibility of Kūkai's works, Horiuchi proposes that there was in fact a discourse on esoteric Buddhist doctrine in the generations immediately following Kūkai. Specifically, he cites the multiple versions of the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* and a short dialogical text called the *Doctrine of the Four-fold Maṇḍala* (四種曼荼羅義), both attributed to Kūkai, as a part of this tradition. Scholars have long debated the authenticity of this attribution; the current consensus is that only one version of the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* was composed by Kūkai, while the other versions and both extant versions of the *Doctrine of the Four-fold Maṇḍala* are apocryphal. However, Horiuchi argues that the association of these texts with doctrinal themes in Kūkai's writings makes them "nominal" (仮託) Kūkai works, or writings that were traditionally attributed to

Kūkai and perhaps reflect his oral teachings or the teachings of his disciples. He also considers the *Oral Determinations for Applying the Mind when Contemplating the A-syllable* (*Ajikan yūshin kuketsu* 阿字觀用心口決), traditionally attributed to Kūkai's chief disciple Jichie, as well as the writings of his disciples Shinzei and Shinga 眞雅 (801–879) to be nominally Kūkai works in that they were supposedly based on his oral teachings.<sup>17</sup>

The problem with this argument for an early Kūkai Studies tradition, besides the fact that it contradicts Horiuchi's initial claim that such writings were unnecessary, is that these texts never mention Kūkai or his writings. With the exception of biographies and the collection of Kūkai's letters in the *Shōryōshū* initially compiled by Shinzei, the few known works by Kūkai's disciples are brief commentaries on ritual manuals or *dhāraṇī* texts. His disciples Shinshō 眞紹 (797–873) and Shinga, for instance, produced two catalogues recording items and texts housed at Kanjinji, a temple founded by Jichie in 827, which note that many of these items were brought to Japan by Kūkai. However, they do not mention any of Kūkai's writings or teachings. Furthermore, writings supposedly based on Kūkai's oral teachings never explicitly refer to his works. Rather, they discuss doctrinal issues concerning practices related to the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*.<sup>18</sup>

An analysis of the content of the *Contemplating the A-syllable* perfectly illustrates the historical disconnect between Kūkai and the text allegedly based on his oral teachings. According to Horiuchi, Jichie wrote this work to document Kūkai's prescriptions for practices involving the contemplation of the A-syllable. Perhaps the first scholar to discuss this text as a meditation guide was Rai Mitsuun 雷密雲 (1817–1884), who in the preface to an Edo-period collection of manuscripts called the *Compilation of Secret Determinations for Contemplating the A-syllable* (*Ajikan hiketsu shū* 阿字觀祕決集), claims that the texts included in this compilation elucidate essential practices for attaining buddhahood in one's current body.<sup>19</sup> In more recent scholarship on these texts, Yamazaki Taikō identifies *Contemplating the A-syllable* as the basis for visualization practices in the Shingon school. According to Yamazaki, Jichie faithfully transcribed the text exactly as Kūkai dictated these instructions. Like Rai, he asserts that the

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17. See Horiuchi Noriyuki 堀内規之, *Saisen kyōgaku no kenkyū—Insei ki shingon mikkyō no sho mondai—* 濟暹教学の研究—院政期真言密教の諸問題— (Tokyo: Nonbun, 2009), 63-64 and 93-95.

18. See the *Kanjinji kanroku engi shizai chō* 觀心寺勘録緣起資財帳 and *Kanjinji engi jitsu chō* 觀心寺緣起實帳 in *DNBZ* 119.230-248. Shinga's other major work, the *Zuishin kongō shidai* 隨身金剛次第, is a manual for rites regarding the wish fulfilling jewel (如意輪法), which purports to be based on Kūkai's oral instruction. See *BKJ* 6.278d-279a.

19. See the preface to Rai Mitsuun 雷密雲, ed., *Ajikan hiketsu shū* 阿字觀祕決集 (Kyoto: Rokudai Shinpansha, 1912).

proliferation of texts regarding such practices in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, all of which are included in the Edo-period compilation, were based on Jichie's transmission of Kūkai's oral teachings.<sup>20</sup>

Few scholars have ever doubted the attribution of this text to Jichie. However, he could not have possibly written *Contemplating the A-syllable*, nor could the content be based on his or Kūkai's oral instruction. The text quotes from two sources that were not available to Kūkai or Jichie. The first text is the so-called *Secret Samaya Sūtra of the Wondrous Lotus of the Dharma Samādhi* (*Myōhō renga sanmai himitsu sanmaya kyō* 妙法蓮華三昧祕密三摩耶經, abbreviated as *Lotus Samādhi Sūtra*). This single-fascicle sutra was supposedly translated by Amoghavajra as an esoteric interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Scholars now agree that it is actually an apocryphal work composed in Japan, although there is much debate regarding when and by whom it was written. Mizukami Fumiyoshi argues that the apocryphal sutra was probably pieced together from passages in commentaries and exegetical works. The earliest reference to this sutra appears in Annen's writings in which he quotes an eight-line verse in the opening of the text. The prose of the sutra were probably added to the verse sometime after Annen.<sup>21</sup>

The verse and Annen's citation of the verse were quoted repeatedly in the works of both Tendai and Shingon scholastics. However, the passage in *Contemplating the A-syllable* does not refer to the verse, but a line of proses that is not found in the extant version of the apocryphal sutra. Mizukami suggests that this passage, like the sutra, was a part of a later commentary on the verse quoted in Annen's writings. Therefore, he concludes that *Contemplating the A-syllable* would have been composed no earlier than the tenth century.<sup>22</sup>

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20. A summary of Yamazaki's scholarship has been translated into English. See Taikō Yamasaki, *Shingon: Japanese esoteric Buddhism* (Fresno, C.A.: Shingon Buddhist International Institute, 1988), 190. It is doubtful that such practices existed during Kūkai's lifetime. The earliest texts referring to the A-syllable practice are found in the writings of Kakuban, who prescribed such practices as a form of deathbed rite. See Jacqueline I. Stone, "By the Power of One's Last Nenbutsu: Deathbed Practices in Early Medieval Japan," in *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha*, edited by Richard K. Payne and Kenneth K. Tanaka (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 77-119.

21. Mizukami also argues that *Contemplating the A-syllable* describes *zazen*-like mediation postures not common in Japan until after Dōgen returned from China in the early thirteenth century. Therefore, he proposes that the text must have been composed sometime afterward. See Mizukami Fumiyoshi 水上文義, *Taimitsu shisō keisei no kenkyū* 台密思想形成の研究 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2008), 221-224, 332. The *Secret Samaya Sūtra of the Wondrous Lotus of the Dharma Samādhi* is published as no. 204 in the ZZK. The verse is also published in Tada Kōryū 多田厚隆, ed., *Tendai hongaku ron* 天台本覚論 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 98. Ōkubo discusses Annen's quotations of this verse in Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, *Tendai kyōgaku to hongaku shisō* 天台教学と本覚思想 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1998), 18-20.

22. See Mizukami 2008, 224.

The second quote complicating the claim that the text is a faithful record of Kūkai's oral transmission comes from the revised version of Yixing's commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. Since the mid-ninth century, two versions of Yixing's commentary have circulated in Japan. The twenty-fascicle version published in volume thirty-nine of the *Taishō* canon is often associated with Kūkai and the Shingon school, although it is listed in catalogues from the Nara period. The fourteen-fascicle version, commonly called the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (commonly abbreviated as Ch. *Yishi*, Jp. *Gishaku* 義釋), was brought to Japan by Ennin in 847 and was utilized by Tendai monks thereafter. It is published in the thirty-sixth volume of the *Shinsan dai nihon zoku zōkyō* and more recently in the first volume of the *Zoku tendai-shū zenshū mikkyōbu*. For the most part, the two commentaries are identical, but the order of their chapters differ and the *Interpretation* includes more references to the *Lotus Sūtra*. However, the passage quoted in *Contemplating the A-syllable* is only found in the fourteen-fascicle version. Therefore, it is improbable that Jichie, who died only one month after Ennin landed in western provinces upon his return from China, would not have been familiar with this passage quoted at the end of the text. Obviously, Kūkai would not have quoted this passage in his oral instructions, which presumably would have occurred before his death twelve years earlier.<sup>23</sup>

Horiuchi also cites the multiple versions of the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* and *Doctrine of the Four-fold Maṇḍala* as examples of nominal Kūkai works. However, these texts were not attributed to Kūkai until the late eleventh century. In his catalogue of Kūkai works, Saisen records five versions of the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* and four versions of the *Doctrine of the Four-fold Maṇḍala*.<sup>24</sup> Before this time, these works

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23. Kitao Ryūshin also points out the historical problems caused by this quote from the fourteen-fascicle commentary. See Kitao Ryūshin 北尾隆心, "Ajikan yūshin kuketsu no seiritsu ni tsuite" 『阿字觀用心口決』の成立について, in Nakao shunpaku sensei tsuitō ronbunshū 中尾俊博先生追悼論文集 (Kyoto: Hattsubaimoto Tankyūsha, 1998), 289-299. For this passage in *Contemplating the A-syllable*, see *Taishō* 77.416a17-19. This quote is identical to a passage in the fourteen-fascicle commentary. See *ZTZm* 1.380a. The *Taishō* version does not include this passage, but a line in chapter six is similar. See *Taishō* 39.691a.

24. Saisen's catalogue, the *Catalogue of Kōbō Daishi's Writings* (*Kōbō daishi go sakusho mokuroku* 弘法大師御作書目録) is published in *KDZ* 15.231-233.

were never explicitly associated with Kūkai. For this reason, both texts have long been a topic of scholarly debate, and, since Yūkai and perhaps earlier, Shingon scholastics and modern scholars have questioned the attribution of these texts to Kūkai.<sup>25</sup>

Nonetheless, some form of these texts, or oral transmissions, appear to have been circulating by the late ninth century. In his catalogue, Annen lists the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body*, the *Doctrine of the Four-fold Maṇḍala* and the *Doctrine of the True Characteristic of Syllables* (*Monji jissō gi* 文字實相義), consisting of a single fascicle, under the category of "Vajradhātu related works."<sup>26</sup> Unlike mosts texts included in the catalogue, he does not record an author or note where he obtained these texts or text. It is possible that he simply neglected to attribute these works to Kūkai. According to the sectarian narrative, this would make sense considering the fact that Annen, as a Tendai monk, would have had little interest in documenting Kūkai's works. However, elsewhere in the catalogue, Annen attributes an unspecified text called the *Secret Records* (*Himitsuki* 祕密記) to Kūkai. Furthermore, in his compendia on esoteric Buddhist doctrine, he mentions Kūkai by name on several occasions regarding his taxonomical works, the *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*. Therefore, he clearly did not hesitate to assign authorship to Kūkai when this information was available. However, he also cited these three works several times in the same compendia, but does not attribute them to Kūkai. The fact that he did not associate the three doctrines with Kūkai suggests that they may not have been composed by Kūkai, but rather they were a part of a broader discourse on esoteric Buddhist doctrine.

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25. Regarding the authenticity of the auxiliary versions of the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body*, Rinzan Mayuri explains that Dōhan commented that some of his contemporaries doubted the authenticity of these works due to their inclusion of non-Kūkai doctrines. Raiyu, on the other hand, based his interpretation of the concept of becoming buddha in one's current lifetime on these works. Yūkai was probably the first Shingon scholastic to clearly propose that these works were not Kūkai compositions. See Rinzan Mayuri 林山まゆり, "Yūkai no sokushin jōbutsu shisō nitsuite" 宥快の即身成仏思想について, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 57/1 (2008):198-202. Ōkubo discusses the debate among modern scholars regarding the authenticity of the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* in Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, "Nihon bukkyō no kyōgaku kenkyū to bunken" 日本仏教の教学研究と文献, *Nihon no bukkyō* 日本の仏教 5 (1996):1-17. For a discussion of the *Doctrine of the Four-fold Mandala*, see Matsuzaki Keisui 松崎恵水, "Shishu mandara gi ni tsuite" 四種曼荼羅義について, *Taishō daigaku kenkyū kiyō · bukkyōgaku bu · bungaku bu* 大正大學研究紀要. 佛教學部・文學部 72 (1986):79-90. and Shinpo Ryūshō 真保竜敵, "Shishu mandara gi no seiritsu ni tsuite" 四種曼荼羅義の成立について, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 19 (1970):292-295.

26. See *Taishō* 55.1116b10 or *DNBZ* 2.116a.



### (iii) The Three Curricula of the Shingon School

Annen's reference to the three doctrinal works in his catalogue suggests that these texts, or more precisely their content, were circulating among scholastic monks by the mid to late ninth century. However, this was not the earliest documentation of these titles. They first appear in an edict supposedly issued by the Daijōkan on the twenty-second of the first month of 835 (承和 2) regarding the curricula for Shingon monks at Tōji.

The edict states that three additional ordinands were to be assigned annually to the Shingon school and each were to study one of three curricula. The first curriculum consisted of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, which, according to the edict, included the study of rites to the various deities specified in the sutra and its relevant ritual manuals. Monks assigned to this curricula were also required to study the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*, the *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies in the Vajraśekhara Yoga* (*Jingangding jing yujia shiba hui zhigui* 金剛頂經瑜伽十八會指歸),<sup>27</sup> and the recitation and copying of Siddham from the *Mahāpratisarā Dhāraṇī Sūtra* (*Dasuiqiu tuoluoni jing* 大隨求陀羅尼經).<sup>28</sup> It also specifies that ordinands in this curriculum must know the "Doctrine of the Four-fold Maṇḍala." The second curriculum was based on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. Ordinands in this curriculum must likewise study the rites for deities in this sutra and its ritual manuals. The edict states that they must also become versed in the commentary on the first chapter of the sutra, recite and copy the Siddham for the *Great Buddha*

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27. The *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies in the Vajraśekhara Yoga* is a brief summary of the corpus of the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* (*Jingangding jing* 金剛頂經), which was never fully transmitted to East Asia. See *Taishō* 18, no. 869. The first assembly of this collection, the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, was partially translated by Vajrabodhi in 723 and revised by Amoghavajra. A more extensive translation was undertaken by Danapāla in 1012. For a concise overview of the Chinese translation of the text, see Steven Neal Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra: Compendium of Principles (*Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra*) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2003), 9-10, 28-35. In the Shingon School the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* is often referred to as the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*, but this text actually only comprises the first assembly of the entire *Vajraśekhara Yoga*.

28. There are two Chinese translations of this text. The first is a single-fascicle work translated during the early Tang dynasty by a monk from north India named Mañicintana (Baosiwei 寶思惟, d. 721). For an English translation, see Todd T. Lewis, "The Power of Mantrā: Story of the Five Protectors," in *Religions of India in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 227-234. Amoghavajra translated it again in the eighth century as a two-fascicle work. See *Taishō* 20, nos. 1153 and 1154. The edict does not clarify which translation was used in this curriculum, but Amoghavajra's version would have been available having been imported by Kūkai. However, Kūkai lists this translation in his catalogue as a single-fascicle work. See *Taishō* 55.1061c27. This *dhāraṇī* sutra opens by listing the names of vajrasattvas and bodhisattvas in the assembly. Amoghavajra's translation preserves the Siddham scripts for the names of assembly members, which is probably what ordinands in the Tōji curriculum were tasked with studying, rather than an actual Sanskrit copy of the text.

*Peak Dhāraṇī Sūtra* (*Da foding tuoluoni jing* 大佛頂陀羅尼經),<sup>29</sup> and be familiar with the "Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this very Body." Finally, the third curriculum focused on methods of incantation (聲明). According to the edict, this training consisted of studying the Siddham for the *Sūtra of the Mahāmāyūrī Vidyārājñī* (*Kongque mingwang jing* 孔雀明王經), as well as the "Doctrine of the True Characteristics of Sound and Syllable" (*Shōji jissō gi* 聲字實相義).<sup>30</sup>

Scholars of Kūkai Studies often cite this reference to the three doctrines in the edict as evidence that these works were composed sometime before 835 and, therefore, proving that they were composed by Kūkai.<sup>31</sup> Some medieval scholastics also assumed that the three doctrines must refer to the three texts listed in Saisen's catalogue as Kūkai works. Yūkai, for instance, clearly thought that this was the case, arguing in his *Essay on the Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* (*Sokushin jōbutsu gi shō* 即身成佛義鈔) that Kūkai wrote the three works as study guides for the three curricula. Regarding the correlation between the three doctrinal works and the edict, he writes:

凡高祖御製作書、數部雖有之、正所學學處、今書并四種曼荼羅義、聲字義三部也。聲字義舉聲明業所學。四曼義爲金剛頂業所學。今書爲胎藏業所學。

The works composed by the founder are numerous, but among these he offered this text {i.e. the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body*}, the *Doctrine of the Four-fold Maṇḍala*, and the *Doctrine of the True Characteristics of Sound and Syllable* to provide the proper study [of the three curricula]. The *Doctrine of the True Characteristics of Sound and Syllable* explains the study of the incantations curriculum. The *Doctrine of the*

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29. There are several extant translations of this *dhāraṇī* text, but again the edict is probably referring to Amoghavajra's version, the *Da foding rulai fanguang xidaduobodalu tuoluoni* 大佛頂如來放光悉曇多鉢陀羅尼. This brief work is just a transliteration of a *dhāraṇī*. See *Taishō* 19, no. 944a. Again, it is unclear what this course of study would have consisted of, but ordinands were probably tasked with reciting and copying the Siddham scripts for the *dhāraṇī*.

30. Amoghavajra's translations of this text, the *Fomu da kongque mingwang jing* 佛母大孔雀明王經, includes Siddham titles for deities. See *Taishō* 19, no. 982. Amoghavajra also composed a commentary on this sutra. See *Taishō* 19, no. 983a. The repository on Mt. Kōya includes an extant copy of a book of Siddham titles for deities in the sutra dating to the Heian period (ninth to twelfth centuries). See *Taishō* 19, no. 983b. It is possible that the so-called *shōmyō* curriculum consisted of reciting these mantras.

31. For example, Toganoo claims that Kūkai established the Tōji curricula to provide a Shingon sectarian system of study independent from the Nara and Tendai schools. See Toganoo Shōun 桐尾祥雲, *Nihon mikkyō gakudō shi* 日本密教學道史 (Wakayama, Japan: Kōyasan University, 1982), 15 (originally published in 1942).

*Four-fold Maṇḍala* concerns the study of the Vajraśekhara curriculum. This text is for the study of the Garbhadhātu curriculum.<sup>32</sup>

In other words, Yūkai assumed that Kūkai wrote these texts for the express purpose of explaining the three curricula and the Daijōkan confirmed this new development in the Tōji training course by issuing a new edict. However, there are three problems with Yūkai's claim that Kūkai wrote the texts to supplement the curricula. The first issue concerns the legitimacy of the edict. Specifically, there are two extant versions with conflicting dates and content.

The longer version of the edict, summarized above and partially quoted in Yūkai's commentary, is documented in two collections of temple documents, Gōhō's *Record of Treasures at Tōji* and a collection of medieval records housed at Kongōji (*Kongōji monjo* 金剛寺文書).<sup>33</sup> These two records are virtually identical with two notable exceptions. The Tōji version includes a date of the twenty-second of the first month of 835, whereas the Kongōji record is dated to the following day. Furthermore, the Tōji document quotes the earlier 823 edict permitting Kūkai to reside at Tōji while training fifty monks in the teachings of the Shingon school. This training consisted of advanced studies in two hundred fascicles of texts related to the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, one hundred seventy-three fascicles of vinaya texts, which includes the *Susiddhikara Sūtra*, as well as the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* and the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*.<sup>34</sup> The earlier edict also states that, if any of these ordinands were incapable of mastering these materials, they should be prescribed a simpler curriculum that begins with rites focusing on a single deity. Furthermore, if there is an insufficient number of monks to fulfill this training course, the edict stipulates that the *ācārya* may temporarily augment the group of trainees with monks from other schools. Although the Kongōji manuscript is missing this passage quoted in the 835 edict, it includes the original 823 edict as the preceding entry. This version of the edict is not found in any other historical documents.

The second version of the edict is also included in the Tōji records as well as the second fascicle of the *Three Periods of Amendments to the Collections of Historical Records (Ruiju sandai kyaku* 類聚三代格), a collection of official edicts from the early ninth to eleventh

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32. SZ 13.174b-175a. Ōkubo Ryōshun discusses the problem with Yūkai's assumption that the texts were composed to explain the curricula, arguing that Yūkai was simply guessing that there may have been a correlation due to the titles of the texts and references in the edict. See Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, *Taimitsu kyōgaku no kenkyū* 台密教学の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2004), 303.

33. For this version of the edict in Gōhō's *Record of Treasures at Tōji*, see ZZGSRJ 12.150-151. For the copy of the edict published in the Kongōji records, see *Dai nihon komonjo uchiwake* 大日本古文書家わけ, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Historiographical Institute University of Tokyo, 1997), 1-5.

34. These works are listed in a catalogue called the *Shingon shū sho gaku kyōritsuron mokuroku* 眞言宗所學經律論目錄, which, according to the colophon, Kūkai submitted to the court on the same day as the 823 edict. See TKDZ 1.43-61.

centuries, and the first fascicle of the *Biographies of Kōbō Daishi* (*Kōbō daishi go den* 弘法大師御傳), a collection of documents related to Kūkai compiled in 1152. The three documents are identical except for the date. The *Three Periods of Amendments* agrees with the Tōji record that it was written on the twenty-third day of the first month, but the *Biographies of Kōbō Daishi* states it was written on the previous day. This version of the edict is not included in the Kongōji record.<sup>35</sup>

Both versions of the edict call for three additional ordinands to be allotted to the Shingon school and outline three curricula to be undertaken by each of these individuals. Moreover, both versions cite the earlier 823 edict as the official beginning of the Shingon training course at Tōji. However, the second version of the edict does not mention the three doctrinal texts. There are also small, although significant, differences in the curricula prescribed in the two edicts. The shorter edict does not assign the study of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* or *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and their respective commentaries and manuals. Rather, it simply states that ordinands in both the Womb and Vajra curricula study the ritual manuals for each deity in the *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies*.<sup>36</sup> An appended note adds that individuals in these two curricula should also study the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* and the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* as well as the *Rites for the Thirty-seven Honorable Ones of the Vajraśekhara Yoga* (*Jingangding yuqie sanshiqi zun li* 金剛頂瑜伽三十七尊禮), a list of mantra for the thirty-

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35. The *Ruiju sandai kyaku* is available in several publications of historical documents. I consulted the *Shintō Taikai* 神道大系, vol. 10 (Tokyo: Shintō Taikai Hensankai, 1997), 142-144. The two-fascicle *Biographies of Kōbō Daishi* was compiled by a Ninnaji monk named Ken'i 兼意 (b. 1072) and is the source for most extant biographies of Kūkai. Publications in the *Kōbō daishi zenshū* and *Zoku gunsho ruiju* are based on an early manuscript housed at Shinpukuji dating to 1184. See *ZGSRJ* 8b.540b-541a.

36. The edict simply states that ordinands in the first two curricula should study the "ritual manuals for each Honorable one in the eighteen paths" (十八道). It is possible that the edict was referring to an early form of the so-called "eighteen methods," the first component of and structural basis for the *Shidokeyō* ritual system that developed in the twelfth century. However, as Robert Sharf argues in an article on Shingon ritual, the texts prescribing these methods post-date Kūkai. See Robert H. Sharf, "Thinking Through Shingon Ritual," *Journal of International Association of Buddhist Studies* 26/1 (2003):62-64. Furthermore, according to Misaki Ryōshū, the *Shidokeyō* ritual system in the Tōji tradition probably developed as a response to Annen's association of the eighteen methods with the *Susiddhikara Sūtra* in the Tendai interpretation of these rites. See Misaki Ryōshū 三崎良周, *Taimitsu no riron to jissen* 台密の理論と実践 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1994), 42. Considering that the longer edict explicitly states that the ordinand assigned to the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* curricula should study the manuals associated with the deities in the *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies*, the "eighteen paths" is probably an abbreviation for this text rather than a reference to the "eighteen methods" of the *Shidokeyō* ritual system.

seven deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.<sup>37</sup> For the third curricula, the study of the *Mahāpratisarā Dhāraṇī Sūtra*, which is listed as part of the first curricula in the longer edict, is added to the *Sūtra of the Mahāmāyūrī Vidyārājñī*.

The existence of two edicts complicates Yūkai's claim that Kūkai wrote the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body*, *Doctrine of the Four-fold Maṇḍala*, and *Doctrine of the True Characteristics of Sound and Syllable* to augment the three curricula. The most obvious problem is the fact that the shorter edict does not mention these texts. Yūkai does not clearly state where he obtained this edict, but he seems to have been aware of both versions. Although he quotes from the longer version, he refers to the curricula by the titles in the shorter edict. If he was relying on the Tōji record composed a century earlier, he would have known that these texts do not appear in the second version. Nonetheless, he neglects to mention the shorter edict in his essay.

Another problem with Yūkai's claim is that he never addresses the question of why the Daijōkan would have issued this edict. Modern scholars have suggested that the edict may have been a response to a request from Kūkai for three additional ordinands to be allotted annually to the Shingon school. This request, like most official Daijōkan related documents from this era, is preserved in the fourth collection of national histories (*Zoku nihon goki* 續日本後記) and includes a date of the twenty-second of the first month of 835.<sup>38</sup> However, if the edict was a response to Kūkai's request, why would the Daijōkan issue two different responses?

Gōhō offered his own novel explanation for the existence of two edicts. In his comments following the two versions of the edict in the *Record of Treasures at Tōji*, Gōhō surmises that the Daijōkan allocated for two tracks of curricula designed specifically for monks with sharper and duller faculties. The longer version prescribes a more complex curricula involving the study of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* as well as collections of *dhāraṇī* and mantra written Siddham script. The first two curricula in the shorter version, on the other hand, has been reduced to the study of ritual manuals for individual deities in the *Synopsis of the*

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37. This Amoghavajra transliteration of mantra is listed in the Zhenyuan canon and was imported by Kūkai, Ennin, and Enchin. See *Taishō* 18, no. 879. Annen states in his catalogue that this text is also referred to as *Zuisheng shangsheng bimi sanmodi lichan wen* 最勝上乘祕密三摩地禮懺文. See *Taishō* 55.1129a24-25. The title listed in the edict seems to be a combination of these two renditions.

38. Both versions of the edict refer to this line. However, this record does not mention the curricula. For Kūkai's request, see fascicle four of the *Zoku nihon goki* in the *Kokushi taikei* 国史大系, vol. 4, 35.

*Eighteen Assemblies*. Therefore, Gōhō concludes that the second version was issued to reinforce the provision in the original 823 edict stating that the training course may be tailored to the needs of individuals who cannot grasp the more intensive curricula.<sup>39</sup>

In contrast to Gōhō's two-track solution to this problem, modern scholars have been inclined to favor one edict as legitimate and dismiss the other as a forgery. Moriyama Shinshō, for instance, argues that the shorter edict was most likely correct. Noting that the entry in the national history is dated to the twenty-second day of the first month, he claims that the second version of the edict must be correct because the Daijōkan would have taken at least a day to respond to the formal request. Moriyama also cites two later edicts recorded in the *Three Periods of Amendments*, one dating to 853 (an alternative manuscript states 895) and the other 907, that refer to Kūkai's request and the edict issued on the twenty-third day in 835 as evidence that the shorter edict is the historically legitimate one.<sup>40</sup>

Shinpo Ryūshō, on the other hand, contends that the longer document is the real edict. In contrast to Moriyama's claim that the shorter edict was possibly a response to Kūkai's petition, Shinpo notes that date of the petition in the national history and the dates for the edicts use different dating systems; that is, the edict includes the day of the month, whereas the historical record employs the sexagenary calendar (干支). Therefore, either edict could have been a response to the petition. However, Shinpo rejects the shorter version in the *Three Periods of Amendments* as suspicious, because it directly cites the original 823 edict. However, he does not give a reason why this is any more suspicious than the edict in the Tōji and Kongōji records, which quote the same passage in the original edict.<sup>41</sup> He also notes that the 853 edict refers to the edict issued on the twenty-third day of 835. However, Shinpo points out that this edict was in response to Kūkai's disciple Shinzei and actually refers to a request for three additional monks be assigned to Kongōbuji. Shinzei cited the 835 edict as precedent for the Daijōkan awarding three additional ordinands to assist with ritual services and requested the court grant the same number

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39. See ZZGSRJ 12.152a. Gōhō also discusses both versions of the edict in the *Hōsatsushō* 寶册鈔. See *Taishō* 77.819a5-b24. However, in this passage he is primarily concerned with the position that the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* held in the curricula rather than the legitimacy of the edicts.

40. See Moriyama Shōshin 守山聖眞, *Bunkashijō yori mitaru kōbō daishi den* 文化史上より見たる弘法大師傳 (Tokyo: Buzan-ha Kōbō Daishi Issen-hyakunen Goonki Jimukyoku, 1933), 859-860. In a biography of Shinzei commemorating his eleven hundred memorial, Wada Shunjō agrees with Moriyama's assessment that the shorter version of the edict is most likely the historically legitimate text. Wada Shunjō 1990, 54-56. Ōkubo discusses this scholarship in Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, "Nihon bukkyō no kyōgaku kenkyū to bunken" 日本仏教の教学研究と文献, *Nihon no bukkyō* 日本の仏教 5 (1996):9 and Ōkubo 2004, 312n28.

41. Both edicts are available in *Shintō Taikei* 1997, 144-147.

of monks be assigned to Jingoji on Mt. Takao. Shinpo concludes that the shorter edict dated to the twenty-third in Gōhō's record probably referred to the original edict allotting three additional monks to train at Kongōbuji, not Tōji.<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately, without further evidence it is impossible to determine which of these edicts were actually issued by the Daijōkan. Gōhō was trying to make sense of the fact that he discovered two versions of the edict while compiling the Tōji record. Like Yūkai's conflation of the three doctrines mentioned in the edict and the three texts attributed to Kūkai, Gōhō had no reason to doubt that they were both legitimate edicts issued by the Daijōkan. However, it is odd that the Daijōkan would bother with a second, almost identical, edict just to adjust the curricula for ordinands with the insufficient acumen to understand the curricula outlined in the longer edict. Why would the aristocrats in this bureaucratic office care what these monks studied as long as the delivered on the performance of rituals for the court? Therefore, as Moriyama and Shinpo argue, only one of the edicts should be considered legitimate. They both assume that the edict was a response to Kūkai's request for additional ordinands, although they disagree on which edict is authentic and claim that the conflicting dates in the records for each edict was due to scribal error.<sup>43</sup>

Moriyama and Shinpo arrive at a conclusion that Gōhō and Yūkai did not consider in their comments on the edict; namely, one of the two versions of the edict was a forgery. They do not speculate on who or why someone may have written the dubious version of the edict. However, even if one of the edicts is fake, this conclusion still does not explain the content of the Daijōkan response to Kūkai's request for three additional ordinands. Both edicts provide unnecessarily detailed accounts of the curricula to be undertaken by these new trainees. The original 823 edict already granted the *ācārya*, presumably Kūkai, the freedom to change the curricula as needed. If the edict is a response to Kūkai's request, why would the Daijōkan change the curricula from the course of study specified in the earlier edict, which was supposedly based

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42. The Kongōji version is missing a page of the original text. However, when comparing it to the version in the Tōji record, it probably included the same quotation from the 823 edict. Shinpo's actual reason for favoring the longer edict is because it serves as an early proof text linking the *Doctrine of the Four-fold Mandala* to Kūkai. See Shinpo Ryūshō 真保竜敏, "Shishu mandara gi no seiritsu ni suite" 四種曼荼羅義の成立について, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 19 (1970):292-295. For a copy of the 853 edict, see *Shintō Taikai* 1997, 144-145.

43. Moriyama and Shinpo both suggest that the date for the Kongōji record of the longer edict is likely a scribal error. For this reason, Moriyama insists that the shorter edict in the *Three Periods of Amendments* and Tōji record was the real response to Kūkai's request. Shinpo makes the opposite claim based on the same sources, stating that the date for the Kongōji record should be the same as the Tōji and, therefore, the authentic edict. Neither mention the version in the *Biographies of Kōbō Daishi*, which includes a date of the twenty-second for the shorter edict. It is impossible to determine which of these dates may have been corrupted without comparing manuscripts. However, errors when copying the number two (二) and three (三) are fairly common in manuscripts and any, or all, of these dates may be incorrect.

on Kūkai's catalogue of essential sutras and treatises for monks in the Shingon school? Therefore, not only is it suspicious that the Daijōkan issued two edicts, but neither edict hardly seems necessary.

Kūkai's petition recorded in the national history on the twenty-second of the first month of 835 does not mention Tōji or the curricula. Moriyama and Shinpo both propose that the edict was issued in response to this request. However, it is more plausible that Kūkai's petition followed up on a request sent earlier on the sixth day (壬子) of the same month. The record quotes Kūkai's petition, stating:

依弘仁十四年詔欲令真言宗僧五十人住東寺修三密門。今堂舍已建、修講未創。願且割被入東寺官家功德料封千戶之内二百戶、(甲斐國五十戶、下總國百五十戶)。以充僧供。爲國家薰修。利濟人天。許之。

The edict of Kōnin 14 {823} permitted the Shingon school to house fifty monks at Tōji to study the teaching of the three secret activities. Now, the hall has been constructed, but practice and lecture has yet to begin. I humbly request that a two hundred ( fifty coming from Kai Province and the other hundred and fifty coming from the province of Shimōsa) of the one thousand fiefs of the Daijōkan's funds granted annually for religious activities be supplied to Tōji so the monks might fulfill their ritual duties and propagate practices for the sake of the nation and the benefit of sentient beings in the human and heavenly realms.<sup>44</sup>

In other words, Kūkai pleads with the court for more money to fully staff and fund the monks at Tōji while training in the assigned curricula outlined in the 823 edict. The request on the twenty-second of the same month was most likely a request for three more monks to assist with this program.

Gōhō also cites this petition in the *Record of Treasures at Tōji*. He explains that the funds allotted to Tōji were insufficient for housing and training fifty monks. Therefore, at the time of Kūkai's death, the temple could only support twenty four monks. Although succeeding heads of Tōji tried several times to increase this number, the total did not reach fifty until 1113. In the eleventh month of that year, the Daijōkan finally approved a request from Kanjo 寬助 (1052–1125), the abbot of Ninnaji, to provide enough funds to support fifty monks in the Tōji curricula.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, if we take into consideration Kūkai's earlier petition and Gōhō's

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44. *Zoku nihon goki*, vol. 4, 35. Interestingly, the memo following Kūkai's first request for funds notes that Shinnyo, i.e. the disinherited crown prince Takaoka, was ordered to take up residence at Tōji.

45. See ZZGSRJ 12.139. Abé also discusses the financial problems of Tōji and its inability to meet the fifty ordinands promised in the 823 edict. According to Abé, Tōji primarily relied on Nara monks from Kōfukuji and Tōdaiji to fill the ranks of the curricula. Many of the participants probably studied esoteric rituals at the Abhiṣeka hall at Tōdaiji, which Kūkai founded in 822, before continuing their training at Tōji. See Abé 1999, 60.



explanation of Tōji's troubled finances, then both edicts restructuring the content of the curricula seems suspicious. Why would the Daijōkan take an interest in the details of the training course if they did not even bother to properly fund it?

A third problem with Yūkai's interpretation of the edict as an early reference to Kūkai's writings is that neither edict, its appended comments, nor Gōhō's analysis describe these references as texts. In fact, Yūkai seems to be the first person to make this correlation. Both the Tōji and Kongōji versions of the longer edict quote Kūkai regarding the content of the first two curricula. The passage states:

此二部經王名祕密真言藏。金剛頂經梵本有十萬偈。大唐所翻一百餘卷有十八會。一一會各說三十七尊乃至百八尊四種曼荼羅四印等、超過諸地頓入金剛祕密藏。不經三劫速證大日尊位。毘盧遮那經亦有十萬偈。此間所譯四十餘卷、說大悲胎藏曼荼羅王爲主、三部曼荼羅其數過塵沙。四種曼荼羅等同上。

The preacher of the two sutras is called the secret mantra treasury. The Sanskrit version of the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* has one hundred thousand verses. In the Great Tang, it was translated into more than one hundred fascicles in eighteen assemblies. Each and every assembly expounds on the four types of mandala and four mudra for the thirty-seven honorable ones up to the one hundred eight honorable ones, which [allows the practitioner] to transcend the various stages and suddenly enter the secret treasury of the Vajra[dhātu]. Without transversing the three great *kalpa*, one rapidly ascends to the position of Mahāvairocana. The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* also has one hundred thousand verses. Among these, the more than forty translated fascicles explain the master of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala of Great Compassion as the main [mandala] and the three divisions of the mandala, which are more numerous than the grains of sand in the Ganges. These four types of mandala are the same as above.<sup>46</sup>

In other words, the "doctrine of the four-fold mandala" in the Tōji curricula denotes a typology of mandala prescribed in the *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies*. In fact, the above passage from the edict and the final lines of this text are almost identical. At the end of the text, after the summaries of each of the eighteen assemblies, the *Synopsis* proclaims that the practices of the entire *Vajraśekhara Yoga* in one hundred thousand verses is encompassed by the four types of mandala. The mandala in each assembly, the text states, reflects the mandala in every other assembly "like the jewels in Indra's net."<sup>47</sup> The "doctrine of the four-fold mandala" also refers to the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. The "main mandala" is the central dais,

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46. ZZGSR 12.150-151.

47. See *Taishō* 18.287c1-5. For an English translation and study of this text, see Rolf W. Giebel, "The *Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh shih pa-hui chih-kuei*: An Annotated Translation," *Journal of Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies* 18 (1995):107-201.

and the "three divisions" are the three outer levels. Therefore, if we assume that the edict was actually issued by the Daijōkan, this quote from Kūkai regarding the meaning of the four-fold mandala clearly does not refer to his text by the same title.<sup>48</sup>

This brief analysis of the edicts demonstrates that these documents are not proof that the Tōji curricula was based on Kūkai's writings. In addition to the specious nature of the edicts themselves, there is no evidence that the edicts referred to the three doctrines of "becoming a buddha in this very body," "the four-fold mandala," and "the true characteristics of sounds and symbols" as texts. Furthermore, official records of petitions to the court note that Kūkai sought financial assistance to house fifty monks at Tōji while participating in the curricula. He did not request that the Daijōkan change the content of the curricula based on his writings concerning these doctrinal issues.

If this is the case and the content of the 835 edicts was not based on Kūkai's writings, where did it come from? One possibility could be Saichō's *shanagō* curriculum outlined in the *Regulations in Six Articles* and reformed in the *Regulations in Eight Articles*. The edicts include additional *dhāraṇī* texts, but the objective of studying these collections of incantations for use in rites for protecting the nation was the same. It is possible that the edicts were simply expanding on Saichō's laconic prescription for recitation practice. In other words, the revised Tōji curricula was actually an expansion of Saichō's *shanagō* curriculum.

Another possibility is that the curricula was based on Kūkai's reference to the enigmatic *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies* in the original 823 edict. Saichō proposed that the structure of the twelve-year training program at Enryakuji was based on a passage in the *Susiddhikara Sūtra*. His disciples, especially Ennin, were uncertain why Saichō based the format of the curricula on this text and travelled to China in search of answers. If we are to believe the quotation in the original 823 edict was in fact from Kūkai, he suggested that the Tōji curricula should be based on the *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies*. Similar to Saichō's use of the *Susiddhikara Sūtra*, this work was an odd choice for the basis for a course of doctrinal study. Of the eighteen texts outlined in the *Synopsis*, only the first was translated into Chinese. The practices and doctrines of the other seventeen works would have been unavailable to the initiands at Tōji. Kūkai's disciples would have been quite perplexed by this work, and perhaps, as with the case of Ennin, they may have been motivated to travel to China in search of further sources and training concerning these assemblies. However, the three doctrinal works conveniently address matters of doctrine left unresolved by the concluding passage of the *Synopsis*. What were the

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48. In another essay on texts housed at Tōji, Gōhō interprets this passage to refer to the first section of works included in Kūkai's three-part catalogue, which includes sixty two translations by Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra. This includes the study of both translations of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. The four-fold mandala, he suggests, refers to the rites in the two translations and their respective manuals. Unlike Yūkai, Gōhō does not associated the doctrine of the four-fold mandala with a specific text. For this passage in the *Hōsatsushō* 寶冊鈔, see *Taishō* 77.786b19-b26.

four types of mandala and how are they related? What is the doctrinal significance of mantra practice? What is the soteriological goal of such practices? The three doctrinal texts attributed to Kūkai were attempts to answer these questions.

Whatever Kūkai Studies consisted of in the ninth century, the Tōji curricula did not exist independent of the Tendai system on Mt. Hiei. In fact, scholastic monks often rotated between the fledgling monastic centers of Enryakuji and Tōji and the more established institutions in Nara. It is possible that Annen's reference to the three doctrines in his catalogue denotes a broader discourse on doctrinal issues that emerged from the study of esoteric texts, rather than specific works penned by Kūkai.

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### The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as a "Sacred Text"

In the previous section, I examined the question of why there was virtually nothing written about Kūkai's works in the ninth century. Several doctrinal issues related to Kūkai's works or attributed works were central to the development of esoteric Buddhist doctrine. For instance, the three doctrinal works on 'becoming a buddha in this very body', 'the four-fold mandala', and 'the true characteristics of sound and syllable' were part of a broader discourse on the interpretation of practices in esoteric texts such as the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies*. Furthermore, as discussed in the previous chapter, Kūkai's taxonomical writings spawned a debate among Tendai scholastics regarding the distinction between esoteric and exoteric teachings as well as the doxography of so-called esoteric sutras and treatises. However, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is conspicuously absent from this discourse. Written accounts of Kūkai's oral teachings attributed to his disciples, such as *Contemplating the A-syllable*, also fail to mention Kūkai's most famous work, nor do these oral transmissions resemble to content of the *Treatise*. Yet, beginning in the late eleventh century, the doctrinal texts and the *Treatise*, as well as dozens of other writings, became canonized as the sacred teachings of Kōbō Daishi Kūkai, the founder of the Shingon school. In this section, I explore how the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* transformed from an unknown work to become Kūkai's most revered "sacred teachings" (聖教).

In an influential study of temple documents at Daigoji and Nara temples, Nagamura Makoto explains the evolution of the burgeoning collections of sacred teachings in early medieval Japan. In addition to the simple dictionary definition of "the teachings of the buddha,"

or the even vaguer "teachings of a sage,"<sup>49</sup> Nagamura notes that the term was also used among medieval scholastic monks to denote texts passed down from past masters or orally transmitted teachings. Stated broadly, a text constituting a sacred teaching can be any booklet or scroll containing instructions for ritual protocols, interpretations of commentaries and sutras, as well as the sutras, vinaya, and treatises themselves. In other words, any document referencing the teachings of the buddha is a "sacred text" as opposed to writings on secular matters (世事).<sup>50</sup>

In addition to this general definition of sacred texts, Nagamura notes that this term was used at Shingon temples primarily to denote documents concerning ritual procedures, such as ritual manuals (儀軌) or lists of ritual protocols (次第). Based on this stipulation, he divides sacred texts into two categories according to their exoteric or esoteric affiliation. According to Nagamura's definition, sacred texts in the exoteric schools concerned debate texts and sources for debate texts composed, transmitted, and stored at temples such as Kōfukuji. On the other hand, esoteric sacred texts, like those housed at Daigoji and Ninnaji, concerned ritual protocols passed down from previous masters.<sup>51</sup>

In the ninth century, the earliest catalogues to categorize texts as "esoteric" primarily recorded works imported from Tang China. However, after the eleventh century, a new type of catalogue began to emerge. These lists included collections by previous masters, many of which had been transmitted within a particular lineage. In his study of catalogues in medieval Buddhism, Uejima Susumu describes these texts transmitted in temple collections as "sacred texts." Uejima also states that, for esoteric Buddhist monks, works by past masters became important for establishing the legitimacy of their lineages. He further contends that these collections developed as monks studied at different temples and made note of their lineages.

These transmission of these collections marks the beginning of sectarian institutions consisting of distinct ritual systems as well as oral instruction on the meaning of such practices. These collections and catalogues of sacred teachings were probably meant to be kept secret, but eventually were documented in writing some of which have been preserved to the present. In part, the collections that survived are from textual repositories established at temple cloisters and passed down by aristocratic families. These repositories were available to scholastic monks of particular

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49. See BDJ 770a.

50. See Nagamura Makoto 永村眞, *Chūsei jūin shiryō ron* 中世寺院史料論 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2000), 168-169.

51. See Nagamura 2000, 272-273.

lineages, especially imperial-affiliated temples such as Ninnaji, who organized these works into collections of "sacred texts."<sup>52</sup>

Of course, the category of "sacred teachings" was not an invention of the eleventh century, but was part of a long tradition of cataloguing and categorizing Buddhist texts. The earliest Japanese catalogues in the eighth century were mainly copies of the Kaiyuan canon assembled in the Tang. The category of "esoteric" texts, however, became prominent in the Japanese doxography as a justification of new ritual and doctrinal systems of the Shingon and Tendai schools.<sup>53</sup>

Annen's *Catalogue of Mantra Esoteric Teachings* is an early example of this shift from imported canons to constructing an esoteric canon according to classes of ritual. Annen had a couple of reasons for compiling his exhaustive catalogue. One reason simply may have been to compensate for his failure to travel to China. Prior to Annen, most Japanese clergy trained in the study of esoteric texts or performance of esoteric rites had received *abhiṣeka* rites from one or more Chinese *ācārya*. However, after Shūei's return to Japan in 865, diplomatic ties were cut off with temples in Chang'an and Annen missed his opportunity to make this journey. Another reason for amassing all the prior catalogues into a single master list was to document the expansion of an esoteric Buddhist corpus. Since first introduced by Saichō and Kūkai earlier that century, esoteric Buddhist doxography had expanded to include new categories that emerged along with the import of a diverse body of new texts.<sup>54</sup>

Annen organized esoteric Buddhist texts according to their ritual application, arranging them into twenty categories ranging from *abhiṣeka* rites to texts addressing rites for specific deities. Among these categories, he included works related to the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, and *Susiddhikara Sūtra*. Annen also recorded all known versions of

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52. See Uejima Susumu 上島 亨, "Chūsei bukkyō to mokuroku" 中性仏教と目録, in *Nihon ni okeru shūkyō tekusuto no sho isō to tōjihō: Tekusuto fuchi no kaishaku gakuteki kenkyū to kyōiku* 日本における宗教テキストの諸位相と統辞法—テキスト布置の解釈学的研究と教育 (Nagoya: University of Nagoya, 2012), 55-57.

53. As Bryan Lowe demonstrates in his study of the Sōshōin collection, *dhāraṇī* and mantra texts were popular among the aristocracy of the Nara court well before Kūkai categorized them as a distinct genre of the buddha dharma. See Bryan D. Lowe, "Contingent and Contested: Preliminary Remarks on Buddhist Catalogs and Canons in Early Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 41/2 (2014): 224, 230-231. The concept of a Buddhist canon in Japan was strongly influenced by the Kaiyuan catalogue, which also informed the basic structure of Japanese Buddhist doxography in terms of Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna sutras, vinaya, treatises, and biographies. However, these categories as well as the titles included in them were flexible, and there were often competing voices in determining which texts were and were not canonical. Therefore, the canon was always a process of renegotiating orthodoxy, a process that continues to the present day with the publication of sectarian collections and appended collections. Many sutras, commentaries, and *dhāraṇī* texts later called "esoteric" had already found their way to Japan in prior to the ninth century.

54. Misaki briefly discusses Annen's reasons for compiling the catalogue in Misaki 1994, 34.

each work as well as the individuals responsible for importing them to Japan. In addition to imported texts, he also noted works within these divisions that may have been domestic productions, such as the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body*, *Doctrine of the Four-fold Maṇḍala*, and the *Doctrine of the True Characteristic of Sound and Syllable*.<sup>55</sup>

Annen's catalogue remained the authoritative record of esoteric Buddhist texts until at least the eleventh century. Although he classified esoteric texts in terms of their ritual application, he also carefully documented the master who composed, translated, and imported these works. Gradually, this feature of Annen's catalogue became common in collections of sacred texts as they shifted their focus to individual masters rather than imported collections, such as the Kaiyuan and Zhenyuan canons, or specific doxographical and ritual categories. The collections of sacred texts in the eleventh century also began to add the writings, or attributed writings, of Japanese masters to these lists.<sup>56</sup>

Like the ninth-century catalogues of imported titles, canons of sacred texts attributed to founder figures such as Kūkai has always been in flux. For modern scholars, the study of the canon has primarily been an exercise in authentication. As discussed in the previous section, twentieth-century scholars have debated at length the authenticity of works such as the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* and *Doctrine of the Four-fold Maṇḍala* in a effort determine an authoritative canon of Kūkai works. To verify the authenticity of a particular work or version of a particular work, scholars thoroughly examine available manuscripts and compare them with contemporary writings attributed to the same author or quotations of such works in later texts to determine the probability of having been composed by Kūkai.

Medieval scholastics also employed philological methods for determining the authenticity of a text before attributing it to an author. Annen, for example, employed a strikingly modern approach when determining the authorship of a short essay called the *Doctrine of Bodhicitta* (*Putixin yi* 菩提心義). Because this text is similar to the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*, there was a debate over whether or not it was also composed by Nāgārjuna and translated by

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55. Annen categorizes esoteric texts in terms of their ritual application. His twenty categories are: 1) *abhiṣeka* rites 三灌頂部, 2) Garbhadhātu 胎藏界部, 3) Vajradhātu 金剛界部, 4) Susiddhikara 蘇悉地部, 5) various tathāgatas 諸如來部, 6) rites from the "buddha peak" *dharāṇī* texts 諸佛頂部, 7) rites from the "buddha mother" *dharāṇī* texts 諸佛母部, 8) rites from various sutras 諸經法部, 9) rites to Avalokiteśvara 諸觀音部, 10) rites to bodhisattvas 諸菩薩部, 11) rites in the ritual manuals to the Vajraśekhara texts 諸金剛部, 12) rites to wrathful deities 諸忿怒部, 13) rites to gods in this world 諸世天部, 14) rites to gods in the higher heavens 諸天供部, 15) *goma* rites 諸護摩部, 16) repentance rites 諸禮懺部, 17) hymns 諸讚歎部, 18) Siddham texts 諸悉曇部, 19) inscriptions 諸碑傳部, 20) images 諸圖像部. See *Taishō* 55.1114a2-14.

56. Annen includes works found in the catalogues of the eight masters who travelled to China to study esoteric Buddhism: 1) Saichō, 2) Kūkai, 3) Ennin, 4), Engyō, 5) Eun, 6) Jōgyō, 7) Enchin, and 8) Shūei. See *Taishō* 55.1113b27-29, and c27-1114a. The *Taishō* version of the catalogue includes two prefaces. The first only lists sixteen divisions, suggesting that Annen later expanded his catalogue to include the additional divisions of images.

Amoghavajra. However, because the text refers to Yixing's commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, an eight-century Chinese composition, Annen concludes that Nāgārjuna could not have written this text.<sup>57</sup> Gōhō was also quite rigorous in his comparison of manuscripts and historical records when compiling his *Record of Treasures at Tōji*. However, medieval scholastics also privileged some works due to their doctrinal content. A case in point is Saisen's apologetic essay on the *Interpretation of the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*.<sup>58</sup> Contrary to Annen's note in his catalogue that this was an apocryphal work, Saisen argues that the content of this commentary was essential to the principle doctrine in *Treatise on the Two Teachings* that the dharma body of the buddha directly preaches the esoteric teachings. Therefore, it must have been written by the patriarch Nāgārjuna.

The doctrinal content of a text is often the reason why a text is deemed a "sacred teaching." There are, of course, other mechanisms by which a text may be canonized. In a recent study of catalogues and collections, Bryan Lowe proposes a pragmatic definition of sacred teachings as "manuscripts produced and collected by Japanese monks for use in temple life." He further states that the production of these texts reflects "the way Buddhism was *actually* taught and interpreted by clergy active in medieval Japanese temples in contrast to idealized normative visions of what Buddhist doctrine ought to be."<sup>59</sup> In other words, the study of everyday aspects of doctrine, such as manuscript culture, moves attention away from an exclusive focus on founder figures such as Kūkai to medieval intellectuals responsible for preserving and promoting these works. No doubt the emphasis on founding figures has marginalized the historical significance of those responsible for copying and commenting on the writings of these well-known founders. However, highlighting the process should not eclipse the relevance of the content. Medieval scholastics determined what texts constituted a sacred teaching based on the doctrines associated with that text. Therefore, such works were deemed sacred, because they supported the "idealized views of what Buddhist doctrine ought to be" at that particular moment in time.

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57. See *Taishō* 75.451b6-451c19. The *Doctrine of Bodhicitta* is published in *Taishō* 46, no. 1953. The version of the text published in the *Taishō* attributes it to some named Kaiun 海運. According to the BKJ, Annen was responsible for this attribution. However, this is an error. In his catalogue, Annen notes these two characters after the title in reference to Kūkai and Eun, who imported the text. It does not refer to the author or translator. See *Taishō* 55.1116a27. This work is listed Kūkai's catalogue in *Taishō* 55.1062b24. Annen also entertains the possibility that the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* was apocryphal, but ultimately concurs with Saichō, Kūkai, and Ennin that it should be considered a canonical work. The objective of Annen's compendium was, in part, to demonstrate that the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* was not heterodox to Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine, particularly the doctrines of the Tendai school.

58. In the *Shakumakaenron ketsugihana nane shaku shō* 釋摩訶衍論決疑破難會釋抄, Saisen constructs a history of this text in order to claim that it was an authentic writing of Nāgārjuna. See *Taishō* 69, no. 2286.

59. See Bryan D. Lowe, "Manuscript Cultures in Premodern Japan," *Religion Compass* 8/9 (2014):291-292.

The doctrines expounded in sacred texts were by no means static, but evolved through the process of debate and the production of texts related to such debates. The reproduction of sacred texts in a monastic community reflected the doctrinal identity of the group, whether the that group be a specific lineage, such as the Shingon lineages that emerged at Daigoji and Ninnaji in the eleventh century, or dictated by the bureaucratic authorities such as the Daijōkan or Office of Monastic Affairs.<sup>60</sup> As Asuka Sango points out in the case of sacred texts at Tōdaiji, copying and preserving these works were a central component of doctrinal learning in medieval Japan.<sup>61</sup> However it was not just the process of producing, collecting, and cataloguing texts that made them sacred to the monastic community, but the doctrines expounded in these works as well as the development of the essential scholastic skills to explain and defend them was the very definition of a "school."

The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* became a sacred text for medieval Shingon scholastics, because it distinguished the doctrines in their school from their rivals. Therefore, the content of the text came to reflect the doctrinal identity of a Shingon school based on the writings of Kūkai. There is no philological or historical evidence connecting the text as we have it today to Kūkai. However, the *Treatise's* doctrine that the esoteric teachings were expounded by the dharma body was a foundational concept to the Shingon school, and, therefore, medieval scholastics unquestionably attributed this text to Kūkai.

### (i) "It is Difficult to Determine Their Authenticity"

In total, there are nine full or partial extant manuscripts for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* that date from the mid-eleventh to the fourteenth century. As the first of the ten works included in the *Jūkanshō* 十卷章, an early-modern primer for readings central to the Shingon school, the *Treatise* was widely circulated from the Edo period onward and published at least three times in

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60. By "doctrinal identity," I am referring to Paul Griffiths' explanation of how a doctrine-candidate becomes a primary doctrine. According to Griffiths, a doctrine-candidate must possess three characteristics to be considered a doctrine of a particular community. First, the community must agree that the doctrine-candidate in question possesses "a greater degree than any of its known competitors whatever property or properties the community thinks of as making doctrine-candidates acceptable in their spheres of relevance." Second, the doctrine-candidate in question must be taken by the "community to be of significance for its religious life." Third, the members of the community must be bound by the doctrine-candidate. If these three requirements are met, the doctrine-candidate can be identified as a primary doctrine, which, upon being accepted by the community, becomes an axiomatic expression in the textual tradition of that community. See Paul J. Griffiths, *On Being Buddha: The Classical Doctrine of Buddhahood* (Albany: State University of New York Press), 6.

61. See Asuka Sango, "Buddhist Debate and the Production and Transmission of Shōgyō in Medieval Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 39/2 (2012):269.



the modern period.<sup>62</sup> When referencing the *Treatise*, most scholars cite the edition in the third fascicle of the *Kōbō daishi zenshū*, which was first published in 1909 and reissued in 1978.<sup>63</sup> The *Treatise* was also published in volume seventy-seven of the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (*Taishō*) a few years later. The editors note that, in addition to the *Kōbō daishi zenshū* edition (*KDZ*), they compiled the *Taishō* edition based on a Heian-period manuscript (no precise date given) housed at the repository on Mt. Kōya as well as a manuscript from the Kanchiin at Tōji. The latter includes a date of 1211–1212 (建曆年間) in the colophon, but only the second fascicle is extant.<sup>64</sup>

The most recent publication of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is included in the *Teihon kōbō daishi zenshū* (*TKDZ*), a revised collection of Kūkai's works that consults alternative manuscripts and provides more extensive notations on the texts in the earlier *KDZ*. The texts included in the *KDZ* were primarily based on Edo-period woodblocks and annotated copies. The *TKDZ*, on the other hand, was compiled with the purpose of incorporating the oldest extant manuscripts. For the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, the editors, primarily Matsunaga Yūkei, cite four primary manuscripts in the compilation of the revised publication. The *TKDZ* utilizes a manuscript from Ninnaji as the base text of the edition. Thought to have been copied and transmitted by Hōshu 法守 (1308–1391), the fifteenth abbot of Ninnaji and the third son of Emperor Go-Fushimi 後伏見 (1288–1336), the original includes annotations and Japanese phonetic notations. Although the text lacks a colophon with a date, the attribution to Hōshu would suggest it was copied sometime in the middle to late fourteenth century.

The editors of the *TKDZ* edition also consulted two manuscripts held on Mt. Kōya, both dated to the late Heian period (late eleventh to twelfth centuries). Because they were stamped with a seal marking them property of Mt. Kōya, they are collectively known as the Mt. Kōya manuscripts. (These are perhaps the same texts used in the *Taishō* edition.) Both texts include

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62. See Katsumata's publication of the *Jūkanshō*, Katsumata Shunkyō 勝又俊教, *Shingonshū jūkanshō*, 眞言宗十卷章 (Kyoto: Shūso kōbō daishi senhyakugojuū nen goonki kinen shuppan, 1986), 1-30. Matsunaga notes in the summary of the treatise in the *TKDZ* that it is unclear which manuscripts might have been used in the *Jūkanshō*. See *TKDZ* 3.354. The entry for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in *Mochizuki* suggests that the *Jūkanshō* probably consisted of later editions of the text produced from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries. See MBDJ 5.4529b-c.

63. See *KDZ* 3.58-89. For most of the works included in the *KDZ*, the editors provide commentary on the manuscripts used in compiling the text as well as an overview of the scholarship on the authenticity of the particular text. However, the *KDZ* does not include any additional information on the sources for the *Treatise*. The second publication of the *KDZ* divides the collection into volumes rather than fascicles. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is found in the first volume, 474-505.

64. The *Taishō* edition also notes that only the *KDZ* publication includes the name of Kūkai as the author. However, it is unclear why the editors of the *KDZ* added this name to the text or which manuscripts they may have used when preparing this edition. See *Taishō* 77:374c22, note 11. The *TKDZ* clarifies that only the 1057 version lists Kūkai as the author, but the editors suggest that this attribution may have been added at a later date. See *TKDZ* 3.280n3.

annotations and Japanese phonetic notations. The smaller of the two versions, one is 26 cm. by 16 cm. and the other is 24.6 cm. by 15.2 cm., is missing the latter half of the second fascicle. Neither text has a colophon with a date, and the exact reason for dating them to the late Heian period is unspecified. The *TKDZ* edition also references a manuscript housed at the *Daitōkyūkinen* Library at the Gotoh Museum in Tokyo. Unlike the other extant copies of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, this text includes a clearly labeled colophon with a date of 1057 (天喜 5), making it the oldest known version of the *Treatise*.<sup>65</sup>

The *Daitōkyūkinen* manuscript was the only extant copy of the *Treatise* in circulation at the time Saisen compiled his catalogue of Kūkai works. Of course, it is possible that the manuscript referenced in the catalogue and the source for his commentary on the *Treatise* has long since disappeared from the repositories and libraries of medieval Japan. However, there is evidence that Saisen may have had access to this manuscript. The version of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* published in the *TKDZ* is identical to the text quoted in his commentary. Furthermore, as I outline below, the *Daitōkyūkinen* manuscript may have found its way into Saisen's possession along with dozens of other texts listed in his catalogue of Kūkai works.

As the first compiler of Kūkai's works and commentator on his writings, it is not an exaggeration to call Saisen the founder of Kūkai Studies. However, besides his relatively extensive body of exegetical works, virtually nothing is known of his life.<sup>66</sup> The only complete biography of Saisen is found in Mangen Shibani's 卅元師蠻 (1626–1710) early eighteenth-century compendium, *Biographies of Eminent Monks in Japan* (*Honchō kōsō den* 本朝高僧傳).

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65. Matsunaga and the other editors also consult the following copies when annotating the *TKDZ* edition: 1) the second fascicle of an 1137 text from Tōji's Kanchiin, 2) the first fascicle of an 1146 version from Mt. Kōya, 3) the first fascicle of an 1147 version from Mt. Kōya, 4) the Tōji version dated to 1211-1212 included in the *Taishō* edition, 5) a 1375 text included in the Osu Library (大須文庫) at Shinpukuji in Nagoya. The Osu Library includes several manuscripts originally produced at Daigoji, Negoroji, and Ninnaji. For a summary of the manuscripts used in compiling this publication, see *TKDZ* 3.9-10 and 348-354. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is found on pages 75-110.

The Daitōkyū Memorial Library (*Daitōkyū kinen bunkozō* 大東急記念文庫藏), housed at the Gotoh Museum in Tokyo, includes collections of manuscripts that were formerly a part of Emperor Go-Shirakawa's repository. In a recent survey of eleventh century manuscripts, Utsunomiya Keigo notes that this text was annotated by a Mt. Kōya monk named Shin'yo 眞譽, who received *abhiṣeka* from Kanjo, the abbot of Ninnaji. See Utsunomiya Keigo 宇都宮啓吾, "Kyōgaku teki kōryū kara mita inseiki kōyasan no wokoto ten den ban ni tsuite—Chishakuinzō *Jōshin shōrai kyō tō mokuroku* wo tekakari toshite" 教学的交流から見た院政期高野山のヲコト点伝播について—智積院蔵『上新請来経等目録』を手懸かりとして, *Chisan gaku* 62 (2013):215.

66. Depending on the catalogue, Saisen completed either seventy-one, sixty-eight, or sixty-six commentaries and essays from during his lifetime. See the *Catalogue of Writings Produced by Masters of Śākyamuni's Teachings* (*Shakkyō shoshi seisaku mokuroku* 釋教諸師製作目録) in *DNBZ* 95.51, the *Catalogue of Essays and Commentaries on Various Schools* (*Shoshū shōsho roku* 諸宗章疏錄) in *DNBZ* 95.96 and the *Extensive Catalogue of the Transmission of the Unsurpassed True School of the Vajraśekhara* (*Kongōchō mujō shōshū dentō kōroku* 金剛頂無上正宗傳灯廣錄) in *ZSZ* 26.292. Also, for an overview of these references, see Horiuchi Noriyuki 堀内規之, "Saisen kyōgaku to *Daijō mitsugon kyō*" 濟暹教学と『大乘密嚴經』, *Chisan gaku* 42 (1993):309.

Compiling data from genealogies housed at Tōji and Ninnaji, Shibana simply notes that Saisen conducted a memorial rite for Kūkai in 1104 and led the inaugural session of the Denbōe, an assembly for lectures on esoteric texts, in 1109 at which he lectured on the *Prajñāpāramitānaya Sūtra* (*Liqu jing* 理趣經).<sup>67</sup> He also states that Saisen was responsible for revising the *Shōryōshū*, a collection of Kūkai's letters originally compiled by Shinzei. The colophon to this revised and expanded version of the collection includes a date of 1079, which is the earliest conclusive date available for Saisen's activities.<sup>68</sup>

In his history of Shingon institutions, Kushida Ryōkō provides additional biographical data for Saisen, noting that he received full *abhiṣeka* in 1084 at the age of fifty-eight from the ordained prince Shōshin 性信 (1005–1085), the fourth son of Emperor Sanjō 三条 (976–1017). Horiuchi Noriyuki adds to this timeline of Saisen's life, noting that according to the *Record of the Classification of Lineages* (*Kechimyaku ruiju ki* 血脈類聚記) Saisen was the son of someone named Fumiamī 文網. However, nothing is known of this person. He also cites an Edo-period lineage record that speculates Saisen may have studied under a monk named Saien 濟延, but this claim appears to be based solely on the common character in their names.<sup>69</sup>

Most references in secondary sources such as Kushida's institutional history discuss Saisen as a precursor to Kakuban 覺鑊 (1095–1143), the revered reformed of the Shingon school. Although there is no evidence that Kakuban directly studied under Saisen, it is reasonable to conclude that they would have encountered each other during Saisen's final years. First, they overlapped at Ninnaji during the first five years of Kakuban's monastic training at a time when, according to Shibana's biography, Saisen led several major ceremonies. Second, Kanjo, Kakuban's master and abbot of Ninnaji, trained under Shōshin along with Saisen. As I discussed in the previous section, Kanjo was responsible for petitioning the Daijōkan to increase the annual

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67. The full Chinese title of the *Liqu jing* 理趣經 is *Dale jingang bukong zhenshi sanmoye jing* 大樂金剛不空眞實三摩耶經, the translation of which is attributed to Amoghavajra. See *Taishō* 8, no. 243. Portions of the sutra were often recited during rituals, but until Saisen this text was never considered a particularly esoteric Buddhist text. See, Hendrik van der Veere, *A Study into the Thought of Kōgyō Daishi Kakuban* (Leiden, Netherlands: Hotei Publishing, 2000), 21-22.

68. Kushida Ryōkō states that Shibana's history is the earliest biography of Saisen. See Kushida Ryōkō 櫛田良洪, *Zoku shingon mikkyō seiritsu katei no kenkyū* 統真言密教成立過程の研究 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1979), 66. However, according to Shibana, Saisen is listed in several genealogies and catalogues: the fifth chapter of the *Record of Treasures at Tōji*, the second chapter of *Appointed Heads of Tōji* (*Tōji chōja funin* 東寺長者補任), a running list of Tōji leaders first compiled in the mid-twelfth century, the fourth chapter of *A Record of the Classification of Lineages* (*Kechimyaku ruiju ki* 血脈類聚記), a collection of lineage charts listing post-Kūkai Esoteric Buddhist lineages, *A Record of the Cloisters and Schools of Ninnaji* (*Ninnaji sho inge ki* 仁和寺諸院家記), a record of buildings constructed with imperial support first compiled from 1532–1555, and *A Genealogy of Masters at Ninnaji* (*Ninnaji shoshi nenpu* 仁和寺諸師年譜), a list of masters based at Ninnaji first compiled in 1206 and expanded in 1348. For Shibana's brief biography on Saisen, see *DNBZ* 103.186-187.

69. For this record in the *Kechimyaku ruiju*, see *ZSZ* 39.44. Horiuchi claims that an earlier date of 1056 can be found in the colophon to a recently discovered manuscript. See Horiuchi 2009, 132-134.

funding of Tōji and reinstate the fifty monk mandate originally promised to Kūkai in the 823 edict. Moreover, according to Ninnaji records, Kakuban acted as interlocutor (*monja* 問者) along with four other monks during a session of the Denbōe in 1114. Although almost ninety years old at the time, Saisen may have been present at this event having been instrumental in launching this assembly just a few years earlier.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, in a colophon at the end of the *Catalogue of Works by the Great Universally Radiant Vajra* (*Dai henjō kongō gosakusho mokuroku* 大遍照金剛御作書目錄), the Edo-period scholar-priest Ryūkō 隆光 (1649–1724) notes that Saisen bequeathed his catalogue of Kūkai works to Kakuban, which then became the basis of later collections.<sup>71</sup>

In his catalogue, Saisen lists ninety-nine works, all of which he attributes to Kūkai. These include Kūkai's major treatises such as the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, the *Ten Abiding Minds*, and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*. Multiple versions of the three doctrinal works listed in the 835 edict are included as well as seven fascicles of the *Shōryōshū*.<sup>72</sup> Unfortunately, Saisen provides no indication of where or from whom he obtained these works. However, a generation later, in a similar list of Kūkai's works, the catalogue attributed to Kakuban offers a possible answer to this problem.

The colophon to Kakuban's catalogue provides the only date for a catalogue of Kūkai's works in the twelfth century, noting that it was compiled on the eighth month of 1137 (保延 3). It also records a source for the catalogue, stating that it was based on Saisen's earlier version. The colophon further includes a quote, which claims to be Saisen's explanation of how he came to possess these texts. According to the colophon, Saisen informs Kakuban:

今擧自視聽、未見他目錄。然則此外未見聞書猶定多之歟云云。

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70. Abé Ryūichi writes that Kakuban participated in the Denbōe at Ninnaji, but does not identify a source for this claim. Abé also states that Saisen acted as lecturer (*kōji* 講師), but I could not find a record of Saisen and Kakuban participating in the same assembly. See Ryūichi Abé, "From Kūkai to Kakuban: A Study of Shingon Buddhist Dharma Transmission" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1991), 316. According to an entry in the *Ninnaji hyōbaku shū* 仁和寺表白集 dated to 1114, Kakuban and several other monks participated in *rongi* at Ninnaji. However, the text does not mention Saisen. See *Dainihon shiryō* 大日本史料, vol. 3, no. 16, p. 67 (accessed at <http://clioimg.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/IMG/850/8500/02/0316/0067.tif>).

71. The "*Universally Radiant Vajra*" was an honorific title for Kūkai. This catalogue is attributed to Shōkaku 正覺, but as the colophon suggests this was probably an honorific title for Kakuban. See *KDZ* 15.236-240. Horiuchi discusses the connection between these two catalogues in Horiuchi 1993, 308.

72. For a complete list of these works in the *Catalogue of Works by Kōbō Daishi*, see *KDZ* 15.231-233. The editors note that they compiled this edition based on three manuscripts, but they do not provide any details.

This [catalogue] is entirely based on my own observations, and I have yet to see another catalogue. That being the case, there are likely to be numerous other works of which I am not aware.<sup>73</sup>

If we take this quote to be an accurate representation of Saisen's comments on the availability of Kūkai's works, Saisen was readily aware of the need to document and compile the writings of Kūkai, suggesting that this task had been neglected. He also issues a disclaimer regarding the authenticity of these works. Kakuban continues his quotation:

凡於書藉有無難決真偽易濫。自非深慧名師者攬。勿輒簡擇決斷。或於虛實典名有異本多。或於真偽書俱有同名別體。宜須遍尋深達。然後是非取捨。

In general, regarding collections of writings it is often difficult to determine their authenticity and they are easily corrupted. If one is not a wise and renowned master, he can confuse them. You should not make hasty judgements [regarding their authenticity]. In some cases, both apocryphal and legitimate texts are said to have numerous variants. In other cases, along with the authentic documents there are [versions] with the same title but different content. You must thoroughly investigate [these works] to the fullest extent. Only after doing so can you identify which are correct and which are mistakenly [attributed to Kūkai].<sup>74</sup>

This passage, which Kakuban claims to be Saisen's advise regarding the authenticity of his collection of Kūkai's works, attests that there was no standard collection of Kūkai's writings prior to Saisen's catalogue. Saisen also warns Kakuban that many of the attributions of authorship of these texts to Kūkai may be incorrect, and one should take caution when assigning authorship to these writings. Therefore, we can only speculate as to the existence and transmission of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* prior to Saisen's references to the text in his catalogue.

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73. *KDZ* 15.240. In his note following this statement, Ryūkō affirms that Kakuban obtained his collection of Kūkai works from Saisen. It is unclear, however, if Kakuban obtained these texts directly from Saisen or if this collection later found its way into his hands.

74. *KDZ* 15.240. The third fascicle of the *Shoshū shō sho roku senmyō sōroku* 諸宗章疏錄撰名總錄 also includes a passage supposedly from Saisen regarding his catalogue of Kūkai's works. The text differs slightly, but it seems to be based on the Kakuban colophon. See *DNBZS* 1.160b: 凡於書藉有無難決。真偽易亂。學者於上件中尋訪有無。簡辨真偽。且似同本異目者多矣。待可畏之訂正。又此外有數部。真偽及所出來詳者記左。 Brian Ruppert also mentions this passage in "Reconsidering the Buddhist Canon: *Shōgyō* ("Sacred Works") and the Transformation of Japanese Buddhist Scripture" presented at AAR National Conference, Chicago, Nov. 21, 2012 (unpublished), 19n34. Fujii Sami also cites this passage and discusses the relationship between Saisen and Kakuban. See Fujii Sami, *Shingonkei shōdō setsuwa no kenkyū* 真言系唱導說話の研究 (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 2008), 74-78.

(ii) "The Sacred Teachings Preserved through the Generations"

Kakuban's quote also informs us that the works included in the catalogue had been previously housed in various locations. If we dare to speculate how these works, and specifically the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, found their way into Saisen's possession, a sensible guess would be that they came from the monastic complex and ritual training center at Daigoji. A text by the same title as the *Treatise* appears in a catalogue of texts housed at Mandaraji. Founded by Ningai, Mandaraji was the ritual center of the Ono lineage of the Shingon school until it fractured into multiple sub-lineages in the twelfth century.

The *Catalogue of the Sutra Repository for the Ono Lineage* (*Ono kyōzō mokuroku* 小野經藏目錄) lists the collections of four Shingon monks: Kūkai (supposedly the works listed in this collection were copied in Kūkai's own hand), his disciple Shinga, Kangen 觀賢 (854–925), and Ningai. The titles included in these collections primarily denote ritual commentaries important to the Ono lineage. In addition to these collections, however, the catalogue also records the contents of four reliquaries (厨子) housed at Mandaraji on Mt. Daigo. In each of these reliquaries we find titles of texts that Saisen attributed to Kūkai. For instance, the seven-fascicle *Shōryōshū* was stored in the reliquary labeled "West," presumably because it was stored in the western section of the temple. It was this seven-fascicle version to which Saisen edited and appended the final three fascicles. The Ono catalogue further records that the corresponding "East" reliquary contained one fascicle of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Although only consisting of one fascicle, this text may have been an early manuscript of the *Treatise*.<sup>75</sup>

It is important to note that the Ono catalogue does not assign authorship to any of these titles, and the reason for housing them in Ningai's temple or how they got there is unclear. However, there is evidence that these collections later found their way to Ninnaji and possibility

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75. Most of the earliest manuscripts of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* only consist of the first fascicle. For a publication of the Ono catalogue, see the *Ono kyōzō mokuroku* 小野經藏目錄, in *Ryūmon bunko zenpon sōri* 龍門文庫善本叢利, vol. 12 (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1988). The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is listed on the top of page 73.

into Saisen's possession. The extant manuscript for the catalogue was written at Daigoji in 1168, approximately three decades after Kakuban compiled his catalogue of Kūkai works. However, there is reason to believe that this manuscript is a copy of a much earlier composition.<sup>76</sup>

In the sixth fascicle of his *Shingon Transmission* (*Shingon den* 眞言傳), the abbot of Kanjuji, Yokai 榮海 (1278–1347) records that the collection of texts housed at Mandaraji were dispersed in the late eleventh century after a dispute with a neighboring Mt. Daigo temple regarding ownership of the collection. He writes:

小野萬茶羅寺ハ、仁海僧正ノ草創トシテ、後朱雀院ノ御願ヲハシメヲカル。經藏ノ中ニ弘法大師所持ノ法門道具以下、代々祖師ノ聖教ヲ安置シテ、是ヲ成尊僧都ニ付屬ス。成尊コレヲ範俊ニ付ス。範俊那智ニ參籠ノ間、醍醐ノ義範僧都師ノ讓ヲ帶セス。彼ノ寺ヲ押妨ル間、承歷二年範俊奏聞ヲフルニヨリヲ、義範ノサマタケヲ止メテ、範俊勅裁ヲ蒙ル。コレ小野正流ノ印信經教等。他流ニ散スヘカラサル故ナリ。範俊ノ相承法門十二合道具等ヲ以ス。白河院ニ進シテ鳥羽寶藏ニ納メタリ。

Mandaraji of the Ono lineage was established by Ningai by the imperial decree of Emperor Go-Suzaku. In its sutra repository were stored the teachings and ritual implements possessed by Kōbō Daishi as well as the sacred teachings of the founder that had been preseeded through the generations and passed on to Jōson. Jōson transmitted these to Hanjun. While Hanjun was on pilgrimage to Naichi Falls, they came under the control of the Daigoji monk Gihan. He attempted to seize control of Hanjun's temple, but in the second year of Jōryaku Hanjun got word of this and issued a decree to stop Gihan. The seals of transmission, sutras, and texts of the legitimate Ono lineage were scattered among other lineages. Therefore, the inherited teachings (twelve in total), implements, etc. used by Hanjun's tradition were transferred to Shirakawain and then to the Toba repository.<sup>77</sup>

The abbot of Mandaraji in 1078, Hanjun 範俊 (1038–1112) had inherited the collection of sacred teachings from Jōson 成尊 (1012–1074), Ningai's chief disciple. However, while on a pilgrimage, the interim abbot, Gihan 義範 (1023–1088), dispersed many of the texts and

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76. The manuscript was copied at Daigoji by Hangō 範杲 in 1168. The editor, Kawamoto Ichiba, states that the catalogue was written in a single hand and that the works in Kūkai's own hand are labeled as *goshuseki* 御手跡. Others are labeled "Chinese versions" 唐本 or "Sanskrit version" 梵本. The works of Shinga, Kangen, Ningai listed in a total of seven collections. These are followed by four reliquaries labeled first, second, east, and west. The catalogue was thought to have been compiled after Ningai, because the text refers to him as the compiler of one of the collections. See the Kawamoto Ichiba 川本市場, "kaisetsu" 解説, in *Ryūmon bunko zenpon sōri* 龍門文庫善本叢利, vol. 12 (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1988), 483. Horiuchi argues that the 1168 manuscript was probably a copy of a much earlier version, perhaps dating back to Ningai's disciple Jōson. See Horiuchi 2009, 116-117.

77. *DNBZ* 106.233-234.

implements in this collection to other lineages at Daigoji. To preserve the remainder of the collection, Hanjun relocated it to Shirakawa'in 白河院, which later became a part of Emperor Toba's sutra repository at Shōkōmyōin 勝光明院.<sup>78</sup>

The dates for the earliest extant manuscripts of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* overlap with the compilation of the Ono catalogue. Daitōkyū Memorial Library, the location of the oldest extant manuscript of the *Treatise*, houses many texts originally stored at Go-Shirakawa's repository, which inherited some of the previous imperial collections. Moreover, Uejima Susumu notes that Shirakawa, after abdicating in 1087, personally collected sacred texts and implements from the Ono lineage based at Mandaraji. These "sacred works" included collections of Kūkai, Shinga, Kangen, and Ningai.<sup>79</sup> Saisen and Kanjo and the rising fortunes of Ninnaji were intertwined with Emperor Shirakawa and his interest in Kūkai texts and pilgrimage to Mt. Kōya. Kanjo presided over the ordination of the emperor's son, Kakuho 覺法, who became the imperial abbot of Mandaraji. Shirakawa's uncle, Shōshin, who was well supported by the imperial household while at Ninnaji, was the master of both Saisen and Kanjo. Perhaps, Shirakawa was also Saisen's source for obtaining Kūkai's writings for his catalogue. It is also possible that Saisen was tasked with cataloging and commentating on manuscripts acquired by Shirakawa.

Furthermore, the fact that the Ono collection was dispersed among various temples corresponds to Saisen's quote stating that he consulted different temple repositories in compiling his catalogue of Kūkai works. This hypothesis is also supported by Saisen's comments regarding the editing of the *Shōryōshū*. He states:

此集第八以來零落年久。乃拾先聖美言。補三闕文。

The eighth fascicle onward of this collection were lost over the course of many years. Consequently, I have gathered together the beautiful words of the Sage and appended the three missing texts.<sup>80</sup>

Saisen finished editing the *Shōryōshū* in 1079, shortly after Hanjun relocated the Mandaraji collection to Shirakawa'in. Although he does not include a date for his catalogue of Kūkai works, it is reasonable to presume that he would have compiled these texts at approximately the same

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78. Horiuchi Noriyuki discusses Yōkai's comment in Horiuchi 2009, 116-119. Uejima Susumu also discusses the Ono catalogue at Daigoji and its affiliation with Ningai in Uejima 2012, 55-57.

79. See Uejima Susumu 上島享, *Nihon chūsei shakkai no keisei to ōken* 日本中世社会の形成と王権 (Nagoya: University of Nagoya Press, 2010), 220.

80. *TKDZ* 8.215.



time he collected manuscripts of the *Shōryōshū*. Therefore, it is possible that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was preserved in the Mandaraji collection and later found its way into Saisen's catalogue.<sup>81</sup>

However, this narrative is also mere speculation. The Ono catalogue does not identify the *Treatise* as Kūkai's composition. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that the texts stored in the four reliquaries at Mandaraji were passed down by Kūkai's disciples. If so, why would they not be listed in the personal collections of Shinga, Kangen, or Ningai? As opposed to these individual collections, there is no discernible pattern to the titles and grouping of texts stored in the reliquaries. Furthermore, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* appears to have had little to no significance to Ningai and his disciples at Daigoji. In his analysis of Shingon lineages at major temples across Japan, Ningai never mentions the *Treatise*, nor any other Kūkai work. Perhaps, these texts were just various manuscripts that Ningai and his disciples discovered when collecting ritual texts from other monastic centers.<sup>82</sup>

By examining the catalogues, we can trace the canonization of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* from a random manuscript at the bottom of a box in the eastern corner of Mandaraji to a Kūkai work in Saisen's catalogue and the subject of praise in his commentary. Saisen possibly obtained this text as well as the other works listed in his catalogue from the imperial collections of Emperor Shirakawa. However, this textual history does not explain why Saisen considered it to be a sacred teaching. To address this question, it is necessary to examine how Saisen discusses the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in another body of extra-canonical literature. Specifically, the rich hagiographical tradition surrounding Kūkai and Saisen's commentary on these texts offers a possible answer to why he held the *Treatise* in such high esteem.

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### The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and the Cult of Kōbō Daishi

Among the semi-legendary figures that adorn the annuals of Japanese history, few have generated a body of scholarship as extensive as Kūkai. As a cultural icon, Kūkai has been credited with devising a Japanese phonetical system in the form of the *iroha*, designed public

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81. According to Horiuchi Noriyuki, Saisen completed the three appended fascicles to the *Shōryōshū* in 1079, making it his earliest dated compositions. See Horiuchi 2009, 133.

82. In his *Kanjō go genki* 灌頂御源記, Ningai compares *abhiṣeka* rites conducted at different temples in an effort to construct a genealogy of the Ono lineage. See *DNBZ* 116.483-496.

works projects, and founded public schools.<sup>83</sup> Even the account of his birth was a miraculous event. In a birth story conspicuously similar to the Buddha Śākyamuni, the *Legend of the Establishment and Cultivation of Kongōbuji* (*Kongōbuji konryū shugyō engi* 金剛峯寺建立修行緣起) tells us that Kūkai's mother, a member of the Ato clan (阿刀氏), had a dream that an Indian sage (天竺聖人) entered her side. Soon after, she gave birth to Kūkai.

The same text relates an event that occurred when Kūkai was five or six years old. Fashioning a statue of the buddha out of clay, he enshrined the icon in a small hut made of sticks. Then, dozing off in the shrine, he had a dream in which he saw a group of buddhas seated atop an eight-petalled lotus. This tale informs us that the boy Kūkai engaged these buddhas in a dialogue regarding the secret teachings. Decades later, upon returning to Japan after receiving initiation into the Shingon school in China, Kūkai revealed this secret in his doctrinal treatises through which he endeavored to transmit the sacred teachings of becoming a buddha in this very body and the preaching of the dharma body of the buddha.<sup>84</sup>

In his article "Kūkai as Master and Savior," Joseph Kitagawa discusses the dual aspect of Kūkai's legacy as both a legendary spiritual hero and a Buddhist intellectual. According to Kitagawa, Kūkai as we know of him today is a composite of many factors. He was a master of esoteric Buddhism; Kitagawa refers to him as a "classical figure" in that he represented the cultural archetype of a religious virtuoso in the Japanese context. Under the designation of "Kūkai the Master," Kitagawa sketches a biography of Kūkai by "sorting facts from legends." According to Kitagawa, Kūkai's travel to China and subsequent writings were motivated by his desire to advocate for esoteric Buddhism. This fact, he claims, is evident in a handful of biographies on Kūkai's "actual" life, namely, the biographies attributed to his disciples Shinzen and Shinga. He also cites the *Twenty-five Section Testimony* (*Nijūgo jō go yuigō* 二十五条御遺告), which claims to be Kūkai's own recollection of his life and final instructions to his disciples. Although Kitagawa admits this work was probably not Kūkai's actual testimony, it is the primary source of information on Kūkai's early life.<sup>85</sup>

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83. Hakeda discusses some of the legends of Kūkai in the introduction to Yoshito S. Hakeda, *Kūkai: Major Works* (New York: Columbia University, 1972).

84. See *KDDZ* 1.50-57. The *Legend of the Establishment and Cultivation of Kongōbuji* is traditionally attributed to Ningai. However the date of composition in the colophon is 968 (康保 5), meaning he would have written the text in his teens. This early date has led most scholars to consider this attribution to be apocryphal. Ethan Lindsay discusses this text in Ethan Lindsay, "Pilgrimage to the Sacred Traces of Kōyasan: Place and Devotion in Late Heian Japan" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2012), 13-35.

85. Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Kūkai as Master and Savior," in *The Biographical Process: Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion*, edited by Frank E. Reynolds and David Cupps (Paris: Mouton, 1976), 319-320. There are nine extant versions of the Kūkai's last testimony, but the twenty-five chapter version seems to be the most preferred among medieval and modern scholars.

Regarding "Kūkai as Savior," Kitagawa proposes that in the century after his death the perception of Kūkai began to shift from that of a master of Buddhist thought to a deified saint. He presents Kūkai's supernatural biography in two stages. Kitagawa exclaims that Kūkai's writings on doctrine were an expression of his personal spiritual development. However, this "real" Kūkai underwent a transformation after his death to become a deified symbol for a populous yearning to achieve a similar path to salvation. His supernatural abilities, gradually embellished by his disciples and later generations of Shingon initiates, eventually overshadowed the human Kūkai. In other words, as a master of esoteric Buddhism, Kūkai came to embody the teachings that he expounded in his writings. As a result, his disciples and later generations of disciples viewed him not as a mere worldling, but the great Master who Advanced the Dharma (弘法大師).<sup>86</sup>

Kitagawa's attempt to discover the "real" Kūkai within the same sources he discredits as ahistorical may be methodologically problematic, but he is not alone in his search for the historical Kūkai. In a recent publication, Shingon historian Takeuchi Kōzen seeks to demystify our view of Kūkai by questioning the received narrative and revisiting the earliest textual sources. Takeuchi even challenges long-held truisms, such as the claim that Kūkai was appointed head abbot of Tōji in 824 by Emperor Junna, a claim also rooted in the *Twenty-five Section Testimony*. As Takeuchi demonstrates, this was probably an embellishment in the hagiographical tradition of an imperial edict that merely allotted a space at Tōji for Kūkai to perform *abhiṣeka* rites. However, he also seeks to uncover the historical Kūkai, noting that our view of Kūkai the intellectual has been blurred after twelve centuries of blending historical events with hagiography perpetrated by the Kōbō Daishi cult, false textual attributions, and sectarian polemics.<sup>87</sup>

Takeuchi is correct. What we know of Kūkai has been shaped by centuries of interpretation and reinterpretation of his life, often premised on claims that a modern audience would reject as superstitious or medieval. However, there are two problems with this narrative of Kūkai's transformation from an historical individual to deified cult figure. First, the biographical and hagiographical evidence for his life are often based on the same sources. Kitagawa merely selects which details are real and which are embellished as they suit his needs in constructing a modern biography of a pre-modern life. Takeuchi approaches the sources in much greater depth and rejects accounts of Kūkai's life that cannot be verified in contemporary sources. However, as he admits, this leaves us with very little information about Kūkai with which to create a biography.

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86. See Kitagawa 1976, 327-336.

87. See Takeuchi Kōzen 武内孝善, *Kūkai den no kenkyū—go hansei no kiseki to shisō* 空海伝の研究—後半生の軌跡と思想 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2015), 2-7.

Moreover, there is no reason to assume that the cultural understanding of Kūkai evolved in such a linear fashion from the historical Kūkai to a legendary version of this historical Kūkai. Of course, in terms of chronology, the historical Kūkai, or Kūkai the intellectual, preceded the image of Kūkai as a supernatural being. However, all evidence suggests that his significance as the founder of the Shingon school developed in the opposite direction. Kūkai was a cult figure long before scholars cared about his writings on doctrine. In fact, his status as a supernatural being is what made his writings so important to the tradition. In other words, the emergence of Kūkai Studies in the eleventh century grew out of a belief that Kūkai was a supernatural being, an advanced bodhisattva who vowed to spread the esoteric teachings and reveal the supreme preaching of the dharma body of the buddha.

(i) "I Will Return"

In addition to manuscripts of Kūkai's works and the sacred texts housed at temple repositories such as the Ono lineage collection at Mandaraji, Saisen also inherited a tradition of hagiography on the life and afterlife of Kūkai. Kūkai's death was documented by several of his disciples. Historians often cite a letter composed by Kūkai's chief disciple Jichie as the earliest account of Kūkai's final days.<sup>88</sup> However, in his analysis of the various biographies of Kūkai in the *Compendium of Determinations Regarding the Meditative Trance of Kōbō Daishi (Kōbō daishi go nyūjō kanketsu shō 弘法大師御入定勸決抄)*, Saisen dismisses these first person accounts as apocryphal. He proposes three reasons for doubting their authenticity. First, he claims that the records of Shinzei, Shinzen, Shinga, and Shinshō, which are thought to be based on Jichie's letter, all provide incorrect dates for Kūkai's death. Second, he disagrees with the description of Kūkai's posture in the biographies. Shinzei, for instance, records Kūkai lying on his side before expiring. However, Saisen cites eye-witness accounts of pilgrims who attested to seeing Kūkai in seated meditation in his mausoleum at Okunoin. Third, it was well-known throughout Japan, Saisen claims, that Kūkai did not really die, but rather had entered a deep state of meditative trance (入定). Therefore, Shinzei's record must have been falsified by someone without first-

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88. Abé Ryūichi discusses Jichie's letter, calling it the first biography of Kūkai. See Abé 1999, 41-42. He also notes that this letter was probably the basis of Shinzei's biography. See *ibid.*, 461.

hand knowledge of Kūkai's final moments. In other words, Saisen preferred an alternative history of Kūkai's death over the accounts attributed to his disciples of these events based on a belief that Kūkai was still alive and seated in a deep meditative trance on Mt. Kōya.<sup>89</sup>

As the fifteenth chapter of the *Tale of Flowering Fortunes* (*Eiga monogatari* 榮華物語) demonstrates, by the time Fujiwara Michinaga 藤原道長 (966–1028) made his pilgrimage to Kūkai's mausoleum on Mt. Kōya in 1023 it was widely believed that Kūkai was abiding on Mt. Kōya in a perpetual state of meditative trance. While enumerating Michinaga's pious deeds, the tale simply lists his visit as a proof of the merit he had accumulated over the course of his lifetime. However, the story also suggests an alternative motive for this trip. The narrator notes that Michinaga was in fact born for the express purpose of propagating Kūkai's teachings. The narrator then describes what Michinaga sees when entering Kūkai's mausoleum, stating that the Great Master's appearance was bluish in color. His robes were clean and new as he sat in a perfect mediation posture awaiting the arrival of the future buddha Maitreya.<sup>90</sup>

It is debatable when exactly the belief in an undead Kūkai become prominent at court or among the clergy. Shingon scholars such as Yoritomi Motohiro have suggested that Kangen was the earliest proponent of the Kōbō Daishi cult. In his capacity as the abbot of Tōji, Kangen is noteworthy for having successfully petitioned the court to grant Kūkai the posthumous title of Kōbō Daishi in 918. He also secured positions for two of his disciples to be housed at Okunoin, Kūkai's mausoleum. Therefore, Yoritomi suggests, Kangen not only played a significant role in

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89. See *KDDZ* 1.127. Although he cites several sources that discuss the difference between *nirvāṇa* and *nirodha-samapatti*, it is not clear that Saisen is applying these terms in the same way. He seems to equate *nirvāṇa* (涅槃・入滅) with the death of the physical body and *nirodha* (入定) with a state of suspended animation. Even in this state, however, he suggests that Kūkai still has mental activity.

Saisen claims that Shinzei's biography includes a date of 836, not 835, the established date. It is unclear what manuscripts he had at his disposal, but all extant versions of Shinzei's biography include a correct date of 835. As Shirai Yūko notes, Saisen may have been using a manuscript that had been corrupted, or perhaps the extant manuscripts were later changed to reflect the correct date. See Shirai Yūko 白井優子, *Kūkai densetsu no keisei to kōyasan – nyūjō densetsu no keisei to kōyasan nōkotsu no hassei* 空海伝説の形成と高野山-入定伝説の形成と高野山納骨の発生 (Tokyo: Dōsei, 1986), 16. It is also possible that Saisen intentionally misread the date in order to support his second and third reasons for dismissing this account. The other biographies, however, do posit a date of 836.

90. The narrator foreshadows this interaction between Michinaga and Kūkai by suggesting that the most infamous politician-aristocrat of early medieval Japan was born for the purpose of proselyting the teachings of either Kūkai, Shōtoku Taishi, or both. See chapter fifteen in the *Nihon Koten Bungaku Teikei* 日本古典文学大系, vol. 75 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965), 448. For a translation, see William H. McCullough and Helen Craig McCullough, trans, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period*, vol. 2 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 513.

re-establishing an institutional link between Tōji and Mt. Kōya, but was also an early propagator of the Kōbō Daishi cult.<sup>91</sup>

Although Yoritomi connects Kangen to the Kōbō Daishi cult, it is unclear if the notion of Kūkai abiding in meditative trance was circulating at this time. However, a nascent form of this belief can be found recorded a few decades after the title of Kōbō Daishi had been made official. In his diary, the *Kurekishō* 九曆抄, Fujiwara no Morosuke 藤原師輔 (909–960) records a short story involving Kūkai and the Tendai scholiast Ennin. According to Morosuke, on the seventeenth day of the eighth month in 930 (延長 8), a monk from Tōji named Renshū 蓮舟 told him a story about a dream Ennin once had concerning Kūkai. According to this story, Ennin told a group of monks that Kūkai's form of Shingon was obsolete. That night Ennin saw Kūkai in a dream. This dream was followed by another in which a disciple named Kanshu 康修 appeared to Ennin and told him, "the Master of Shingon is here." Shortly after, Ennin set out in search of Kūkai, but in his mausoleum he only found a five-pronged vajra on top of a single lotus blossom. Startled, he further searched the grounds for Kūkai, who he expected to find in his mausoleum. Kanshu then appeared to him, explaining that the vajra was in fact his master Kōbō Daishi.<sup>92</sup>

Of course, Morosuke's story includes several details that should cause one to question its historical validity. First, the only record of a disciple of Kūkai named Kanshu is found in an Edo-period collection of biographies, which seems to have been based on this story in the *Kurekishō*.<sup>93</sup> Second, it is not clear how Renshū would have learned this story. According to the record of administrators at Tōji, Renshū was an assistant preceptor in 933.<sup>94</sup> If he heard it from Ennin directly, which Kanshu's biography implies, then he would have been quite senior by time he told it to Morosuke. Finally, the story could be interpreted as a polemic against Ennin's writings on esoteric Buddhism, which incorporated many sources previously not available to Kūkai. On the other hand, the story could serve as an example of the continuity between Kūkai and Ennin's lineages. Nonetheless, this story is evidence of an early form of the legend that Kūkai did not die, but was in fact sitting in eternal meditation on Mt. Kōya. However, this peculiar story from Morosuke's diary is not necessarily evidence that the Kōbō Daishi cult was as widespread by early tenth century as Yoritomi has suggested.

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91. Kangen's petition can be found in *KDZ* 15.225-230. Yoritomi discusses Kangen in his overview of Shingon institutional history in Yoritomi 2000, 41.

92. See *Kurekishō* (Tokyo: The Historiographical Society, University of Tokyo, 1997), 130. This passage can be found at the following link <https://clioimg.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/viewer/image/idata/850/8500/06/0901/0130.tif>. This story is repeated with slight variations in *KDDZ* 1.279 and 10.133.

93. See *KDDZ* 10.132-133. The details of this version of the story slightly differ. The compiler of the biography states that this is the only record of a disciple of Kūkai named Kanshu.

94. A monk by this name is listed in the record of Tōji administrators, *Tōji chōja fujin* 東寺長者補任. According to this record, Renshū was an assistant preceptor at Tōji in 933. See *ZZGRSJ* 2.494.

The most widely accepted view among scholars is that Ningai promoted the idea of an undead Kūkai as part of his effort to raise funds to rebuild Okunoin. A later hagiography dated to 1118, the *Extended Biography of Kōbō Daishi* (*Kōbō daishi kōden* 弘法大師廣傳), even claims that Ningai personally escorted Michinaga to Mt. Kōya to demonstrate that the Daishi was in fact not dead.<sup>95</sup> However, in a recent study, Hyōtani Kazuko argues that monks at Ninnaji and their imperial kin were the real champions of restoring Kūkai's mausoleum and promoting the beliefs of the Kōbō Daishi cult. It was not Ningai who accompanied Michinaga to Mt. Kōya as the later hagiography suggests. Rather, Hyōtani proposes that it was Michinaga's brother-in-law, the Ninnaji monk Saishin 濟信 who encouraged him to seek out the Daishi. More significantly for the restoration of Mt. Kōya, however, was the appointment of Saishin's disciple Shōshin to the position of abbot at Ninnaji. As I discussed in the previous section, Shōshin was also the master of Saisen and the subsequent abbot of Ninnaji, Kanjo. Furthermore, as the uncle of Emperor Shirakawa, Shōshin established a precedent at Ninnaji as an imperial monastery. In 1072, he built a hermitage (庵室) at Okunoin to house monks in residence at Kūkai's mausoleum. These monks were chosen from the Ninnaji clergy. This cooperation between the Ninnaji clergy and the imperial household continued, ultimately culminating with Emperor Toba supporting Kakuban's efforts to establish a new monastic center on Mt. Kōya in 1132.<sup>96</sup>

The second belief constituting the cult of Kōbō Daishi contends that Kūkai was reborn in Tuṣita Heaven after his death. In his analysis of Kūkai biographies, Saisen provides no explanation for the institutional development of the Kōbō Daishi cult or the rebuilding of Mt. Kōya. Rather, he is primarily concerned with explaining how two seemingly contradictory beliefs regarding Kūkai's postmortem status are in fact compatible. In this work of sectarian apologetics, Saisen's source for reconciling the belief in an undead Kūkai with the claim that he was reborn in Tuṣita is none other than the Daishi himself.<sup>97</sup>

In the seventeenth story of the *Twenty-five Section Testimony*, Kūkai instructs his disciples on managing the Shingon school after he transpires and predicts his own rebirth in Tuṣita Heaven. He states:

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95. See *KDDZ* 1.278. For a succinct historical overview of efforts to restore Mt. Kōya in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, see William Londo, "The 11th Century Revival of Mt. Kōya: Its Genesis as a popular Religious Site," *Japanese Religions* 27/1 (2002):19-40.

96. See Hyōtani Kazuko 俵谷和子, *Kōyasan shinkō to kenmon kishin—Kōbō daishi kūkai nyūjō densetsu wo chūshin ni—高野山信仰と権門貴紳—弘法大師空海入定伝説を中心に* (Tokyo: Iwata Shoin, 2010), 27.

97. *KDDZ* 1.127-134

是吾非欲白屍之上更人之勞。護繼蜜教壽命可令開龍三華<sup>98</sup>庭謀也。吾閉眼之後、必方往生兜率他天。可待彌勒慈恩尊御前。五十六億餘之後、必慈尊御共下生祇侯可問吾先跡。

I do not wish to become a corpse, nor suffer the defilements of humans {i.e., corporal decay}. I intend to protect and perpetuate the esoteric teachings by opening the three halls of Maitreya. After I close my eyes, I will be reborn in Tuṣita Heaven and attend Maitreya. After 5.6 billion years, I shall return with Maitreya and will inquire about the traces of my former remains.<sup>99</sup>

In other words, Kūkai declares that his body will not decay, but will be preserved until he returns with the future buddha to preach the dharma. Meanwhile, he will propagate the esoteric teachings in Tuṣita Heaven and instructs his disciples to continue his lineage in this world.

Similar claims to Kūkai's rebirth in Tuṣita Heaven are found in the *Legend of the Establishment and Cultivation of Kongōbuji* and other hagiographical sources. The *Legend of Kongōbuji* is a treasure of fantastic tales related to Kūkai and the founding of his mountaintop monastery. Perhaps its best known story explains how Kūkai selected Mt. Kōya as the location for Kongōbuji. The legend tells us that before he boarded the ship to return to Japan after his two years of study in Tang China, Kūkai announced, "The secret and sacred teachings have been transmitted to me. If there is a land where they can thrive, shall you quickly find such a place." Kūkai then tosses a three-pronged vajra into the sky in the direction of Japan, which, of course, lands on Mt. Kōya where he later builds his monastery.<sup>100</sup>

This legendary tale also expands on the claims in the *Twenty-five Section Testimony* regarding Kūkai's rebirth in Tuṣita, explaining why Mt. Kōya was a sacred space in which he could remain in suspended animation until the arrival of the future buddha. He pleads with his disciples not to allow the mountain to be abandoned. One reason to maintain the temple on the mountain was to appease the local gods, who, if left unsubdued by Buddhist rites could become malevolent. The more profound reason to preserve the monastery on Mt. Kōya, he proclaims, was its unparalleled spiritual potency. The testimony claims that past buddhas also came to the mountain, which is why the honorable ones of the mandala will take up residence there. "Seeing the traces of the buddhas," the text states, "makes us aware of their bodily postures, and hearing

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98. Alternatively rendered as 華三, which is another term for Tuṣita Heaven.

99. From *KDDZ* 1.17a-b. Hase Hoshū, the editor of the *KDDZ*, argued that at least portions of this work can be attributed to Kūkai or his disciples. Shirai argues that it was probably produced around 895. See Shirai 1986, 16. However, in the preceding line, the author is clearly referring to Kangen. He states that the head of Tōji will be a disciple who is born after his passing. This head abbot will not have seen Kūkai's face, but will know his mind. He will then honor him with a posthumous title. Therefore, the hagiography or at least this particular passage was probably post-dates Kangen, who died in 925.

100. See *KDDZ* 1.52a.



their voices distinguishes the compassionate from the hateful." In other words, Kūkai revealed to his disciples that his mausoleum on Mt. Kōya was the nexus of past and future buddhas and the location where the buddhas and deities of the mandala assemble to preach the dharma.<sup>101</sup>

As a foundational legend for Kongōbuji, these alleged final words of Kūkai offer a doctrinal as well as aesthetic justification for promoting pilgrimage to the mountaintop monastery. In his article on fundraising campaigns (勸進) in eleventh-century Japan, William Londo notes that elite clergy such as Ningai, Saishin, and Morosuke's son Jinkaku 深覺 spent much of their time collecting alms to restore Okunoin and Kongōbuji.<sup>102</sup> Tales of Kūkai abiding on the mountain in meditation would have been useful tropes to recount when soliciting funds from courtiers and bureaucratic offices such as the Daijōkan. Likewise, declaring Mt. Kōya a locus for the buddhas of the past, present, and future, created an incentive to make the pilgrimage to the mountain.

The *Extended Biography of Kōbō Daishi* expands on this passage from the Kongōbuji text, asserting that the future Buddha Maitreya will descend from Tuṣita Heaven to Mt. Kōya. The same passage stating that Ningai guided Michinaga to Kūkai's mausoleum also describes Mt. Kōya as the place where "the sages of the ten directions constantly dwell and the buddhas of the three temporal realms transverse and transform." It is also where one finds "the traces of Śākyamuni having turned the wheel of the dharma and where Maitreya will preach the dharma in the future." Therefore, anyone who steps foot on the mountain, the text proclaims, will be saved from an undesirable rebirth in the hell, animal, or hungry ghost realms.<sup>103</sup>

While his master Shōshin and colleague Kanjo successfully expanded Ninnaji's control over Mt. Kōya, Saisen also had a role to play in promoting pilgrimage to the mountain. For instance, Kūkai declares in the *Twenty-five Section Testimony* that he will be reborn in Tuṣita, while still in mediation on Mt. Kōya. He instructs his disciples to care for his body, because he expects to see it when he returns in five and half billion years. In other words, Kūkai simultaneously abides in meditation on Mt. Kōya while attending Maitreya in Tuṣita Heaven. It may seem like an odd claim to maintain a physical body in one place while being reborn in a higher realm. However, ever the good scholiast, Saisen is prepared for such skepticism. Applying the two-truths hermeneutic, he explains that the ultimate truth is that Kūkai has been reborn in Tuṣita Heaven and no longer remains present in this world. On the other hand, as a provisional

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101. *KDDZ* 1.55a. Hyōtani also refers to this passage in Hyōtani 2010, 30.

102. See Londo 2002, 27-33.

103. See *KDDZ* 1.278b.

truth, his body remains intact as a skillful means for demonstrating the power of the esoteric teachings. Citing the example of Śākyamuni's relics, Saisen states that the body serves as an object of veneration for pilgrims who seek the benefits of the Daishi's teachings.<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, Saisen notes that the Daishi's case is not unprecedented, but a similar account is documented in the third fascicle of the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*Dazhidulun* 大智度論), which recounts a story of Mahākāśyapa on Mt. Gṛdhrakūṭa. In response to a question asking why Śākyamuni Buddha preferred to reside on this particular mountain, the commentator offers several possible reasons. First, he states that the buddha liked Mt. Gṛdhrakūṭa because it is close enough to the city of Rājagṛha where the *saṃgha* would hold retreats, but still remote enough not to be overly crowded. Second, the commentator reminds his interlocutor that this is the site where Mahākāśyapa compiled the *Tripitaka*. Seizing the opportunity to tell a story, the commentator notes that having completed the *Tripitaka*, Mahākāśyapa decided to follow the Śākyamuni Buddha's example and enter *nirvāṇa*. He informed his disciples of his decision, and they in turn told the lay officials in the town below. The officials, however, were not pleased by the news and ascended the mountain to request one final sermon from Mahākāśyapa. After delivering his final testimony and displaying his supernatural abilities, he announces:

令我身不壞。彌勒成佛、我是骨身還出。以此因緣度衆生。

My body will not be allowed to decay. When Maitreya becomes a buddha, my skeleton will reappear. In this form, I will assist in saving sentient beings.<sup>105</sup>

Upon making this declaration, Mahākāśyapa disappeared into the side of Mt. Gṛdhrakūṭa. The commentator notes that when Maitreya descends to be reborn in this world and revive the buddha dharma he will go to the mountain and, by merely touching it, will reanimate Mahākāśyapa. Humans will see what great feats they can achieve even with an ancient mortal body like that of Mahākāśyapa and will have successful rebirths as gods, arhats, or even bodhisattvas. For these reason, the commentator concludes, the Śākyamuni Buddha enjoyed residing on Mt. Gṛdhrakūṭa.<sup>106</sup>

Saisen compares Kūkai to this account of Mahākāśyapa in the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. He states that, like Mahākāśyapa, Kūkai did not die, but entered a state of

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104. See *KDDZ* 1.130.

105. *Taishō* 25.79a04-5.

106. This story is found in the third fascicle of the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 25.78b-79a. For a translation of this passage see Étienne Lamotte, *Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse de Nāgārjuna (Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra)*. (Louvain: Bureaux du Muséon, 1944), and the corresponding English translation in *The Treatise on the Great Virtue of Wisdom of Nāgārjuna*, translated by Gelongma Karma Migme Chodron (2001), 166-170.

suspended animation. In the case of Mahākāśyapa, his body was preserved inside the mountain. Likewise, Kūkai's body remains intact on Mt. Kōya, although within his mausoleum (which is visible to pilgrims) rather than interned in the mountain itself. Both sages, according to Saisen, chose to forgo entering *nirvāṇa* so they might continue to save sentient beings. They achieve this goal in two ways. By being reanimated for the arrival of Maitreya, they vow to save sentient beings in the age of the next buddha. In the meantime, their corporal remains, and by extension the mountains that embody them, provide merit for pilgrims who, as the *Extended Biography of Kōbō Daishi* states, "step even one foot on the mountain."<sup>107</sup>

### (ii) "Not a Typical Student"

Saisen's second explanation for this dual ontology of the Daishi, leads us to the third belief of the Kōbō Daishi cult, namely, that Kūkai was actually a bodhisattva of the third *bhūmi* (第三地菩薩). Although this claim is ubiquitous in the hagiographical literature, it is unclear exactly where it originated. Saisen was probably one of the earliest proponents of this idea. For several centuries following Saisen's commentary on Kūkai's hagiography, Tendai scholiasts countered this claim not by dismissing it but by promoting patriarchs in the Tendai school to even higher positions. For instance, in his *Essay on the Similarities and Differences between the Two Schools of Tendai and Shingon* (*Tendai shingon nishū dōi shō* 天台眞言二宗同異章), the leader of monastic training program on Mt. Hiei, Shōshin 證眞 (active 1153–1214), comments on this belief in Kūkai's rank as a bodhisattva of the third *bhūmi*. Rather than reject this claim as ridiculous or mistaken, which he does with many of Kūkai's doctrinal proclamations, he counters by stating that Saichō was actually the Medicine King and Ennin was a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara.<sup>108</sup> Another Tendai monk, Jōshun 貞舜 (1334–1422), proposed that Kūkai actually predicted that Annen would outrank him. He states that Kūkai appeared to Annen in a dream and confessed to him that Annen was a bodhisattva of the eighth *bhūmi*, whereas he was merely a bodhisattva of the third *bhūmi*. Thus, Annen was actually more advanced along the bodhisattva path than he.<sup>109</sup>

According to Saisen, the identity of Kūkai as a high-ranking bodhisattva was revealed by none other than Kūkai's master Huiguo. As Kūkai claims in his *Catalogue of Imported Items*, Huiguo acknowledged him to be his successor to the Shingon lineage and announced that Kūkai

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107. See *KDDZ* 1.136-138.

108. See *Taishō* 74.423a5-12. I translate this passage in Part II of the dissertation.

109. For Jōshun's collection of various Tendai titles and writings, the *Tendai myōmoku ruiju shō* 天台名目類聚鈔, see *TZ* 22.44b. Ōkubo discusses this passage in Ōkubo 2004, 294.

would propagate the sacred teachings in Japan. In Saisen's citation of this pronouncement, however, he quotes Huiguo as identifying Kūkai as a bodhisattva of the third *bhūmi*.

The quotation of Huiguo recognizing Kūkai as his dharma heir is the only verification that Kūkai received *abhiṣeka* initiation from Huiguo. Of course, Kūkai also possessed several ritual implements and portraits of the Chinese patriarchs demonstrating that he resided at Qinglongsi.<sup>110</sup> However, the quote is the only verification in Huiguo's own words that Kūkai was a part of his lineage. Variations of this quote appear in several of Kūkai's writings, and it seems to have undergone a curious evolution leading up to Saisen's analysis in his compendium on hagiographies. In his catalogue, Kūkai quotes Huiguo stating that he was overjoyed to meet him having feared he would not find a qualified heir before his death.<sup>111</sup> In a memorial that Kūkai supposedly wrote for Huiguo, he states that the recently departed master appeared to him the evening after his death to inform him that they have spent many lifetimes together as master and disciple. The apparition of Huiguo then declares that he will be reborn in the east, where he will become Kūkai's disciple.<sup>112</sup> Finally, as a testament to his master's approval of his inheritance of the esoteric Buddhism lineage, Kūkai quotes a memorial in his two dharma transmission texts attributed to a lay practitioner named Wu Yin 吳殷. In this account of Kūkai and Huiguo's first meeting, Huiguo has slightly more to say than the quote recorded in the catalogue, exclaiming to his group of disciples that Kūkai came in search of the sacred teachings and to study the two mandala.<sup>113</sup>

Shingon scholars often refer to another memorial for Huiguo dated to 826 as the source for Kūkai's memorial in the *Shōryōshū* and Wu Yin's memorial quoted in the transmission texts.<sup>114</sup> However, Wu Yin's memorial quoted in Kūkai's transmission texts differs considerably

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110. In their study of chan portraiture, Sharf and Foulk argue that portraits were transmitted from master to disciple as proof of dharma transmission. Rather, portraits of the master were commissioned after his death, and the quality of such portraits reflected the financial status of the commissioner more than their status as a disciple. See T. Griffith Foulk and Robert H. Sharf, "On the Ritual Use of Ch'an Portraiture in Medieval China," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 7 (1993):207-208.

111. See *Taishō* 55.1065a21-25. For an English translation of this passage, see Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 222.

112. This memorial is preserved in the second fascicle of the *Shōryōshū*. See *TKDZ* 8.36. According to Takagi and Dreitlein, this memorial is Kūkai's copy of Wu Yin's memorial composed soon after Huiguo's death. See Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 229. However, other than Huiguo's biographical details, these two letters are very different.

113. Both the *Longer* and *Shorter Dharma Transmission* texts quote Wu Yin's memorial, but the wording slightly differs. For the longer text, see *TKDZ* 1.112, and the shorter text can be found in *TKDZ* 1.131.

114. Abé discusses the correlation between the Wu Yin's memorial and Kūkai's quotes in his lineage text in Abé 1999, 223. In the notes, pp. 505n78, Abé states that the biography in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* and the memorial dating to 826 are identical. The biographical details are similar, as are those in the *Shōryōshū* memorial, but the memorial does not include the quote from Huiguo regarding Kūkai. Abé also states that *Taishō* 50.295 references Wu Yin's memorial, but this is just a lineage text that places him in Huiguo's line of transmission.

from this account. The most striking difference between these memorials are their treatment of Kūkai. The quotations from Huiguo regarding Kūkai in his own works are not found in any other source, including the 826 memorial. It is possible that Kūkai requested that Wu Yin provide him with a copy of his memorial during the month long funeral procession as proof of his studies with Huiguo. However, if this is the case, why does Kūkai not mention the same quote in the *Catalogue of Import Items*? Furthermore, why would he request a letter from a lay disciple and not Huiguo's successor?

There is no evidence that Wu Yin wrote the 826 memorial. He is listed among Huiguo's dozens of other disciples, but the text gives no indication that he was its author. Furthermore, it does not refer to Kūkai as a disciple, but simply lists him as a Japanese emissary requesting texts and initiations. It is not even clear why scholars think this memorial was composed in 826. The latest date in the text is 839. The final line in the text notes that Engyō was sent back to Japan in 839 with robes and other items. Kūkai's disciple Engyō traveled to China on the same envoy as Ennin in 838 with the express purpose of delivering a letter to Qinglongsi on behalf of Jichie, the head of Tōji following Kūkai's death. This letter, presumably, announced Kūkai's death and Jichie as his heir. The memorial also notes that a monument to Huiguo, possibly a stele with an inscription of Huiguo's biography, had been maintained until 826 when it was relocated to a new site up river. Therefore, it is unclear if this source-text for Huiguo's biographies was a stele composed shortly after his death, a memorial composed in 826 to mark the relocation of the monument, or a copy that Engyō made of the text or stele before returning to Japan in 839.<sup>115</sup>

Variations of Huiguo's quote are found in Kūkai's catalogue, transmission texts, and memorial in the *Shōryōshū*, all of which differ drastically from the 826 memorial text. However, none of these versions made much of an impact on the medieval tradition. Rather, the apocryphal *Twenty-five Section Testimony* was the authoritative account of Kūkai's training at Qinglongsi and his relationship with his master. The rendition of Huiguo's quote in the *Twenty-five Section Testimony* is almost identical to Wu Yin's memorial in the transmission texts. However, after stating that Kūkai had come in search of the sacred teachings, Huiguo proclaims, "This *śramaṇa* is not a typical student, but a bodhisattva of the third *bhūmi*." This line is found in almost all subsequent hagiographies of Kūkai.<sup>116</sup>

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115. For Engyō's version of this memorial, see *Taishō* 50, no. 2057.

116. *KDDZ* 1.12a and *Taishō* 77.409b115-16. In the *Kujaku kyō ongi* 孔雀經音義, dating to the mid tenth century, Kanjō includes a slight variation on this line. See *Taishō* 61.756c25-27: 日本座主。非是凡徒。第三地菩薩。內發大乘菩提心。外現(小)國沙門相。

Saisen bases his analysis of Kūkai as an advanced bodhisattva on a slightly more developed version of this line from a recent hagiography composed sometime around the turn of the first millennium simply called the *Biography of Kōbō Daishi* (*Kōbō daishi den* 弘法大師傳). The text primarily emphasizes Kūkai's training and initiations, but when paraphrasing Kūkai's *Catalogue of Imported Items*, the author writes:

大師初謁和尚之日、與西明寺志明談勝等五六人同詣見和尚。和尚乍見含笑、歡喜告曰、我先汝來相待久。今日相見大好大好。皆令所學如瓶水。此沙門是非凡徒、第三地菩薩也。內具大乘心、外示小國沙門也。

On the day that the Daishi first had an audience with master [Huiguo], he travelled to see the master along with five or six other people from Ximingsi, including the monks Zhiming and Tansheng. When the master saw him, he held back a smile and joyfully announced, "I have been awaiting your arrival for a long time. This day that I have met you is quite pleasing. All of your studies will be like [pouring] water into a vessel."<sup>117</sup> This *śramaṇa* is not a typical student, but a bodhisattva of the third *bhūmi*. Internally, he has the mind of the Mahāyāna, but on the outside he is a *śramaṇa* from a small land."<sup>118</sup>

The original passage from Kūkai's catalogue ends with Huiguo proclaiming his joy at meeting his new student and is immediately followed by a description of Kūkai's initiation. The account in the hagiography, as well as Saisen's exegesis of this passage, diverges from the original text, explaining that Kūkai was a superior student of the dharma, a bodhisattva of the third *bhūmi*.

This is a remarkable claim. It does not simply mean that Kūkai was an outstanding practitioner, nor is it merely an honorific title. By labeling Kūkai an advanced bodhisattva, Saisen also ascribes to him a number of supernatural powers that accompany this achievement. A bodhisattva of this level is described in various terms depending on the interpretative tradition, but it generally denotes a bodhisattva who has the power to emit the light of the wisdom of the dharma. Alternatively called the "stage of emitting light" (發光地, *prabhākarī*), a bodhisattva of this rank achieves superior levels of meditation and can radiate the wisdom of the buddha dharma in all directions.<sup>119</sup> Saisen specifically cites a definition of a third-*bhūmi* bodhisattva in Amoghavajra's

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117. This metaphor is not found in the *Catalogue of Imported Items*. However, the author seems to be mixing the quote from Kūkai's catalogue with the biography in the transmission text. See *KDZ* 2.44.

118. *KDDZ* 1.64a. Hase states that this hagiography was written on the fifth month of 1002 (長保 4) by a monk named Jōju 清壽. The copy used for the *KDDZ* was copied by Jinken 深賢 in 1198 (建久 7) and preserved at the Sanbōin on Daigoji. In his record of biographies, Saisen states that a new biography was composed during the Chōhō era, which may refer to this text. However, Saisen also notes that there were two theories regarding its authorship. The first claimed that Shinzei wrote it, and the second suggests that it was authored by Shinshō. In the colophon to the manuscript Jōju states that it was probably written by the latter. Hase notes, however, that it was probably not written by either of Kūkai's disciples.

119. This basic definition is from the Xuanzang's *Treatise on Consciousness Only*. See *Taishō* 31.51a24-25: 三發光地。成就勝定大法總持能發無邊妙慧光故。

translation of the *Sūtra of Humane Kings*, which states that a bodhisattva of this rank can manifest in any place in the ten directions, including the multiple heavens as well as our world. Therefore, as a light emitting bodhisattva, Kūkai had the power to reside both in Tuṣita, where he is currently propagating the esoteric teachings, and on Mt. Kōya in a state of deep meditation.<sup>120</sup>

The intellectual context of the Kōbō Daishi cult is important for understanding how Saisen and the later tradition understood the authorship of Kūkai's works such as the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. First, this claim gives validity to Kūkai's works as the product of a superior being and, therefore, reinforces the argument in the *Treatise* that his lineage of esoteric teachings is superior to other Buddhist schools. The above hagiography supports this argument by concluding that the Daishi's teachings are difficult to grasp due to his superior wisdom. The author states that we only have the records of his disciples and the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to guide us.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, this belief that Kūkai was superhuman informed Saisen's interpretation of his writings and was central to his editing and commentarial agenda. Writings attributed to Kūkai were analyzed based on the assumption that they were authored by a high-ranking bodhisattva. Kūkai's earliest work, the *Sangōshiki* 三教指歸, for instance, was particularly problematic for the early tradition, because Kūkai wrote it before receiving initiation into the esoteric teachings. Should this work be considered a sacred teaching or not? The solution to this problem was to claim that Kūkai was a bodhisattva, therefore the work has value to the tradition. However, Kūkai did not yet have the appropriate language to express the esoteric teachings until Huiguo identified him as such and initiated him into the Shingon lineage.

The second reason that the context of the Kōbō Daishi cult is relevant to a study of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is that it offers a possible explanation of where the text, either written or orally transmitted, may have originated. In response to a question regarding the lack of textual evidence for Kūkai's postmortem existence, Saisen explains that these facts have been concealed from the scholiasts in the other schools. According to Saisen, Kūkai transmitted the doctrines of becoming a buddha in this very body and the preaching of the dharma body of the buddha to Japan in order to enlighten the Nara schools to their mistaken views of the Buddhist teachings. However, these monks doubted the truth of these doctrines and denigrated the esoteric teachings. Therefore, Kūkai composed the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to counter their

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120. See the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra for Humane Kings for The Protection of the Nation* (*Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經), *Taishō* 8.837b29-c1:

發光菩薩夜摩王 應形往萬諸佛刹 善能通達三摩地 隱顯自在具三明

The bodhisattva of the stage of emission of light is the king of the Yāma gods {i.e. the third of the six heavenly realms in the world of desire}. He may reflect an image while moving throughout the myriad realms of the buddhas. His virtues can penetrate *samādhi*. He can conceal and reveal himself at will and is fully endowed with the three cognitions.

121. See *KDDZ* 1.67.

criticisms and prevent his disciples from falling under their influence after his passing. If these monks knew that the Daishi was in a state of meditation on Mt. Kōya, they would also deny this truth and give rise to doubts regarding the Daishi's true identity as a high ranking bodhisattva. Therefore, Saisen explains, the truths of the *Treatise* and the fact that Kūkai was not dead were concealed from the public.<sup>122</sup>

The implication of this statement is that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was a hidden teaching, available only to those privileged to be initiated into Kūkai's tradition. Saisen asserts that these teachings were kept from the other Buddhist schools, whose inferior exoteric teachings had prevented them from understanding the real meaning of Kūkai's message. If they would not accept the truths of esoteric Buddhist doctrine, how could they have the cognitive ability to understand that the Daishi was both abiding in Tūṣita Heaven and in meditation on Mt. Kōya, let alone realize Kūkai's real identity as a bodhisattva who emits the light of the dharma.

The lacuna of historical evidence for the existence of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in the ninth and tenth centuries requires us to reconsider the significance this work may have had on esoteric Buddhist thought in early medieval Japan. Perhaps, as Saisen claims, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was a secret text concealed from those who lacked the ability to understand the potent truths that it revealed. However, the sudden surfacing of the *Treatise* and Saisen's laudatory claims to its profundity suspiciously coincides with the institutionalization of the Kōbō Daishi cult and Ninnaji's efforts to gain control of the land holdings at Mt. Kōya. Furthermore, we must question the value of a work on doctrine that is as polemical as the *Treatise* if it were meant to be hidden from its opposition. Saisen claims that Kūkai wrote it to respond to criticism from the Nara schools, but what is the point of doing so if nobody will see this response? The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* may have in fact been written by Kūkai. But, the fact that it was unknown for two centuries should cause us to question its value.

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122. Saisen refers to the secret transmission of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in when explaining the why Kūkai's disciples did mention in their biographies that he was still abiding on Mt. Kōya in a state of mediation. See *KDDZ* 1.129a:

謂諸宗明匠可致疑謗者、大師傳布即身成佛義法身說法之義故。當時早彼護命僧正修圓僧都陸奧德一菩薩等悉成疑惑誹謗之也。因之大師遂造二教論對治彼等疑謗給也。而若又聞入滅定事必可成疑謗亦復可爾也。所以祕密於此事不令風聞外人意在此也。

Scholastics in the various schools came to have their doubts about the Daishi's transmission of the doctrines of 'becoming a buddha in this very body' and the 'preaching of the dharma body'. At that time, Gomyō sōjō, Shuen sōzu, Tokuitsu Bodhisattva all had doubts and defamed these doctrines. For this reason, the Daishi composed the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to counter their doubts. If they also heard that he was abiding in meditative trance, they would also have doubts and defame this as well. For this reason, these matters have been kept secret and not permitted to be shared with non-initiates.



## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to answer three questions regarding the textual history of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and the study of Kūkai's works. First, what exactly constituted the study of Kūkai works, or Kūkai Studies? I began by calling into question the historical narrative of esoteric Buddhist doctrine in Japan that is premised on an institutional distinction between the Tendai school headquartered on Mt. Hiei and Kūkai's Shingon training program at Tōji. These institutions were founded under different circumstances by individuals with specific agendas. However, both locations were centers for the study of esoteric Buddhism. Saichō established Enryakuji as a center for the study of Tendai doctrine and practice, which also included training in esoteric rites and texts. Kūkai also started a training program at Tōji in 823, which, supposedly, was revised at least once before his death in 835. Both of these training programs underwent substantial changes from their inception, and, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what constituted the study of esoteric Buddhism in the early ninth century. Presumably, these curricula consisted of training in the administration of *abhiṣeka* rites and performing rituals for the protection of the nation. However, the doctrinal component of both sets of curricula is unclear. Nonetheless, scholarship on Kūkai Studies tends to perpetrate a single narrative regarding the development of a scholastic tradition on esoteric Buddhist doctrine that ignores the writings of Tendai scholastics.

Annen, the most prolific writer on esoteric Buddhism in the ninth century, addressed several doctrinal issues that are often associated with Kūkai's primary writings on doctrine. Although he does not attribute these passages to Kūkai, he quotes the opening verse of the *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* as well as passages in the *Doctrine of the True Characteristic of Sound and Syllable*. He also engages Kūkai's taxonomy of teachings in the *Ten Abiding Minds*. However, he seems not to have been aware of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. This omission is particularly striking, considering that Annen wrote extensively on the same doctrinal issues addressed in the *Treatise*. It stands to reason that if Kūkai's *Treatise* were available, Annen would have made reference to it, either as a subject of criticism or as a source text.

My second question concerns where the manuscripts of the *Treatise* might have come from. The *Treatise* is first attributed to Kūkai in Saisen's catalogue of Kūkai works, composed sometime between 1079 and his death in 1115. A text by this title is only found in a catalogue of sacred texts housed at Mandaraji on Mt. Daigo. Although the manuscript for this catalogue is

Chapter Two: A Paratextual History of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*

later than Saisen's catalogue, the collection at Mandaraji can be confidently dated to the early or mid eleventh century. There is also evidence that this collection was dispersed around the same time Saisen was editing the *Shōryōshū*, which suggests that it may have been his source for Kūkai's works.

If I am correct that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was a discovered text in the late eleventh century, one might wonder why Saisen immediately held it in such high regard. The obvious answer is because it was written by Kūkai. But, how exactly did Saisen perceive Kūkai? There was no precedent for writings on Kūkai's works or teachings. The only body of literature that discussed Kūkai prior to Saisen's own commentarial writings were hagiographies. These works were a part of a broader cultural understanding of Kūkai as a superhuman being who still resides on Mt. Kōya in a meditative trace while simultaneously having been reborn in Tuṣita Heaven. Saisen was very familiar with this belief in the Great Daishi, having written an exegesis of these hagiographical texts. In addition to these beliefs, Saisen promoted the idea that Kūkai was actually an advanced bodhisattva who emitted the light of the dharma. Therefore, a possible answer to the question of why Saisen promoted the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as a foundational and sacred text for the Shingon school was because it was a record of the teachings of the high ranking bodhisattva Kōbō Daishi.

## Chapter Three: The Doctrine of the Dharma Body of the Buddha

In the previous two chapters, I questioned the attribution of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* by reevaluating the scholarship regarding its date of composition and surveying the history of the text. Closer scrutiny of both modern and medieval theories of authorship demonstrates that we need to reconsider the current consensus that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* in or around 815. Furthermore, by examining sources from the ninth to eleventh centuries, I showed that the *Treatise* and its doctrinal claims were absent from the scholastic discourse on esoteric Buddhism doctrine. Not only do we not find an extant version of the text itself, there is no indication that it made any impact on Japanese Buddhist thought whatsoever. This suggests two possibilities. Either the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was a lost Kūkai work rediscovered in the eleventh century, or it was a later composition. In either case, it is clear that it was insignificant until Saisen wrote his commentary some time around the end of the eleventh century.

In this chapter, I address the content of the *Treatise* and consider why Saisen and later Shingon scholastics considered the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to constitute the doctrinal foundation of the Shingon school. If the *Treatise* was irrelevant for nearly three centuries, why did it suddenly become so central to their doctrinal identity? There are many other works attributed to Kūkai that could have been praised for their doctrinal content. His taxonomical writings, the *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, both open with prefaces championing the Shingon school as the premier vehicle of the esoteric teachings. Out of all the works attributed to Kūkai, these two texts can reliably be said to reflect his views on doctrine. Yet, compared to the plethora of medieval commentaries and modern scholarly publications on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, very little is made of Kūkai's magnum opus.

The *Treatise* stands out among Kūkai's attributed works due to its radical claim that the dharma body of the buddha directly preaches the dharma and that only his Shingon school can explain the esoteric teachings. Kūkai does not make this assertion in any of his other writings. Both medieval scholastics and modern scholars take the opening statement of the *Treatise* to be the origin of this doctrine. However, in this brief passage of little more than two hundred characters, the *Treatise* not only elevates the doctrine of the dharma body as the enlightened explication of the buddha dharma, it dismisses the long history of Buddhist scholasticism concerning buddha-body theory and the soteriological consequences of this discourse. To

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demonstrate just how radical the doctrine of the dharma body would have seemed to Kūkai's contemporaries, I provide an overview of buddha-body theory in the first half of the chapter. I also examine the interpretative maneuvers made in the *Treatise* that distinguish its theory of a four-fold dharma body from previous Buddhology.

The doctrine that the dharma body directly preaches the esoteric teachings was a polemic that dismissed all other doctrinal positions on this issue as "exoteric" and, therefore, inferior. As I discussed in the first chapter, Saisen proposed that Kūkai may have written the *Treatise* as a response to debates between Saichō and Tokuitsu. In his commentary on Kūkai hagiographies, Saisen also suggests that Kūkai revealed this doctrine to his disciples shortly before his death. They kept this doctrine and the *Treatise* hidden from other Buddhist schools along with the fact that their master was seated in meditation on Mt. Kōya while awaiting the coming of the future Buddha Maitreya. Modern scholars have also proposed theories that the *Treatise* was a response to Kūkai's contemporary Buddhist intellectuals. The first theory suggests that Kūkai may have written the text as a rejection of Saichō's view of esoteric Buddhism. Saichō performed the first *abhiṣeka* rite in Japan and later devised a curriculum that included training in *dhāraṇī* texts and esoteric rituals. However, he always considered these practices to be a component of Tendai and the singular-vehicle of Mahāyāna. According to this theory, Kūkai penned the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to clarify that Saichō did not properly understand the doctrinal basis of esoteric Buddhism. The second theory suggests that the *Treatise* might have been a direct response to Tokuitsu's critical essay, the *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School*. In the ninth question of his essay, Tokuitsu inquires about a line from Yixing's *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* regarding the nature of the dharma body. Several recent studies of Kūkai have argued that the purpose of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was to answer this inquiry.

In the final half of this chapter, I argue that both of these theories are problematic and propose an alternative target for to the doctrinal claims and polemics of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. The earliest direct response to Tokuitsu's criticism came from the Tendai scholiast Annen, who in his compendia on esoteric Buddhist doctrine addresses several of Tokuitsu's inquiries. Annen also discusses the passage from Yixing's commentary at length and situates this terminology regarding the dharma body within a broader scholastic discourse on buddha-body theory. Furthermore, all but two of the proof texts cited in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* for the doctrine that the dharma body of the buddha preaches can be found in Annen's compendia along with extensive commentary. The explication of these same passages in the *Treatise* is often at odds with Annen's analysis. Therefore, I propose that the doctrine of the dharma body in the *Treatise* was a retort to Annen's discussion of buddha-body theory in his compendia on esoteric Buddhist doctrine.

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Bodies of the Buddha

The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was the heir to centuries of scholastic discourse on the ontology of the buddha and the soteriology of its teachings. Buddha-body theory is the quintessential component of Buddhology, and there is no shortage of scholarship regarding the various interpretations of this Buddhist doctrine. For the purposes of this chapter, a brief survey of the major issues regarding the bodies of the buddha will suffice to demonstrate why Saisen and later Shingon apologists found the *Treatise* to be the doctrinal foundation of the Shingon school.

Scholarship on buddha-body theory can generally be divided into two camps. The first attempts to reconstruct the evolution of Buddhist ontology in India from a single body to three bodies. According to the tripartite theory, the term "buddha" was originally an epithet for the historical founder of Buddhism, Gautama Śākyamuni. After his death, the buddha's disciples carried on his teachings, which were passed down through the generations and finally collected and documented in writing. This body of teaching, or *dharma-kāya*, was distinct from the historical buddha, who had long since passed into *parinirvāṇa*. In contrast to the physical body of the buddha, the body of teachings was imperishable and, therefore, functioned as a vehicle for preserving the teachings for future generations of disciples. Over the centuries and with the emergence of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the *dharma-kāya* began to be depicted as a superhuman form of the buddha. Rather than a mere collection of teachings, the *dharma-kāya* of the Mahāyāna sutras is an absolute and eternal body of the buddha. Eventually, the Yogācāra school incorporated past and future buddhas as well as buddhas from alternative buddha lands to create

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a three-body theory consisting of the *dharma-kāya* (or in some cases, an essence body, *svābhāva-kāya*)<sup>1</sup> *sambogha-kāya*, the body attained by a bodhisattva upon achieving buddhahood, and a *nirmana-kāya*, the body in which a buddha is born, awakens, and preaches to sentient beings.<sup>2</sup>

This tripartite theory of the buddha has many variations, but is generally depicted as having evolved in three stages. First, the body of the buddha denoted the physical, living body of the Gautama Śākyamuni. The teachings of the buddha, the *dharma-kāya*, were equated with abstract concepts such as *tathā*, *dharmatā*, or *dharmadhātu*. Eventually, the *dharma-kāya* became elevated to a metaphysical and absolute "body" of the buddha, which over time surpassed the historical buddha as the most essential aspect of Buddhist ontology. Finally, the Mahāyāna sutras, and in particular the Yogācāra school, brought the concept of the buddha to "a stage of perfection" by formalizing the tripartite theory of buddha-bodies and establishing a philosophical justification to explain how the *dharma-kāya* functions as the source or grounds for the other types of buddha bodies.<sup>3</sup>

Recent scholarship, however, has highlighted some of the problems with this model and the assumption Mahāyāna Buddhism developed a metaphysical interpretation of the bodies of the buddha. According to Paul Harrison, the assertion that the *dharma-kāya* denotes a cosmic or absolute form of the buddha as the supreme member of a Buddhist trinity was largely the result of mistranslations. He points out several instances in which scholars have rendered the term

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1. John Makransky notes that there was much confusion and debate in Indian and Tibetan sources regarding the terms *svābhāva-kāya* and *dharma-kāya*. This debate, he argues, stemmed from the number of buddha bodies specified in the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, a fourth-fifth century commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. Eventually, the Sakya school interpreted the commentary to specify three bodies, whereas the Gelug school concluded that there were four. The first six verses of the eighth chapter of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* are the source of the controversy and state that the *svābhāva-kāya* of the Buddha is the inherent nature of all undefiled dharmas. However, a few verses later the text states that the qualities defining the omniscient wisdom of the Buddha is called the *dharma-kāya*. The ambiguous usage and close proximity of these two similar terms for the body of the Buddha invited a variety of interpretations. See John J. Makransky, "Controversy over Dharmakāya in India and Tibet: A Reappraisal of its Basis, *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* Chapter 8," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 12/2 (1989):45-78.
  2. This overview of buddha-body theory is based on Nagao Gadjin, "On the Theory of Buddha-Body," *Eastern Buddhist, New Series* 6/1 (1973):25-30, reprinted in Nagao Gadjin, *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra: A Study of Mahāyāna Philosophies*, translated by Kawamura, Leslie S. (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York, 1991), 103-107.
  3. See Nagao 1973, 38. The scholastic discourse on the body of the buddha is too extensive and detailed to outline in a brief article. However, Nagao's presentation of this fundamental Buddhist doctrine exemplifies most studies regarding buddha-body theory, which tend to follow an evolutionary model beginning with a single body of an historical figure and proceeding to the multiple Yogācāra configurations and elaboration on this concept. Studies of buddha-body theory in esoteric Buddhism simply add one more stage of development by associating the esoteric teachings with the most rarified and abstract body of the buddha. For example, Fukuda Ryōsei cites Nagao's overview of buddha-body theory and suggests that esoteric Buddhism adds yet another stage of development to this model. See Fukuda Ryōsei 福田亮成, "Kōbō daishi no hosshin seppō to sono kōzō" 弘法大師の法身説法説とその構造, in *Mikkyō taiki* 5 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1994), 317-347.

"*dharmakāya*" as a noun, but when revisiting the original texts it is clearly an adjective. For instance, in one of earliest Mahāyāna sources, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, the term "*dharmakāya*" appears five times in the Sanskrit and in each case appears in conjunction with the term "buddha" or "tathāgata." Previous scholars have translated this term as a noun (i.e. the *dharmakāya*) and in most instances as plural (i.e. the *dharmakāyas*) to mean "the *dharmakāyas* of the buddha."<sup>4</sup>

The rendering of the *dharmakāya* as plural, however, is philosophically problematic. If the *dharmakāya* is a name for the singular, absolute, and universal body of the buddha, there obviously cannot be more than one. These translations, as Harrison points out, presuppose that the term refers to a particular form of the buddha (i.e. the dharma bodies of the buddha). However, Harrison suggests that we should understand the passages from the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* to mean the "dharma-bodied buddhas/tathāgatas," or the "buddhas/tathāgatas take the dharma as their body." In the sole appearance of this term in the Chinese translation, Lokakṣema confirms that *dharmakāya* did not refer to a specific form of the buddha in the early Mahāyāna sutras, translating it as "the body of sutras from the buddhas of the past, present, and future." In other words, Lokakṣema understood the term "*dharmakāya*" to denote the body of the buddha's teaching, not a specific manifestation of a multi-bodied buddha.<sup>5</sup>

In other instances, however, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* clearly employs the term as a noun, as do many instances in the Chinese translation of the *Āgamas*. Suffice to say, Harrison argues that this usage does not refer to a distinct form of the buddha. Similar to the two-body theory of a physical and abstract buddha, these pre and early Mahāyāna sources identify the *dharmakāya* with a body of dharmas that are "demonstrated by the buddha," or associated with the dharma (i.e. the Buddhist teachings). In other words, Harrison suggests that the Chinese term "*fashen*" (法身) was a translation of *dharmakāya* found in pre-Mahāyāna sources such as the

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4. See Paul Harrison, "Is the *Dharmakāya* the Real "Phantom Body" of the Buddha?," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 15/1 (1992):44-54.

5. See Harrison 1992, 53-54. For a study of this translation, see Lewis Lancaster, "An Early Mahayana Sermon about the Body of the Buddha and the Making of Images," *Artibus Asiae* 36/4 (1974):30-41. For Lokakṣema's translation, see *Taishō* 8.468c17-18:過去當來今現在佛經身.

The application of the term *dharmakāya* as a modifier for the teachings of the buddha is found elsewhere in canonical sources. For example, it appears once in the Pali Canon. According to Steven Collins, a passage in the *Aggañña Sutta* uses the term *dharmakāya* as an epithet for the tathāgata and is written as an adjective compound for "having a body which is *dharmakāya*." Moreover, Collins notes that the commentary on this passage explains that the *dharmakāya* refers to the remnants of Śākyamuni Buddha's teachings after he has entered *nirvāṇa*. Because he no longer dwells in a specific location, the buddha is only identified by his teachings, that is, as a "body of the dharma." See Steven Collins, "Reflections on the Dichotomy Rūpakāya/Dharmakāya," *Contemporary Buddhism* (2014):1-15. Harrison also discusses this passage in Harrison 1992, 50.

*Āgamas*, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakōśa-bhāṣya*, and even the Pali *Aggañña Sutta*, all of which apply the term to denote the buddha that embodies the dharma, or the body of teachings. Translations of early Mahāyāna sutras retain this meaning of the term.<sup>6</sup>

Even the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, a source text for Yogācāra doctrine and the theory of the dharma body in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, conveys a similar usage of the term. In his infamous study of the sutra in which he equates the *dharmakāya* with the concept of the Godhead in the Christian doctrine of the trinity, D.T. Suzuki translates the term as a proper noun (i.e. the Dharmakāya). Harrison contends that such instances should also be translated as adjectival modifiers in the same manner as the *Āgamas* and *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* passages, that is, the "dharma-bodied tathāgatas" or "tathāgatas as the body of dharma" rather than a sublime form of the buddha called "the Dharmakāya." Such translations, Harrison concludes, are the consequences of modern scholars reading the tripartite theory of the body of the buddha into the text at the expense of philological evidence.<sup>7</sup>

The second approach to buddha-body theory focuses on the translation and interpretation of these categories in the East Asian milieu. It may be the case that early Chinese translations of Mahāyāna sutras did not intend to render the term "*dharmakāya*" as a distinct form of the buddha, but the exegetical tradition seems to have interpreted that way. In other words, modern scholars such as Suzuki may have interpreted the three-body theory through a theistic lens, but the notion that the *dharmakāya* denoted an abstract form of the buddha was not a modern invention. From as early as Kumārajīva's commentarial translation of the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, a contrast was made between the physical body of the buddha and an abstract essence of the buddha dharma.

In the ninth chapter, the commentator proposes a theory regarding the body of the buddha, which inadvertently spawned an ongoing debate among Buddhist scholastic monks in East Asia. Extrapolating from a discussion in the original commentary regarding how the buddha attained his power by cultivating the six perfections, an unidentified interlocutor asks Kumārajīva why the buddha experienced suffering if he possessed such powers. Kumārajīva initially responds by stating, "The buddha resided among humans, born to human parents from whom he obtained a human body."<sup>8</sup> He further explains that despite having a physical form, the buddha possessed inconceivable powers and unlimited knowledge. Then asking rhetorically how such a being could in fact suffer, Kumārajīva answers his own question:

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6. See Harrison 1992, 56.

7. See Harrison 1992, 71-75. See Suzuki's introduction to his translation in Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra: A Mahāyāna text* (London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1932).

8. *Taishō* 25.121c21:佛在人中生人父母受人身。



### Chapter Three: The Doctrine of the Dharma Body of the Buddha

復次佛有二種身。一者法性身。二者父母生身。是法性身滿十方虛空無量無邊。色像端正相好莊嚴、無量光明無量音聲。聽法衆亦滿虛空。此衆亦是法性身非生死人所得見也。常出種種身種種名號種種生處種種方便度衆生。常度一切無須與息時。如是法性身佛能度十方世界衆生。受諸罪報者是生身佛。生身佛次第說法如人法。以有二種佛故受諸罪無咎。

The buddha has two types of the bodies. The first is a body that is the nature of the dharma. The second is a body born of a father and mother. The dharma-nature body fills the empty space of the ten directions and is limitless and boundless. Its image is perfect, adorned with the major and minor marks, possessing limitless radiance and immeasurable voice. Its assembly also fills empty space. This assembly is also the body of dharma-nature and cannot be seen by people in *samsāra*. It constantly emits various bodies, called by various names, and born in various locations, where it dispenses various skillful means to save sentient beings. It constantly saves all beings without pause. In this way, the buddha of the dharma-nature body is able to save sentient beings in the worlds of the ten directions. That which suffers the consequences of retribution is the buddha in a birth body. The buddha in a birth body preaches the dharma in stages as if it were a human teaching. Because there are two types of buddha [bodies], it is not an error [to conclude] that the buddha experiences the consequences of karmic retribution.<sup>9</sup>

As the interlocutor notes, sources documenting the life of Śākyamuni Buddha record numerous occasions in which he suffered after having attained buddhahood. He experienced cold in the winter, heat in the summer, and went hungry when no food was placed in his begging bowl.<sup>10</sup> If the buddha possessed inexhaustible wisdom and miraculous powers as the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* claim, why would he suffer due to karmic retribution? Kumārajīva responds by positing a two-body theory of the buddha. The body of Śākyamuni was born of human parents in our current age. As a result, he had to experience the suffering of a human such as old age, illness, and death. The other form of the buddha is more abstract. As the nature of the dharma, this body of the buddha embodies the characteristics of a fully awakened being who is no longer subject to the suffering caused by the cycle of birth and death. Rather, it is omnipresent and saves sentient beings through manifesting multifarious forms in response to their specific needs.

Although addressing a question of causation and suffering, Kumārajīva's response was a forerunner to a doctrinal issue that was debated back and forth for centuries among Chinese and Japanese Buddhist intellectuals. Such debates took various turns, but for the most part the

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9. *Taishō* 25.121c26-122a5. For a translation of this passage see Étienne Lamotte, *Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse de Nāgārjuna (Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra)* (Louvain: Bureaux du Muséon, 1944), 513 and the corresponding English translation in *The Treatise on the Great Virtue of Wisdom of Nāgārjuna*, translated by Gelongma Karma Migme Chodron (2001), 406.

10. Lamotte lists Sanskrit, Pali, and Chinese sources recording these incidences. See Lamotte 1944, 507-512.

primary concern remained the same: Why are there so many bodies of the buddha, and how are these bodies related? Buddha-body theory developed through scholastic efforts to address this problem.

Conflicting terminology for bodies of the buddha in multiple translations of the same sutras further complicates efforts to articulate a unified buddha-body theory in East Asian Buddhism. As Robert Sharf points out, the Chinese discourse on buddha bodies was confounded by two variables. First, the Indian sources used a variety of terms for the bodies of the buddha, and, as Harrison's study suggests, there is no evidence of a uniform theory of buddha bodies in these sources. Second, terms such as "*nirmana-kāya*," "*sambogha-kāya*," "*dharma-kāya*," etc. were rendered into Chinese using different translations for the same word, thus increasing the vocabulary for bodies of the buddha.<sup>11</sup>

The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* is a case in point. The sutra employs an array of terminology for bodies of the buddha and makes no attempt to systematize them into a coherent unit. In his ten-fascicle translation, Bodhiruci (d. 527) uses the term "dharma buddha" (法佛) to denote the "true buddha from which all other [buddhas] are a manifestation."<sup>12</sup> He also uses the same term in conjunction with the reward buddha (報佛), stating that the dharma buddha-reward buddha (法佛報佛) emits radiant light, while there are response-transformation buddhas (應化佛) that illuminate various worlds.<sup>13</sup> Śikṣānanda (active 695) later translates the same passage as referring to three different types of buddhas, stating that the dharma buddha suddenly manifests as the reward buddha and through the transformation buddha emits light.<sup>14</sup>

Sharf suggests that Bodhiruci and Śikṣānanda probably used terms such as "reward buddha" and "response buddha" in accordance with conventions at the time for translating buddha-body terminology. For example, Buddhaśanta's (active 511–539) translation of the *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha* (*She dansheng lun* 攝大乘論) completed around the same time as Bodhiruci's translation, uses a similar set of terms.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the fact that Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) later retranslates these same terms as essence body (自性身, which is equated with

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11. See Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise*, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism 14. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 102.

12. *Taishō* 16.574b16: 法佛是真佛 餘者依彼化

13. *Taishō* 16.525b13-14: 譬如法佛報佛放諸光明。有應化佛照諸世間。

14. *Taishō* 16.596b12-13: 譬如法佛頓現報佛及以化佛光明照曜。

15. See *Taishō* 31.109c22-28.

the dharma body of the tathāgata), reward body (受用身), and transformation body (變化身), is evidence that Chinese translators were not always faithfully rendering these terms according to an Indian original, but often took interpretative license when discussing bodies of the buddha.<sup>16</sup>

Adding to this mélange of technical jargon is the *Golden Light Sūtra* (*Jingguangming zuishengwang jing* 金光明最勝王經). Along with the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, Shingon commentators on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* frequently cite this popular sutra as a source text for the doctrine on the dharma body.<sup>17</sup> Like the *Laṅkāvatāra*, there are several translations of the *Golden Light Sūtra*. But, unlike the *Laṅkāvatāra*, this sutra presents a fairly uniform explanation of the tripartite buddha-body theory. Both the synoptic translation compiled in 497 and 703 translation by Yijing 義淨 (635–713) render the names for each type of body as transformation body (化身) for *nirmana-kāya*, response body (應身) for *sambogha-kāya*, and dharma body (法身) for *dharma-kāya*. As a collective whole, the sutra claims, these bodies indicates supreme awakening (阿耨多羅三藐三菩提, *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*).

Although this configuration is uniform in translations of the sutra and seems to support the idea of a Mahāyāna theory of buddha bodies, the definition of these bodies is by no means universal. The transformation body is referred to as a body generated in response to the thoughts, practices, and location of sentient beings. The response body, on the other hand, preaches the ultimate truth to bodhisattvas and pervades both *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. It generates the foundation for the unlimited buddha dharma. Finally, unlike these two bodies, which provisionally exist for the sake of preaching to sentient beings and bodhisattvas, the dharma body truly exists and generates the foundation for the other two bodies. Therefore, this is not a body in the corporal sense of the word, but the "wisdom of the dharma that encompasses all Buddhist teachings."<sup>18</sup>

As Harrison points out in his article on the dharma body, the later development of a tripartite theory has caused some scholars to read this configuration into translations of pre and early Mahāyāna texts. However, this theory was not the creation of modern scholars bent on finding a Buddhological parallel to the doctrine of the trinity (although Suzuki's introduction to

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16. For Xuanzang's translation of the same passage, see *Taishō* 31.149a18-26. Sharf discusses these translations in Sharf 2002, 102-105.

17. For instance, Saisen lists a variety of sources for the three bodies noted in the first line of the *Treatise*, but he interprets the meaning of these bodies through the definition of buddha bodies in the *Golden Light Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 77. 423b19-28.

18. For a summary of buddha-body theory in the compiled translation of the *Golden Light Sūtra*, see *Taishō* 16.362c17-362a11. Yijing's translation includes the same passage in *Taishō* 16.408b27-c4. Sharf translates part of this passage in Sharf 2002, 104.

his translation of the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* clearly invites this comparison). The theory developed through centuries of scholastic writing that sought to make sense of disparate translations and peculiar terminology for bodies of the buddha.

**(i) Buddha-body Theory in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings***

Although the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* largely ignores the scholastic discourse on buddha-body theory, understanding the background to the concept and the diversity of interpretations regarding this doctrinal issue exposes the polemical thrust of the *Treatise* and the reason it was essential to medieval Shingon scholastics. The *Treatise* opens by declaring that there are three bodies of the buddha, two that are exoteric and one esoteric. However, later in the text this three-body model morphs into a four-body theory. Medieval commentators and modern scholars have explained these two versions of buddha-body theory through a structural analysis of the text that interprets the doctrinal claims and textual exegesis in the latter portion of the *Treatise* in the context of its opening lines.

The extant version of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* consists of two fascicles, which can easily be divided into three sections based on the format and content of the text. The first section includes an opening statement declaring the superiority of the esoteric teachings over the exoteric teachings and a brief exchange of questions and responses regarding the reason for composing the *Treatise*. The second section consists of quotations from a variety of textual sources, ranging from Mahāyāna sutras to ritual manuals. In some cases, the *Treatise* is critical of these passages, but in other cases certain passages are cited as proof texts for the doctrinal claims made in the first section. However, it is unclear why the *Treatise* cites these texts. Finally, the *Treatise* ends with a series of questions and responses concerning the differences between the exoteric and esoteric teachings.

Medieval commentators explained the idiosyncratic structure of the *Treatise* by devising structural paradigms interlinking sections of the text. In his commentary on the *Treatise*, Saisen argues that the entire text is an explication of this first line regarding bodies of the buddha. He then parses the *Treatise* into five divisions: 1) The purport of the *Treatise*, namely the first line of the text; 2) the rationale for composing the *Treatise*, namely the second line of the text; 3) a clarification of distinction between exoteric and esoteric doxography; 4) a large section including the questions and responses and textual sources; and 5) a final section of questions and response regarding the correlation between the esoteric and exoteric teachings. Each section, Saisen argues, serves as an explication of the previous sections. In other words, the second division

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explains the first, and the third division explains the first two lines, and so on. This structural analysis of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* served as a model for later commentaries and this influence shaped modern studies of the text as well.<sup>19</sup>

Based on this structural analysis, the opening lines constitute the premise of the entire *Treatise* and, Saisen argues, encompasses all Buddhist teachings.<sup>20</sup> The first two divisions of Saisen's five-part analysis read:

夫、佛有三身、教則二種。應化開説、名曰顯教。言顯略逗機。法佛談話、謂之密藏。言祕奧實説。

The buddha has three bodies, and his teachings are two types. The preaching of the response and transformation [bodies] are designated as exoteric teachings. We say that this [preaching] is revealed, provisional, and adapted to the capabilities of the individual. The speech of the dharma buddha is called the secret treasury. We say that it is esoteric and profoundly true speech [of the buddha].<sup>21</sup>

The opening line divides the Buddhist teaching according to three bodies through which the buddha preaches the dharma and two types of teachings. The dharma buddha preaches the ultimately true esoteric teaching, while the other two bodies preach a provisional form of the dharma through the exoteric teachings.

The second division of Saisen's five-part analysis of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* further distinguishes between the exoteric and esoteric teachings regarding whether or not they are contingent on the needs of the practitioner. By declaring the exoteric teachings to be merely provisional teachings preached by lesser bodies of the buddha and the esoteric teachings to be the domain of the dharma buddha, the *Treatise* asserts that the exoteric teachings are incapable of explaining this ultimate truth and are, therefore, inferior in comparison to the esoteric teachings

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19. See *Taishō* 77.421c22-422a15. Saisen's structural analysis continued to be the model for studies of the treatise into the twentieth century. For example, the entry for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in the *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten* outlines the treatise in terms of Saisen's five-part structure. See BKJ 9.375c-376a.

20. See *Taishō* 77.422b3-4 and 423a1-2.

21. *Taishō* 374c23-25, *KDZ* 3.58, *TKDZ* 3.75. Shingon scholars almost always interpret the character 言 in this line as a subject, translating the latter usage to mean "Its words are esoteric...." However, this reading of the passage is probably based on Edo-period editions of the text. The *TKDZ* notes that the fourteenth-century manuscript used as the base text for the edition includes an interliner ク next to this character, meaning that the Ninnaji monk who copied it believed it to be read as reported speech (イワク), not as a subject. Nonetheless, the editors of the *TKDZ* have changed the text to adhere to the traditional reading. See *TKDZ* 3.280. Saisen did not include this character in his commentary, which strongly suggests that he did not consider it to be a noun but merely modifying the following four-character compound. Raiyu includes this character in his commentary, and the editors of the *SZ* volume include a reading of "word" (コトバ) in the margins. However, the term does not factor into his exegesis of this line. See *SZ* 12.3. For an English translation of the *Treatise*, see Rolf W. Giebel, trans., "On the Differences between the Exoteric and the Esoteric Teachings," in *Shingon Texts* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2004), 17-61.

expounded by the Shingon school. The reason the exoteric teachings cannot account for this possibility is because they are adapted to the needs of the practitioner. In other words, the *Treatise* asserts that the capabilities of the individual only apply to the exoteric teachings and are irrelevant to the preaching of the esoteric teachings.

In his influential book on Japanese esoteric Buddhism, Katsumata Shunkyō makes several claims regarding esoteric Buddhist doctrine that have since become mainstay in studies of Kūkai and the Shingon school. As I discussed in the first chapter, his suggestion that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in 815 is now cited in reference works as the undisputed date of composition. He settled on this date by comparing the content of the *Treatise* with a letter, also attributed to Kūkai, which includes a date of 815. As I pointed out, however, there are several differences between the letter and the *Treatise*. The most significant difference between the two texts is the manner in which they discuss the correlation between the preaching of the buddha in all its bodily manifestations and the capabilities of sentient beings to receive it. The letter states, "In both the exoteric teachings and esoteric teachings, one realizes liberation in accordance with one's capabilities."<sup>22</sup> The *Treatise*, on the other hand, states that only the preaching of the response and transformation bodies are contingent on the capabilities of the individual. By declaring the exoteric teachings to be merely provisional teachings preached by lesser bodies of the buddha and the esoteric teachings to be the domain of the dharma buddha, the *Treatise* asserts that the exoteric teachings are incapable of explaining this ultimate truth and are, therefore, inferior in comparison to the esoteric teachings expounded by the Shingon school. The reason the exoteric teachings cannot account for this possibility is because they are adapted to the needs of the practitioner. In other words, in contrast to the *Letter of Promulgation*, the *Treatise* asserts that the capabilities of the individual only apply to the exoteric teachings and are irrelevant to the preaching of the esoteric teachings.

Although Katsumata does not mention this difference between the two texts, medieval commentators were compelled to remedy this problem. In his commentary on the *Treatise*, Raiyu proposes that this difference was due to the fact that the letter and *Treatise* were written for different audiences. The letter, he claims, was directed toward those who do not yet have the capacity to understand the esoteric teachings, but will in the distant future. Therefore, it is necessary to point out that they will eventually attain the capability to perceive the preaching of the dharma directly from the dharma body of the buddha. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, on the other hand, was directed toward those who already "bask in the preaching of the dharma body." Thus, they know that the preaching of the dharma body of the buddha is not contingent on sentient beings, but miraculously this body still has relational properties that they can perceive.<sup>23</sup>

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22. *TKDZ* 8.173-174.

23. See *SZ* 12.3. Raiyu also points out that there are other interpretations of the exoteric teachings that account for the relational properties of the dharma body, although he does not cite any sources or examples.

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Saisen asserts that the opening line of the *Treatise* establishes the foundational doctrine of the Shingon school that the esoteric teachings are superior because they are preached by the dharma buddha. However, he does not explain how the dharma buddha preaches if it does not require the interlocutor to possess the capacity to hear it. Rather, he quotes the opening passage from the *Longer Dharma Transmission* as evidence for this claim. This the reference to capabilities in the lineage text differs considerably from the *Treatise*. The transmission text states:

彼曼荼羅教者金剛頂瑜伽十萬頌經等是也。大日如來普遍常恆雖演說如是唯一金剛祕密最上佛乘大曼荼羅法教、而非機非時不得聽聞信受修行流傳。所謂道不自弘。弘必由人。

The mandala teaching is the *Vajrasākhara Yoga* in one hundred thousand verses. Although Mahāvairocana Tathāgata universally and constantly preaches the great mandala teaching of the universal, adamant, secret, and supreme buddha vehicle, if not for the capabilities of the practitioner or the time in which it was preached it would not be possible for it to be heard, believed, cultivated, or transmitted. This path toward awakening does not propagate itself. Its dissemination must rely on people.<sup>24</sup>

In this passage in the opening of the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text, Kūkai states that the preaching of Mahāvairocana, the manifestation of the dharma body of the buddha, relies on the capabilities of the practitioner. The context of the individual as well as the time and location in which the teachings are preached determines their content. Therefore, in the lineage text, Kūkai argues that the Shingon patriarchs had superior faculties for ascertaining the teachings, thus making his Shingon school a superior tradition of the buddha dharma. However, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* argues that the dharma body's preaching is unconditioned and not responsive to the individual, yet simultaneously declares that it can be heard by practitioners of the three secret activities.

The problem of how to perceive the true speech of the dharma body of the buddha if sentient beings are incapable of comprehending such speech is the fundamental conundrum of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. The transmission text addresses this issue by positing a lineage that transmits the true speech of the tathāgata from its original utterance to the present. In order to comprehend such speech, one must receive *abhiṣeka* from a qualified master and have the capability to transmit this teaching to a disciple. However, the solution to this problem in the *Treatise* is simply the recitation of mantra. Mantra are "true words" and the unmediated language

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24. TKDZ 1.67-68. Ōkubo Ryōshun points out the contradiction between the notion of the capabilities of the practitioner in the *Treatise* and the transmission text. See Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, *Taimitsu kyōgaku no kenkyū* 台密教学の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2004), 153. Saisen quotes this passage in his commentary on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* wherein he links it to the statement on the dharma body's preaching in the opening of the text. See *Taishō* 77.424a1-9. Saisen rambles on that the exoteric teachings are shallow and provisional and just offers various synonyms for the term 顯.

of the buddhas. Therefore, their sound and linguistic form must be imbued with the substance of the dharma body of the buddha. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* explains this substance in terms of buddha-body theory.

### (ii) The Four-fold Dharma Body

Saisen's fourth and by far the longest division of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* consists of quotes from sutras, treatises, ritual manuals, and Chinese exegetical works. Although the *Treatise* does not explicitly address buddha-body theory in the citations, these sources include an array of definitions and schematics for bodies of the buddha. Rather, the *Treatise* combines these various types of bodies and their attributes into a four-part model of the dharma body. This model conceives of the dharma body not just as one type of body, but presents all bodies as components of the dharma body. The *Treatise* refers to this theory of buddha bodies as the four-fold dharma body (四種法身).

The *Treatise* explains this four-fold body and its capacity as the preacher of the esoteric teachings through a series of intertextual correlations. Toward the end of this list of seemingly random passages, the *Treatise* quotes the opening segment of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. Like all sutras, it begins by describing the location of the teaching and the audience that has assembled to hear the tathāgata preach. After enumerating a list of vajra-wielding beings in the assembly along with the four bodhisattvas Samantabhadra, Maitreya, Mañjuśrī, and Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, the sutra recounts the preaching of the tathāgata. The passage reads:

前後圍繞而演說法。所謂越三時如來之日加持故。身語意平等句法門。時彼菩薩普賢爲上首。諸執金剛祕密主爲上首。毘盧遮那如來加持故。奮迅示現身無盡莊嚴藏。如是奮迅示現語意平等無盡莊嚴藏。非從毘盧遮那佛身或語或意生。一切處起滅邊際不可得。而毘盧遮那。一切身業一切語業一切意業。一切處一切時於有情界宣說眞言道句法。又現執金剛普賢蓮華手菩薩等像貌。普於十方。宣說眞言道清淨句法。

Having gathered around, the [*bhagavan*] began to preach the dharma. He spoke the dharma as a phrase of the harmony of the body, speech, and mind is due to the empowerment of the sun of the tathāgatas, which transverses the three time periods. At that time, the bodhisattva Samantabhadra became the leader [of the bodhisattvas], and the Lord of Mysteries became the leader of the various vajra-wielders. Due to the empowerment of Vairocana Tathāgata, a body instantly appeared as the treasury of inexhaustible adornment. In this way, the harmony of speech and mind instantly manifested as the treasury of inexhaustible adornment. These were not born from the body, speech, or mind of Vairocana Buddha. They arise and cease in all places and their boundaries cannot be ascertained. Moreover, all activities of the body, all activities of



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speech, and all activities of the mind of Vairocana are in all places at all times preaching the dharma in the world of sentient beings as a phrase of the mantra path. Furthermore, the manifested forms of the vajra-wielders, Samantabhadra, Padmapāṇi, the bodhisattvas, etc. preach the dharma as a phrase of the purity of the mantra path universally throughout the ten directions.<sup>25</sup>

This passage was pivotal in the development of esoteric Buddhist scholasticism due to its claim that the teachings of Vairocana, "the sun-like tathāgata," transcend the three times of past, present, and future. The sutra also declares that the tathāgata preaches through the three secret activities of body, speech, and mind to all sentient beings at all times and in all locations. According to the sutra, this preaching is the so-called "path of mantra" (i.e. Shingon). However, the issue in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and for later commentators was not the specific teaching expounded in the sutra, but the body of the buddha through which Vairocana preached these teachings.

As in the case with many of its textual citations, the *Treatise* does not provide an explanation of this passage. Instead, it inserts interlinear commentary equating the various descriptions of the tathāgata's preaching in the sutra with a specific body of the buddha. The "phrase of the harmony of the body, speech, and mind is due to the empowerment of the sun of the tathāgatas" denotes the preaching of the essence body (自性身, *svābhāva-kāya*). The body, speech, and mind that "instantly appeared as the treasury of inexhaustible adornment" signifies the preaching of the reward body (受用身, *saṃbhoga-kāya*). The universally pervasive activities of the body, speech, and mind of Vairocana preach the dharma to all sentient beings in the form of mantra. The *Treatise* associates this form of the preaching with the transformation body of the buddha (變化身, *nirmāṇa-kāya*). Finally, the dharma as preached by the various bodhisattvas, vajra beings, or deities that appear in the periphery of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala are the preaching in the form of emanation bodies (等流身, *niṣyanda-kāya*).<sup>26</sup>

Studies of the *Treatise* are quick to point out that this four-part configuration of buddha bodies was based on the preface to Amoghavajra's *An Abbreviated Description for Cultivating Methods for Determining the Sagely Stages of the Vajraśekhara Yoga* (*Lueshu jingangding yuqie fenbie shenwei xiuzheng famen* 略述金剛頂瑜伽分別聖位修證法門, hereafter *Sagely Stages of the Vajraśekhara Yoga*). However, Amoghavajra's source for this terminology is unclear. These four types of bodies are also listed in his conclusion to the *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies*. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, the *Synopsis* is an outline of the eighteen assemblies, or divisions, of texts that supposedly constituted the legendary *Vajraśekhara Yoga* in one hundred

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25. *Taishō* 18.1a9-b3. The *Treatise* omits several lines from the original text. For an alternative translation, see Rolf Giebel, trans., *The Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Translation and Research, 2005), 173, 3-4.

26. See *TKDZ* 3.106.

thousand verses. The four types of mandala referenced in the Tōji curricula were based on this same passage. However, like the four types of mandala, this concluding line to the *Synopsis* does not explain these terms for the bodies of the buddha. Rather, it simply asserts that if one understands the harmony between the four mandala and its deities, then he "perfectly realizes the four bodies of essence, reward, transformation, emanation" and generates benefits for all sentient beings.<sup>27</sup>

In the *Sagely Stages of the Vajraśekhara Yoga*, Amoghavajra purports to quote a line from a Sanskrit version of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. Because this line lists four bodies by the names of essence, reward, transformation, and emanation, some scholars speculate that Amoghavajra adopted his interpretation of the four-body paradigm from the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* also relates Amoghavajra's text to this sutra, claiming that they both explain that the dharma body preaches. However, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* makes no effort to present a coherent system of buddha bodies, let alone a four-body model. Furthermore, this terminology of the four-fold dharma body is not found in any of the extant Chinese translations of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. Although a similar line can be identified in Śikṣānanda's early eighth-century translation, Bodhiruci's translation, which is the version of the sutra cited in the *Treatise*, makes no reference to this configuration.<sup>28</sup>

A more probable inspiration for the four-part theory of the bodies of the buddha is proposed in the final fascicle of Xuanzang's *Treatise on Consciousness Only*. In this commentary on the last of Vasubandhu's *Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only*, Xuanzang describes the characteristics of the body attained by Śākyamuni when liberated from the afflictions of *saṃsāra*. Because he realized the supreme and ineffable dharma, his body can also be called a body of dharma. This body has unlimited power and is adorned with great virtue. Xuanzang also notes that the term "dharma body" does not only designate the embodiment of the purified dharmas, but includes the impure grounds in which the buddha attained awakening. In other words, the

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27. The four-part buddha-body theory is listed in the *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies in the Vajraśekhara Yoga* (*Jingangding jing yujia shiba hui zhigui* 金剛頂經瑜伽十八會指歸). See *Taishō* 18.287c1-12. Fukuda discusses this passage as a possible source of the four types of the bodies in the *Treatise*. See Fukuda Ryōsei 福田亮成, "Kōbō daishi no hosshin seppō to sono kōzō" 弘法大師の法身說法説とその構造, in *Mikkyō taikēi* 5 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1994), 321. For an English translation and study of this text, see Rolf W. Giebel, "The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh shih pa-hui chih-kuei: An Annotated Translation," *Journal of Naritatan Institute for Buddhist Studies* 18 (1995):107-201.

28. Śikṣānanda translates these terms as 自性, 受用, 化身, 現化. See *Taishō* 16.0631c12. Ochi Junji compares the Chinese terms with Tibetan translations of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* in Ochi Junji 越智淳仁, "Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra no Dharmata-buddha to Nisyanda-buddha" 『楞伽經』の Dharmata-buddha と Nisyanda-buddha, *Mikkyō bunka* 150 (1985):148-137. Both Ochi and Fukuda argue that Amoghavajra adopted these terms from a Sanskrit manuscript of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and suggest that this text was also the source of his buddha-body theory. See Fukuda 1994, 321-322 and Ochi Junji 越智淳仁, "Mikkyō no hosshin shisō" 密教の法身思想, *Nihon bukkyō gakkai nenpō* 日本仏教学会年報 53 (1987):95-110.

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dharma body is not just a metaphor for the enlightened mind of the buddha, but this concept includes the impure space in which Śākyamuni attained buddhahood. Therefore, the comprehensive assemblage of all dharmas, both pure and impure, is called the "dharma body."

Xuanzang then explains that the dharma body has three distinct aspects. The first is an essence body (自性身), which denotes the pure *dharmadhātu* of the tathāgatas. This body is the foundation for the harmony between the manifested bodies of the buddha. The essence body is without characteristics, quiescent, and beyond the limits of discourse. As the ultimate truth of all dharmas, Xuanzang exclaims, the essence body is also called the dharma body of the buddha. The second aspect is the reward body (受用身), which is further divided into two types. The first is the inwardly-directed reward (自受用), which is the body attained by a buddha after cultivating merit over the course of three great *kalpa*. This body is the pure form of a buddha that abides in a blissful state of realizing the dharma (法樂). The other component of the reward body is the outwardly-directed (他受用) form of this reward, which manifests in a pure land to preach to advanced bodhisattvas. The third aspect of the dharma body is the transformation body (變化身). This body manifests in both pure and impure lands to preach to worldlings, śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and low ranking bodhisattvas. This aspect of the dharma body can take various forms and preaches according to the needs and capabilities of the practitioner. Xuanzang does not include the fourth category of emanation body in this scheme, but the term "emanation" or "continuity" (等流) is widely used in the text and is synonymous with the transformation body.<sup>29</sup>

Amoghavajra's interpretation of the four-fold dharma body is very similar to this configuration in the *Treatise on Consciousness Only* with the notable addition of specific names for buddhas and the location of their preaching. He defines the transformation body as the aspect

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In a recent study of the interpretation of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, Doi Natsuki points out that the discussion of bodies of the buddha in these two texts considerably differ. Doi also argues that the notion that the dharma buddha preaches the teachings of the sutra was a standard doctrine of the Hossō school. Rather than an innovative interpretation of the sutra, the treatise was just rehashing already well known doctrinal perspectives and calling them "esoteric." See Doi Natsuki 土井夏樹, "Ben kenmitsu nikyō ron ni okeru ryōga kyō hōbutsu seppō no kaishaku ni tsuite—toku ni hossō kyōgaku to no taihi wo tōshite—" 「弁顯密二教論」における「楞伽經」法仏説法の解釈について—特に法相教学との対比を通して—, *Mikkyō bunka* 215 (2005):1-28. For this passage in Bodhiruci's translation regarding the preaching of the dharma buddha, see *Taishō* 16.525b16-c11. Kūkai cites the same passage from the ten-fascicle translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* in his *Letter of Promulgation* and the opening statement in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*. See Takagi Shingen and Thomas Eijō Dreitlein, *Kūkai on the Philosophy of Language* (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2010), 312 and *TKDZ* 1.66, respectively. The letter merely cites a portion of this passage without commentary, whereas the transmission text does not quote the passage but equates the dharma buddha with the internally-directed reward body of Vairocana. In the *Essay on the Two Schools*, Shōshin criticizes the *Treatise's* interpretation of this passage in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, noting that the dharma buddha in this sutra is determined not to have cognitive function, thus making it impossible for it to preach to a retinue of bodhisattvas. See *Taishō* 74. 422a16-29, or part two of the appended translation.

29. See *Taishō* 31.57c14-58a6. For an English translation, see Francis H. Cook, *Three Texts on Consciousness Only* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Translation and Research, 1999), 360-361. Fukuda also notes that 等流 is an alternative translation for 變化. See Fukuda 1994, 322.

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of the tathāgata who attained enlightenment in the land of Magadha on the continent of Jambudvīpa in order to preach to worldlings, śrāvakas, and low ranking bodhisattvas. The teachings of this body of the buddha guides these beings toward buddhahood, which, depending of their level of capability, could require three great *kalpa* of rigorous practice. This body of the buddha is not the same as the reward body of Vairocana Buddha, who abides in Akaniṣṭha Heaven at the peak of the fourth *dhyāna* in order to preach to the great bodhisattvas who have completed the ten *bhūmi* of the bodhisattva path. In contrast to this physical form of Vairocana, his internally-directed reward body emits countless bodhisattvas from his mind at the moment of attaining unsurpassed awakening. These bodhisattvas then receive *abhiṣeka* from the outwardly-directed reward body of Vairocana Tathāgata and expound the teachings of the three secret activities.<sup>30</sup>

The difference between Amoghavajra's depiction of the types of bodies and the passage in the *Treatise on Consciousness Only* is the claim that bodhisattvas arise from the enlightened mind of the reward body. As Amoghavajra goes on to explain, this spontaneous activity originating from the mind of the tathāgata highlights the subtle distinction between the internal and outwardly-directed reward bodies of Vairocana. The outwardly-directed body assists bodhisattvas in mastering the thirty-seven factors for attaining enlightenment (三十七菩提分法, *bodhi-pāṅṣika-dharma*).<sup>31</sup> Without this assistance it would be impossible to reach buddhahood. When the bodhisattva realizes the internal reward body of the buddha, he has attained the wisdom of *samādhi* acquired through mastering these factors and becomes a buddha. In other words, if the advanced bodhisattva can perceive the preaching internal to the mind of a fully awakened buddha, then by definition he is a buddha.<sup>32</sup>

Amoghavajra's view of the four-fold dharma body is similar to the *Treatise on Consciousness Only* in that he explains the aspects of the transformation and two components of the reward bodies unified through the essence body. In total, these bodies constitute the dharma body, and, therefore, their preaching is none other than the preaching of the dharma body. However, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* interprets the teaching of the three secret activities expounded by the bodhisattvas after receiving *abhiṣeka* from Vairocana to be the preaching of the essence body and inwardly-directed reward body. It supports this claim by quoting another text from the *Vajrasekhara Yoga* series, the *Yogas and Yogins of the Vajra Peak Pavillion Sūtra* (*Jingangfeng louge yiqie yujia yuqi jing* 金剛峯樓閣一切瑜伽瑜祇經), traditionally attributed to Amoghavajra's master Vajrabodhi. The key passage states:

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30. See *Taishō* 18.288a3-13. Abé discusses this passage in Abé 1999, 115.

31. Lamotte discusses these factors and their canonical sources in his preliminary notes to Chapter Thirty-One of the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. See Lamotte 1944, 1119-1137.

32. See *Taishō* 18.291a2-11.

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以此甚深祕密心地普賢自性常住法身、攝諸菩薩。唯此佛刹、盡以金剛自性清淨所成密嚴華嚴。

The constantly abiding dharma body, whose universally sagacious essence is the grounds for a profoundly secret mind, encompasses the bodhisattvas. Only in this buddha field is one purified by the vajra essence and achieves the secret adornment of the Flower Garland.<sup>33</sup>

The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* relates the bodhisattvas referenced in this passage to the bodhisattvas in Amoghavajra's text, stating that the essence-dharma body includes the bodhisattvas, vajra-beings, deities, etc. of Vairocana's retinue in the mandala. Therefore, whenever these beings preach via their three secret activities, it is tantamount to the preaching of the essence-dharma body of the buddha.

The *Treatise* equates the activity of the vajra-beings and bodhisattvas in the mandala with the three secret activities of the essence-dharma body. However, it simultaneously rejects the mainstream Mahāyāna view represented by the *Treatise on Consciousness Only* that considers the reward and transformation bodies of the buddha to be the vehicles for transmitting the secrets of the tathāgata to their audience. This reversal of roles between the buddhas and bodhisattvas as expounders of the dharma created a problem for the later scholastic tradition. Saisen addressed this issue by arguing that the preaching of vajra-beings and bodhisattvas was not adapted to the proclivities of their audience. As the opening of the *Treatise* proclaims, the response and transformation bodies use skillful means to relate the teachings to the needs of the individual. Bodhisattvas, and especially vajra-beings, do not have the inclination to adapt the teachings. Therefore, their three secret activities simply reflect the three secret activities of the essence body of the buddha. Saisen refers to these bodies as "projections" (影像, *pratibimbha*) of the substance (本質, *bimbha*) of the dharma.<sup>34</sup>

The *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, however, never clarifies why the preaching of the bodhisattvas and vajra-beings (i.e. the emanation bodies) reveals the "true speech" of the dharma buddha, whereas the response and transformation bodies merely propagate a "provisional" teaching. Rather, the passage from Vajrabodhi's translation is followed by the opening segment of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. The *Treatise* interprets the preaching of Mahāvairocana in the opening lines of the sutra to consist of the four bodies of essence, reward, transformation, and

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33. *Taishō* 18.254a13-15.

34. Saisen makes this argument in the *Doctrine of the Four-fold Dharma Body* (*Shishu hosshin gi* 四種法身義) See *Taishō* 77.511a15-b12. Saisen contends that perceiving the preaching of the internally or outwardly-directed reward body depends on the capabilities of the practitioner. However, the preaching of the essence body is unchanging and unadapted. Saisen's point is that ultimately this preaching occurs within the mind of the practitioner and to realize that one has the capacity for inherent awakening is tantamount to hear the preaching of the dharma body.

emanation. The harmony of the three secrets of the tathāgata is the essence body. The embodiment of this harmony appears to the assembly as the reward body. The activities of the Vairocana's body, speech, and mind is the transformation body. And, because they arose from the mind of the internally-directed reward body, the emanation bodies also preach the internally-realized wisdom (内證智) of the dharma.<sup>35</sup>

It would appear that the equation of the tathāgata's activity with the transformation body differs little from the four-body theory in the *Treatise on Consciousness Only*, the birth body in the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, and the response-transformation buddha from Bodhiruci's translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. In each of these Mahāyāna sources, the transformation body manifests as a response to sentient beings, adapting the preaching of the dharma body to their specific needs and sharpness of faculties. However, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* takes this analysis of the four-fold dharma body a step further by parsing the bodies of the buddha into two tracks according to their preaching. The four types of bodies associated with the opening of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* are all the preaching of Mahāvairocana Tathāgata. Because the source of the latter three manifestations of this preaching is Mahāvairocana as the dharma body of the buddha, all four types are deemed to be the preaching of the dharma body. Therefore, the *Treatise* defines the esoteric teachings as the content of the preaching of this particular four-fold dharma body. The exoteric teachings, on the other hand, are teachings that are incapable of signifying this four-fold preaching without multiple levels of mediation.

This is an odd claim to make considering the sutra proclaims Mahāvairocana's preaching to be all pervading. If this is the case, one would presume that all teachings are ultimately the esoteric teachings emanating from the body, speech, and mind of the tathāgata. However, a comment to another passage from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* suggests that this is in fact what the author(s) meant when defining the esoteric teachings in terms of buddha-body theory. A verse in the sixth fascicle of the sutra describes Śākyamuni Buddha as "pervading all realms like empty space" and performing deeds in the various buddha lands for the sake of their denizens. The preacher of the sutra declares that, just like Śākyamuni Buddha, Vairocana's speech and deeds manifest throughout the realms and lands "causing all sentient beings to achieve joy."<sup>36</sup> According to the exegesis of this passage in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, the three bodies

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35. Abé Ryūichi proposes a slightly different interpretation of this passage in the *Treatise*, suggesting that the interlinear commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* actually addresses a practical issue of language rather than a doctrinal problem of the ontology of the dharma body. Kūkai's point, according to Abé, was that the three secret activities constitute a "phonic mandala" of the language of the dharma body. The bodies of the buddha and bodhisattvas occupying this mandala were merely an audience for a pluralized dharma body, and the three secrets are its internal monologue. By emulating these three secrets, the esoteric practitioner gains access to this monologue, thus hearing the preaching of the dharma body. The intent behind this doctrine, Abé concludes, was to offer an esoteric theory of language that would explain the intersection of scripture and ritual incantation. Abé 1999, 195.

36. See *Taishō* 18.40b11-19. For an alternative translation see Giebel 2005, 173.

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of Mahāvairocana (i.e. the essence-dharma, reward, and transformation bodies) pervade the cosmos to save sentient beings just like Śākyamuni. However, the *Treatise* declares that the three bodies of Śākyamuni are ultimately not the same as the bodies of Mahāvairocana. Rather, they merely expound the inferior exoteric teachings.<sup>37</sup>

As in the opening line of the *Treatise*, this commentary distinguishes between two tracks of buddha-body theory, exoteric and esoteric. In the exoteric track, Śākyamuni preaches in the form of a reward or transformation body. Thus, his teachings are "revealed, provisional and adapted to the capabilities of the individual." The dharma body of Śākyamuni does not preach. In the esoteric track, on the other hand, the preaching of Mahāvairocana in all of his manifestations is the preaching of the essence-dharma body. According to the *Treatise*, the preaching of the pluralized dharma body is "secret, profound, and ultimately true speech." This speech is unchanged through time and space, and, therefore not adapted to the capabilities of the audience who hear it.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, in the last set of citations, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* applies this dualistic interpretation of bodies of the buddha to the two types of bodies discussed in the ninth chapter of the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. As I discussed in my translation of this passage in the previous section, Kumārajīva responds to a question regarding the suffering of the buddha by positing a two-body theory. The first type is the birth body of Śākyamuni, who was born, suffered, and died. The second type is a body that takes the dharma as its nature. This body is omnipresent and responds to the needs of sentient beings. However, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* equates the body of dharma-nature in the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* with the three-body scheme, concluding that the dharma body (which is actually the body of dharma-nature) is imperceivable to sentient beings. Therefore, it can only preach through manifested bodies. In contrast, the manifested bodies of Mahāvairocana are, in substance, the dharma body. Therefore, their preaching *is* the preaching of the essence-dharma body of the buddha.<sup>39</sup> For this reason, the *Treatise* proposes that the esoteric track of buddha-bodies preaches a superior form of the dharma to the exoteric track, which require multiple levels of mediation between the ultimate truth and unenlightened sentient beings.

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37. See *TKDZ* 3.107.

38. *TKDZ* 3.75. Shingon scholars offer several interpretations of this distinction between Mahāvairocana and Śākyamuni, but invariably the conclusion is that they signify two distinct sets of teachings. For example, see Katsumata's note on this passage in Katsumata Shunkyō 勝又俊教, *Kōbō daishi chosaku zenshū* 弘法大師著作全集, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1963), 39n1. However, this is a circular argument, because the distinction between these two buddhas is the basis for distinguishing between the esoteric and exoteric teachings.

39. See *TKDZ* 3.108.

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The four-fold dharma body model in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is hardly a radical departure from mainstream Mahāyāna buddha-body theory. There are no significant differences between the four-body doctrine in the *Treatise on Consciousness Only* that depicts the essence, reward, and transformation bodies as aspects of the dharma body and the claim in the *Treatise* that the teaching of mantra by various manifestations of the buddha's internally-realized wisdom is the substance of the dharma body's preaching. Although the *Treatise* does not cite Xuanzang's translation, which it rejects as an exoteric teaching, it ultimately comes to the same conclusion regarding the doctrine of the dharma body.

In Xuanzang's four-part typology, the body of the buddha is the singular dharma body, but is differentiated in terms of function. The reward and transformation bodies manifest in response to sentient beings. The reward body preaches within its buddha field or land to an assembly consisting of advanced bodhisattvas on the verge of becoming buddhas. When such bodhisattvas attain buddhahood, they generate their own buddha field as a body of internal bliss of the dharma (自受法樂). Within this land, the buddha manifests an outwardly-directed reward body to preach to an assembly of bodhisattvas. The transformation body appears in an impure buddha land to preach to worldlings and less advanced bodhisattvas. Therefore, the only real difference between these two aspects are their relation to the audience and the location in which they preach. The teachings of a reward or transformation body of the buddha are adapted for their intended audience. The essence body provides continuity through time and space, but does not have relational properties and, therefore, is inconceivable. The dharma body of the buddha, according to this scheme, is the harmony of all three of these functions.<sup>40</sup>

Amoghavajra's application of the four-body theory to Vairocana and the deities of the mandala is fundamentally the same as the *Treatise on Consciousness Only*. In Amoghavajra's explanation of the four bodies, both components of the reward body as well as the transformation body share the same essence of the dharma body. Only their intended audience, their location, and method of teaching differ. Amoghavajra simply relates the ontology of the buddha from the *śāstra* to the structural logic of the mandala. Vairocana generates the mandala and its inhabitants from his enlightened mind at the moment of awakening. As the outwardly-directed reward body, he preaches to the deities in the mandala, who in turn preach the teaching of mantra as transformation and emanation bodies.

The four-fold model in *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is clearly based on Amoghavajra's interpretation of the Yogācārin notion of buddha bodies. The *Treatise* then parses the four-fold dharma body model into two tracks. The esoteric teachings are defined as the three secret activities of the essence-dharma body as transmitted through the deities in the mandala. However, this doctrinal claim does not explain why the so-called "exoteric teachings" of the response and transformation bodies are incapable of the same function. The *Treatise* simply associates these teach-

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40. I based this overview of Yogācāra views of the dharma body on Paul J. Griffiths, *On Being Buddha: The Classical Doctrine of Buddhahood* (Albany: State University of New York, 1994), 87-180.



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ings with the rival schools of Hossō, Kegon, and Tendai and declares that they do not account for the preaching of the dharma body. However, Xuanzang's translation clearly expresses the idea that ultimately the preaching of all buddhas is the preaching of the dharma body. Kegon and Tendai also devised theories to explain this doctrine. The polemical assertion in the *Treatise* that the other schools are incapable of explaining the preaching of the dharma body, along with the distinction between Mahāvairocana and Śākyamuni strongly suggests that the *Treatise* devised this theory in opposition to an alternative esoteric model of buddha-body theory or criticism of this the four-body model.

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### The Polemical Foundations of the Doctrine of the Dharma Body

Saisen's fourth division of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* includes a brief exchange of questions and responses explaining the necessity of composing this work. The section begins with a very reasonable question from an interlocutor:

問曰。古傳法者廣造論章、唱敷六宗開演三藏。軸剩廣厦人僵卷舒。何勞綴斯篇。利益如何。

Question: The teachings that were transmitted in the past were composed in treatises promulgated extensively by the six schools and disseminated in the *Tripitaka*. The surplus of these scrolls in storage make it such that a person stiffens from taking them out and rolling them up. Why bother composing this work? What does it benefit?<sup>41</sup>

The author goes on to explain that the numerous sutras and treatises that had been composed in India and transmitted to China prior to the eighth century were all exoteric teachings. During the reigns of the Tang emperors Xuanzong 玄宗 (685–762) and Daizong 代宗 (726–779), Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra introduced the esoteric teachings of the *Vajraśekhara Yoga*. These new teachings flourished and replaced the inferior exoteric teachings of the Tiantai, Huayan, and Faxiang schools. However, the author notes that the "old diseases had yet to be cured," and the exoteric teachings still dominated Japanese Buddhism. Therefore, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was meant to serve as a mirror to reflect the profound truth of the esoteric teachings transmitted by Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra.<sup>42</sup>

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41. TKDZ 3.76, *Taishō* 77.375a17-19.

42. See TKDZ 3.76-78,

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This candid reply denouncing the doctrines and exegetical works of the six schools has led some scholars to conclude that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* with a particular audience in mind. One theory proposes that Kūkai wrote it as a rejection of Saichō and his attempt to introduce esoteric Buddhism as a component of Tendai. The second theory argues that Kūkai was directly responding to Tokuitsu's criticism of the Shingon school in his essay *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School*. In the final sections of this chapter, I pose a third possibility. If, as the historical evidence suggests, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was a post-Kūkai work, the most likely target of the polemics in the *Treatise* were the foundational writings of Tendai esoteric Buddhist doctrine. In his two compendia on esoteric Buddhist doctrine, the *Interpretation of the Teachings and Time Periods in the Mantra School* (*Shingonshū kyōji gi* 眞言宗教時義, also called the *Shingonshū kyōji mondō* 眞言宗教時間答, hereafter *Interpretation of the Teachings*) and the *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta*, Annen outlines a comprehensive system of Buddhist doctrine culminating in the unification of the Tendai perfect teachings with the Shingon esoteric teachings of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, its commentary, texts belonging the *Vajraśekhara Yoga* series, and the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*.<sup>43</sup>

Among the many doctrinal issues addressed in his compendia, Annen discusses the preaching of the dharma body on several occasions. It is often assumed, erroneously, that Annen developed his view of this doctrine based on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*.<sup>44</sup> Although he cites other Kūkai works, Annen never mentions the *Treatise* nor does he refer to its radical interpretation of buddha bodies. Considering Annen's purpose for compiling the prodigious compendia was to organize all available scholastic paradigms into a comprehensive taxonomy of the perfect-esoteric teachings, he certainly would have included the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in this project if it were at his disposal. However, Annen makes no mention of this text or its content. Therefore, we should consider the possibility that the parallels found in Annen's writings and the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* were not coincidental. Rather, the *Treatise's* interpretation of proof texts directly opposed Annen's exegesis of the same passages. Furthermore, Annen proposes a theory of the dharma body that was not limited to the medium of speech, but accounts for all possible means of receiving the teachings from the dharma body of the buddha.

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43. The *Treatise on the Bodhicitta* refers to Amoghavajra's translation of the *Jingangding yujia zhong fa anouduoluo sanmiaosanputi xin lun* 金剛頂瑜伽中發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心論, which is traditionally attributed to Nāgārjuna.

44. For example, Katsumata argues that Annen's view of Shingon was influenced by Kūkai and Saichō. See Katsumata Shunkyō 勝又俊教, *Mikkyō no nihonteki tenkai* 密教の日本的展開 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1970), 285. Fukuda argues that the doctrine of the dharma body in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* had a profound impact on Annen. See Fukuda Ryōsei 福田亮成, *Kūkai shisō no tankyū* 空海思想の探究 (Tokyo: Daizō, 2000), 133.

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In the final sections, I discuss Annen's theory of the dharma body and its parallels with the four-fold dharma body in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* through two case studies. In the first case, I demonstrate that Annen wrote the *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta*, in part, as a response to Tokuitsu's *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School*. Unlike the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, Annen directly replies to several of Tokuitsu's inquiries. The second case compares Annen's exegesis of the opening segment of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and *Yogas and Yogins of the Vajra Peak Pavillion Sūtra* with the interpretation of these passages in the *Treatise*. This comparison demonstrates that Annen's perfect-esoteric Buddhism not only responded to Tokuitsu's criticism of Shingon texts and doctrines, but provided a comprehensive theory of the dharma body and its preaching.

#### **(i) "The Old Diseases Had Yet to be Cured"**

The first theory of a possible antagonist for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* proposes that Kūkai wrote this work in opposition to Saichō. It is unclear when or how Kūkai and Saichō first met. They departed on the same envoy to China in 804. Although on different ships and arriving at separate ports, they may have encountered each other at some point before their journey. The initial departure date had been pushed back due to weather, and it is reasonable to assume that they would have met while waiting in Kyūshū.<sup>45</sup> Nonetheless, the only documentation of an

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45. Paul Groner and Ryūichi Abé discuss the conditions of Saichō and Kūkai's voyage and note the possibility that they may have met before leaving. See Paul Groner, *Saichō: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1980), 39 and Abé 1999, 114.

interaction between the two monks is a collection of letters exchanged over the course of six or seven years. This correspondence abruptly ended around 816 after which time there is no evidence of any further communication.<sup>46</sup>

Although the authenticity of some of these letters is questionable, they are the only source of information regarding the relationship between Saichō and Kūkai.<sup>47</sup> The letters also offer a glimpse into how their views of esoteric Buddhism may have differed. In a letter written on the first day of the fifth month of 816 (弘仁 7), Saichō writes to a disciple:

法華一乘眞言一乘、何有優劣。同法同戀。

How could either the singular-vehicle of the *Lotus Sūtra* or the singular-vehicle of mantra be superior to the other? They are equally concerned with the same dharma.<sup>48</sup>

This proclamation to his disciple Taihan 泰範 (778–ca.858), who was currently studying with Kūkai on Mt. Takao, reflects Saichō's interpretation of mantra and esoteric Buddhism. Rather

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46. Saichō's letters are found in the *Correspondences of Dengyō Daishi* (*Dengyō daishi shōsoku* 傳教大師消息), published in *DDZ* 5.441-472. In this collection of forty letters, approximately twenty four are addressed to Kūkai. This extant version of this collection was compiled in 1381 at Tōji. However, there is evidence that it was based on an earlier version compiled by Ningai 仁海 (ca. 950-1046), the founder of the Ono lineage of the Shingon school. A colophon to an alternative manuscript notes that Ningai originally collected Saichō's letters and that the current edition was a copy made at Ninnaji in 1079. Takagi Shingen discusses the earlier version of the collection and its attribution to Ningai. See Takagi Shingen 高木 諄元, *Kōbō daishi no shokan* 弘法大師の書簡, (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1981), 140-141. Abé summarizes the same details in Ryūichi Abé, "Saichō and Kūkai: A Conflict of Interpretations," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 22/1-2 (1995):110n10. In contrast to Saichō's two dozen letters to Kūkai, only five of Kūkai's correspondences have survived and are published in two separate collections of Kūkai's writings. The *Shūi zōshū* 拾遺雜集 is a compilation of independently circulated letters, poems, and edicts traditionally attributed to Kūkai. It includes three brief responses to Saichō's letters. The other two letters are found in the tenth fascicle of the *Zoku henjō hakki shōryōshū hoketsu shō* 續遍照發揮性靈集補闕鈔, which, as I discuss in Chapter Two, was one of three auxiliary fascicles added to the *Shōryōshū* by the Ninnaji scholiast Saisen in 1079. Both letters are relatively long and employ more doctrinal terminology than the other letters. Both collections are published in *TKDZ* 8.

47. It is a curious coincidence that two letters attributed to Kūkai were penned by the same Shingon scholiast who composed the first commentaries on Kūkai's works. It is also suspicious that the earlier manuscript of Saichō's letters was copied at Ninnaji in 1079, the same year and location where Saisen appended Kūkai's letters to the *Shōryōshū*. This has led some scholars to question the authenticity of the letters and the tenth fascicle of Saisen's revised *Shōryōshū*. Tsuji Zennosuke considered these letters to be forgeries, because they are only found in the auxiliary fascicles to the *Shōryōshū*. See Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之助, *Nihon Bukkyō shi* 日本佛教史, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1944), 304. Akamatsu Toshihide also discusses the authenticity of the tenth fascicle of the *Shōryōshū*, but he does not dismiss them as forgeries. Rather he proposes that they were addressed to Saichō's disciple Enchō. See Ienaga Saburō 家永三郎, Akamatsu Toshihide 赤松俊秀, and Tamamuro Taijō 圭室諦成, ed., *Nihon bukkyō shi* 日本佛教史, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1967), 194. Groner discusses this scholarship in Groner 1980, 85. Abé dismisses Tsuji's claim, noting that the letter to Saichō was listed in two twelfth century catalogues as an independent text. See Abé 1995, 124n29. These catalogues were based on Saisen's catalogue, which also lists this letter as an independent text and was probably the basis for the letter in the *Shōryōshū*. See *KDZ* 15.232. However, it is impossible to confirm if the letter listed in the catalogue is identical to the one in the collection.

48. *DDZ* 5.469.

than a distinct school, he always considered the practice of mantra (i.e. Shingon) to be a part of the singular-vehicle of Mahāyāna. The "singular-vehicle" generally refers to the soteriology of the Chinese Tiantai and Huayan exegetical traditions. Both schools devised their views of the bodhisattva path in contrast to the notion of three vehicles for śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas. Rather than three separate vehicles, the singular-vehicle of the buddha permitted all sentient beings to eventually reach the goal of buddhahood due to the buddha's ability to adapt its preaching to the needs of individuals at various stages of development along the path. Saichō assumed that the practice of mantra similarly led to the same ends and, therefore, called it the "singular-vehicle of mantra."

Saichō's equation of Shingon with the singular-vehicle is often cited as one reason Kūkai ended their correspondence. In his study of Kūkai's esoteric Buddhism, Katsumata suggests that Kūkai articulated his view of the esoteric teachings as distinct and superior to the exoteric teachings in contrast to Saichō's notion of the unification of the perfect-esoteric teachings (圓密一致). According to Katsumata, Saichō had learned a form of esoteric Buddhism that combined Tendai doctrine and esoteric practice while in China. When he received initiations from Kūkai into the Garbhadhātu and Vajradhātu Maṇḍalas, he interpreted these rites in terms of the perfect-esoteric model. Kūkai did not take kindly to this misappropriation of his teachings. In response, Katsumata suggests, Kūkai began to articulate his own view of the esoteric teachings in opposition to Saichō's blended form of esoteric Buddhism. Therefore, his motivation for writing the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was to establish the doctrinal foundation of his Shingon school.<sup>49</sup>

As Katsumata points out, a letter addressed to Saichō preserved in the tenth fascicle of the *Shōryōshū* directly responds to Saichō's letter sent to Taihan in 816 and, therefore, is believed to have been written shortly thereafter. There are three extant versions of the letter. The one published in the *Shōryōshū* is attributed to Taihan, while Kūkai is listed as the author in another, yet one more version does not name a specific author.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, Katsumata argues that even

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49. See Katsumata 1970, 45. Although Saichō developed a curriculum for the study of incantation and ritual on Mt. Hiei called the "*shanagō*," there is little evidence that he thought of esoteric Buddhism as a set of practices or doctrines distinct from Tendai. Saichō was influential on Ennin and Annen, who later developed a Tendai-esoteric system based on Saichō's interpretations of the writings of Tiantai patriarchs Zhiyi and Zhanran. However, they combined the Tendai teachings with newly imported esoteric texts and practices to create a unified perfect-esoteric Buddhism. Ōkubo Ryōshun discusses the development of this system in his scholarship. For a brief explanation of Saichō's influence on Annen's view of a perfect-esoteric Buddhism, see Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, "Annen to saichō" 安然と最澄, in *Tada kōbun meiyō kyōju koki kinen ronbunshū—Tōyō no jiji to chie* 多田孝文名誉教授古稀記念論文集—東洋の慈悲と智慧 (Tokyo: Sankibo Busshorin, 2013), 324-325.

50. See Groner 1980, 86.

if Taihan actually wrote the letter, the content reflects Kūkai's doctrinal positions on the superiority of the Shingon teachings. The letter is relatively long, but the key passage responding to Saichō's letter states:

夫如來大師隨機投藥。性欲千殊藥種萬差。大小並鑣、一三爭轍。權實難別、顯密易濫。自非知音、誰能別之。雖然、法應之佛不得無差。顯密之教、何無淺深。法智兩佛、自他二受。顯密別說、權實有隔。所以沈執真言醍醐。

The tathāgata and great masters deliver medicine according to the needs of the individual. Depending on one's proclivities, this medicine is divided in myriad ways. The great and small [vehicles] are ranked, and the singular and three [vehicles] are debated. The provisional and ultimate are difficult to differentiate, and the exoteric and esoteric are easy to confuse. Without a good teacher, who could ever know the differences between these. Although this is the case, the buddha in dharma or response body are not indistinguishable. What is not shallow or profound about the exoteric and esoteric teachings? The two dharma and wisdom aspects of the buddha are obtained internally and externally. The exoteric and esoteric differ in how they explain the impediments between the provisional and ultimate. For this reason, I have become attached to the ghee of mantra.<sup>51</sup>

The content of this letter has many parallels with another letter in the *Shōryōshū*, the so-called *Letter of Promulgation*, and to a lesser degree the opening of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. The rhetoric of the esoteric as a superior teaching as well as the casual dismissal of traditional classification schemes are found in both of these texts.

These similarities have led scholars such as Katsumata to conclude that Kūkai, via Taihan, wrote this letter as a rejection of Saichō's view of esoteric Buddhism as equal to the singular-vehicle of Mahāyāna. Specifically, Katsumata argues that the term "exoteric" in the letter denotes the Tendai unification of the perfect and esoteric teachings, whereas "esoteric" is the "ghee of mantra." Furthermore, he suggests that the metaphor of the tathāgata's medicine refers to the doctrine of skillful means in the *Lotus Sūtra*, which contends that teachings of the buddha are always adapted to the capabilities of the practitioner. Comparing this statement in the letter with the opening of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, Katsumata concludes that Kūkai wrote both as a refutation of Saichō's notion that mantra (i.e. Shingon) was included in the singular-vehicle of Mahāyāna.<sup>52</sup>

David Gardiner takes Katsumata's claim a step further, arguing that the doctrine of the dharma body in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was the result of the schism between Saichō and Kūkai. In particular, he suggests that Kūkai articulated this doctrine in response to Saichō's

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51. *TKDZ* 8.199-200. For an alternative and partial translation of this passage, see Abé 1995, 131.

52. See Katsumata 1970, 45.

*shanago* curriculum, which considered the study of *dhāraṇī* texts and *abhiṣeka* rites on par with Tendai *shikan* practice.<sup>53</sup> According to Gardiner, Kūkai explained the distinction between the categories of esoteric and exoteric in terms of buddha-body theory to provide a doctrinal foundation for the superiority of the esoteric teachings, and, therefore, demonstrate to Saichō that he should not equate them with the singular-vehicle.<sup>54</sup>

This narrative of a falling out between Saichō and Kūkai due to irreconcilable differences between their views of esoteric Buddhism is problematic for two reasons. First, it assumes that they halted their communications due to a dispute over doctrine. Taihan's letter to Saichō, if it was in fact authentic, was clearly a response to Saichō's earlier letter in which he states the singular-vehicle of the *Lotus Sūtra* and the singular-vehicle of mantra are the same. Taihan respectfully replies that he currently preferred to study the latter, having previously studied the former under Saichō. The letter never rejects the claim that both the *Lotus Sūtra* and mantra are the singular-vehicle. Even Saisen, the first Kūkai apologist, did not consider the singular-vehicle and Shingon to refer to distinct traditions. In his *Doctrine on the Four-fold Dharma Body (Shishu hosshin gi 四種法身義)*, he states, "The singular-vehicle of mantra is the buddha vehicle, and the buddha vehicle is Mahāvairocana Tathāgata." He also clarifies that the "singular-vehicle of vajra" is included under this rubric.<sup>55</sup>

The second problem with this theory is that Saichō never discussed buddha-body theory in his writings. He addressed other doctrinal issues that later became the purview of esoteric Buddhism, such as expedient buddhahood and the three secret activities. However, he does not

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53. Ōkubo Ryōshun explains that Saichō used the term "*shanago*" and "*daihitaijōgō*" (大悲胎藏業) to denote the seasonal performance of rites held at the imperial palace. Because of this term, it is often mistakenly assumed that Saichō only incorporated the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* into his system of esoteric study. However, it is unclear what texts besides this sutra that Saichō considered to be esoteric. See Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, ed., *Sange no daishi saichō 山家の大師最澄* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Bunkan, 2004), 80.

54. See David Gardiner, "Transmission Problems: The Reproduction of Scripture and Kūkai's 'Opening' of an Esoteric Tradition," *Japanese Religions* 28/1 (2003):41-43. Gardiner also claims that Kūkai may have been provoked into dismissing the singular-vehicle after Saichō criticized Shingon in his 816 preface to the *Collection of Doctrines and Scholars from the various Traditions of the Great Tang and Silla that relied upon Tendai Doctrine (Daitō shinra shoshū gishō ehyō tendai gishō 大唐新羅諸宗義匠依憑天台義集)*. For more on this text, see Groner 1980, 88-91. In the preface, Saichō notes, "The new Shingon school rejects written transmission." Gardiner and Abé both suggest that Saichō may have been referring to Kūkai's letter admonishing him for requesting texts without receiving proper instruction in their meaning. See Abé 1995, 125-127. However, if Kūkai wrote the *Treatise* in 815, as both Gardiner and Abé suggest, it would have been impossible for him to have responded to Saichō's preface written a year later. For the preface, see *DDZ* 3.344. Saichō may have been referring to the lack of written documentation for the Shingon lineage, which was a issue debated among Shingon and Tendai scholastics. I discuss this issue in Chapter Four.

55. See *Taishō* 77:504a15-b14.

seem to have taken an interest in buddha-body theory.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, it is unclear why Kūkai would articulate his theory of a preaching dharma body as a rejection of a doctrine that Saichō never proposed in the first place. The claim that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as a rejection of Saichō's view of the singular-vehicle assumes that the singular-vehicle was synonymous with the exoteric teachings. However, this claim only appears in the *Treatise*.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the singular-vehicle, like the term "esoteric," was primarily a polemic for distinguishing between types of teachings. Why would Saichō have thought the term "esoteric" meant anything other than the singular-vehicle?

§ § §

The second theory regarding a possible interlocutor for the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* proposes that Kūkai wrote it as a response to a question in Tokuitsu's *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School*. As I discussed in Chapter One, Saisen also noted in his commentary that Kūkai may have composed the *Treatise* as a reaction to Tokuitsu's essay. Saisen claimed that Kūkai wrote it for the benefit of his disciples to prevent them from being deceived by the false doctrines of Tokuitsu, his fellow Nara clergy, and Saichō. In other words, his agenda was to demonstrate that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was Kūkai's final word on the correct interpretation of the buddha dharma. Modern scholars, on the other hand, suggest that the *Treatise* was a directly reply to Tokuitsu's essay, particularly the ninth inquiry regarding the meaning of the "original-ground dharma body."

The *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School* consists of eleven critical questions, or doubts (疑), regarding the textual and doctrinal basis for the mantra school. The first two inquiries concern the audience of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. Inquires three to seven constitute the majority and most critical segments of the essay in which Tokuitsu criticizes statements in the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* regarding the bodhisattva path and the time required for attaining buddhahood. In the eighth question, Tokuitsu challenges the notion that Siddham constituted a special language that was not created by humans, but inherently exists in the world as a

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56. Although Saichō wrote on the issues of expedient buddhahood and the three secret activities, he never addressed the issue of the dharma body. Ōkubo notes that Annen was really the first Tendai scholiast to write about this doctrine. See Ōkubo 2004a, 120-121. For an overview of Saichō's interpretations of the expedient buddhahood and the three secret activities, see Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, *Saichō no shisō to tendai mikkyō 最澄の思想と天台密教* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2015), 6-13.

57. When discussing a series of commentaries in his catalogue, Kūkai refers to the singular-vehicle as the "profound meaning of the principle" (一乘理奥義). *TKDZ* 1.30. Tomabechi also points out that with the exception of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* Kūkai never rejected the singular-vehicle as an exoteric teaching in his early writings. See Tomabechi Seiichi 苦米地誠一, *Heianki shingon mikkyō no kenkyū 平安期真言密教の研究* (Tokyo: Nonburu, 2008), 11.



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manifestation of the buddha's speech. Unlike his other questions, he does not associate this doctrine with a specific text. Rather, he attributes it to an anonymous "student of mantra." The tenth question simply asks if the final fascicle of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* was originally part of the sutra or if it was added later as a ritual supplement.<sup>58</sup> The final inquiry is the only one that does not directly refer to a specific text or the Siddham alphabet. Tokuitsu questions the legitimacy of the Shingon lineage and the legend of the iron stupa, arguing that there is no textual evidence to support the claim to an independent Shingon lineage. As I discuss in the next chapter, medieval Shingon scholiasts devised theories on the origin of their lineage and possible textual sources as they struggled to respond to this critique.<sup>59</sup>

The similarities between the critical inquiries in the *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School* regarding the textual and doctrinal legitimacy of the mantra school and Kūkai's writings on doctrine and lineage have led scholars to suggest that he must have replied directly to Tokuitsu. For instance, the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text appears to respond to the final question regarding lineage.<sup>60</sup> The *Doctrine of Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body* may have been a rejoinder to Tokuitsu's third criticism.<sup>61</sup> Kūkai's *Siddham Alphabet with Commentary* (*Bonji shittan jimo byō shakugi* 梵字悉曇字母并釋義) may have been an attempt to answer Tokuitsu's eighth question regarding the origins of Siddham.<sup>62</sup>

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58. The seventh fascicle of the sutra is actually an appended collection of *dhāraṇī* and incantations called "Prescriptions of Rites for the Practice and Study of Mantra" (*Gongyang cidifa zhong chenyan xingxue chu* 供養次第法中眞言行學處). See *Taishō* 18.45a4-55a4.

59. Tokuitsu's essay is published in *Taishō* 77, no. 2458. Abé also discusses the content of this text and argues that Tokuitsu wrote it as a response to Kūkai's *Letter of Promulgation*. See Abé 1999, 207-213. In his study of Annen and ninth-century Buddhism in Japan, Sueki Fumihiko notes that there are several extant versions of Tokuitsu's essay. The *Taishō* publication is based on an 1145 manuscript held at Muryōjuji on Mt. Kōya. The *Nihon daizōkyō* publication is based on a 1659 manuscript that includes colophons referring to earlier copies dating to 1130, 1156, 1277, and 1489. See Sueki Fumihiko 末本文美士, *Heian shoki bukkyō shisō no kenkyū—Annen no shisō keisei o chūshin toshite* 平安初期仏教思想の研究—安然の思想形成を中心として (Tokyo: Shunjūsha 1995), 86-87.

60. Most scholars agree that the *Longer Dharma Transmission* was written after Tokuitsu's criticism of the iron stupa narrative in his essay with the exception of Sueki, who argues that *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School* was a response to the transmission text. See Sueki 1995, 91.

61. Katsumata argues that Kūkai wrote both the *Doctrine on Becoming a Body in this Very Body* and the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to defend the legitimacy of the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* against Tokuitsu's criticism. See Katsumata 1970, 146-157.

62. See *TKDZ* 5 for this essay on writing on Siddham scripts and their doctrinal significance. For an English translation, see Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 275-305.

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Scholars have also proposed that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as a response to Tokuitsu's ninth inquiry. In this question, Tokuitsu refers to the dharma body and its capacity to preach. However, the reason he addresses this topic is to clarify the meaning of a passage from Yixing's *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. Tokuitsu writes:

毘盧舍那疑者。疏云、說此經佛即毘盧舍那佛本地法身。今疑。所言本地法身者。不過理智二之法身。此二法身不十地菩薩之所能見。如何執金剛手等皆悉雲集共見毘盧舍那佛共聞受其所說經。若言法身說法者爲誰說法。若爲十地機說法者不爾、他受用身應無用故。若爲二乘凡夫說法者此亦不然、變化身應無用故。此疑未決。

On the question of Vairocana: The *Commentary [on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states, "The buddha who preaches this sutra is Vairocana Buddha, the original-ground dharma body." My question is this. Regarding the so-called "original-ground dharma body," the dharma body is nothing more than the two aspects of principle and wisdom. This two-fold body of the dharma cannot be perceived even by bodhisattvas of the tenth *bhūmi*. How can the vajra-wielders in their cloud-like assembly perceive Vairocana Buddha and hear the preaching of this sūtra? If this is said to be the preaching of the dharma body, then to whom is the dharma preached? If this preaching is for the sake of those who have the capabilities of a tenth *bhūmi* [bodhisattva], then this could not be the case because the outwardly-directed reward body would be without function. If the preaching [of the dharma body] is for the sake of the two vehicles and worldlings, then this is also not the case because the transformation body would be without function. These doubts have yet to be resolved.<sup>63</sup>

Tokuitsu asks for clarification on the meaning of Yixing's phrase "original-ground dharma body." He states that the dharma body consists of the principle (i.e. the essence of the dharma) and wisdom (i.e. the aspect of the dharma that preaches). Tokuitsu is suspicious of the claim that the preacher of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* is the principle or source of the teachings of the sutra. He notes that even the most advanced bodhisattvas cannot perceive the principle body (i.e. the essence body) of the dharma body, but only the outwardly-directed reward body (i.e. the wisdom body). The notion that less advanced practitioners such as vajra-wielding beings can achieve this is unacceptable to Tokuitsu. Moreover, if the principle or essence dharma body could preach, who would be able to hear it? Also, if bodhisattvas or worldlings could hear the preaching of the most rarified body of the dharma, there would be no need for other bodies of the buddha.

According to many scholars, Kūkai wrote the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as an answer to these questions. Abé Ryūichi and Fukuda Ryōsei, for instance, identify a question in the dialogue of the *Treatise* as a reference to Tokuitsu's inquiry. This passage reads:

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63. *Taishō* 77.864c23-865a2.

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問。應化身說法諸宗共評。如彼法身無色無像。言語道斷心行處滅無說無示。諸經共說斯義。諸論亦如是談。如今何爾談法身說法。其證安在乎。

Question: That the transformation body preaches the dharma has been affirmed by all the schools. In this view, the dharma body is formless and without image, beyond language, beyond the function of the mind, and can neither be expounded upon nor revealed. The sutras also expound this meaning, and the treatises likewise discuss it in this way. Why do you now claim that the dharma body expounds the dharma? Is there any evidence?<sup>64</sup>

In other words, the interlocutor in the *Treatise* states that all schools claim that the dharma body is ineffable and imperceivable. Thus, it cannot possibly preach the dharma. The respondent explains that the evidence for this doctrine is found throughout the sutras and treatises. The authors of treatises on doctrine such as Vasubandhu and Nāgārjuna were aware of the esoteric meaning of the scriptures. However, among later generations, and particularly through the translation of the sutras into Chinese, the secret was lost and in some cases intentionally subverted. The respondent then goes on to cite passages from Chinese exegetical works, accusing the patriarchs of these schools of misrepresenting the buddha dharma.

Abé and Fukuda propose that the interlocutor in this dialogue represents Tokuitsu and the list of textual citations that follow the dialogue is Kūkai's answer to his question.<sup>65</sup> However, Tokuitsu's inquiry in the *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School* does not ask for textual evidence that the dharma body preaches. In fact, he never doubts that the dharma body preaches the dharma. The function of the transformation and reward bodies are to respond to the needs of sentient beings. They are both the wisdom of the dharma body. However, the principle upon which their teachings are based does not have relational properties and cannot be perceived by non-buddhas. Tokuitsu asks how the principle or essence of the dharma can be perceived if it is without the function of being perceivable.

Furthermore, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* never actually responds to Tokuitsu's question. He is curious about a phrase in Yixing's *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* stating that the preacher of the sutra is the "original-ground dharma body." In his commentary, Yixing explains the line "the *bhagavan* abides in the empowerment of the tathāgata," writing:

薄伽梵即毘盧遮那本地法身。次云如來、是佛加持身。其所住處名佛受用身。即以此身為佛加持住處。如來心王諸佛住。而住其中既從遍一切處加持力生。即與無相法身。無二無別。而以自在神力、令一切眾生見身密之色、聞語密之聲、悟意密之法。隨其根性分種種不同。即此所住名加持處也。

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64. TKDZ 3.76-77.

65. See Fukuda 2000, 112 and Abé 1999, 213-214.

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The *bhagavan* is the original-ground dharma body of Vairocana. Next [the sutra] states, "The tathāgata is the empowerment body of the buddha." The body abiding in this location is called the reward body of the buddha. We take this body to be the location of the empowerment of the buddha. The mind-king of the tathāgata dwells in the buddhas. Moreover, from within this abode, its empowerment arises in all locations. This is the dharma body without characteristics. It is neither dual nor distinct. Through its unhindered supernatural power, it causes all sentient beings to see the form of the somatic secret, hear the voice of the verbal secret, and realize the dharma of the mental secret. In accordance with ones faculties and nature, it disperses many different forms. The location where they abide is called the "place of empowerment."<sup>66</sup>

Yixing explains that the tathāgata consists of both an "original-source body" and an "empowerment body," which resides within the reward body. This body then empowers the buddhas, and this same empowerment is what causes sentient beings to perceive the three activities of the tathāgata. Tokuitsu questions this claim, because it assumes all sentient beings have the capability to comprehend these three secret activities. The reason there are so many buddhas is due to the fact that sentient beings do not equally progress along the bodhisattva path.

The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* never answers Tokuitsu's question. Rather, it asserts that the capabilities of the practitioner are irrelevant to the preaching of the essence-dharma body of the buddha. It does not explain the reception of this preaching, but merely asserts that it is only possible to obtain the preaching of the dharma body through the esoteric teachings.

#### **(ii) A Rejoinder to Tokuitsu**

The earliest documentation of a response to Tokuitsu's *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School* is found in Annen's five-fascicle *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta*. Ostensibly a commentary on the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*, Annen attempted to explain the doctrines proposed in this treatise by comparing them with the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. The compendium could also be considered a rejoinder to Tokuitsu's essay, considering that Annen addresses many of Tokuitsu's criticisms of the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* as well as the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and its commentary. Unlike the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, he also answers Tokuitsu's question regarding the passage in the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana*

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66. *Taishō* 39.580a12-19.

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*Sūtra*. These responses prompted further deliberation on buddha-body theory and the nature of the dharma body of the buddha, which Annen explains through Tendai doctrinal paradigms such as the four types of teachings of the dharma (法化四教).<sup>67</sup>

Annen's first response to Tokuitsu concerns the issue of becoming a buddha in this very body. In his third inquiry, Tokuitsu admonishes the Tendai and Shingon school for their claims that it is possible to become a buddha in one's current body. This doctrine based on the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* purports that the practitioner of mantra can progress from the lower stages of the bodhisattva path directly to the final goal of becoming a buddha without cultivating the ten bodhisattva *bhūmi*. Tokuitsu rejects this possibility on two accounts. First, skipping stages of the path means the practitioner has not completed the required steps to attain buddhahood, and, therefore, is not a bodhisattva. Second, leaping over stages of the path to instantly become a buddha does not facilitate compassion for other sentient beings. Finally, Tokuitsu condemns the Tendai and Shingon school for propagating this false doctrine and confusing their disciples.<sup>68</sup>

In the fourth fascicle of his compendium, Annen responds by asserting that Tokuitsu is simply confused about the structure of the path in the Tendai perfect teachings. According to the Tendai taxonomy of the four teachings, all Buddhist teachings are classified into four categories: *tripiṭaka*, shared, distinct, and perfect. Each of these classifications also denotes the faculties of the intended audience as well as the body of the buddha who preaches to them. The *tripiṭaka*, or Hīnayāna, teachings were preached by the birth body of the buddha to those with the dullest faculties. This body is classified as the lesser of two response bodies. The greater response body preached the shared teachings. Both bodies manifested in our world at some time in the past to preach to either śrāvakas or novice bodhisattvas. The distinct teachings, exemplified by the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, are preached by a reward body that resides in a pure land or heavenly realm. This body is also the manifestation of the buddha's wisdom. Finally, the perfect teachings are the preaching of the body of the *dharmadhātu*, which is the principle and essence of the dharma.<sup>69</sup>

Annen dismisses Tokuitsu's critique as a "shared teaching" interpretation of Tendai doctrine, stating that he does not understand the perfect-teaching concept of the "hundred realms" (百界). The ten realms include the six destinies (hell, hungry ghosts, animals, asuras, humans, and gods) plus the realms of śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and buddhas. Each of these ten realms contains all ten realms, hence there are one hundred realms. In terms of

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67. Ōkubo argues that Annen developed most of his criticism of Tokuitsu and Hossō based on Saichō's writings. See Ōkubo 2015, 148-156. However, his responses to the *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School*, which explicate many of the textual sources referenced in Tokuitsu's essay, appear to be based on his own critiques.

68. See *Taishō* 77.863a28-c36.

69. For an overview of Tendai doctrinal paradigms, see Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, ed., *Shin hasshū kōyō* 新八宗綱 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001), 57-70 and Fukuda Gyōei 福田堯穎, *Tendai-gaku gairon* 天台學概論 (Tokyo: Seikōsha, 1954), 81.

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soteriology, the cosmological scheme of the hundred realms demonstrates that even from within the lowest and most impure realm one can cultivate the bodhisattva path. Tokuitsu, according to Annen, assumed that the practitioner must progress sequentially from the lower to the higher realms until reaching buddhahood. However, in the perfect teaching it is possible to attain buddhahood in any of the ten realms.<sup>70</sup>

For the purpose of comparing Annen's view of the dharma body with the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, the key passage in his response to Tokuitsu is a reference to Yixing's commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in which he explains the interfusion of the ten realms. He states that according to the Shingon school, "Form and mind in both the worldly and sagely stages are all the harmonious wisdom body of the Dharmadhātu Vairocana."<sup>71</sup> In other words, practitioners of the perfect teachings at all stages of the bodhisattva path, whether the lowly stages for those with dull faculties or the stages of advanced bodhisattvas on the verge of becoming buddhas, are able to achieve buddhahood due to the preaching of the wisdom aspect (i.e. reward body) of the dharma body. This is possible, according to Yixing, because the true aspect of the form and mind of all sentient beings has always been consubstantial with the wisdom body of Vairocana.

In this passage, Yixing is commenting on a line in the opening segment of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in which the vajra-wielding Lord of Mysteries asks the preacher of the sutra how the tathāgata obtained the wisdom of all wisdoms (一切智智).<sup>72</sup> After explaining the origin of this term and the various interpretations of omniscience, Yixing states that the generation of Vairocana's body is a skillful means (方便) to assist the practitioner striving to realize the wisdom of all wisdoms. In some cases, the buddha manifests a buddha-body to expound the various teachings. In some cases, it manifests non-human forms to preach mantra in a voice that accommodates the type and capacity of the individual.<sup>73</sup> By invoking this passage in Yixing's commentary, Annen equates the Tendai concept of the interdependence of the ten realms with the wisdom body of Vairocana as a skillful means for realizing the wisdom of all wisdoms. Ultimately, he concludes that "the Shingon school is the same as the perfect teaching in Tendai."<sup>74</sup>

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70. Ōkubo explains the concept of the ten and hundred realms in Ōkubo 2015, 210. As he notes, the concept of interconnected realms was based on the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*.

71. *Taishō* 75.535c27: 色心凡聖皆是法界毘盧遮那平等智身.

72. See *Taishō* 18.1b6-26.

73. For this passage in Yixing's commentary, see *ZTZm* 1.19a.

74. For Annen's response to Tokuitsu, see *Taishō* 75.35c19-536a4.

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In a more direct response to Tokuitsu, Annen quotes the fourth inquiry from the *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School*. In this passage, Tokuitsu questions the association of the five wisdoms with the five *dhyāna* buddhas in the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*.<sup>75</sup> He again notes two problems with this claim. First, it suggests that all buddhas do not possess wisdom equally. If each buddha only represents one of the five wisdoms, then each buddha lacks the other four. If each buddha lacks the four wisdoms, then all buddhas are lacking in wisdom. Tokuitsu suggests that this association of the five wisdoms and five buddhas contradicts the definition of a buddha and, therefore, must be rejected. Citing treatises such as the *Treatise on Consciousness Only*, Tokuitsu explains that all buddhas must equally possess all five wisdoms.<sup>76</sup>

The second problem concerns the function of the five buddhas. If there are no distinctions between their function and essence, then there cannot be five distinct buddhas. But, if we say that it is possible to differentiate between them, then they each possess a single type of wisdom. If so, this would mean that some buddhas are superior in wisdom to others, thus creating a hierarchy of buddhas. For example, he notes, the perfect mirror-like wisdom (大圓鏡智) would only manifest as a buddha-body and in a buddha land of the internally-directed reward buddha. The wisdom of harmonious nature (平等性智) would only generate as the body and land of the outwardly-directed reward. And, the wisdom of unrestricted activity (成所作智) would be the buddha in the body and lands of the transformation body. In this scheme of five wisdoms as five buddhas, Vairocana is the wisdom of the essential nature of the *dharmadhātu* (法界體性智). The *dharmadhātu* ultimately does not have the function of wisdom, but is the principle of the dharma body of the buddha. Tokuitsu argues that the embodiment of the five wisdoms as specific buddhas is problematic, because it ascribes only a single type of wisdom to each of the four buddhas and functionality to the *dharmadhātu*. However, all bodies and lands of the buddha must equally possess all types of wisdom. Furthermore, he asserts that the *dharmadhātu*, or dharma body, is the essence of the wisdom of the buddhas; it does not have function. Therefore, he questions the legitimacy of this passage in the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*.<sup>77</sup>

Following his full quote of Tokuitsu's inquiry, Annen poses a similar response to the previous passage regarding becoming a buddha in this very body. He invokes the four teachings paradigm to demonstrate that from a perfect-esoteric perspective the five buddhas and wisdoms are

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75. For the passage in the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*, see *Taishō* 32.573c21-29.

76. A passage in the seventh fascicle of the *Treatise on Consciousness Only* outlines four types of wisdom that the bodhisattva must achieve on the path toward buddhahood. Tokuitsu probably refers to this passage, explaining that the fourth wisdom is the culmination of mastering the other three. If a bodhisattva fails to master the other types of wisdom, he will not realize the principle of consciousness only (唯識理). See *Taishō* 31.39a8-22. Tokuitsu also refers to Xuanzang's translations of the *Foshuo fodi jing* 佛說佛地經 and the *Fodi jinglun* 佛地經論 which outlines the five types of wisdom. See *Taishō* 16.721a1-25 and 26.291b11-20, respectively.

77. See *Taishō* 77.863c27-864b19.

actually all the same.<sup>78</sup> The more pertinent response, however, is found elsewhere in his compendium. Although he does not quote the *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School* or name Tokuitsu as the interlocutor, Annen refers to a text by a Hossō monk critical of the mantra school. This passage likewise addresses the five wisdoms, particularly the problem of associating buddha bodies and types of wisdom. Annen again dismisses this critique as a "shared teaching" interpretation. However, he then states that in the mantra school, there are four bodies of the buddha: essence, reward, transformation, and emanation. According to the *Yogas and Yogins of the Vajra Peak Pavillion Sūtra*, the deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala arise from the essence body. In Amoghavajra's *Sagely Stages of the Vajraśekhara Yoga*, the deities emerge from the internally-directed reward body and then are consecrated by the outwardly-directed reward body of Vairocana. Annen interprets both passages to mean that all deities, bodhisattvas, and buddhas are replete with the four-fold dharma body. In response to Tokuitsu's claim that the *dharmadhātu*/dharma body does not have the function of wisdom, he suggests that the generation of the bodies and lands of the buddha is the function of the wisdom of the dharma body.

In addition to *Yogas and Yogins of the Vajra Peak Pavillion Sūtra* and Amoghavajra's text, Annen cites two other works regarding the four-fold dharma body. First he claims that a relatively obscure ritual text called the *Sūtra of the Domain of the Buddhas that Encompasses Ultimate Reality* (*Zhufo jing jie shezhenshi jing* 諸佛境界攝真實經) explains that the deities in the mandala arise from the transformation body of Śākyamuni. He cites a second source, Vajrabodhi's translation of the first chapter of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*.<sup>79</sup> Annen states that according to the sutra the deities in the mandala are emanation bodies that appear as manifestations of the four-fold dharma body in response to śrāvakas and pratyekabuddha in the form of various beings.<sup>80</sup> Neither of these texts include such statements. Rather, they reflect Annen's conclusion that buddha-body theory in the mantra school constitutes the four-fold dharma body.

Annen's interpretation of the four-fold dharma body, however, differs from the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Annen addresses Tokuitsu's concern that associating particular types of wisdom with specific buddhas would create a hierarchy of buddhas by asserting that from the perspective of the perfect-esoteric teachings all bodies of the buddha are just the function of the buddha's wisdom. Therefore, the five buddhas are ultimately the same buddha. The *Treatise*, on

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78. Annen's quotation of Tokuitsu's essay and his response can be found in *Taishō* 75.554a9-554c2.

79. The *Sūtra of the Domain of the Buddhas that Encompasses Ultimate Reality* was supposedly translated by Prajñā in the late eighth century. There is no corresponding passage that claims the deities in the mandala emerge from the body of the Śākyamuni. Annen may be extrapolating from a line stating that Śākyamuni preaches the the procedures for the mandala platform. See *Taishō* 18.281.a6-7. According to Annen's catalogue, Ennin first imported this text to Japan. See *Taishō* 55.1116a3. For Vajrabodhi's translation of the sutra, see *Taishō* 18, no. 866.

80. For Annen's critique of Tokuitsu and references to the four-fold dharma body, see *Taishō* 75.544a19-b2.



the other hand, emphasizes the essence-dharma body as the source of the esoteric teachings and rejects the teachings of other bodies as inferior exoteric teachings. In Amoghavajra's *Sagely Stages of the Vajraśekhara Yoga*, the deities of the mandala are generated as the byproduct of Vairocana's awakening. Because they originated from the mind of the buddha in an internally-directed reward body, the *Treatise* claims that the activities of vajra-beings and bodhisattvas are actually the preaching of the essence body of the buddha. Thus, the content of their three secret activities is "esoteric." The preaching of the transformation and reward body of Vairocana described in the same passage, however, is deemed to be "exoteric." The commentary on this passage in the *Treatise* then ridicules the "wise men of the exoteric teachings" for failing to understand this concept.

In other words, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* emphasizes the preaching of the dharma body from the top down, thus creating a hierarchy of buddha bodies just as Tokuitsu had warned in his essay. The *Treatise* cites the four-fold dharma body in Amoghavajra and Vajrabodhi's texts to support the polemic that the esoteric teachings are superior. Annen's model, on the other hand, interprets the bodies as consubstantial with the dharma body. The differences between the buddha bodies and lands depends how the buddha responds to the needs of sentient beings. Furthermore, Annen includes Śākyamuni in the paradigm of the four-fold dharma body. Unlike the *Treatise*, he does not distinguish between two tracks of buddha bodies for the esoteric and exoteric teachings.

### (iii) The Three Secret Activities of Mahāvairocana

In this final section, I compare Annen's interpretation of the opening segment of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* with the same passage cited in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Central to both interpretations is the cultivation of the three secret activities (三密行). It is a common misconception that Kūkai was the innovator of this doctrine or that it originated with the esoteric sutras. Actually, it can be found in Chinese Buddhism as early as the third century and by the Tang period was a frequent topic in the scholastic discourse on buddha-body theory.<sup>81</sup> This concept is based on the correlation between the three activities of sentient beings (body, speech, and mind) with those of a buddha. The purpose of maintaining the precepts or performing

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81. For instance, Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Miji jingang lishi hui* 密迹金剛力士會 published as the eighth fascicle of the *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* in *Taishō* 11, no. 310 discusses the three secret activities of buddhas. For a study of the Tiantai usage of this concept, see Ōkubo 2004a, 64-71.

repentance rites is to purify these three activities. A buddha, by definition, has extinguished all negative karmic output and, therefore, has purified its three activities. Because these pure activities are inconceivable to non-buddhas, they are called "secret."

Esoteric Buddhist scholastics employed the concept of three secret activities in their exegesis of the opening segment of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. As I discussed in the first half of the chapter, the doctrine of the dharma body in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was based on a particular reading of this passage that overlaid a four-body scheme of the buddha onto the preaching of Vairocana in the sutra. According to the interlinear commentary, the three secret activities of the Vairocana in the sutra are expounded by the transformation body. However, previously in the opening section of the *Treatise*, the three secret activities are defined as the content of the esoteric teachings. The passage states:

他受用身、爲地上菩薩、說顯一乘等。並是顯教也。自性・受用佛、自受法樂故、與自眷屬各說三密門。謂之密教。此三密門者、所謂如來內證智境界也。等覺十地、不能入室。何況二乘凡夫、誰得昇堂。

The outwardly-directed reward body preaches the exoteric singular-vehicle for the sake of bodhisattvas who have entered the latter stages of the path. Because the essence/inwardly-directed reward buddha rejoices in the internal bliss of the dharma along with its self-generated retinue and preaches the gateway of the three secret activities, this [preaching] is called the "esoteric teachings." The gateway of the three secrets is the domain of the so-called inwardly-realized wisdom of the tathāgata. Bodhisattvas at the stage of virtual awakening and the tenth *bhūmi* {or ten *bhūmi*} cannot enter the chamber [of the buddha]. How much more so for those of the two vehicles or worldlings, who cannot even ascend to the hall?<sup>82</sup>

According to this definition of the esoteric teachings, the essence-reward body of the buddha preaches the three secret activities to its retinue while in a state of dharmic bliss. In contrast to the exoteric teachings of the reward and transformation bodies directed toward bodhisattvas and worldlings, the three secret activities cannot be perceived by even the most advanced bodhisattvas. They are only preached within the enlightened mind of the tathāgata. Therefore, the *Treatise* claims, the singular-vehicle of Mahāyāna preached by the outwardly-directed reward body is incapable of preaching the esoteric teachings. Contrary to the four-fold dharma body theory that identifies the transformation body as the preacher of the three secret activities, this polemical definition rejects the preaching of all other manifestations of the buddha as exoteric teachings.

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82. *Taishō* 77.374c25-375a5, *KDZ* 3.58, *TKDZ* 3.75.

### Chapter Three: The Doctrine of the Dharma Body of the Buddha

In contrast to the dichotomy between the exoteric and esoteric teachings in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, Annen's theory of the four-fold dharma body accounted for the preaching of the dharma body in all manifestations of the buddha. Although he cites the same sources for this theory as the *Treatise*, he additionally employs Tendai exegetical works and doctrinal paradigms to explain how the three secret activities of the dharma body are accessible in the phenomenal world. However, he does not limit his sources to Tendai doctrine or the *Vajraśekhara Yoga* texts. One of his main proof texts for this argument is Kūkai's magnum opus, the *Ten Abiding Minds*.

Like the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, the *Ten Abiding Minds* quotes the opening segment of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. However, in this case, it is not accompanied by the interlinear commentary that forms the basis of the theory of the four-fold dharma body in the *Treatise*. In fact, Kūkai rarely refers to bodies of the buddha in his primary doctrinal text. Rather, the final fascicle of the *Ten Abiding Minds* defines the Shingon school in terms of the four categories of mandala referenced in the conclusion the *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies*.<sup>83</sup>

In the *Ten Abiding Minds*, Kūkai proclaims that the preaching of the tathāgata described in the opening segment of the sutra actually professes the benefits bestowed by the body of Vairocana who abides in the four categories of mandala. First, he alludes to Yixing's commentary on the opening lines of the sutra, clarifying that both the preacher and the audience of the sutra constitute the "original-ground dharma body" and its "empowerment body."<sup>84</sup> However, Kūkai discusses neither this passage nor the dharma body. Rather, he equates the four categories of mandala with the preacher and audience of the sutra. The five *dhyāna* buddhas are the mahā-mandala, which he notes also refers specifically to the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala. The vajra-beings in the assembly signify the samaya-mandala and are represented by their accoutrements. The third category is the dharma-mandala, which represents the *dharmadhātu*. This mandala consists of seed syllables (種子, *bija*) from mantra listed in the second and fifth fascicles of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*.<sup>85</sup> Finally, the karma-mandala, or the mandala of activity, consists of the actions of the beings in the mandala. According to Kūkai, these four categories of mandala constitute the body, speech, and mind of Vairocana Tathāgata.<sup>86</sup>

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83. This is the same passage quoted in the 823 edict from the Daijōkan. See Chapter Two, Section One.

84. This is the same passage referenced in Tokuitsu's essay discussed above. See *Taishō* 580a12-18.

85. See *Taishō* 18.14c and 30b-c, respectively.

86. See *Taishō* 77.359c23-360a10. Kūkai alludes to a passage in the fifth fascicle of the sutra stating that when Vairocana became a buddha, his body, speech, and mind became identical with empty space. See *Taishō* 18.31b16-17.

In his analysis of the opening segment of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, Kūkai simply quotes Yixing's commentary. According to Yixing, the assembly of bodhisattvas and vajra-wielders are the embodiment of Vairocana's wisdom. In this capacity, they appear in the various realms as "good friends" (善知識) expounding the gateway to liberation for the sake of sentient beings. These good friends guide sentient beings to enter the mandala of the *dharmadhātu*. Yixing also explains the process by which Vairocana disseminates his teachings. Like the roar of lion, the tathāgata preaches the gateway of all wisdom. As the sutra proclaims, this preaching suddenly generates the treasury of inexhaustible adornment (無盡莊嚴藏). "Inexhaustible adornment," Yixing notes, means that all activity of the buddha arises from a single harmonious body. Thus, there is nothing that is not the secret mudra (密印) of the buddha. From a single harmonious utterance, arises all sound. Thus, there is nothing that is not mantra. From a single harmonious mind, appears the venerable ones of the mandala (本尊). Therefore, Yixing concludes that the three secret activities of the tathāgata are all pervasive and their characteristics are incalculable.<sup>87</sup>

Kūkai's interpretation of Vairocana's preaching in the sutra is very different from that of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. In the *Treatise*, this passage is cited as evidence that the essence body of the buddha preaches the sutra. Kūkai, on the other hand, cites the passage and Yixing's commentary regarding the definition of "the mind that abides adorned with the secret of the tathāgata" (祕密莊嚴住心), which refers to the tenth stage in his taxonomy. Kūkai also quotes the same passage from the *Yogas and Yogins of the Vajra Peak Pavillion Sūtra*. The inter-linear commentary in the *Ten Abiding Minds* is identical to the commentary in the *Treatise*. However, in the *Ten Abiding Minds*, Kūkai simply cites this passage as textual evidence for the tenth stage in his taxonomy; he does not explain the four-fold dharma body referenced in the passage. Rather, he concludes that practitioners of this stage are endowed with the three secret activities transmitted by means of the mantra teachings.<sup>88</sup>

The passage in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* regarding the activity of Vairocana and Yixing's commentary on the pervasiveness of the three secret activities was interpreted slightly differently by Tendai exegetes. Ennin references this passage from the sutra in his definition of esoteric Buddhism, which he calls the "great perfect teaching" (大圓教). In his commentary on the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, Ennin interprets the line "all activities of the body, all activities of speech, and all activities of the mind of Vairocana are in all places at all times preaching the dharma as a phrase of the mantra path in the world of sentient beings" to mean that the tathāgata preaches mantra as a gateway through which the practitioner can suddenly realize unsurpassed awakening. Therefore, the words and sounds of mantra are a skillful means, but the mantra itself is not adapted to the inclinations and abilities of others. They are the direct word of

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87. See *Taishō* 39.583b6-18 for Yixing's explanation of the three secret activities. For Kūkai's quotation of this passage in the *Ten Abiding Minds*, see *TKDZ* 2.315-316.

88. See *Taishō* 77.361b10-11.

the tathāgata. Hence, the teaching of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* is a "preaching in accordance with the mind of the tathāgata."<sup>89</sup> However, he notes that mantra are also preached "in accordance with the mind of others." Therefore, there are two types of Shingon teachings, those that coming from the mind of the tathāgata and those that are adapted to the minds of the practitioner. In Ennin's doxography, the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* propagate this dual teaching of mantra, which he argues was the only factor distinguishing them from other Mahāyāna sutras.<sup>90</sup>

Annen expanded on Ennin's interpretation of the opening of the sutra in greater detail. Tendai scholars generally agree that Annen primarily based his view of esoteric Buddhism on Ennin's writings.<sup>91</sup> However, Annen's treatment of esoteric Buddhist doctrine and its parallels with the Tendai perfect teachings was much more extensive than any of his predecessors, and his writings on this topic served as the basis for doctrinal disputes in esoteric Buddhism for centuries. Not only did Annen expand upon Ennin's works, he endeavored to bring these discussions of esoteric Buddhism in line with traditional Tiantai, specifically the writings of Zhiyi and Zhanran, as well as provide a critique of Kūkai's taxonomy outlined in his *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*.

In his *Interpretation of the Teachings*, Annen cites the same passage from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* regarding the three secret activities of the tathāgata. However, unlike Ennin and Kūkai in the *Ten Abiding Minds*, he explains these activities in terms of buddha-body theory. He paraphrase the sutra:

大日經說、大日如來身口意業一切時處起滅邊際不可得。是他受用三密現普賢等九界三密說眞言道。是變化身三密。

The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* states, "The extent to which Mahāvairocana Tathāgata's activities of body, speech, and mind arise and cease at all times and in all locations is incomprehensible." These are the three secrets of the outwardly-directed reward, which

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89. For Ennin's commentary on the opening passage of the sutra, see *Taishō* 61.16b1-8: 隨如來自意說之。

90. According to Ennin, the mantra teachings that are "in accordance with the mind of others" consist of five categories, or *samaya*. These *samaya* are just the ten realms in which the six destinies have are encapsulated in a single category. See *Taishō* 61.a16-20. Ennin bases this classification scheme on a similar explanation in Yixing's commentary. See *ZTZm*1.171b.

At the end of the tenth fascicle of the *Ten Abiding Minds*, Kūkai also proposes that there are two types of mantra teachings. He states that mantra associated with Śākyamuni are also included in the mantra school. However, Vairocana's mantra are the great mantra (大眞言) teaching. He compares this distinction to Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna. See *TKDZ* 2.325.

91. For instance, Mizukami Fumiyoishi contends that Annen's intention in writing his compendia was to clarify a Tendai position on the teacher of the esoteric sutras based on Ennin's claim that the Garbhadhātu and Vajradhātu worlds were interconnected view the *Susiddhikara Sūtra*. See Mizukami Fumiyoishi 水上文義, *Taimitsu shisō keisei no kenkyū* 台密思想形成の研究 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2008), 145-147.

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display the three secrets in the ninth realm to Samantabhadra, etc. and preaches the path of mantra. This [path of mantra] is the three secrets of the transformation body.<sup>92</sup>

In other words, Vairocana preaches mantra to the bodhisattvas who occupy the ninth realm through the three secret activities. They in turn preach mantra as transformation bodies in the lower eight realms (i.e. six destinies and two vehicles). Hence, the locutions we call "mantra" in our world have been transmitted by transformation bodies of the buddha. However, if we consider Annen's exegesis of this passage in the context of Ennin's claim that mantra are a "preaching in accordance with the mind of the tathāgata," then the actual phonetics and orality of the mantra are merely a means for accessing the three secret activities of the buddha.

Furthermore, it is necessary to consider the meaning of this passage within the structural context of Annen's *Interpretation of the Teachings*. This four-fascicle compendium of questions and responses is organized into four parts. Each part considers and compares taxonomies in terms of buddhas, times periods, locations, and teachings. Within each of these categories, Annen incorporates all known taxonomies, thus creating a taxonomy of taxonomies. The passage above belongs to the "all buddhas" portion of the compendium, which means Annen's purpose for citing the sutra is to compare it with other descriptions of Vairocana and his preaching. Annen's interpretation of this passage in the opening of the sutra is a part of a long deliberation on the dharma body of the buddha in relation to the four categories of mandala. Although he uses the same mandala paradigm from the *Synopsis on the Eighteen Assemblies* as Kūkai in the *Ten Abiding Minds*, he offers his own interpretation of these mandala.

Annen explains each category of mandala as a component of the dharma body. The dharma body as the mahā-mandala consists of the six elements (earth, water, fire, wind, empty space, and consciousness of each of the five elements), which he also equates with the *dharmadhātu*. The dharma body as the samaya-mandala is the form of all sentient beings and insentient things. The dharma body as the dharma-mandala includes all teachings, texts, letters, and words. The dharma body as the karma-mandala is the secret activities as they are perceived through the six senses.

He next explains these four dharma-bodied mandala in terms of the four-fold dharma body paradigm. The internally-directed reward is the bliss of the dharma (法樂) shared by all buddhas through the four-fold body. The outwardly-directed reward is the body that reveals the four-fold dharma body to advanced bodhisattvas. The transformation body, out of great compassion, transmits the teachings of the four-fold dharma body to worldlings. The emanation

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92. *Taishō* 75.386c9-12. Ōkubo discusses this passage and the Tiantai doctrinal foundation of Annen's view of the three secret activities in Ōkubo 2004, 64-70.

bodies are miscellaneous forms resonating from the transformation body as a response to sentient beings. Annen concludes that the preaching of the four-fold dharma body is identical to the four categories of the mandala.<sup>93</sup>

Annen may have adapted these mandala categories from Kūkai, either from the tenth fascicle of the *Ten Abiding Minds*, or his own interpretation from passages also found in the *Doctrine of the Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body*. Furthermore, he seems to have borrowed the notion that the *dharmadhātu* was composed of the five material elements from the *Doctrine of the True Characteristics of Sound and Syllable* (*Shōji jissō gi* 聲字實相義). However, he also incorporated these concepts into the four-fold dharma body paradigm from the *Yogas and Yogins of the Vajra Peak Pavillion Sūtra*. Annen was well-versed in this text. He composed a three-fascicle commentary on the text in which he identifies it as the fourteenth of the eighteen assemblies of the *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies*. As I note in the previous section, he cites this work along with Amoghavajra's *Sagely Stages of the Vajraśekhara Yoga* when responding to Tokuitsu's critique of the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*.<sup>94</sup>

In the *Interpretation of the Teachings*, Annen elaborates on the meaning of the four-fold dharma body from the *Pavillion Sūtra*. He explains that the notion of the "essence body" in the text denotes the enlightened mind of the tathāgata as it pertains to each of the four bodies. For instance, the line "the retinue is generated by the essence" (自性所成眷屬) refers to the enlightened mind of the tathāgata as the internally-directed reward body. The "essence of Samantabhadra who constantly abides in the dharma body and encompasses all bodhisattvas" (普賢自性常住法身攝諸菩薩) denotes the enlightened mind in an outwardly-directed reward body. The "indestructible transformation body that benefits sentient beings in the three temporal realms" (三世不壞化身利樂有情) is, of course, the transformation body. For Annen, what

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93. See *Taishō* 75:386a6-16. Annen claims to paraphrase the *Doctrine of the Becoming a Buddha in this Very Body*, but his explanation is not found in the extant versions of the texts. He may be offering his own interpretation of this concept from the six elements section of the text in *Taishō* 77.381c28-382c16. However, as I note in Chapter Two, this title, like the *Doctrine of the Four-fold Mandala*, may refer to a general discourse on the topic of becoming a buddha rather than a text authored by Kūkai. Annen discusses the six elements and the dharma body elsewhere in the *Interpretation of Teachings*. In this case he quotes the another text traditionally attributed to Kūkai, the *Doctrine of the True Characteristics of Sounds and Syllables*. See *Taishō* 75.431c11-24 for Annen's appropriation of a line from this text. Ōkubo suggests that Annen's citation of these works are actually his own interpretation of verses associated with these works, rather than paraphrases of the texts attributed to Kūkai. See Ōkubo 2004, 159.

Saisen discusses this passage from Annen's *Interpretation of the Teachings* in his *Doctrine on the Four-Fold Dharma Body* in which he compares it with Kūkai's theory. He dismisses Annen's explanation of the dharma body as the four categories of mandala, calling it an "exoteric-esoteric" view. In contrast, Kūkai's theory explained how the three secret activities were preached by the essence body, not the transformation body. See *Taishō* 77.502a26-b12.

94. For Annen's commentary, the *Kongōbu rōkaku issai yugakyō shugyō hō* 金剛峰樓閣一切瑜祇經修行法, see *Taishō* 61, no. 2228.

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makes the four-body theory in the *Pavillion Sūtra* "esoteric" is the notion that all four bodies are consubstantial regardless of when, where, what, or in what form they preach. This passage appears in the "all time" division of the compendium, which means Annen is primarily concerned with constructing a taxonomy explaining how all buddhas preach at all times. The reward and transformation bodies mentioned in the sutra preach to a specific audience at a particular time. However, because they are consubstantial with the internally-directed reward body, which constantly abides in the bliss of the dharma, these bodies also preach at all times.<sup>95</sup>

In contrast, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* simply asserts that the three secret activities are constantly present across time and space as the substance of mantra. It rejects the preaching of the reward and transformation bodies as provisional truths, but does not explain how sentient beings can access the preaching of the dharma body. The *Treatise* simply proposes that mantra are the substance of the dharma body's true speech. Annen, on the other hand, proposes that the three secret activities of the dharma body are not limited to its speech.

In his *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta*, Annen explains how sentient beings ascertain the preaching of the dharma body by posing a question that echoes Tokuitsu's inquiry in the *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School*. The interlocutor asks by what means can sentient beings perceive the all pervasive three secret activities of Vairocana. "Is this through the outwardly-directed reward or transformation body," he asks. "Surely, this not the essence-dharma body or internal reward body?" Annen responds by quoting the same passage from the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* referenced in Tokuitsu's inquiry regarding the "original-ground dharma body," then offering his own exegesis of this passage. He explains that the mantra school interprets the "original-ground dharma body" as the dharma body of the buddha abiding as a body of empowerment while in a state of dharmic bliss. Therefore, the dharma body has the function of empowering the bodies of the buddha to preach. Furthermore, Annen accounts for how sentient beings perceive the three secret activities of the dharma body. If all beings resonate and unify with the manifested bodies of the buddha, then they can see the body of the buddha, hear its voice, and comprehend its mind. In other words, the three secret activities of the dharma body are consubstantial with all bodies of the buddha, and by unifying one's three activities with the activities of a buddha, the practitioner will see, hear, or realize the body of the dharma.<sup>96</sup>

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95. See *Taishō* 75-407b21-c22.

96. See *Taishō* 75.508b3-11. Ōkubo also discusses this question in Ōkubo 2004, 150-151. In response to a similar passage in the *Interpretation of the Teachings*, Annen cites the end of the Kūkai's *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*. He writes:

今眞言宗皆爲法身。故海和上云。大日如來與自眷屬四種法身自受法樂故說此教 云云。已上以一切佛爲一佛義。略釋已竟。



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Conclusion

The reason the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was central to the doctrinal identity of the medieval Shingon school was not because it offered a fundamentally new buddha-body theory. The *Treatise* was the foundational text for the Shingon school because it distinguished between two tracks on the path toward buddhahood. The esoteric track permits the practitioner to perceive the preaching of the dharma body as the substance of the mantra. The exoteric track, on the other hand, requires this substance to be mediated through the skillful means of a buddha. This distinction, however, is strictly polemical. The *Treatise* simply defines the esoteric teachings as the content of the buddha dharma that is inconceivable to followers of the so-called "exoteric teachings."

The claim in the *Treatise* that the three secret activities of the buddha are imperceivable even to the most advanced bodhisattvas of the tenth *bhūmi* is a refutation of the Tendai interpretation of the dharma body as consubstantial with all bodies of the buddha. In contrast to Annen's theory of the four-fold dharma body, the *Treatise* argues that the three secret activities of the essence-dharma body are the substance of the mantra teachings transmitted by a retinue of vajra-beings and bodhisattvas from the enlightened mind of the Tathāgata to sentient beings. This theory combined the narrative of Vairocana's awakening in the *Yogas and Yogins of the Vajra Peak Pavillion Sūtra* with the description of Vairocana's preaching in the opening sequence of the the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. However, neither of these sources dismiss the manifested bodies of the buddha as preaching inferior teachings. The assertion in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* that bodies of the buddha responding to the needs of sentient beings do not preach the three secret activities of the dharma body was merely a polemic aimed at the doctrines of other Buddhist schools.

Scholars have previously pointed out the polemical nature of the *Treatise*, suggesting that Kūkai wrote it as a refutation to Saichō's view of mantra practice as a component of the singular-vehicle or a response to Tokuitsu's criticism of Yixing's commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. It may have been the case that whoever wrote the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was

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In the Shingon school, these are all the body of the dharma. Therefore, Master Kūkai states, "Mahāvairocana Tathāgata along with his retinue and the four-fold body of the dharma abiding in internal bliss of the dharma preach this teaching." The above interpretation of the singular buddha as all buddhas is an abbreviation of this claim. *Taishō* 404c16-19.

The line quoted above from the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* is very similar, but states that the essence and internal reward bodies abide in dharmic bliss, not the four-fold dharma body. For this passage in the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, see TKDZ 3.176.

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familiar with the writings of these two Buddhist intellectuals and found them to be incompatible with Kūkai's esoteric Buddhism. The opening of the *Treatise* is clearly hostile toward both the three vehicles of the Hossō school and singular-vehicle of the Tendai and Kegon schools. In the body of the *Treatise*, exegetical works of these traditions are rejected as "exoteric" interpretations of the dharma body. However, neither Saichō nor Tokuitsu attempted to articulate a theory to explain the preaching of the dharma body.

The preaching of the dharma body was in fact a topic addressed in the writings of the Tiantai patriarchs Zhiyi and Zhanran, but Saichō did not reference these particular writings. Why would Kūkai propose an esoteric Buddhist theory of the dharma body of the buddha in response to Saichō's equation of mantra practice with the singular-vehicle, if Saichō did not hold a particular doctrinal position on bodies of the buddha? If Kūkai wanted to criticize Saichō, he could have attacked him on several other issues. As for Tokuitsu, he does in fact discuss buddha-body theory and the dharma body in his critical essay. In particular, in the ninth inquiry in the *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School*, he questions the claim in Yixing's commentary that the preacher of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* was the "original-ground dharma body." He argues that if this denotes the principle or essence aspect of the buddha, then the essence body would have the function of preaching. However, even the most advanced bodhisattvas on the verge of becoming buddhas cannot perceive this aspect of the buddha. How then could it be perceived by sentient beings? The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* simply confirms the position rejected in Tokuitsu's statement that the essence body has the function of preaching and that even the most advanced bodhisattvas cannot comprehend this. It does not address Tokuitsu's question regarding reception of this teaching, nor does it offer an explanation of why, if this is the case, there are other bodies of the buddha.

In this chapter, I have suggested that another possible target for the polemics of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* may have been Annen. In his compendia on esoteric Buddhist doctrine, Annen replies to many of Tokuitsu's inquiries. Unlike the *Treatise*, he answers Tokuitsu's question regarding the body of the buddha that preaches the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. In his interpretation of this passage from Yixing's commentary, Annen explains that the preaching of the dharma body is accessible to sentient beings by cultivating the three secret activities of all buddhas.

Like the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, Annen also proposed a theory of the four-fold dharma body. In his model, the three secret activities of the dharma body are consubstantial with all four bodies, and, consequently, all buddhas preaching all teaching preached at all times in all locations. His theory suggests that the esoteric teachings of the dharma body are infused with all teachings including those deemed by the *Treatise* to be "exoteric." This comprehensive notion of the esoteric teachings, Annen notes, is the same as the perfect teaching in Tendai. Hence, Annen called his form of esoteric Buddhism the perfect-esoteric teaching. If we consider the possibility

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that the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* was not composed in the ninth century, as the lack of historical evidence suggests, it is reasonable to conclude that it was written as a retort to Annen's doctrine of the four-fold dharma body.

## Chapter Four: The Doctrine of the Dharma Body and the Construction of Shingon Lineage

When defending the doctrinal claim of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* that the esoteric teachings were expounded by the dharma body of the buddha, Shingon scholastics inevitably invoke a similar statement in the preface to a lineage text called the *Longer Dharma Transmission*. Like the *Treatise*, the transmission text is traditionally attributed to Kūkai, and recent consensus among Shingon scholars agrees that Kūkai wrote it approximately the same time or shortly after the *Treatise*. However, the earliest manuscripts for both works date to the eleventh century and lack any indication of an original date of composition in their colophons. Furthermore, neither of these works appear in any other ninth-century records, either in catalogues or references in post-Kūkai writings on esoteric Buddhist doctrine. Although the *Treatise* and transmission text are now considered prototypical Kūkai works, they appear to have had little influence in the scholastic discourse on esoteric Buddhism until the latter half of the eleventh century.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest references to both the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and the *Longer Dharma Transmission* are found in the writings of the Ninnaji scholiast Saisen, who listed these works sequentially in his *Catalogue of Works by Kōbō Daishi*, the earliest record of Kūkai's writings. He also cited the transmission text several times in his commentary on the *Treatise*, which is also the earliest exegesis of this text.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in his *Compendium of Decisions* (*Ketsudan shō*

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1. For an overview of the extant manuscripts of this lineage text, see *TKDZ* 1.245-253.

2. In his catalogue, Saisen includes several titles that could denote some variation of lineage text. Following the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in two fascicles, he lists the title of a *Longer Dharma Transmission* (廣付法傳) in a single fascicle. See *KDZ* 15.221-223. In his commentary, he quotes from the transmission text at least four times, and each quote is identical to the extant version of the *Longer Dharma Transmission*. See his *Essay Reflecting the Treatise on the Differentiation between the Two Teachings of the Exoteric and Esoteric* (*Ben kenmitsu nikyōron kekkyō shō* 辨顯密二教論懸鏡抄) in *Taishō* 77, no. 2434. It is unclear why he lists the transmission text as a single fascicle in his catalogue. The quotes in his commentary are only from the Part One of the transmission text, so he may have only possessed the first fascicle. However, in the *Compendium of Decisions*, he quotes Part Three of the text, although he does not state whether this quote is from the first or second fascicle. It is also possible that Saisen possessed a single-fascicle version of the extant two-fascicle *Longer Dharma Transmission* text.

決斷抄), Saisen quotes the *Longer Dharma Transmission* at length as a rejoinder to critiques of Shingon lineage and the sectarian origin story. As in the case of the *Treatise*, Saisen did not document when or how he obtained the transmission text. However, together these two works had a formative influence on Saisen's interpretation of Kūkai's thought and esoteric Buddhist doctrine, an influence that only increased in later centuries due, in part, to his extensive apologetic writings on Kūkai's works.

The author of the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, who both medieval scholastics and modern scholars agree was Kūkai, invokes the authority of lineage to reinforce the doctrine of the preaching of the dharma body by offering an alternative means for transmitting the teachings from the beginningless past to the present. Moreover, the lineage text supports the sectarian polemics in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, which maintained that the esoteric teachings originated with the Dharmakāya Mahāvairocana Tathāgata, and, therefore, are obviously superior to the teachings revealed by Śākyamuni Buddha. Conversely, this doctrine justified the construction of an alternative lineage narrative, which happened to position Kūkai at the vanguard of this superior form of Buddhist teachings.

However, this connection between the doctrine of the dharma body and esoteric Buddhist lineage begs the question; an unbroken transmission of the teachings from Mahāvairocana, who is identified with the dharma body of the buddha, to Kūkai, the alleged author of the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text, implies that such esoteric teachings are superior because they were originally expounded by the dharma body of the buddha. Thus, the legitimacy of the signature doctrine of Kūkai's Shingon school, that the dharma body directly preaches the esoteric teachings, is confirmed by this authoritative lineage. Connecting the two texts provided medieval scholastics with a justification for the doctrine while employing the doctrine to give authority to the lineage. However, the juxtaposition of the lineage and the doctrine creates a problem of historical legitimacy. How can Kūkai and his Shingon school prove that their lineage originated with the dharma body of the buddha? Was this lineage ever intended to be historically verifiable, or was it a metaphor for the all-pervasive nature of the dharma body's preaching?

In this chapter, I explore how medieval scholastics dealt with the question of history and the transmission of the buddha's teachings. As most scholars have concluded, the Shingon lineage was an innovation of Kūkai. However, he devised his particular view of the transmission of the buddha dharma by conflating two narratives on the origins of esoteric Buddhism that had already been circulating in Tang China when he arrived in 804. The first is the iron stupa narrative. This origin story briefly details how an anonymous "master of great virtue" entered an iron stupa in southern India to obtain the teachings of the *Vajrasekhara Yoga* in one hundred thousand verses. The second is the patriarchal narrative, which lists the genealogy of the esoteric teachings beginning with Mahāvairocana Tathāgata and ending with the Chinese patriarch Amoghavajra. This narrative depicts an unbroken line of patriarchs, who successively

transmitted the teachings via the rite of *abhiṣeka*. The textual sources for these narratives were associated with Amoghavajra and his disciples, but Japanese scholastics later deemed them to be authoritative documentation of the Shingon lineage.

Shingon apologists such as Saisen employed the *Longer Dharma Transmission* and its lineage narrative in defense of the doctrine of the dharma body's preaching. However, Kūkai's Shingon lineage was not without its problems. A perennial issue for Shingon scholastics was the authority of oral as opposed to textual transmission of the teachings. Although a topic of heated debate among scholars in the early twentieth century, the recent consensus seems to agree that Kūkai never intended to locate his Shingon lineage in textual sources. Nonetheless, the lack of textual evidence for this lineage plagued the scholastic tradition, requiring them to either argue for the supremacy of the oral tradition or rely on historically dubious sources.

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### The Historicity of the Shingon Lineage

The extant, two-fascicle version of the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text consists of three sections. The preface expounds on the nature of the esoteric teachings and their supremacy as the preaching of the dharma body of the buddha. The final section is a series of questions and responses regarding the origin of the Shingon school. However, the vast majority of the text consists of the second section regarding the Shingon patriarchs. Primarily a biography of the Indian and Chinese patriarchs, this section of the *Longer Dharma Transmission* proposes that the orthodox Shingon lineage began with Mahāvairocana Tathāgata, who the text equates with the dharma body of the buddha. Mahāvairocana revealed the Shingon teachings to Vajrasattva, while the latter was concealed in an iron stupa. The teachings were transmitted into the human world through Nāgārjuna (龍猛) after he entered the stupa and received them from Vajrasattva.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Nāgārjuna transmitted the teachings to his disciple Nāgabodhi and thus began the esoteric

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3. Although other Kūkai works, including the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, use Kumārajīva's translation of Nāgārjuna's name as Longshu 龍樹, the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text uses Xuanzang's translation, Longmeng 龍猛, which is the same translation used in the transmission narrative found in the *Interpretation of the Arising of the Thirty-seven Honorable Ones in the Yoga of the Vajraśekhara Sūtra (Jingangding yuqie sanshiqizun chusheng yi 金剛頂瑜伽三十七尊出生義)*. See *Taishō* 18.299a. Abé Ryūichi notes Kūkai's use of these terms, suggesting that Kūkai was trying to link the second-century Nāgārjuna, author of the *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*, with the Nāgārjuna mentioned in the lineage texts. See Ryūichi Abé *Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 229.

Buddhist tradition.<sup>4</sup> This tradition later made its way to China when the fifth patriarch, Vajrabodhi, arrived in south China, eventually entering the Tang capital of Loyang in 720. His disciple Amoghavajra, the sixth patriarch, further advanced esoteric Buddhism by retranslating the first chapter of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* as well as composing several ritual commentaries. Kūkai became a part of this lineage after arriving in Chang'an in the twelfth month of 804 and receiving *abhiṣeka* from Huiguo, Amoghavajra's disciple and the seventh patriarch of the Shingon school.<sup>5</sup>

The historical legitimacy of this lineage has long been called into question. The first person to challenge this narrative was the Hossō scholiast Tokuitsu, who in his brief essay *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School*, enumerated eleven unanswered questions concerning passages found in texts central to the Shingon school. In the eleventh and final question, Tokuitsu inquired into the legitimacy of the iron stupa narrative and Shingon lineage, writing:

第十一鐵塔凝者。習真言宗徒傳云、真言宗所憑據論、是釋迦如來滅度後八百年、龍猛菩薩入南天鐵塔、受金剛薩埵。問。誰傳。如是爲有文傳、爲是口傳耶。答曰。金剛智說。又問。若金剛智三藏說者。又疑爲是口傳。爲有文傳。若言口傳非文傳者不足信受。若有文傳者誦示其文。此疑未決。

Eleven, on my doubts concerning the iron stupa: Those who adhere to the mantra school, transmitting what they have learned, say that the theory forming the basis of the mantra school is that, eight hundred years after the passing of Śākyamuni, Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva entered an iron stupa in southern India and received [the teachings] from Vajrasattva.

Question: Who transmitted this? Are there any textual sources for such a transmission, or was this an oral transmission?

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4. Although the Sanskrit for 龍智 is commonly rendered as Nāgabodhi, recently scholars of Indian and Tibetan Buddhism have suggested that it should actually be read as Nāgajñāna or Nāgabuddhi. See Jeffery Sundberg, "The Life of the Tang Court Monk Vajrabodhi as Chronicled by Lü Xiang (呂向): South Indian and Sri Lankān Antecedents to the Arrival of the Buddhist Vajrayāna in Eighth-Century Java and China," *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies* 13 (2011):179-180. However, the terms *jñāna*, *bodhi*, and *buddhi* are often translated into Chinese as 智, making it impossible to determine the original Sanskrit name, if in fact such a person even existed. Furthermore, as Teramoto Enga argued almost a century ago regarding the name of Nāgārjuna, the Chinese 龍樹 and 龍猛 were used to translated a variety of Indian names. For example, Bodhiruci used the characters 龍樹 in his translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* for the Sanskrit name Nāgāhvaya. Xuanzang argued in his travel journal that Nāgārjuna should be translated as 龍猛, but these characters had previously been used for a variety of names. See Teramoto Enga 寺本婉雅, *Shin ryūju den no kenkyū* 新龍樹傳之研究 (Kyoto: Chūgai Shuppan, 1926), 58-66. Matsunaga also discusses the translation of these names. He notes that, even when such a person by this name can be identified in Indian sources, it was such a common title that it is unfeasible to suggest that any of these individuals were in fact the Shingon patriarch. See Matsunaga 1978, 18-19. Abé Ryūichi also discusses this debate in Abé 1999, 506n83.

5. See *TKDZ* 1.112-114.

Response: This was Vajrabodhi's explanation.

Another question: If the *Tripitaka*-master Vajrabodhi explained this, then my inquiry is whether it is an oral transmission or are there any textual sources? If you say that it is an oral transmission and there are not any textual sources, then there is insufficient evidence to believe it. If there are textual sources, I ask that you show me these texts. These doubts have yet to be resolved.<sup>6</sup>

In this passage, Tokuitsu challenges the historical legitimacy of the Shingon lineage, requesting documentation of its existence as well as a written account of the iron stupa encounter between Vajrasattva and Nāgārjuna. Simply noting that this legend was transmitted to China by the patriarch Vajrabodhi was insufficient for Tokuitsu. Without proper documentation, he argues, this fantastic tale is unbelievable and the assertion of a distinct esoteric Buddhist lineage is untenable.

This early eighth-century opposition to the Shingon foundation narrative has also been at the fore of debates among modern scholars regarding the legitimacy of the Shingon lineage elucidated in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*. In his tome on the origins of esoteric Buddhism in East Asia, the early twentieth-century art historian Ōmura Seigai revived Tokuitsu's criticism of the iron stupa story, arguing that it is impossible to confirm in the extant record. Furthermore, he challenged the long-held axiom of the Shingon school affirming they belonged to a distinct and superior Buddhist tradition, writing, "There is no recorded or historical basis for the claim that an esoteric tradition ever existed independent of Śākyamuni's lineage."<sup>7</sup> Through a close examination of Chinese and Japanese sources, he concluded that the conflation of the iron stupa myth with the patriarchs of the Shingon lineage was a fiction initially constructed by Kūkai in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* and later defended in the apologetic writings of medieval Shingon scholastics.

Ōmura's fellow Shingon scholars were less than enthusiastic about his criticism of their lineage and their revered founder's claims in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text. Most notably, Gonda Raifu, a reformer of the modern Shingon school and head of the Buzan sect as well as Ōmura's former teacher, published an impassioned refutation to Ōmura's study. In particular, Gonda took umbrage with Ōmura's disparaging of the lineage. The point of the iron stupa, he argued, was not to historically ground the lineage as originating in a particular time or location. Rather, it was a metaphor for the transmission of the esoteric teachings from Mahāvairocana, the Dharmakāya, to Vajrasattva and into the human realm through Nāgārjuna. This was the tradition of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, and, as an initiate in this tradition, Ōmura should know that the transmission of the esoteric teachings from master to disciple validates the

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6. *Taishō* 77.865a12-19.

7. See Ōmura Seigai 大村西崖, *Mikkyō hattsu shi* 密教發達志 (Tokyo: Bussho kankō kai zuzō bu, 1918), 2-3, 42-48.



iron stupa narrative. According to Gonda, the textual evidence that Tokuitsu requested is irrelevant and merely reflected the Hossō monk's exoteric understanding of lineage. The transformative experience of *abhiṣeka*, Gonda declared, surpasses the writings of the exoteric sutras and lineage texts. Tokuitsu, not having partaken in this rite, was incapable of realizing the superiority of the Shingon lineage.<sup>8</sup>

Despite his acrimonious tone, Gonda's repudiation of Ōmura for his "impaired vision" (病眼) of esoteric Buddhist lineage has had an enduring influence in Kūkai Studies. In a 1978 article on the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, Matsunaga Yūkei revisits the Ōmura-Gonda dispute, offering his own interpretation of Kūkai's views on lineage. In contrast to philological studies of lineage texts such as Ōmura's, he proposes that Kūkai intended the Shingon lineage to be meta-historical. Matsunaga bases this claim on the opening section of the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, which professes that the lineage of the patriarchs was the only legitimate vehicle of the preaching of the dharma body.

In this passage, Kūkai cites the story of a master of great virtue and his attainment of the teachings in the iron stupa as the moment when the preaching of the dharma body transformed from the internal cognitive function of awakening, which is limited to buddhas, into a verbal and written language discernible in the human realm. This language, Kūkai exclaims, is the teaching of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala prescribed in the *Vajraśekhara Yoga*. In the first section of the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, he declares:

法身智身二種色相平等、平等遍滿一切衆生界一切非情界。常恆演說真實語如義語曼荼羅法教。。。彼曼荼羅教者金剛頂瑜伽十萬頌經等是也。大日如來普遍常恆雖演說如是唯一金剛祕密最上佛乘大曼荼羅法教、而非機非時不得聽聞信受修行流傳。所謂道不自弘。弘必由人。誰能弘者則有七箇大阿闍梨耶。上自高祖法身大毘盧遮那如來下至青龍阿闍梨嫡嫡相續迄今不絕。斯如來加持力之所致也。法之最上於此見矣。

The two forms of the dharma and wisdom bodies are equivalent and equally pervade all realms of sentient beings and insentient objects. They constantly preach true speech, speech that is in accord with ultimate reality, and the teaching of the mandala...The mandala teaching is the *Vajraśekhara Yoga* in one hundred thousand verses. Mahāvairocana Tathāgata universally and constantly preaches the great mandala teaching of the universal, adamant, secret, and supreme buddha vehicle. However, if not for the capabilities of the practitioner or the time at which it was preached, it would not be

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8. Gonda's book is a refutation of Ōmura. For his defense of Shingon lineage against Ōmura's philological critique, see Gonda Raifu 権田雷斧, *Gakan mikkyō hatsu shi* 我觀密教發達志 (Tokyo: Heigo, 1925), 29-30. Gonda was also president of the Buzan seminary when it joined with the Tendai school to form Taishō University at which time he also become president of the university. For Gonda's role in the institutional and academic reforms of the Meiji era, see Saitō Akitoshi 斎藤昭俊, "Kindai ni okeru shingonshū no bunha to tōgō" 近代における真言宗の分派と統合, *Chisan gakuho* 12-13 (1964):71-96.

possible for it to be heard, believed, cultivated, or transmitted. This path toward awakening does not propagate itself. Its dissemination must rely on people. Who has the ability to advance this path? There are seven great *ācārya*. Beginning with the founder, the Dharmakāya Mahāvairocana Tathāgata, to the *ācārya* of Qinglongsi, it has been transmitted through the generations up to the present without interruption. This has been made possible by the empowerment of the tathāgata, so that we may perceive the supremacy of this teaching.<sup>9</sup>

In this passage from the opening of the transmission text, Kūkai proclaims that the dharma body of the buddha, in both its principle and wisdom components, preaches the dharma through the language of mandala. This language is documented in the *Vajrasāekhara Yoga*, which was the teaching transmitted in the iron stupa. Only his Shingon school, he claims, has propagated this true speech of the dharma body through its succession of patriarchs, originating with the dharma body and continuing without pause to his master Huiguo of Qinglongsi.

Matsunaga considers this passage fundamental to the Shingon interpretation of lineage. The Shingon lineage, he notes, did not begin with the historical Śākyamuni Buddha and continue from his disciples to the present. Instead, in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, Kūkai articulates his lineage and its patriarchs as an expression of the cosmic truth of the dharma body's omnipresent preaching of the dharma. According to Matsunaga's interpretation, Vajrasattva is the manifestation of this truth, which was enacted through the *abhiṣeka* rite in the iron stupa and transmitted into the human realm through Nāgārjuna and down to the present. Matsunaga, therefore, concludes that textual studies of the Shingon school must take into account the fact that the tradition has always placed the legitimacy of its doctrine in its initial transmission from sagely and supernatural beings over an historically verifiable lineage.<sup>10</sup>

In his 1999 book on Kūkai, Abé Ryūichi makes a similar claim regarding Kūkai's notion of lineage, albeit more theoretically sophisticated than Matsunaga and Gonda's arguments. Rather than an historical succession of patriarchs, Abé contends, Kūkai emphasized the centrality of *abhiṣeka* in the transmission of the esoteric teachings. Like in Matsunaga's meta-historical theory, the iron stupa signifies the reenactment of the initial transmission from Mahāvairocana to Vajrasattva. During the rite, the *ācārya* and initiand evoke and reanimate the moment when the dharma body of the buddha vocalizes its internally realized wisdom. Kūkai's goal in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, according to Abé, was to establish a "polyphonous" lineage in which the atemporal moment of the dharma body's preaching enacted during the *abhiṣeka* rite is embodied

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9. TKDZ 1.67-68. This section also refers to the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and *Dazhidulun*, which I have omitted in the above quote. Saisen quotes this passage in his commentary on the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* wherein he links it to the statement on the dharma body's preaching in the opening of the text. See *Taishō* 77.424a1017.

10. See Matsunaga Yūkei 松長有慶, "Fudenhō no tenjō to chosaku mokuteki" 『付伝法』の典拠と著作目的, in *Kōbō daishi kenkyū* 弘法大師研究 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1978), 13.

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and transmitted along the historical continuum of the Shingon lineage. Therefore, *abhiṣeka* was central to the continuation of the lineage narrative as the means by which the timeless speech of the dharma body is made manifest in the profane world of human beings.<sup>11</sup>

Both Matsunaga and Abé conclude, although in very different theoretical terms, that the discussion of lineage in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* was intended to explicate the doctrine of the dharma body's preaching. On the one hand, Kūkai's Shingon tradition derived its authority from the esoteric teachings transmitted through *abhiṣeka* rites. On the other hand, the doctrine permitting access to this secret of the buddha dharma was based on the authenticity of the lineage. Rather than point to a textual source for this lineage, Matsunaga and Abé suggest, Kūkai's notion of lineage was meant to be rediscovered again and again by reenacting the original moment of interaction between Mahāvairocana and Vajrasattva through the transformative experience of *abhiṣeka*. Therefore, the Shingon lineage functioned as a vehicle through which the preaching of the dharma body, which the exoteric teachings traditionally held to be ineffable, is revealed to sentient beings.<sup>12</sup>

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#### In Defense of Orality

In question eleven of his critique, Tokuitsu implies that the iron stupa narrative was an oral account, stating that adherents of the mantra school simply "transmitted what they learned." He also notes that this oral account was attributed to Vajrabodhi, the fifth patriarch in the Shingon lineage, and questions its legitimacy. Following his question cited above, Tokuitsu notes that his reason for challenging the validity of this story was not to slander the mantra school or question the authority of Vajrabodhi as a revered figure in this tradition, but simply to request further verification. As with most of the questions in the *Unresolved Passages in the Mantra School*, the critique of the iron stupa narrative addresses the fact that many of the doctrines associated with highly regarded texts in the esoteric doxography did not have parallels in more standard canonical sources, and Tokuitsu requests additional proof explaining such extraordinary claims. Nonetheless, his inquiry into the iron stupa narrative caused a rancorous backlash from Shingon apologists, beginning with Part Three of the *Longer Dharma Transmission*.

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11. See Abé 1999, 223.

12. See Matsunaga 1978, 14 and Abé 1999, 234, respectively.

Scholars have long agreed that there is a dialogical connection between Tokuitsu's final question in the *Unresolved Passages* and the dialogue in Part Three of the *Longer Dharma Transmission*. The matter of who was responding to whom in this exchange, however, is still a contentious issue in the scholarship. Shingon scholars, for the most part, have maintained that Part Three was Kūkai's response to Tokuitsu's skepticism regarding Vajrabodhi's telling of the iron stupa narrative. Tendai scholars, on the other hand, have been somewhat divided, primarily because other questions in the *Unresolved Passages* appear to have been directed at Saichō. Therefore, some scholars have concluded that Tokuitsu may have penned his critical essay after his debates with Saichō, which began in 817 and ended with Saichō's death in 822. Nonetheless, this theory does not rule out the possibility that the *Longer Dharma Transmission* was written later. Shimaji Daitō, for instance, contended that Part Three of the transmission text was clearly a response to Tokuitsu's inquiry. However, he also noted that Kūkai's text is suspicious in that it does not mention any of the other ten questions from Tokuitsu's essay, even when they are relevant to the discussion.<sup>13</sup> Another theory, supported primarily by Tomabechi Seiichi, suggests that Tokuitsu wrote the first half of the question (the section quoted above) and that the latter half (discussed below) was added some time later as a rejoinder to Kūkai.<sup>14</sup>

Whether a direct response to Tokuitsu or a likeminded audience, Part Three of the *Longer Dharma Transmission* was clearly directed toward skeptics of the Shingon lineage and the origin story of the iron stupa. Written in the form of a dialogue between a "student drowning in the

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13. Shimaji was notoriously skeptical of any text attributed to Kūkai, including the *Longer Dharma Transmission*. He suggested that the transmission text was probably written much later than Tokuitsu's *Unresolved Passages*, which he argued was composed after Saichō's death in 822. If the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text was written even later, this would mean it was not one of Kūkai's earlier works as most Shingon scholars now attest. See Shimaji Daitō 島地大等, *Kyōri to shiron 教理と史論* (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1931), 205-207.

14. I discuss this scholarship in the first and third chapters regarding the correlation between the *Unresolved Passages* and the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. The stronger argument, in my view, is that Tokuitsu's essay prompted a number of replies from Kūkai, or someone writing in the voice of Kūkai. Recent scholarship tends to confirm this view. One exception to this consensus, however, is Sueki Fumihiko, who argues that the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text preceded Tokuitsu's essay, but that the *Treatise* and other Kūkai works were a response to Tokuitsu. Because Tokuitsu specifically places Nāgārjuna in the iron stupa, Sueki suggests that he must have been familiar with Kūkai's transmission text. See Sueki Fumihiko 末木文美士, *Heian shoki bukkyō shisō no kenkyū—Annen no shisō keisei wo chūshin toshite 平安初期仏教思想の研究—安然の思想形成を中心として* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1995), 93. Tokuitsu's source for the iron stupa narrative is unclear, but he probably citing oral commentary, as he clearly states in question eleven, and not referring to a passage in a text. Miyadera Misshō was the first scholar to suggest that the latter half of Tokuitsu's question was later added as response to Kūkai's *Longer Dharma Transmission*. See Miyadera Misshō 宮寺密正, "Shingonshū miketsu mon to Kōfuhōden" 『真言宗未決文』と『広付法伝』, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 27/1 (1978):138-139. Tomabechi expands on this claim in Tomabechi Seiichi 苦米地誠一, "Shingon miketsumon tetsutō nitsuite" 『真言宗未決文』鉄塔疑について, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 32/1 (1983):306-308, and again in Tomabechi Seiichi 苦米地誠一, *Heianki shingon mikkyō no kenkyū 平安期真言密教の研究* (Tokyo: Nonburi, 2008), 396-407.

stream" (溺派子) and a "master who has realized the source" (了本師), their first exchange alludes to Tokuitsu's critique in the *Unresolved Passages*. The interlocutor states:

如來正法者佛所懸記。傳法聖者迦葉阿難等師師相付。誠有憑據。今所謂祕密佛乘者如汝所言如來滅後八百年中龍猛菩薩入南天鐵塔受金剛薩埵。龍猛得此法時、一人受耶、爲當有同受人耶。一切經首皆列同聞衆。爲決如是疑滯。

The age of the true dharma of the tathāgata was propagated by the buddha. It was transmitted to sages such as Kāśyapa and Ānanda, who passed it down from generation to generation. There is actual evidence for this. The so-called "secret vehicle of the buddha," as you claim, occurred eight centuries after the tathāgata when Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva entered an iron stupa in southern India and received it from Vajrasattva. When Nāgārjuna received this teaching, did he receive it alone, or did others receive it as well? All sutras open by listing its assembly. For this reason, I have my doubts.<sup>15</sup>

In other words, the interlocutor, who for the sake of expediency we can presume refers to Tokuitsu, states that the dharma as expounded by Śākyamuni Buddha has been faithfully transmitted down through the ages, and we know of these teachings because they have been documented in the sutras. Furthermore, he notes, the sutras identify their audience as proof that the buddha preached these words at a specific time and in a particular location. However, the interlocutor claims, the teachings of the iron stupa are neither documented in the sutras, nor are there any witnesses to confirm that Nāgārjuna did in fact receive them from Vajrasattva. Emulating Tokuitsu's criticism, he is skeptical of the Shingon lineage and the iron stupa narrative without further textual evidence.

The master, a moniker for Kūkai, responds by recounting Vajrabodhi's oral account of the iron stupa. In this tale, Nāgārjuna, conferred as the "master of great virtue," beckons Vairocana Buddha by properly reciting his mantra. Manifesting in empty space, Vairocana preaches the dharma in words and phrases. After instructing Nāgārjuna to record this teaching, the buddha vanishes, leaving Nāgārjuna with the necessary ritual techniques for entering the stupa. For seven days, the patriarch circumambulated the stupa while chanting and striking its exterior with white mustard seeds. Finally, the gates opened and he peered inside at an infinite expanse of incense, smoke, and radiant light. Hearing voices of praise, he repented and made a great vow. However, before proceeding through the gate, he was confronted by several vajra-wielding deities, who blocked his entry and demanded to know his intentions. Nāgārjuna replied:

如來滅後、邪林繁鬱大乘欲滅。聞之此塔中有三世如來一切法藏。願受持利濟群生。

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15. *TKDZ* 1.112-113. Also, see Abé 1999, 224 for an alternative translation.

Chapter Four: The Doctrine of the Dharma Body and the Construction of Shingon Lineage

Since the cessation of the tathāgata, heretical groups have multiplied, and the Mahāyāna is bound to diminish. I have heard that in this stupa are all teachings of the tathāgata from the three temporal realms. I wish to obtain them to save sentient beings.<sup>16</sup>

Upon clarifying his reason for entering the stupa, the deities permitted him to pass, and, as the gate closed behind him, he saw that the stupa was a manifestation of Vairocana in his *dharmadhātu* palace. Various buddhas and great bodhisattvas, notably Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī, dwelled within the stupa. Finally, he received *abhiṣeka* from Vajrasattva and was bestowed the esoteric teachings, which he vowed to propagate throughout the human realm.

After hearing the master's rendition of the iron stupa tale, the interlocutor, still unsatisfied with the lack of textual evidence for this story, reiterates his objection to basing the lineage solely on an oral transmission, as opposed to documented sources. Vajrabodhi's word alone, he asserts, is insufficient proof of the Shingon origin story. The master, frustrated with the question, replies:

經中明鑿。前已陳訖。縱使雖無經證、何不信受傳法聖者言乎。若不信三藏口說者、玄奘三藏所記西域記等亦不合信。何以故。玄奘三藏遊天竺之日都無從者、隨自見聞載之翰墨。緣傳法者不妄語、信其事而已。然前所述事略載金剛頂義決中。

This is reflected in the sutras. It has already been settled! Even if there were no evidence in the sutras, why would you not trust the words of a sage who has transmitted the dharma? If you will not believe the oral explanation of the *Tripitaka*-master [Vajrabodhi], Xuanzang's writings in his *Record of Travels to the Western Region* cannot be trusted either. Why? Because in the days when Xuanzang was traveling in India he was without any attendants, and his record was based solely on his own perceptions. The only basis for believing that the events [in the *Record of Travels to the Western Region*] were not lies is the person from whom they were transmitted. Likewise, the events of the [iron stupa] have been briefly documented in the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara*.<sup>17</sup>

In other words, the master declares that the iron stupa narrative is legitimate due to the fact that it was transmitted from Vajrabodhi. If the interlocutor/Tokuitsu dismisses Vajrabodhi's story because it was disseminated orally rather than through texts, he must, for the same reason, reject the events and stories recorded in Xuanzang's *Record of Travels to the Western Region*.

This reply invokes two issues regarding the authority of oral transmission. The first issue is Kūkai's rationale for citing Xuanzang's travel journal in his response. As quoted above, there were no witnesses to confirm Xuanzang's stories recorded in his journal. This statement alludes to the interlocutor's question previously posed in the dialogue regarding the audience for

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16. *TKDZ* 1.115. See Abé 1999, 225.

17. *TKDZ* 1.115.

Nāgārjuna's *abhiṣeka* in the iron stupa. By stating that there is likewise insufficient evidence for Xuanzang's journal, Kūkai offers a counter example in which the authenticity of the story depends on the authority of the author, not whether it is verified by other textual sources. More important for Kūkai's purposes, however, Xuanzang's travel journal was the only historical source for Nāgārjuna cited in the biography of the third patriarch in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* that places him in southern India approximately eight hundred years after the time of Śākyamuni. The travel journal, therefore, served as a proof text for Nāgārjuna as the third patriarch and the master of great virtue who entered the iron stupa. Therefore, Kūkai claims that if Tokuitsu accepted Xuanzang's account of Nāgārjuna as trustworthy, then he must acknowledge the Nāgārjuna in the iron stupa narrative as well. In other words, in the biography, Kūkai conflates Nāgārjuna the Shingon patriarch with the Nāgārjuna mentioned in Xuanzang's travel journal. Based on his own argument that these were the same individual, he dares Tokuitsu to reject Xuanzang's account knowing that, as an advocate for Xuanzang's Yogācāra school, Tokuitsu would not dismiss this text. However, Tokuitsu had no reason to accept Kūkai's equation of the two Nāgārjunas and could still have been dismissive of the iron stupa story without rejecting Xuanzang's text.

The second issue concerns the master's argument for accepting Vajrabodhi's story as true. In addition to Xuanzang's travel journal, the master in the dialogue offers several other legends that do not list an audience of witnesses for the transmission of their teachings. The first three fascicles of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, for instance, were supposedly transmitted to Nāgārjuna when he entered the *nāga* palace. Furthermore, in the travel journal, Xuanzang recounts the origin story of the *Yogācārabhūmi Śāstra*, a foundational treatise for Tokuitsu's Hossō school. In this tale, the Yogācāra patriarch Asaṅga ascends to Tuṣita Heaven where he receives these teachings from the future buddha Maitreya. The master in the dialogue notes another version of this tale in which Maitreya descends from Tuṣita to deliver the teachings to Asaṅga. In each of these stories, however, there is no audience to bear witness to the validity of these events. As in the case of the iron stupa, these origin stories for the Kegon and Hossō schools cannot be verified. Therefore, the master retorts, if the interlocutor accepts these stories as true, he must believe Vajrabodhi's oral account as well.<sup>18</sup>

In the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, the interlocutor concedes to the master's argument and moves on to a more specific question about the iron stupa. Nonetheless, the master's response to the initial question is a red herring. Tokuitsu's critique, reproduced in the voice of the drowning student, questioned the validity of the iron stupa story based solely on Vajrabodhi's oral commentary, stating that, to his knowledge, there was no textual evidence confirming this event. The origin story of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* was documented numerous times in the

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18. See *TKDZ* 1.114-155. For an English translation of this passage, see Abé 1999, 227-228.

commentarial tradition.<sup>19</sup> In the fifth chapter of his travel journal, Xuanzang recorded Asaṅga's interaction with Maitreya in which he obtained the Yogācāra teachings, an account that was confirmed by Xuanzang and Huizhao 慧沼 (648–714) in their writings concerning the *Treatise on Consciousness Only*. However, as Tokuitsu originally claimed, unlike these well-documented origin stories, there was no record of Nāgārjuna's *abhiṣeka* in the iron stupa.<sup>20</sup>

The fact that the *Longer Dharma Transmission* cites textual sources for these events corroborates the very point that Tokuitsu makes in the *Unresolved Passages*. In the second half of his question on the iron stupa, Tokuitsu anticipates Kūkai's allegation that the origin of the *Yogācārabhūmi* was equally dubious (or, if we accept Miyadera and Tomabechei's theory that this half of the question was added after the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, we can say that he directly responded to Kūkai's argument). First, Tokuitsu notes a response to his critique, writing:

邊主云。瑜伽論等是無著菩薩獨一聽受。都無同聞衆。不足信受。何故舉世奉行、以此論疑鐵塔疑建立彼宗。

My rival states, "Asaṅga Bodhisattva was alone when he received the *Yogācārabhūmi Śāstra*. Nobody else witnessed this. Thus, there is insufficient evidence to believe it. Why do you accept this tale, but in your treatise you doubt the iron stupa and the foundation of the Shingon school?"<sup>21</sup>

In response to the challenge from an unnamed "rival," Tokuitsu outlines the textual sources for the Yogācāra origin story in Huizhao's commentary. He further notes that Kuiji recorded the transmission of these teachings from Maitreya to Asaṅga in his commentary on Xuanzang's translation of a treatise on Buddhist logic, the *Nyāyapraveśa*, concluding that this story was widely known.<sup>22</sup> However, Tokuitsu bluntly points out that, in contrast to this evidence for the Yogācāra origin story, there was no textual evidence whatsoever to support Vajrabodhi's claims regarding the iron stupa legend, and ended his critical essay by exclaiming:

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19. This origin story of the *Avatamsaka* is fairly ubiquitous in Huayan commentaries. See, for instance, Fazang's *Huayanjing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記 in *Taishō* 35.122b13-14, which states that Nāgārjuna recovered the first half of the sutra from the *nāga* palace. He also mentions it in his *Huayanjing zhuanji* 華嚴經傳記 in which he credits Paramārtha as the source of this legend. See *Taishō* 51.153a27-29.

20. For Xuanzang's explanation of Asaṅga and how he obtained the Yogācāra teachings from Maitreya, see *Taishō* 51.0896b18-27. Huizhao's rendering of the story is very similar. See his commentary, *Chengweishilun liaoyi deng* 成唯識論了義燈 in *Taishō* 43.659c27-a6.

21. *Taishō* 77.865a22-24.

22. Tokuitsu cites the same passage from Huizhao's commentary noted above. See *Taishō* 43.666b13-17. He simply noted that the "Commentary on Logic" confirms that Asaṅga received the teachings from Maitreya, but did not cite a specific passage. He probably refers to a line in which Kuiji states the teachings passed from Maitreya to Asaṅga to Vasubandhu. See Kuiji's commentary, the *Yinming ru zhengli lun shu* 因明入正理論疏 in *Taishō* 44.94b12.



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瑜伽論是慈氏所說。是有文傳。彼真言宗是龍猛菩薩入南天鐵塔受金剛薩埵、唯是口傳。都無文傳。云何以此例彼文傳、得使信受。

The *Yogācārabhūmi Śāstra* was preached by Maitreya. There is textual evidence for this. The claim of the mantra school that Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva entered an iron stupa in southern India and received the teachings from Vajrasattva is merely an oral transmission. There is absolutely no textual evidence. How could I believe this based on the textual evidence in your example?<sup>23</sup>

In other words, there is substantial documentation for the Yogācāra origin story, which, according to Tokuitsu, had been recognized by the greater Buddhist community as legitimate. The story of Nāgārjuna in the iron stupa, on the other hand, had not, and it was incumbent upon the Shingon school—whether it be Kūkai, Saichō, or their disciples—to prove it. Oral transmission alone, Tokuitsu argues, was insufficient evidence that such a lineage existed in India.

This challenge to Vajrabodhi's oral transmission of the iron stupa narrative did not sit well with Shingon partisans. In his *Compendium of Decisions*, Saisen counters Tokuitsu's mistrust of the iron stupa story by quoting the *Longer Dharma Transmission* as the authoritative position on Shingon lineage.<sup>24</sup> Rather than directly answering Tokuitsu's final question, however, Saisen took umbrage with the claim that the iron stupa narrative originated with Vajrabodhi. He noted that Vajrabodhi may have relayed this story to Amoghavajra, but argued that the patriarch surely learned this from his master Nāgabodhi, who, still abiding in south India, was an eyewitness to the existence of the iron stupa.

Saisen also rebuffed Tokuitsu's insistence that the lineage must be documented in writing to be legitimate. Offering his own hermeneutic for determining the authority of an orally transmitted history compared to written documentation, he writes:

或於有文傳而有唯說實事之文傳。謂佛說是也。或雖有文傳而有不言實事也。是則外道經書等是也。又雖無文傳而實事虛言有是矣。

In some cases, among the transmission texts, there are texts that explain issues regarding the ultimate truth. These are called the preaching of the buddha. In other cases, there are transmitted texts that do not discuss the matter of the ultimate truth. These are heterodox

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23. *Taishō* 77.865b20-23.

24. Saisen's *Compendium of Decisions* was the first attempt to refute each of Tokuitsu's eleven questions regarding textual sources for the Shingon school. It is no longer extant, but his responses to Tokuitsu are preserved in sixth fascicle of Senjun's 宣淳 *Treatise Clarifying Contradictions* (*Myō shishaku ron* 明矢石論). See *SNKD* 63.267-325.

scriptures. Moreover, even when there are not transmitted texts, there still exists the ultimate truth.<sup>25</sup>

This passage provides a glimpse into Saisen's view of history and the authority of orality in contrast to the written word. Textual sources may accurately reflect historical events, such as the biographies of the Chinese patriarchs, but the existence of written documentation alone does not prove the legitimacy of these events. Conversely, the lack of documentation, as in the case of the first *abhiṣeka* in the iron stupa, does not mean such events are mere fiction. The oral transmission from the patriarchs, according to Saisen's interpretation, was sufficient, and perhaps even more authoritative than written accounts of lineage recorded in the sutras and treatises, or the exegetical works of Chinese scholastics. This sectarian polemic for determining the validity of the lineage was the extent of Saisen's response to Tokuitsu. He did not offer any textual sources to assuage Tokuitsu's critique, nor did he clarify what qualified as a "heterodox scripture." Instead, he quoted the dialogue at the end of the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text as the authoritative view on Shingon lineage and its superiority over the transmission of Śākyamuni's teachings.

Saisen established a precedent for valuing the oral transmission of the iron stupa narrative over textual antecedents concerning lineage. A generation later, another Ninnaji monk, Shinshō 信證 (1088–1142), also responded to Tokuitsu's critique by rejecting references to lineage and the authority of taxonomies in Chinese sources.<sup>26</sup> He asserted that the Tendai and Kegon schools were Chinese innovations. The Sanron and Hossō schools, he admitted, were based on Indian texts, but relied primarily on the exegetical writings of Jizang 吉藏 (549–623), Xuanzang, and Kuiji. Therefore, the buddha dharma in these schools had been mediated through multiple layers of interpretation. Only the Shingon teachings, he declared, were the direct and unadulterated preaching of the dharma body.

Shinshō's basis for this claim was the Shingon lineage and the tale of the iron stupa. First, he cites a passage from the tenth fascicle of Kūkai's *Ten Abiding Minds* in which Kūkai proclaims the Shingon lineage to be the only means for revealing the buddha dharma "as it is" (法爾).<sup>27</sup> Then, Shinshō applied Kūkai's statement to the iron stupa narrative in order to dismiss

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25. *SNDK* 63.310b.

26. Shinshō, also referred to by the title Kocchi Sōjō 堀池僧正, was a Shingon monk and the third son of Emperor Go-Sanjō. He received *abhiṣeka* from Kanjo 寛助 (1057-1125), the abbot of Ninnaji, in 1124. According to the entry for Shinshō in the *Kokushi daijiten*, he was born in 1098. However, in an article on Shinshō, Ōkubo Ryōshun includes a date of 1088. See Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, *Taimitsu kyōgaku no kenkyū* 台密教学の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2004), 314.

27. This passage from the *Ten Abiding Minds* is very similar to the opening statement in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, which Shinshō also cites in his response, and one of the few references to lineage in Kūkai's primary works. In response to the question, "We already know that the dharma as it is abides uncreated by anyone. If this is the case, who transmits it?" Kūkai writes:

the exegetical writings of the other schools as inferior. By stating that Nāgārjuna transmitted the esoteric teachings from the iron stupa into the human realm, he subordinated all other Mahāyāna traditions as disparate offshoots of the original preaching of Mahāvairocana expounded in the stupa. In other words, according to Shinshō, Chinese exegetes such as Zhiyi, Xuanzang, Jizang, etc. devised their own interpretations of the teachings originally propagated by Nāgārjuna after he exited the iron stupa. Kūkai, who inherited the original teachings from his master, wrote the *Ten Abiding Minds* as a corrective demonstrating that the truth underlying the numerous interpretations of the Buddhist teachings was the transmission of the dharma body's preaching, and this esoteric teaching was only revealed by the Shingon patriarchs. In conclusion, Shinshō proclaimed that, in Japan, Kūkai was the only person with the capabilities to realize this truth.<sup>28</sup>

The only complete response to Tokuitsu's question is found in a collection of writings from esoteric Buddhist scholastics called the *Compendium of Determinations Essential to the Esoteric School* (*Mishū yōketsu shō* 密宗要決鈔). Compiled around 1200 by a monk identified as Kaie 海慧, this vast collection of passages from the works of Tendai and Shingon scholastics includes excerpts from several no longer extant debate texts and covers an array of doctrinal topics. In the eighteenth chapter, Kaie documents a response to the latter half of Tokuitsu's question from an unidentified source. Citing the entire question from the *Unresolved Passages*, the author pondered why Kūkai's response in Part Three of the *Longer Dharma Transmission* was insufficient for Tokuitsu. Kūkai's point in his dialogue, according to the author's analysis, was that the *Avatamsaka* and *Yogācārabhūmi* foundational myths are not based on canonical sources, and, like the iron stupa narrative, were passed down by word of mouth until recorded by Fazang, Xuanzang, and Kuiji. These stories, he argued, were no more legitimate than Vajrabodhi's account.

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初從大日尊、下至青龍阿闍梨。有七葉大阿闍梨耶。其法號曰摩訶毘盧遮那究竟大阿闍梨耶、金剛薩埵大阿闍梨耶、龍猛菩薩大阿闍梨耶、龍智菩薩、金剛智三藏、大廣智三藏、青龍寺惠果阿闍梨。如是大阿闍梨等轉轉而授。

Beginning with the honorable one Mahāvairocana, it was passed down to the *ācārya* of Qinglongsi. There were seven *mahā-ācārya*. Their dharma names are Mahāvairocana, the ultimate *mahā-ācārya*, Vajrasattva Mahā-ācārya, Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva Mahā-ācārya, Nāgabodhi Bodhisattva, *Tripitaka*-master Vajrabodhi, *Tripitaka*-master Amoghavajra, and Huiguo *Ācārya* of Qinglongsi. In this way, the *mahā-ācārya* each in turn transmitted the teachings. (*Taishō* 77.361c1-7).

28. Shinshō never actually answered Tokuitsu inquiry in his response. Most of his response is a comparison of taxonomies of teachings, which ends with the claim that the esoteric teachings were the source for all of these paradigms. See *DNBZS* 42.301b-313b. Ōkubo Ryōshun also discusses Shinshō's essay, noting that although Shinshō was a Ninnaji monk he relied heavily on Tendai interpretations of key doctrinal issues such as 'becoming a buddha in this very body.' See Ōkubo 2004a, 314-323. In his response to Tokuitsu, Shinshō equated the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* with the *Lotus Sūtra*, a hallmark of Tendai esoteric Buddhist doctrine. However, regarding lineage, he clearly took Kūkai's views on Shingon lineage as superior.

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The author of this excerpt also argued for the historical necessity of oral transmissions, noting that the only way that such stories survived the transition from India to China, and eventually to Japan, was through the oral tradition. Not only was the oral tradition important for preserving such legends for later generations, it was also essential for the proper transmission and interpretation of practice. He writes:

夫眞言者不依師受恣不修行。是故傳受之人必尋相承。金智豈不於龍智所聞、其傳來之次第耶。不空三藏受金智說、製金剛頂義訣鐵塔之事。已出其文、龍猛菩薩乃至不空。此是四葉阿闍梨耶、誰人以墮妄語之罪。

The mantra practitioner cannot practice on his own without relying on his master. Therefore, those who have been initiated must seek to continue this tradition. As for Vajrabodhi, if he had not learned [of the iron stupa] from Nāgabodhi, how would it have been successively transmitted? *Tripitaka*-master Amoghavajra received Vajrabodhi's explanation and recorded the events of the iron stupa in the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara*. [The story] in this text had already been transmitted from the four *ācārya*, from Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva up to Amoghavajra. Who would dare commit the sin of slandering [this story]?<sup>29</sup>

In other words, the master-disciple relationship was essential, not only for transmitting such knowledge on the origin of the teachings, but the practical application of these teachings in the sutras and ritual commentaries depended on instruction from a trained master. Therefore, the author concludes that the oral tradition should not be easily dismissed as the authoritative source of the iron stupa narrative. Just as a disciple trusts that the techniques and procedures he learns from his master are correct, the Shingon school must believe that the texts and stories of their origin were faithfully transmitted from India by Vajrabodhi. Nonetheless, this brief reply to Tokuitsu recorded in Kaie's collection is forced to admit that there were in fact no textual records of the Shingon lineage.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, by the Edo period, Saisen's hermeneutic for interpreting textual sources through the oral tradition was well established in the Shingon school. In his sub-commentary on the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, Donjaku 曇寂 (1674–1742) brings to light another problem concerning the lineage of this sutra; namely, there were multiple versions. Citing the oral account of the origin story in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, he noted that the original *Vajraśekhara Yoga* in one hundred thousand verses was in fact transmitted into the world by Nāgārjuna.

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29. SZ 17.374.

30. This entry can be found under the topic of "Reconciling Tokuitsu's Doubts of the Iron Stupa in Southern India," in Chapter Eighteen of Kaie's collection. See SZ 17.373-375. The dates for Kaie are uncertain, but in his article on question eleven in the *Unresolved Passages* Tomabechi notes that he was active between 1172 and 1207. This is also my source for the approximate date of the *Mishū yōketsu shū*. See Tomabechi 1983, 308. However, Tomabechi's source for this information is unclear.

However, when this teaching made its way to China, the text was limited to an abbreviated version of the original. For this reason, Donjaku states, Amoghavajra returned to southern India after the death of Vajrabodhi to obtain the original teaching from Nāgabodhi himself. Therefore, he concludes, the version imported to Japan by Kūkai was in fact the esoteric teachings as transmitted by Nāgārjuna's direct disciple Nāgabodhi. In other words, even when the textual sources do not cohere, the lineage could be invoked to explain away such inconsistencies in the textual history of the esoteric sutras or the transmission of these teachings.<sup>31</sup>

For Saisen and the later Shingon scholastic tradition, the authority of the esoteric teachings depended on adherence to the unbroken transmission of these teachings from the dharma body. Textual sources that challenged this narrative therefore had to be rejected, either as heterodox or lesser exoteric interpretations. Because there was not a sufficient response to Tokuitsu's critique of their lineage, the medieval Shingon scholastics reframed the question. Rather than demonstrating the legitimacy of the lineage by presenting transmission texts, based on this passage in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* they argued that the oral tradition served as its own authority, rendering external textual evidence of the Shingon origin story unnecessary. Therefore, the authority and identity of the doctrine of Japanese Shingon school as a superior form of Buddhism has always been based on the legitimacy of its lineage.

Dismissing Ōmura's historical skepticism, Gonda also invoked the tradition of oral transmission. Similar to Saisen's claim regarding Vajrabodhi's story of the iron stupa, Gonda asserted that Kūkai knew that the identity of the master of great virtue was the patriarch Nāgārjuna, because his master Huiguo told him so. For Gonda, the master-disciple relationship between Huiguo and Kūkai was sufficient evidence that the oral tradition was accurate and the textual sources that Tokuitsu requests were irrelevant.<sup>32</sup> According to Matsunaga and Abé, Kūkai answered Tokuitsu's request for evidence of the Shingon lineage by citing Vajrabodhi's iron stupa narrative and, thus, emphasizing the religious efficacy of the *abhiṣeka* rite over an historical genealogy of the teachings. However, Tokuitsu already ruled out oral transmission as a reliable source for the lineage. To respond to his historical critique, the tradition was forced to place the unquestioned word of the master over textual documentation. Therefore, the response by Shingon apologists that the oral transmission of the teachings was sufficient for documenting their lineage did not resolve the issue highlighted in Tokuitsu's criticism; namely, the Shingon school could not prove the legitimacy of this lineage.

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31. Kwon Do-Kyun discusses Donjaku's commentary in the introduction to *Sarva Tathāgata Tattva Saṃgraha, Compendium of All The Tathāgatas: A Study of its Origin, Structure and Teachings* (Ph.D. diss., University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 2002), 29. For the passage in Donjaku's commentary, *Personal Notes on the King of the Great Teaching of the Vajraśekhara* (*Kongōchō daikyō ōkyō shiki* 金剛頂大教王經私記), see *Taishō* 61.126a20-b25.

32. See Gonda 1925, 26.

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Textual Sources for the Iron Stupa and Shingon Lineage Narrative

Although Ōmura's critics have emphasized the "spiritual lineage" of the esoteric teachings, they also agree that Kūkai considered his lineage to be verified by the sutras and the historical record. In fact, the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, especially Part Two on the biographies of the patriarchs, is little more than a list of quotations from Tang-era sources and references to Nāgārjuna. Therefore, based on the content of the transmission text, it is apparent that its author placed a considerable degree of significance on the historicity of the Shingon lineage. In this section, I address two sources often cited by medieval scholastics as proof texts for the the iron stupa and patriarchs. Each of these works was associated with Amoghavajra, but, as an examination of their textual history demonstrates, this attribution was problematic. Furthermore, the reception and application of these texts to the Shingon lineage narrative in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* posed several doctrinal issues for later scholastics.

**(i) The Iron Stupa Narrative**

Following his curt reply to the "drowning student" in the dialogue from the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, Kūkai's persona of the master nonchalantly mentions, as though an afterthought, that there was in fact a textual source for Nāgārjuna's *abhiṣeka* in the iron stupa. His recounting of Vajrabodhi's tale of the iron stupa is virtually identical to the opening passage in a ritual commentary on the origin of the "Great Yoga Teaching" of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* called *Determinations on the Teaching of the Secret Mind of the Great Yoga of the Vajraśekhara Sūtra* (*Jingangdingjing dayuqie bimi xindi famen yijue* 金剛頂經大瑜伽祕密心地法門義訣, hereafter *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara*). According to this textual account of the Shingon origin story, the iron stupa was located in southern India, where it had been sealed since the time of Śākyamuni Buddha. As Buddhism began to decline on the subcontinent, a master of great virtue (大德) finally happened upon the stupa. Similar to Kūkai's retelling of this story, the master recited the mantra of Mahāvairocana, prompting the Tathāgata to reveal himself and instruct the master on the procedures for entering the stupa. After seven days of repeating these

ritual prescriptions, the iron doors opened, and the master of great virtue was granted the teaching of all tathāgatas (一切如來, *sarva-tathāgata*). This teaching, the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* claims, was the *Vajraśekhara Yoga* in one hundred thousand verses.<sup>33</sup>

The excerpt in Kaie's collection and later scholastics such as Donjaku attributed this work to Amoghavajra, which they presumed he wrote based on the oral instruction of his master Vajrabodhi. However, the association of the iron stupa narrative with the Shingon patriarchs, and Nāgārjuna in particular, exposes a number of textual issues. First, as Ōmura pointed out, the attribution of *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* to Amoghavajra is suspicious. The text prefaces the iron stupa narrative simply stating that it was expounded by the *ācārya*. Because the text immediately shifts to a biography of Vajrabodhi, Shingon scholars have attributed this story to Vajrabodhi and authorship to his most renowned disciple. However, the extant version of the text never names an author. Furthermore, the iron stupa tale does not appear in any of Amoghavajra's other writings on the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. Ōmura also suggested that the prose in this work drastically differs from the more liturgical style of Amoghavajra's commentaries, and, therefore, concluded that *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara*, or at least the opening narrative, was probably apocryphal.<sup>34</sup>

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33. For a translation of the iron stupa narrative, see Charles Orzech, "The Legend of the Iron Stupa," in *Buddhism in Practice*, Princeton Readings in Religion, edited by Donald Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 314-318. For the original passage, see *Taishō* 39.808a27-808b2. The iron stupa narrative only appears briefly in the opening of the text. The content primarily consists of commentary on Vajrabodhi's translation of the first chapter of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, the *Jingangding yujia zhong luechu niansong jing* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經, and focuses particularly on procedures for *abhiṣeka* prescribed in the sutra. For a detailed study of this content, see Misaki Ryōshū 三崎良周, *Taimitsu no kenkyū* 台密の研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1988), 356-382. Endō Yūjun has pointed out that the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* exegeses several passages not found in the extant four-fascicle version of Vajrabodhi's translation and suggests that it may have been a commentary to a six-fascicle version. For details, see Endō Yūjun 遠藤祐純, "Kongōchō daiyuga himitsu shinji hōmon giketsu ni tsuite" 『金剛頂經大瑜伽秘密心地法門義訣』について, *Mikkyō bunka* (1987):35-52. The six-fascicle version was thought to be lost, but a recently discovered manuscript is published in *ZTZm2*.

34. Based on its similarities in content to other *Vajraśekhara*-related ritual commentaries, Misaki Ryōshū suggests that the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* was probably composed sometime between 765 and 779, dating it to the end of Amoghavajra's life or shortly thereafter. He also notes, however, that if it were such a late work, one would expect to find quotes or significant references to his other commentaries that address the same practices from the sutra. However, this is not the case; there are no clear parallels between the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* and Amoghavajra's other writings. Therefore, Misaki proposes that the commentary component of the text may have been written shortly after or while Vajrabodhi was finishing his six-fascicle translation and before Amoghavajra began his more extensive translation. This would place the date of composition in the 720s or 730s. See Misaki 1988, 381-382. However, if the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* were an early composition, we could similarly ask why it was not referenced in Amoghavajra's later writings. Perhaps the commentary was an early exegesis of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, but as the only record of the iron stupa narrative it is odd that it would not have been cited, or at least there should be similar stories found in other ritual commentaries.

In his retort to Ōmura's book, Gonda dismissed such suspicions of authorship. Although the text itself does not specify an author, nor does it appear in Tang-dynasty catalogues such as the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 or the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄, he noted that ninth-century Japanese catalogues of imported titles labelled it a work of Amoghavajra. Gonda proposed that this attribution of the text to the patriarch only a few decades after his death is sufficient evidence that it was widely considered to be his composition.<sup>35</sup>

Gonda's assertion is not completely incorrect. In his catalogue of esoteric Buddhist texts, the Tendai scholiast Annen listed the single-fascicle *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* under "interpretations, commentaries, collections, and catalogues" along with several other Amoghavajra works. In an interlinear memo, he attributed it to the Treasury of Wisdom (智藏), an honorary title occasionally applied to Amoghavajra.<sup>36</sup> However, Annen was the only ninth-century cataloguer to make this association, and his reason for labelling the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* an Amoghavajra composition is unclear. As Annen claimed, Kūkai previously recorded the text in his catalogue, but he did not list it among Amoghavajra's works. Rather, he categorized it under "various treatises, commentaries, and essays, etc." along with Huayan and Tiantai treatises and the Zhenyuan canon. Furthermore, the offhand reference to the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text does not specify who wrote it, but simply emphasizes the similarity of the iron stupa narrative to Vajrabodhi's oral account.<sup>37</sup>

The text only appears in one other ninth-century catalogue. Eun 惠運 (798–869), a Shingon monk who returned from China in 847, included the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* without listing an author. However, he noted that the text was bound together with five other works, two of which list Amoghavajra as the author or translator. It is possible that

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35. See Gonda 1925, 26-29.

36. For Annen's reference to the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* in his catalogue, see *Taishō* 55.1116a13-14. The title of Treasury of Wisdom (智藏) is not uncommon in Chinese and Japanese sources. However, elsewhere in his catalogue Annen clarifies that this title refers specifically to the *Tripitaka-śramaṇa* Amoghavajra of Sri Lanka (師子國三藏沙門阿目伽跋折羅). See *Taishō* 55.1129a16. The term Treasury of Wisdom is probably an abbreviation of Amoghavajra's honorary title, Great Disseminator of Wisdom (大廣智), and *Tripitaka*-master 三藏. An eleventh-century catalogue, the *Shijūchō ketsu* 四十帖決, compiled by another Tendai monk Chōen 長宴 (1016–1081), confirms that the Zhizang listed in Annen's catalogue did in fact denote Amoghavajra. See *Taishō* 75.945b26-28. Annen also attributes this work to the *śramaṇa* Zhizang in his *Interpretation of the Teachings*, but did not state why he thinks Amoghavajra wrote it. See *Taishō* 75.430b17.

37. *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* is listed in Kūkai's catalogue, the *Shōrai mokuroku* 請來目錄, in *Taishō* 55.1064b3. Following his categories of miscellaneous texts, Kūkai gave his reason for including them in his catalogue, stating that such treatises and commentaries are useful tools for explicating the profound teachings of the sacred texts. The fact that he included *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* under this rubric rather than in the previous section of Amoghavajra works suggests that Kūkai did not consider it to be one of the patriarch's writings. For an English translation of this passage in the Kūkai's catalogue, see Takagi Shingen and Thomas Eijō Dreitlein, *Kūkai on the Philosophy of Language* (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2010), 213.



Annen, who based his catalogue on the records of Eun and other monks who traveled to China in the earlier half of the ninth century, assumed that *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* was composed by Amoghavajra due to the fact that it was physically bound to other Amoghavajra writings. Therefore, Gonda was correct in stating that the Japanese catalogues attributed this work to Amoghavajra, but, nonetheless, overstated the pervasiveness of this attribution.<sup>38</sup>

Another contentious issue spawned by the conflation of the iron stupa narrative with the Shingon lineage is the mysterious identity of the master of great virtue. Although Kūkai associated this figure with Nāgārjuna in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, the iron stupa account in the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* does not refer to the individual who recorded the teachings by name. Later Chinese sources likewise failed to draw this connection between the story in the text and the historical figure Nāgārjuna. For instance, in the *Record of Transmission from Master to Disciple of the Great Teaching of the Two Maṇḍala* (*Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi fufa ji* 兩部大法相承師資付法記), written a generation after Kūkai returned to Japan, Haiyun 海雲 (ca. 834) cites the iron stupa narrative from the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara*, but made no mention of the master of great virtue. He simply states that the text describes a great iron stupa in southern India within which is located a grandiose Vajradhātu Maṇḍala consisting of images cast from iron and other precious metals. He also notes that this stupa housed the original unabridged version of the *Vajraśekhara Yoga* in one hundred thousand

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38. For Eun's reference to the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara*, see *Taishō* 55.1089b3-4. Annen did not mention this reference in Eun's catalogue, but noted that it was imported by Ennin. Ennin cites the text in his commentary on the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* to note the size of the original version of the sutra, but I have not been able to find this work or a work of a similar title in Ennin's catalogues. See *Taishō* 61.18a8-11. Annen may have made an error, although such a mistake would be rare; Annen correctly identified the other five works bound with *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* in Eun's catalogue. The title appears in the *Konpon dai wajō shin seki sakushi tō mokuroku* 根本大和尚真跡策子等目錄, which also does not name an author. See *Taishō* 55.1067b6-7. The dates and authorship of this catalogue are uncertain, but it probably post-dates Annen. For instance, the *Tōji yōshū* 東寺要集, a catalogue of texts housed at Tōji compiled in 1113, dated the *Konpon daiwajō* catalogue to 918 (延喜18). For this reference in the *Tōji yōshū*, see *ZGSRJ* 26.449a.

The *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* is thought to originally have consisted of three fascicles, but only the first fascicle is extant. The three fascicle version may have been appended to Vajrabodhi's translation as a record of the *ācārya's* oral commentary on the sutra, but the single extant fascicle provides no clues regarding its intended purpose. In a letter to his former master Prajñācakra 智慧輪 in Chang'an, Enchin requested copies of the second and third fascicles of the text, noting that only the first fascicle existed in Japan. See *DNBZ* 28.1336-1337. Unfortunately, Enchin never received a response, and it is unknown if these missing fascicles ever existed. Furthermore, Enchin did not include the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* in any of his catalogues, suggesting that he was referring to either Kūkai or Eun's copies. It is uncertain why he thought there were two additional fascicles. A second or third fascicle is not listed in Chinese catalogues. However, Haiyun included a text by a similar title at the end of his lineage text, which he also noted originally consisted of three fascicles but only the first fascicle was extant. In contrast to Kūkai's association of this text with Vajrabodhi's oral transmission, Haiyun included it in a list of works written by Yixing. See *Taishō* 51.786c20-21. It is possible that Enchin read this passage in Haiyun's lineage text and assumed it referred to the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara*.

verses. Furthermore, Haiyun does not place Nāgārjuna in the iron stupa, nor does he refer to any of the Shingon patriarchs except to note that Vajrabodhi brought an abbreviated version to China during the Kaiyuan period.<sup>39</sup>

This omission of the patriarchs from the iron stupa narrative is striking considering that Haiyun's text opens by quoting Vajrabodhi's oral explication of the Vajradhātu lineage. Vajrabodhi states:

我從南竺國、親於龍智阿闍梨邊、傳得此金剛界百千頌經。龍智阿闍梨自云、從毘盧遮那如來(即釋迦如來是此約法性身為名)在世、以此金剛界最上乘法、付屬普賢金剛薩埵。普賢金剛薩埵付妙吉祥菩薩。妙吉祥菩薩復經十二代、以法付囑龍猛菩薩(龍猛菩薩即龍樹菩薩也。菩薩生時於龍樹下生故名龍樹也)。龍猛菩薩又經數百年以法付囑龍智阿闍梨。龍智阿闍梨又經百餘年(此二聖者道果成就、皆壽數百歲)以法付金剛智三藏。

I came from a land in south India, where I personally received transmission of the one-hundred thousand verse sutra of the Vajradhātu from Nāgabodhi Ācārya. Nāgabodhi Ācārya told me himself that the supreme vehicle of the Vajradhātu came into the present world from Vairocana Tathāgata (this is the title for the body of dharma-nature of Śākyamuni Tathāgata), who transmitted it to Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva. Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva transmitted it to Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva. Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva also passed down the teaching for twelve generations and was finally bestowed upon Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva (Longmeng Pusa is Longshu Pusa. When the bodhisattva was born, he was born beneath a dragon-tree, thus he was named Nāgārjuna).<sup>40</sup> Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva again passed down the teaching after several centuries to Nāgabodhi Bodhisattva. Nāgabodhi Bodhisattva again passed them down after several centuries (both of these sages achieved the path to awakening and had a lifespans of hundreds of years) and transmitted them to *Tripitaka*-master Vajrabodhi.<sup>41</sup>

This rendition of the Vajradhātu lineage differs considerably from the *Longer Dharma Transmission*. First, Haiyun describes Vairocana Tathāgata simply as another name for Śākyamuni, a correlation that Kūkai adamantly rejected in the transmission text and the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. Second, Vajrasattva is equated with Samantabhadra. In the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, Vajrapāṇi and other Vajra beings are identified as manifestations of Samantabhadra, but in this passage Haiyun applies this association to Vajrasattva in the *Sarva-*

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39. For Haiyun's paraphrasing of the *Determinations on the Vajrasāekhara*, see *Taishō* 51.784b27-c2. Curiously, he also stated that the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* was actually the scripture alluded to in several other sutras, such as a verse in the *Lotus Sūtra* that refers to "the Buddha preaching the *Lotus Sūtra* in verses that are as numerous as the sands of the Ganges." See *Taishō* 9.26c10.

40. This parenthetical statement on the etymology of Nāgārjuna's name was probably based on Kumārajīva's biography, *Longshu pusa zhuan* 龍樹菩薩傳. See *Taishō* 50.185b4-5.

41. *Taishō* 51.783c17-26.

*tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* as well. Finally, the most obvious difference between Haiyun and Kūkai's versions of this lineage is the list of patriarchs. In this version, Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva and twelve generations separate Vajrasattva and Nāgārjuna. In Vajrabodhi's oral account recalled in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī are both present in the iron stupa when Nāgārjuna receives *abhiṣeka*, but they are not explicitly included in the lineage.<sup>42</sup>

Haiyun was clearly familiar with both the iron stupa narrative and a variation of the Shingon lineage scheme, but he did not equate them. By placing Mañjuśrī and twelve generations between Vajrasattva and Nāgārjuna, he apparently did not consider Nāgārjuna to have been the master of great virtue mentioned in the *Determinations on the Vajrasekhara*. Like Haiyun's genealogy text, later Song-dynasty era sources also did not conflate the lineage and iron stupa narratives. In fact, they made no notable reference to a particular esoteric Buddhist lineage whatsoever. As Robert Sharf argues in his evaluation of such sources, the Song biography of Amoghavajra simply describes his Great Yoga Teaching as originating with Vajrabodhi and lists Amoghavajra as the second patriarch of this tradition. Therefore, it is apparent that the Chinese sources did not find it necessary to identify the master of great virtue as Nāgārjuna nor any other quasi-historical figure.<sup>43</sup>

Although there were no Chinese precedents, the conflation of Nāgārjuna with the master of great virtue was paramount for the notion of a superior Shingon lineage. The *Longer Dharma Transmission* goes to great lengths to make this correlation. Kūkai begins his biography of Nāgārjuna with a magniloquent statement of the third patriarch's supernatural qualities, writing:

昔釋迦如來掩化之後八百年中有一大士、名那伽闍賴樹那菩提薩埵。誕迹南天、化被五印。尋本則妙雲如來、現迹則位登歡喜。或遊邪林、而同塵同事。或建正幢以宣揚佛威作千部論摧邪顯正。上遊四王自在處、下入海中龍宮誦持所有一切法門。遂則入南天鐵塔中親授金剛薩埵灌頂。誦持此祕密最上曼荼羅教、流傳人間。

Approximately eight centuries after the passing of Śākyamuni, there was a great being named Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva. He bore his traces in south India, where he preached throughout the five

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42. Ennin imported Haiyun's lineage text, after which it became central to Tendai esoteric Buddhist lineage texts. Fukuda Gyōei discusses how the distinction between the Vajradhātu and Garbhadhātu lineages in Haiyun's text influenced the Japanese Tendai view that these teachings and their respective sutras were transmitted independently. See Fukuda Gyōei 福田堯穎, *Tendaigaku gairon* 天台學概論 (Tokyo: Seikōsha, 1954), 307-308.

43. See Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise*, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism 14 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 269. For the biography of Amoghavajra in Zanning's *Song-edition of Biographies of Eminent Monks* 宋高僧傳, see *Taishō* 50.714a15-18. Abé claims that several early biographies of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra made reference to the transmission of the teachings from Vajrasattva to Nāgārjuna. I assume he is referring to Yuanzhao's collection of memorials and letters related to Amoghavajra, the *Daizong zhaozeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzangheshang biaozi ji* 代宗朝贈司空大辯正廣智三藏和上表制集 (*Taishō* 52, no. 2120). Although one memorial lists the patriarchs, which is identical to Kūkai's reference to the patriarchs in his catalogue, none of these sources mentioned the iron stupa story. See Abé 1999, 230, 507n91.

Chapter Four: The Doctrine of the Dharma Body and the Construction of Shingon Lineage

regions.<sup>44</sup> As for his original form, this was the Wondrous Cloud Tathāgata, who manifested his trace in a position to ascend to the stage of joy {i.e., the initial stage of the bodhisattva *bhūmi*, Skt. *pramuditā*}. In some cases, he walked through the forests of mistaken views in the same manner as those in the profane world. In other cases, he hoisted the banners of truth by propagating the authority of the buddha. He ascended through the boundless domain of the four heavenly kings and descended into the sea to the palace of the *nāga*, memorizing all teachings that existed. Finally, he entered the iron stupa, where he received *abhiṣeka* from Vajrasattva. He put to memory the secret and supreme teaching of the mandala and transmitted it to the human realm.<sup>45</sup>

This biography makes two important claims regarding Nāgārjuna as a Shingon patriarch. First, he was an avatar of the Wondrous Cloud Tathāgata. The source for this name of the tathāgata is unclear. The locus classicus for the association of Nāgārjuna with this tathāgata, however, appears to be the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text. In an interlinear comment, Kūkai claimed that his master, presumably Huiguo, told him that Wondrous Cloud Tathāgata was another title for Lokeśvararāja, one of the specifically named tathāgatas among "all tathāgatas" in the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. As a manifestation, or "trace" (迹), of this buddha, Nāgārjuna was born as a bodhisattva who had already attained the first stage of the bodhisattva path.<sup>46</sup>

The second claim is that Nāgārjuna mastered all of the Buddhist teachings, even those found among the *nāgas* and at the higher strata of the *kāma-dhātu*. The sequence of the biography suggests that grasping these teachings was prerequisite for entering the stupa, thus positing the *Vajraśekhara Yoga* as a more advanced teaching than the Mahāyāna sutras. This claim is similar to Kūkai's argument in the eighth fascicle of the *Ten Abiding Minds*, in which he argues that attaining the path to buddhahood in the lower nine stages—specifically the Hossō, Kegon, and Tendai schools—were merely the preliminary stages for entering the tenth stage of his Shingon teachings. He again links this path to the patriarchs, writing:

言佛道者指金剛界宮大日曼荼羅佛。於諸顯教是究竟理智法身。望眞言門是則初門。大日世尊及龍猛菩薩並皆明說。不須疑惑。

The phrase "path of the buddha" indicates the buddha of the mandala for Mahāvairocana in the palace of the Vajradhātu. In the various exoteric teachings, this is the ultimate

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44. The *Longer Dharma Transmission* does not specify to what these "five seals" refer, but based on the context it probably refers the five cardinal directions of the Indian subcontinent. However, considering the correlation in the biography between Nāgārjuna and Lokeśvararāja Tathāgata it could also denote the five mudra outlined in the second fascicle of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. These five mudras, performed in accord with prescribed mantra, are the five steps required for entering the "samādhi of all tathāgatas." The third mudra and mantra in this sequence is expounded by Lokeśvararāja Tathāgata. See Amoghavajra's translation in *Taishō* 18.214a10-12. For an English translation of this passage on the five seals, see Giebel 2001, 53-55.

45. *TKDZ* 1.69-70.

46. The *Mikkyō daijiten* includes an entry for this tathāgata, but simply cites this passage in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*. See MJD 2112b. However, in his commentary on the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, Unshō notes that this title for the tathāgata was probably based on a story from the fifty-first chapter of Śikṣānanda's translation of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. See *ZSZ* 32.14.

dharma body in its principle and wisdom aspects. However, in regards to the mantra teachings, this is precisely the initial gateway. Mahāvairocana, the world honored one, and Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva both preached this. Therefore, it must not be doubted.<sup>47</sup>

In other words, achieving liberation through the mastery of the path to buddhahood is actually prerequisite for the practitioner of mantra. Kūkai claims that the attainment of buddhahood according to the other Mahāyāna schools constitutes the initiation into the Shingon school. He explains the completion of the path not in terms of stages of development, but as receiving transmission into his lineage.

In the above passage from the *Ten Abiding Minds*, Kūkai identifies the fulfillment of the "path of the buddha" (i.e. the path for becoming a buddha) as entering the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, which is the same teaching that Nāgārjuna allegedly received in the iron stupa. The phrase "path of the buddha" refers to a line in the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, which was also traditionally thought to have been authored by Nāgārjuna. The original passage defines the "initial gateway for entering the buddha dharma" as having the characteristic of being unconditioned (無爲相).<sup>48</sup> In the *Ten Abiding Minds*, Kūkai interprets this "characteristic of being unconditioned" to refer to the dharma body and the "initial gateway" to denote the mantra teachings. He comes to the conclusion by making a correlation between Nāgārjuna the patriarch of the Shingon lineage and Nāgārjuna the author of the treatise. Therefore, Kūkai infers that Nāgārjuna the patriarch transmitted the methods for realizing the unconditioned preaching of the dharma body alluded to in the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*.

Although Kūkai does not explicitly discuss the Shingon lineage in the *Ten Abiding Minds*, nor does he mention the iron stupa narrative, he bases the authority of the Shingon teachings, the tenth and highest stage of his taxonomy, on the assumption that Nāgārjuna was responsible for transmitting these teachings from Mahāvairocana. In the biography, the bodhisattva is only able to enter the stupa and obtain these teachings after he achieved the feats of entering the first *bhūmi*, memorizing the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* in the *nāga* palace, and ascending to the heavenly realm of the four kings. Therefore, by inserting Nāgārjuna, the archetype of the Mahāyāna commentarial tradition and subject of several Chinese biographies, into the Shingon lineage as the master of great virtue, the *Longer Dharma Transmission* attempted to subordinate the

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47. *Taishō* 77.351a26-29.

48. For the original passage, see *Taishō* 25.289a17-20. However, Kūkai neglects to mention the following passage in the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, which states that if unconditioned phenomena have characteristics, then they are conditioned" (若無爲法有相者則是有爲). This statement, of course, contradicts his application of the passage to his definition of the Shingon teachings as the preaching of the unconditioned dharma body of the buddha, which he argued had the characteristic of speech.

teachings of rival schools to Kūkai's interpretation of the Shingon teachings. In other words, the biography supported Kūkai's claim in the *Ten Abiding Minds* that the ultimate teaching in the exoteric sutras is actually an allusion to the preaching of the dharma body in the iron stupa.

Nāgārjuna's biography in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* also identifies the patriarch with a certain "great virtuous *bhikṣu*" in Bodhiruci's ten-fascicle translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. Kūkai quotes a passage from the sutra in which the buddha predicts that in the future, after he has passed from this world, a monk of "great virtue" from the great country to the south will revive his "unsurpassed teaching of the Mahāyāna."<sup>49</sup> Similar to Kūkai's explication of the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in his *Ten Abiding Minds*, he plucks a passage from the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* referring to a "Nāgārjuna" and associates this figure with the patriarch from the iron stupa. Read through the narrative of Shingon lineage, the passage in the sutra appears to be indisputable evidence that Śākyamuni Buddha was aware of the esoteric teachings concealed in the iron stupa and recognized the patriarch Nāgārjuna as the master of great virtue who would transmit them into human realm.

Kūkai's attempt to associate Nāgārjuna the commentator and Nāgārjuna the promised savior with the patriarch of the Shingon lineage may seem like a circumstantial conflation of various references to a semi-legendary Indian monk, but identifying these Nāgārjunas as the propagator of the esoteric teachings was essential to the medieval Shingon view of Buddhist history and the superior position their school played in the progression of the buddha dharma. As Abé argues, Kūkai's biography of Nāgārjuna attributed historical legitimacy to the Shingon lineage by integrating the famed Buddhist intellectual with his own newly formed tradition. According to Abé, Kūkai believed that Nāgārjuna received transmissions into the exoteric teachings of the sutras as well as the esoteric teachings from the iron stupa. However, his disciples, notably Āryadeva (third century), did not understand the secret meaning in his teachings. This secret meaning, Abé argues, was not documented in writing like the exoteric teachings, rather it was persevered in the *abhiṣeka* rite transmitted to Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, and finally to Kūkai.<sup>50</sup>

However, the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* clearly states that the master of great virtue wrote down the teachings he received in the iron stupa. It even describes the dimensions and length of the physical text of the sutra. If the teachings bestowed in the iron stupa were documented in writing, why would the identity of the master of great virtue matter? The text would have been available to the Buddhist community at large, rather than a secret transmission

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49. For the original passage from Bodhiruci's translation, see *Taishō* 16.569a20-26. Abé translates Kūkai's rendering of this passage in Abé 1999, 226. The remainder of the biography consists of this quote from the *Laṅkāvatāra* and passages from Xuanzang's travel journal. See *TKDZ* 1.69-72.

50. See Abé 1999, 32.

limited to a select number of *ācārya*. In fact, the purpose of the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* seems to have been to explain the practices of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* to a broader Chinese audience.<sup>51</sup>

In his compendium on esoteric Buddhist doctrine, the *Interpretation of Teachings*, Annen also names Nāgārjuna as the master of great virtue in the iron stupa narrative. In contrast to the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text, he does not discuss the iron stupa as an oral transmission, but directly cites the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* as the source of this story. He explains the significance of this correlation, writing in the third fascicle:

此文言大德者即龍樹菩薩。據華嚴傳此菩薩昇都率天上取得華嚴經也。又入龍宮誦得華嚴小本。此菩薩已持大日真言。而得盧遮那佛爲現其身、授念誦法要、後入鐵塔。又據金剛界相承大日如來授金剛手。金剛手授妙吉祥。妙吉祥授龍樹云云。可謂受大日真言於妙吉祥之後得盧遮那念誦法要。

The "virtuous one" mentioned in this passage refers to Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva. According to the origin story of the *Avatamsaka*, this bodhisattva ascended to Tuṣita Heaven and obtained the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. He also entered the *nāga* palace and memorized the smaller *Avatamsaka*. Therefore, this bodhisattva already possessed the mantra of Mahāvairocana. This allowed him to beckon Vairocana Buddha to reveal himself and bestow upon him the *Essentials of the Incantations and Methods*, after which he entered the iron stupa. Moreover, according to the transmission of the Vajradhātu teachings, Mahāvairocana bestowed them on Vajrapaṇi, Vajrapaṇi bestowed them on Mañjuśrī, and Mañjuśrī bestowed them on Nāgārjuna, etc. Therefore, it is said that [Nāgārjuna] obtained Mahāvairocana's mantra from Mañjuśrī after he accessed the *Essentials of the Incantations and Methods of Vairocana*.<sup>52</sup>

Similar to the biography of Nāgārjuna and the dialogue in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, Annen outlines a sequence of achievements culminating in Nāgārjuna's entry into the iron stupa. In Annen's version of the story, Nāgārjuna ascends to Tuṣita to receive the *Avatamsaka* rather than the *Yogācārabhūmi* and then visits the *nāga* palace, where he memorized the "short" version of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. However, Annen's reason for incorporating the Kegon origin story into the iron stupa narrative was not simply to suggest that the latter was a superior form of the buddha dharma. By memorizing the *Avatamsaka*, Nāgārjuna would have already possessed the necessary techniques to beckon Vairocana, the buddha of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. This buddha then taught him the incantations and methods for entering the stupa. Furthermore, as in the case of the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, Annen merges the iron stupa narrative with the patriarchal

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51. Charles Orzech comes to a similar conclusion in his discussion of this text. See Charles Orzech, "The 'Great Teaching of Yoga,' the Chinese Appropriation of Tantras, and the Question of Esoteric Buddhism," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 34 (2006):52.

52. *Taishō* 75.430c9-17.

narrative. However, his version of the Shingon lineage drastically differs from Kūkai's rendition. Taking Haiyun's lineage text as his basis, he notes that the Vajradhātu teachings were conferred from Mahāvairocana to Vajrapāṇi to Mañjuśrī and finally to Nāgārjuna. However, Annen reconstructs this lineage to account for Nāgārjuna as the initiator in the iron stupa story by removing the twelve generations separating him from Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, the most obvious shortcoming of the iron stupa narrative as the textual source for the Shingon lineage is the striking omission of the patriarchs. Even if one considers the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* to be a legitimate work of Amoghavajra earnestly documenting the teachings of his master Vajrabodhi, one still has to account for why he did not refer to Nāgārjuna or any of the other patriarchs by name. One possibility is that when this tale was recorded the notion of an esoteric Buddhist lineage did not yet exist. Recent scholarship on medieval Chinese Buddhism has demonstrated that this was likely the case. Sharf, for instance, proposes that the formation of an esoteric Buddhist lineage and the awareness of an independent "school" did not take shape until the Song Dynasty. Charles Orzech offers a more conservative estimate, suggesting that the notion of an independent lineage developed among Amoghavajra's followers in the decades after his death. Therefore, the iron stupa narrative in the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* likely predated the development of an esoteric Buddhist lineage.<sup>54</sup>

## (ii) The Patriarchal Narrative

A second narrative concerning the Shingon patriarchs appears in another Great Yoga Teaching text, purportedly translated by Amoghavajra, called the *Interpretation of the Arising of the Thirty-seven Honorable Ones in the Yoga of the Vajraśekhara Sūtra* (*Jingangding yuqie sanshiqizun chusheng yi* 金剛頂瑜伽三十七尊出生義, hereafter *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven*). Like the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara*, the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* was not included in any of the Tang catalogues, and there is no clear Indian or Central Asian source

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53. This "short" version probably alludes to Fazang's explanation for the multiple versions of the sutra in his commentary, the *Huayanjing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記. Fazang notes that Nāgārjuna recovered the first third of the text from the *nāga* palace. See *Taishō* 35.122b13-14. Why exactly memorizing this portion of the sutra allowed Nāgārjuna to summon Vairocana is unclear. However, the second-fascicle of Buddhahadra's sixty-fascicle translation includes a *gāthā* for praising this buddha and requesting that he preach to the gathered assembly. See *Taishō* 9.405b6-24. It should be noted that in Tendai Vairocana of the *Avatamsaka* was considered a different form of the buddha from Mahāvairocana. Therefore, in Annen's telling of the iron stupa narrative, Nāgārjuna first encounters Vairocana, the reward body of the buddha (報身), before he enters the stupa to receive *abhiṣeka* from Mañjuśrī, who teaches him the mantra for Mahāvairocana, the dharma body of the buddha.

54. See Sharf 2002, 269 and Orzech 2006, 52-59, respectively.



for this alleged translation. This brief ritual manual (儀軌, *vidhi*) resembles other works prescribing practices for contemplating the thirty-seven primary deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and was possibly derivative of Amoghavajra's writings on the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*.<sup>55</sup>

Nonetheless, Japanese scholastics often cited the text for two reasons. First, the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* provides a rationale for how the practitioner successfully contemplates the five tathāgatas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala by assuming the position of Vajrasattva in the soteriological narrative of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. The opening of the sutra depicts the enlightenment of Śākyamuni through a five-step *abhiṣeka* rite. In this rite, Śākyamuni, presented as a great bodhisattva, plays the role of the disciple summoned before the ācārya, who in this case is "all tathāgatas." Through the process of receiving *abhiṣeka*, Śākyamuni transforms into a vajra-being, or Vajrasattva. The *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* opens by equating the practice of the three secret activities with Vajrasattva's attainment of the secret teachings from Mahāvairocana, who represents "all tathāgatas." Once the mantra practitioner masters the body, speech, and mind of Vajrasattva, he too transforms into a bodhisattva of the mantra tradition and obtains the benefits of yogic practice. The Vajradhātu Maṇḍala then emerges from the mind of the practitioner, beginning with each of the five tathāgatas in their respective seats of the altar (塔) and gradually expanding to include all thirty-seven deities.<sup>56</sup>

The Tendai monk and proponent of esoteric Buddhism Ennin was the first person to comment on the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven*. In his commentary on the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, Ennin cites this passage in a question regarding the time and location in which the sutra was expounded by "all tathāgatas," the de facto preacher(s) of the sutra. The transmission of the teachings to Vajrasattva suggests that there was a particular instance and setting in which all tathāgatas expounded the teachings. However, the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* claims that Mahāvairocana actually preaches constantly throughout the three temporal realms and ten directions. Therefore, either the preachers of these sutras were different buddhas, or the transmission of the teachings noted in the opening of the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* was atemporal. To resolve this conundrum, Ennin concluded that the time and place of this teaching depends on the capabilities of the practitioner. He writes:

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55. The *Lueshu jingangding yuqie fenbie shenwei xiuzheng famen* 略述金剛頂瑜伽分別聖位修證法門 (*Taishō* 18, no. 870), the *Jingangding yuqie lueshu sanshiqizun xinyao* 金剛頂瑜伽略述三十七尊心要 (*Taishō* 18, no. 871), and *Jingangding yuqie sanshiqizun li* 金剛頂瑜伽三十七尊禮 (*Taishō* 18, no. 879) include similar practices and were more commonly cited in Japanese exegetical works than the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven*. For a brief overview of the content in the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven*, see BJK 3.490c-491a.

56. See *Taishō* 18.298a10-12.

若准此文、應云一切時處說法、普利有情。何但得局二三時等。故大興善寺傳法阿闍梨云、諸家所立皆是隨機。若准實義、辨說毘盧遮那如來說法時者、應云一切時也。

According to this passage [from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*], we must say that [Mahāvairocana] preaches at all times and in all places for the universal benefit of sentient beings. How would this be limited to just two or three time periods? Therefore, the *ācārya* of Daxingshansi<sup>57</sup> who transmitted [this sutra to me] said, "The various schools have established [their teachings] according to the capabilities of the practitioner. If one follows the ultimate meaning [of the sutra] to determine when Vairocana Tathāgata preaches the dharma, we should say that he preaches at all times."<sup>58</sup>

In other words, the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* claims that Mahāvairocana's preaching is universal and omnipresent. However, Ennin quotes his master from Daxingshansi stating that this is only one interpretation among many, albeit the ultimate purport of the sutra. The preacher of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* could be understood through the preaching of other buddhas in different times or in different locations. Therefore, Ennin concludes that there are two correct responses to the question of the time and location in which the esoteric teachings were expounded. First, the teachings depend on the assembly (三摩耶) in which the buddha engages sentient beings. Ennin notes that the mantra teachings differ whether we are discussing them in terms of the buddha, bodhisattva, pratyekabuddha, śrāvaka, or worldly paths.<sup>59</sup>

The second interpretation claims that the preaching of the sutra is internal to the enlightened mind of Mahāvairocana and is only accessible to those who have attained unsurpassed awakening. Ennin considered Mahāvairocana the embodiment of all buddhas,

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57. Ennin refers to an *ācārya* of Daxingshansi several times in his commentary, but never identifies him by name. While housed at this temple in Chang'an, he studies under a little known monk named Yuanzheng 元政, but he also studied with Faquan 法全 during this period. Writing in the late twelfth century, the Mt. Hiei scholastic Shōshin associated this *ācārya* of Daxingshansi with Faquan. See *Taishō* 417c27-418a6, or Part 1, Section One of the translation in the second part of the dissertation.

58. See *Taishō* 61.15c28-16a3. Mizukami Fumiyoshi discusses this passage and Ennin's two-fold interpretation of the esoteric teachings in Mizukami Fumiyoshi 水上文義, *Taimitsu shisō keisei no kenkyū* 台密思想形成の研究 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2008), 53-55. Annen makes a similar argument citing the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* in his summary of doctrinal debates, the *Debates on the Teachings and Time Periods* (*Kyōjisōron* 教時諍論), and compendiums on esoteric Buddhist doctrine, the *Interpretation of Teachings* and *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta*. See *Taishō* 75.362c14-23, 75.406b14-25, and 75.543b6-26, respectively.

59. This five part typology of *samaya* (三摩耶), also rendered as 三味道, is from Yixing's commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See *ZTZm*1.171b. This concept is similar to the Tiantai notion of ten realms with the exception that the six destinies have been subsumed into a single category. In his commentary, Ennin uses this term to denote the various paths that sentient beings might take toward becoming a buddha. Because the buddha engages beings according to the capabilities, this interaction is classified as types of *samaya*. See *Taishō* 61.15a15-20. Kūkai's taxonomy of ten stages of the mind is based on a similar concept.

bodhisattvas, and deities. The arrangement of the deities in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, which is explained in further detail in the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven*, demonstrates how they originally arose within the mind of Mahāvairocana. Therefore, Mahāvairocana represents all tathāgatas, which are identical in essence and function.<sup>60</sup>

In his sub-commentary, Donjaku offers a very different interpretation of this passage. Rather than an explication of the practice of the three secret activities as they pertain to Vajrasattva, he cites the opening of the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* as evidence for the Shingon lineage and the origin of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. Quoting Nāgārjuna's biography from the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, he first asserts that the patriarch was in fact the same individual as the master of great virtue in the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara*. He then relates Nāgārjuna's *abhiṣeka* in the iron stupa with prescriptions for contemplating the five tathāgatas of the mandala, claiming that Nāgārjuna was responsible for transmitting the teachings of the mandala from the stupa into the human realm of Jambudvīpa. Donjaku connects these unrelated narratives by conflating the iron stupa with the altar/stupa upon which the mantra practitioner mentally arranges the thirty-seven deities of the mandala. Therefore, the *Interpretation of the Thirty-seven* was an important proof text for explaining the origins and entry of the esoteric teachings from the realms of buddhas and bodhisattvas to human practitioners.<sup>61</sup>

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60. According to Ennin, this interpretation is the same as the perfect teachings in Tendai. See *Taishō* 61.16a29-b9. Mizukami discusses Ennin's view of the preacher of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* in Mizukami 2008, 43-53. Ennin asserts in his exegesis of the title of the sutra that all tathāgatas (一切如來), as well as the thirty-seven deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, denote Mahāvairocana. See *Taishō* 61.9a14-25.

61. See *Taishō* 61.120c12-26. This opening passage from the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* was discussed by several esoteric Buddhist scholastics, all of whom tended to use it for their own polemical purposes. In his essay on Shingon lineage, Jōson cites this passage as an account of Mahāvairocana's initial preaching of the three secret activities to Vajrasattva, marking the beginning of the Shingon transmission of the esoteric teachings. See *Taishō* 77.416b23-c2. Saisen relates it to his definition of *bodhicitta* in his commentary on the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*. However, he rejects the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* in his *Gosōjōshin gi mondō shō* 五相成身義問答抄 as an exoteric understanding of *bodhicitta* for stating that the practitioner gradually visualizes each of the deities of the mandala whereas the correct esoteric practice requires the adept to suddenly realize them all at once. In the second fascicle of the *Ryōbu mandara taiben shō* 兩部曼荼羅對辨抄, however, he takes a more nuanced position, arguing that the esoteric teachings consist of both sudden and gradual courses of contemplation. See *Taishō* 70.21c22-a5, 78.107a13-28, and the appended volumes of iconography 1.238. Chōyō relates the passage to the notion of the dharma body's preaching from the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, stating that the sea-like nature of Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva is identical to Mahāvairocana. Therefore, achieving the mind of Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva is to hear the preaching of the dharma body of the buddha. See Chōyō's *Hishū kyōsō shō* 祕宗教相鈔 in *Taishō* 77.637a24-c15. This issue of the mind of Vajrasattva and how to properly contemplate it became a topic of debate between the Shingi and Kogi factions of Shingon starting in the fourteenth century. See the sixth fascicle of Shōken's *Daisho hyakujō daisanjū* 大疏百條第三重 in *Taishō* 79.679a4-680a7.

The second reason medieval scholastics cited the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* is in support of Kūkai's claims regarding an unbroken line of transmission from Mahāvairocana. Unlike the other ritual commentaries on the thirty-seven deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* abruptly shifts from the topic of contemplating the deities to a rendition of the esoteric Buddhist lineage. Although Donjaku later conflated the narratives from these two texts, this version differs from the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* in that it does not mention an iron stupa and instead outlines the transmission of the patriarchs. Exclaiming that this Great Yoga Teaching is not easy to obtain, the unnamed author declares that it should only be transmitted from master to disciple. Furthermore, unlike the teachings written in the sutras, the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* specifies that these teachings must be properly obtained from an *ācārya* through the rites of *abhīṣeka*. The end of the text lists a line of transmission of the Great Yoga Teaching, stating:

故自佛已降、迭相付囑。釋師子得於毘盧舍那如來方授、而誓約傳金剛薩埵。金剛薩埵得之、數百年傳龍猛菩薩。龍猛菩薩受之、數百年傳龍智阿闍梨。又住持數百年、傳金剛智阿闍梨。金剛智阿闍梨以悲願力、將流演於中國。遂挈瓶杖錫、開元七載至自上京、十四載遽得其人。復以誓約傳不空金剛阿闍梨。然後其枝條付囑。頗有其人、若冢嶠[家嫡]<sup>62</sup>相承、准[唯]<sup>63</sup>此而已。

The [Great Yoga Teaching] has been successively conferred from the buddha. The lion of the Śākya's was able to receive it from Vairocana Tathāgata and vowed to transmit it to Vajrasattva. Vajrasattva obtained it and centuries later transmitted it to Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva. Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva received it and centuries later transmitted it to Nāgabodhi Ācārya. He also maintained the teaching for centuries before transmitting it to Vajrabodhi Ācārya. Vajrabodhi Ācārya, through the power of his vow of compassion, managed to propagate the teaching in China. Possessing only his begging bowl and staff, he finally reached the capital in the seventh year of Kaiyuan (719), where he encountered a person fourteen years of age. Once again, he vowed to transmit the teaching to Amoghavajra Ācārya. Henceforth, the branches and tributaries of these teachings have been passed down. If there happens to be a person of a good family, only then should they receive this teaching.<sup>64</sup>

This version of the lineage differs considerably from the iron stupa narrative in the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara*. Instead of a single instance of an anonymous master of great virtue receiving the teachings in an iron stupa, this account outlines a succession of patriarchs from the Vairocana Tathāgata to Amoghavajra. The narrative of patriarchal lineage

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62. An alternative manuscript has 家嫡, as does Jōson's quotation of this passage noted below.

63. This should be 唯 rather than 准.

64. *Taishō* 18.299a5-13.

emphasizes the importance of the master-disciple relationship to ensure the proper transmission of the teachings. Furthermore, in contrast to most Mahāyāna sutras that close with pronouncements for their own dissemination, the instructions in the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* dictate that the Great Yoga Teaching should be kept secret and only conferred upon the most qualified initiates by a recognized *ācārya*.

Such emphasis on the role of secret transmission over dissemination through textual sources seems to support the Shingon claim that the oral tradition was a superior form of the buddha dharma to the revealed, or exoteric, tradition documented in texts. However, the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* narrative is arguably a more sophisticated attempt to document the historical origins of esoteric Buddhism than *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara*. In addition to the genealogy of patriarchs, the text also includes the date of Vajrabodhi's arrival in China as well as the age of Amoghavajra when he first encountered him.<sup>65</sup>

Of course, the fact that the text includes historical information about Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra negates its claim to be a translation from an Indian source. In the opening pages of his book, Ōmura cites the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* as a possible source of the patriarchal narrative, noting the similarity between this passage and Kūkai's rendition of the patriarchs in his catalogue, the *Catalogue of Imported Items*, as well as the list of patriarchs included in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*.<sup>66</sup> However, he also cast doubt on the authenticity of this work, specifically the succession of patriarchs at the end of the text. As the above passage points out, the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* includes historical details of Vajrabodhi's arrival in China as well as Amoghavajra's position in the lineage, which suggests that it was obviously a Chinese composition rather than a translation from an Indian source. Ōmura proposes that it was probably the product of Amoghavajra's immediate disciples, perhaps based on his instructions.

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65. The date given in the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* for Vajrabodhi's arrival in Loyang and age of Amoghavajra when he met him differ from biographical sources. Vajrabodhi arrived in south China by sea in 719, but did not reach the capital until the following year. According to the earliest biography for Amoghavajra, he was fifteen when he met Vajrabodhi. See Chou Yi-liang, "Tantrism in China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 8, 3/4, (1945):256 and 285.

66. For Kūkai's discussion of the patriarchs in his catalogue, see *Taishō* 55.1062c5-24. For an English translation, see Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 208-209. Furthermore, Abé discusses this passage in Abé 1999, 181.

By the time Kūkai arrived in Chang'an in 804, Ōmura suggests, the text was widely considered a translation rather than a composition of Amoghavajra, consequently being labelled such in Japanese catalogues.<sup>67</sup>

Regardless of its questionable authenticity, the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* served as a possible textual source for the Shingon lineage, and Shingon partisans often cited it as textual evidence for the version of the lineage proposed in Kūkai's writings. For instance, in Kūkai's final testimony to his disciples, the apocryphal *Twenty-Five Section Testimony*, the author positioned Kūkai in the list of patriarchs. When defining the transmission of *abhiṣeka* in Kūkai's lineage, the text reads:

若存灌頂流者自我身始。祕密眞言此時而立。夫師資相傳嫡嫡繼來者。大祖大毘盧遮那佛授金剛薩埵菩薩。金剛薩埵菩薩傳于龍猛菩薩。龍猛菩薩下至大唐玄宗肅宗代宗三朝灌頂國師特進試鴻臚卿大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空阿闍梨六葉焉。惠果則其上足法化也。凡勘付法。至于吾身相傳八代也。

If one is to understand the transmission of *abhiṣeka*, it begins with the establishment of the secret mantra within oneself. Then it is passed down from master to disciple through the generations. The founder Vairocana Buddha bestowed it on Vajrasattva, and Vajrasattva transmitted it to Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva. From Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva it extended to the *Tripitaka-śramaṇa* of Daxingshansi Amoghavajra Ācārya, the Great Disseminator of Wisdom, who as the Special Chief Minister was the master of the nation for performing *abhiṣeka* rites under the three reigns of Xuanzong, Suzong, and Daizong in the great Tang and who became the sixth blossoming [of the lineage]. Huiguo successfully mastered these teachings. Consolidating the transmission of these teachings, he transmitted them to me as the eighth generation.<sup>68</sup>

Similar to the narrative in the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven*, the testimony asserts that the Shingon lineage preserved and transmitted the esoteric teachings through the rite of *abhiṣeka* from Mahāvairocana to Huiguo and declares Kūkai to be the eighth generation in this tradition.

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67. See Ōmura 1918, 2. The *Bussho kaisetsu* also points out this flaw in the text, suggesting that it was probably composed by Amoghavajra himself or by his close disciples. See BKJ 3.490-491. The similarity between this narrative and the biographies for Amoghavajra in Yuanzhao's collection of memorials suggests that the end of the text or the entire commentary may have been composed in the late eighth century. However, the fact that Kūkai does not mention it in his catalogue means it could have been even later. Haiyun also does not mention the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* in his lineage text. Therefore, it may have been composed as late as the 840s.

68. TKDZ 3.354 or *Taishō* 77.409b4-12. For a summary of the text, see Horiuchi Noriyuki's entry in Kamata Shigeo 鎌田茂雄, ed., *Daizōkyō zenkaisetsu daijiten* 大藏經全解説大事典 (Tokyo: Yūzankaku Shuppan, 1998), 723. Most scholars agree that the *Twenty-Five Section Testimony* was an apocryphal Kūkai work and was probably written centuries after his death. Takeuchi Kōzen, for instance, argues that it was probably a product of the later half of the tenth century. See Takeuchi Kōzen 武内孝善, "Kūkai sōzuden to yuigō nijūgo kajō" 『空海僧都傳』と『遺告二十五ヶ条』, *Mikyō bunka* 218 (2007):1-36.

In his defense of the Shingon lineage as a distinct and superior tradition, the Daigoji monk Jōson cited the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* to support this claim in the testimony that Kūkai was initiated into the orthodox school of Mahāvairocana. Quoting the narrative at the end of the text, Jōson exclaimed that this line of transmission surely includes the disciples of Amoghavajra, specifically Huiguo, and by extension Kūkai. Ultimately, Jōson concluded that the ritual commentary provides an authoritative account of the lineage spanning all three Buddhist nations of India, China, and Japan in which each master propagated the esoteric teachings in their respective lands. By calling Kūkai the eighth patriarch in this lineage, he also proposed that the initial vow of Vajrasattva to transmit the esoteric teachings culminated in Kūkai's *abhiṣeka* and the introduction of this tradition to Japan.<sup>69</sup>

Writing a century later, Chōyō 重譽 (d. 1143) also connected the lineage in the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* to Kūkai and the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text. He argued that the *Determinations on the Vajrasekhara*, *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven*, *Longer Dharma Transmission*, as well as Haiyun's lineage text all prove that Nāgārjuna transmitted the teachings of the *Vajrasekhara Yoga* from the iron stupa. Furthermore, the extensive biographies of the *Longer Dharma Transmission*, he claimed, were evidence that Kūkai successfully introduced Nāgārjuna's lineage to Japan.<sup>70</sup>

Jōson and Chōyō's association of the patriarchal narrative in the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* with Kūkai's enumeration of the lineage in his catalogue and the transmission text would have been a strong counter-argument to Tokuitsu's critique that the Shingon lineage lacked textual evidence. However, their application of the ritual commentary to Kūkai's writings was anachronistic. Unlike the iron stupa account in the *Determinations on the Vajrasekhara*, this work is not listed in Kūkai's *Catalogue of Imported Items*, which he submitted to the court after his return from China in 806. Furthermore, according to Annen's catalogue, it was first imported to Japan by Eun in the 840s, approximately a decade after Kūkai's death.<sup>71</sup>

The narrative in the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* also caused doctrinal complications regarding the initial preaching of the esoteric teachings and their transmission from Mahāvairocana to Nāgārjuna. On the one hand, as an Amoghavajra translation of an Indian original, the text served as an authoritative source for the lineage. On the other hand, the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* proved problematic for Kūkai's claim to a direct line of

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69. See *Taishō* 77.420a5-b15.

70. See *Taishō* 77.639c24-630a9.

71. This work is listed in Eun's catalogue in *Taishō* 55.1089b20. Annen notes that this text was first imported by Eun and that Ennin also refers to this work, although it was not included in his catalogues. See *Taishō* 55.1116a22:金剛頂瑜伽三十七尊出生義一卷(運仁錄外). The *Rokuge kyō tō mokuroku* 錄外經等目錄, a thirteenth century compilation of catalogues on esoteric Buddhist texts, also lists it under Eun's catalogues. See *Taishō* 55.1112c5.

transmission from the Mahāvairocana as the dharma body of the buddha. In contrast to the passage in his catalogue and final testimony, the teachings are not transferred directly from Mahāvairocana to Vajrasattva, but pass through Śākyamuni Buddha.

Ennin was the first to point out this problem. As noted above, Ennin cited the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* as evidence that the time and location of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* depended on the capabilities of the audience. However, the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* also required later scholastics to explain the preacher of the esoteric teachings due to the identity of the preacher in its opening lines. The text reads:

我能仁如來。憫三有六趣之惑。常由蘊界入等。受生死妄執。空華無而虛計。衣珠有而不知。於是乎收跡都史天宮下。生中印土。起化城以接之。由糞除以誘之。及乎大種姓人法緣已熟。三祕密教說時方至。遂却住自受用身。據色究竟天宮。入不空王三昧。普集諸聖賢。削地位之漸階。開等妙之頓旨。

I, the Tathāgata of Generosity, took pity on the afflicted in the three realms and six destinies, who, due to the aggregates, sense objects, and sense organs, are constantly deluded by and attached to *saṃsāra*. They falsely perceived the illusion of flowers in the sky and were unaware of the existence of the pearls in the garments. For this purpose, I assembled the trace teachings and descended from Tuṣita Heaven. Reborn in India, I generated the conjured city to guide [these beings] and to help rid them of their attachments. When I preached the teaching of the three secret activities, those from superior lineages for whom the conditions necessary to obtain the dharma had already ripened fully advanced to abide in the body of the internally directed reward. In Akaniṣṭha Heaven they congregate among all sages, overcome the gradual stages of the path, and realize the sudden teaching of virtual and wondrous awakening.<sup>72</sup>

For Ennin and other Tendai exegetes, this passage would immediately invite comparisons with the *Lotus Sūtra*. First, the Tathāgata of Generosity was Dharmarakṣa's (d. 316) translation for Śākyamuni Buddha in his early version of the *Lotus Sūtra*, as well as his other translations.<sup>73</sup> Second, the text invokes several well-known *Lotus Sūtra* tropes, such as the conjured city, flowers in the sky, pearls in the garments, etc. Finally, the Tathāgata of Generosity announces that he descended to this world to preach the trace teachings (迹門) (i.e. the first half of the *Lotus Sūtra*) to sentient beings in order to save them from the afflictions of *saṃsāra*. This implies that his preaching of the three secret activities, directed toward advanced practitioners, indicates the source teaching (本門) (i.e. the latter half of the *Lotus Sūtra*).

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72. *Taishō* 18.297c15-21.

73. See BDJ, 1384a.



Ennin does not further explicate this passage from the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven*, but a passage in Annen's *Debates on Teachings and Time Periods* (*Kyōjisōron* 教時諍論) suggests that the identity of the buddha in this text was a matter of dispute in the mid-ninth century. Annen's record begins by noting the correlation of Mahāvairocana from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* with "all tathāgatas" of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. Following Ennin's precedent, he states that Mahāvairocana was the embodiment of the awakened mind of all tathāgatas. He then notes that according to the first of the eighteen assemblies of the *Vajraśekhara Yoga*, recorded in Amoghavajra's *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies*, Samantabhadra obtained the teaching from Vairocana and descended to the southern continent of Jambudvīpa, where he demonstrated the eight phases of the path to buddhahood and was called Śākyamuni.<sup>74</sup> Annen interprets this passage to mean that during his fifty-year career of preaching the dharma, Samantabhadra-Śākyamuni went by many names, including the Tathāgata of Generosity. He further notes that according to the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, Mahāvairocana preaches the teaching of the three secret activities in all times and locations, manifesting in the form of Samantabhadra and other bodhisattvas in order to preach this teaching to sentient beings. Citing the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* as a proof text, Annen suggests that Śākyamuni was born in Jambudvīpa to preach the mantra teachings in accordance with the capabilities of sentient beings in this time and location.<sup>75</sup>

The dual identity of the preacher of the esoteric sutras as both Mahāvairocana/all tathāgatas and Śākyamuni was never an issue for Tendai scholiasts such as Ennin and Annen. Furthermore, as Haiyun's lineage text reflects, the normative view was always that these were the same buddha by different names. However, the inclusion of Śākyamuni in the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* contradicted Kūkai's claims to an unbroken and exclusive line of transmission from Mahāvairocana to himself, making this text problematic for later Shingon scholastics.

In his *Essentials of the Vajraśekhara Tradition* (*Kongōchōshū kōgai* 金剛頂宗綱概), the Tōji scholastic Gōhō discusses Śākyamuni's role in the promulgation of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and its commentaries. In response to the passage in the *Eighteen Assemblies of the Vajraśekhara Yoga*, he asserts that the sutra does not in fact specify that Samantabhadra descended to Jambudvīpa in the form of Śākyamuni. Citing Dānapāla's early eleventh-century translation, Gōhō points out that the actual passage in the final chapter of the sutra states that when Samantabhadra entered *samādhi* "all tathāgatas" called him by the name Vajrapāṇi, not

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74. For this passage in *Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies*, see *Taishō* 18.286a21-25. For an English translation of this passage, see Rolf Giebel, "The Chin-kang-ting ching yüch'ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei: An Annotated Translation," *Naritasan Bukkyō Kenkyūjō kiyō* 18 (1995): 163-165.

75. The *Debates on the Teachings and Time Periods* is a revision of Annen's earlier (*Kyōjisō* 教時諍). Annen does not mention the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* in the earlier text, but begins the revised version by quoting Ennin's discussion of the preacher of the text. See *Taishō* 75.355c14-26. Annen reiterates this point in greater detail in second fascicle of the *Interpretation of the Teachings*. See *Taishō* 75.406b15-c10.

Śākyamuni. Moreover, he argues that even if Samantabhadra manifested as Śākyamuni in Jambudvīpa as Annen claimed, he would merely be a "trace" of a "trace" (迹中迹) of the preacher of the sutra, thus diminishing the efficacy of the sutra. Therefore, he concludes, the lineage in the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* cannot be correct, and he dismisses it along with Haiyun's lineage text as sources extraneous to the Shingon school.<sup>76</sup>

Gōhō's rejection of these two text on the basis that they contradicted the Shingon lineage in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* became a common tactic among Shingon apologists for addressing alternative versions of the lineage. However, Tendai monks were not convinced that these lineage texts, one claiming to be an Indian original and the other from Tang China, could so easily be discarded. In his comments on Saisen's rejoinder to Tokuitsu in his *Treatise Clarifying Contradictions* (*Myō shishaku ron* 明矢石論), Senjun 宣淳 is quite critical of this method of determining a text's legitimacy based on its sectarian affiliation.

As I discussed above, Saisen defended the oral account of the iron stupa narrative by proposing that some oral accounts of historical events were more legitimate than written documentation. This allowed him to argue that Vajrabodhi's story of the iron stupa was true even without textual evidence to support it. He then quoted the *Longer Dharma Transmission* record of this story. However, in his comments, Senjun cites the same source to discredit the claim that the teachings in the iron stupa were not preached by Śākyamuni. He notes Nāgārjuna's response to the vajra-wielding deities in which the patriarch states he intended to reintroduce the Mahāyāna teachings, because they had begun to wane in the centuries since the cessation of Śākyamuni. According to Vajrabodhi's alleged oral transmission of the teachings in the iron stupa, Nāgārjuna appears to think that these teachings were preached by Śākyamuni. Therefore, Vajrabodhi's oral transmission must have been wrong, or Śākyamuni was the original preacher of the *Vajraśekhara Yoga* in one-hundred thousand verses.<sup>77</sup>

Furthermore, Senjun states that the dismissal of the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* as a lesser or "outside" teaching is equally problematic. As Ennin pointed out, this text elaborated on the soteriology of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, and, as the opening of the text articulates, it was preached by the Tathāgata of Generosity, an alternative title for Śākyamuni. If one accepts Gōhō's claim that the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* was not an esoteric teaching because the lineage differs from Kūkai's version, then the practices within the text must be rejected as well. However, doing so would call into the question the soteriology of the sutra.

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76. For Gōhō's argument, see *Taishō* 77.767b14-768c7. He quotes Dānapāla's translation in *Taishō* 18.444a13-16 and c1-5.

77. See *SNDK* 63.317a-b and 312-313.

#### Chapter Four: The Doctrine of the Dharma Body and the Construction of Shingon Lineage

Senjun concludes that a more sensible solution is to recognize the preacher of both the *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven* and the sutra to be Śākyamuni, as both texts claim to be, rather than dismiss these claims based on an alleged oral transmission.<sup>78</sup>

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#### Conclusion

In his critique of Saisen and his hermeneutic for distinguishing between the truth of written and oral accounts of origin stories, Senjun proposed that the iron stupa narrative was probably intended as a metaphor, rather than to denote an actual location. Likewise, he implied that the master of great virtue signifies practitioners who attain the buddha dharma in the past, present, or future. This suggestion is very similar to Matsunaga and Abé's analysis of Kūkai's intentions behind conflating the origin story with his Shingon lineage. According to their interpretations, Kūkai's notion of lineage was metahistorical in that it did not indicate a chronology of patriarchs, but attempted to explain the transformation that occurs between the master and disciple during the rite of *abhiṣeka*.

The scholastic discourse on the iron stupa, however, suggests that many medieval commentators did not think that Vajrabodhi's story was merely a metaphor for religious experience. Rather, this tale and its association with the Shingon patriarchs in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* was evidence that their school, the orthodox esoteric Buddhist lineage, originated with the dharma body of the buddha and that their primary texts, the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, were directly preached by the buddha in his most subtle and ultimate manifestation.

Senjun also hints that such claims were part of the reason why the iron stupa narrative was so suspicious. In response to Saisen's claim that the oral transmission of the Shingon origin story represents an actual historical event, Senjun writes:

汝等南天鐵塔欲建立別佛、早返送此等誠文於天竺。爾後始可草創。不爾者、此疑難決而已。

If you wish to install a distinct buddha in an iron stupa in southern India, you must first submit proof texts from Indian sources. After this, you can establish [the lineage of] the

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78. See *SNDK* 63.316-317.

stupa. If there are no proof texts, then you will only have difficulties in resolving such doubts.<sup>79</sup>

Because there was no proof that the iron stupa existed, Tokuitsu and others were skeptical of Vajrabodhi's story. However, Senjun also suggests that Kūkai and Saisen have violated a fundamental rule of scholastic debate; one must base doctrinal claims on canonical sources. The category of "canonical" is mutable, as the numerous taxonomies of teachings and doxographies in East Asian Buddhism attest, but invariably it denotes the word of the buddha. However, the *Longer Dharma Transmission* and Saisen's application of its dialogue between the "drowning student" and "master" in his response to Tokuitsu propose that textual documentation, even in canonical source, was secondary to the oral teaching of the master. As a consequence, the role of the *ācārya* superseded the word of the buddha in the sutras.

Nonetheless, there were textual sources that could have been employed in response to Tokuitsu. The account of the iron stupa in the *Determinations on the Vajraśekhara* was probably the basis for the expanded story in the *Longer Dharma Transmission*. However, unlike Kūkai's three-part exposition, this account does not specify a lineage for the Vajradhātu teachings in the iron stupa. The *Interpretation of the Thirty-Seven*, on the other hand, lists a Vajradhātu lineage, but differs from the lineage in the *Longer Dharma Transmission* text, thereby conflicting with the doctrinal claims of the transmission text. Shingon apologists had to either explain why these accounts differed from Kūkai, as in the examples of Jōson and Chōyō, or dispense with the need for textual evidence altogether, as Saisen did in his response to Tokuitsu.

Kūkai and the later Shingon tradition tried to create an historical and doctrinal foundation for Amoghavajra's newly devised lineage. The problem, however, was that there were insufficient sources to confirm such a lineage existed prior to the Tang patriarch and his community of disciples. In response to Tokuitsu's critique, the "master" in Kūkai's dialogue and the medieval Shingon school were forced to reframe the question. Rather than demonstrating the legitimacy of the lineage by presenting textual evidence, they argued that the oral tradition proves its own authority. The authority of the lineage was based on the doctrine that the teachings in the iron stupa were originally preached by the dharma body of the buddha. As a secret teaching passed down from *ācārya* to disciple, this preaching superseded textual sources. Therefore, although there was no textual evidence proving the existence of such a lineage, Kūkai and Saisen responded to Tokuitsu's question by proclaiming that the truth of the esoteric teachings initially expounded in the iron stupa and the Shingon lineage that propagated it must not be doubted.

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79. *SNDK* 63.317a-b.

## Conclusion to the Dissertation

As any introductory textbook to Japanese religious history will point out, the Shingon school was founded by the distinguished scholar and ritual specialist Kūkai, who traveled to China in 804 where he obtained a collection of recently translated esoteric texts and received initiations into a series of esoteric rites. A decade after returning to Japan in 806, he began writing on esoteric Buddhist doctrine. Purportedly, the purpose of these brief treatises was to differentiate his new school of Buddhism based on the practice of mantra (i.e. Shingon) from other Buddhist schools in Japan.

Among these works, one stands out above all others as the foundational text of the Shingon school. The *Treatise on Two Teachings* claims that the esoteric teachings propagated by Kūkai's Shingon school are superior to the teachings of all other schools, which it denounces as merely exoteric. The *Treatise* explains the differences between these two types of teachings in terms of the body of the buddha that preaches them. Specifically, it asserts that the dharma body of the buddha preaches the esoteric teachings as the ultimate truth of the dharma, whereas other bodies of the buddha preach a provisional truth of the exoteric teachings. Therefore, this narrative forming the basis of the sectarian identity for the Shingon school posits Kūkai as its founder. Furthermore, it situates the claim that the esoteric teachings are superior to the exoteric teachings as its defining doctrinal tenet and positions the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as its foundational text.

Although the sectarian narrative continues to dominate studies of esoteric Buddhism in Japan, recent scholarship on Kūkai tends to disregard the received tradition as a later construction or distortion of the "real" Kūkai. In order to discover the "real" Kūkai or elucidate the true intent latent in his writings on doctrine, scholars of early medieval Buddhism in Japan often disregard later interpretations of these doctrines and the persona of Kūkai depicted in the profuse hagiographical tradition. The Romantic endeavor to uncover the intent and true meaning of the author's words may circumvent the multiple hermeneutical layers generated by centuries of interpretation, but doing so risks replacing one constructed narrative with another. Kūkai the founder becomes Kūkai the philosopher, or Kūkai the political theorist.

### Conclusion to the Dissertation

In his groundbreaking study of Kūkai, the *Weaving of Mantra*, Abé Ryūichi presents a revised interpretation of Kūkai's contribution to Japanese Buddhism. Rather than the founder of a new school of Buddhism, Abé contends that Kūkai sought to introduce a new hermeneutic for reading scripture that provided a doctrinal basis for the performance of esoteric rites while simultaneously promoting his own "esoteric" interpretation of traditional Buddhist texts, thereby inserting a new doctrinal discourse within the status quo of the Nara schools. Therefore, Kūkai was successful precisely because he was able to win "the interest of the Nara clergy" by infiltrating the Buddhist establishment and integrating his ritual system of esoteric rites into the doctrinal systems of the Nara institutions. Dismissing the sectarian narrative of Kūkai as the founder of an exclusively esoteric school of Buddhism as a construction devised by medieval and modern Shingon apologists, Abé concludes that the historical Kūkai never intended to establish a Shingon school independent of the dominant Buddhist establishment of the early ninth century.<sup>1</sup>

The image of Kūkai as a ritual theorist determined to reinterpret the role of thaumaturgic rites among the Nara schools offers a broader perspective on the intellectual and political context of early ninth century Japan. However, it does not explain why we should assume that Kūkai was successful in these endeavors. The terms of success were defined by the sectarian tradition, which began to take shape centuries after Kūkai. There is no evidence that Kūkai's writings had any impact on Buddhist thought during his lifetime. Therefore, Kūkai as the successful innovator of ritual theory is inseparable from the sectarian narrative and its depiction of Kūkai as the prominent Buddhist intellectual of the early ninth century.

Narratives are constructed for a reason. In the preceding four chapters of the dissertation, I was less concerned with what the historical Kūkai intended to do than how he and his writings were interpreted by the later tradition. In other words, the later construction of Kūkai *was* the Shingon school. In order to better understand Kūkai's role in the development of esoteric Buddhism in Japan it is necessary not to ignore the sectarian narrative, but to take the construction of Shingon sectarian and doctrinal identity as the topic of critical inquiry.

The construction of Kūkai's Shingon school began with the cataloguing and commentarial efforts of a relatively obscure monk from the temple of Ninnaji named Saisen. Saisen was the first scholar monk in Japanese history to catalogue or compose commentaries on any of Kūkai's works. Prior to these efforts, Kūkai's works were relatively obscure. Most of these writings were never even mentioned in the commentaries and exegetical writings of scholastic monks in the Tendai school or monks based at ritual centers such as Tōji and Daigoji. His disciples produced very few writings, none of which refer to their master's doctrinal treatises. However, after Saisen began cataloguing and commenting on the works of Kūkai in the late eleventh century, the writings of the revered master who propagated the dharma became central to the doctrinal identity of an independent Shingon school.

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1. See Abé 1999, 41.

### Conclusion to the Dissertation

Saisen singled out the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as the foundational document of the Shingon school. In his commentary on the *Treatise*, he proclaimed that it is the only text to fully explicate the sacred esoteric teachings. Later commentators make even more emphatic claims regarding the profundity of the *Treatise*. For example, Yūkai, who was the head of the Mt. Kōya faction of the Shingon school in the early fourteenth century, began his commentary with an anecdote about one of Kūkai's contemporary monks in the Hossō school. According to an old record, Yūkai claims, when this Hossō monk received Kūkai's *Treatise* he burst into tears, presumably because the *Treatise* so thoroughly discredited the doctrines of the Hossō school.<sup>2</sup> Of course, there is no evidence that this ever happened, but that is beside the point. My question when I began writing the dissertation was, "Why?" Why was this text so important to the doctrinal identity of the Shingon school?

In the dissertation, I covered a broad range of sources in an effort to answer this question. I examined the *Treatise* along with several of its major commentaries. I also considered how scholastics in the Tendai school interpreted this text and, more importantly, how it did not factor into their view of esoteric Buddhist doctrine. I also investigated non-traditional texts external to the sectarian canon, such as catalogues, hagiography, and official edicts issued by the state when evaluating the formation of this sectarian narrative. I brought these materials together in an attempt to expose why the *Treatise* was so central to the development of an esoteric Buddhist scholastic tradition.

In these concluding remarks to my analysis of these sources, I would like to propose three reasons why Saisen and later Shingon apologists found the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to be indispensable to the doctrinal identity of their school. First, Saisen was a true believer of the Kōbō Daishi cult. He wrote a long exegesis of hagiographies on Kūkai in which he makes several claims regarding the supernatural characteristics of the master. Kūkai was reborn in Tuṣita Heaven where he is propagating the esoteric teachings. Kūkai is not dead, but still abiding on Mt. Kōya in a state of meditation while awaiting the coming of the future buddha. Kūkai was an advanced bodhisattva who chose to be born into this world in order to preach the esoteric teachings of Shingon. In other words, Saisen understood the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to be a revelation of a sage with a superior knowledge of the Buddhist teachings.

Second, the *Treatise* served a polemical purpose. In an essay comparing the doctrine of the dharma body in the *Treatise* to Annen's theory in his compendia on esoteric Buddhist doctrine, Saisen proclaims that the *Treatise* was the authoritative interpretation of the esoteric teachings. Although scholastics in the Tendai school discussed many of the same doctrinal issues, Saisen ultimately concludes that Tendai was an exoteric interpretation of this doctrine, and, therefore, inferior to Kūkai's Shingon school. He bases this conclusion on the opening statement of the *Treatise*, which categorically rejects all other schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

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2. See SZ 12.149-150.

### Conclusion to the Dissertation

Third, the *Treatise* provides a doctrinal basis for an independent Shingon lineage. Kūkai claimed in various works that Shingon constituted a distinct lineage. Rather than tracing his school back to Śākyamuni Buddha, he argued that the Shingon teachings originated with Mahāvairocana as the embodiment of the dharma body of the buddha. The *Treatise* supports this claim by contriving an explanation of how Mahāvairocana, in the capacity of the dharma body of the buddha, preached the esoteric teaching. Therefore, only initiates into this lineage had access to the ultimately true preaching of the the dharma body.

Finally, while articulating my answers to the questions listed above, I came to the conclusion that there is insufficient evidence to support the claim that Kūkai wrote the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. It does not appear in the historical record. Kūkai's contemporaries did not refer to it or its content, nor did his disciples. Tendai scholastic monks writing on esoteric Buddhist doctrine in the generations following Kūkai discussed several of his works, but failed to mention this most seminal treatise. In fact, until Saisen listed it in his catalogue in the late eleventh century, the *Treatise* was completely absent from the scholastic discourse on esoteric Buddhism. It seems to have appeared out of nowhere. Based on this lack of historical evidence for the existence of the *Treatise* in the ninth and tenth centuries, along with the fact that it so conveniently reinforces the polemics of the sectarian narrative, I conclude that the *Treatise* played no significant role in Japanese Buddhist thought until the eleventh century at the earliest. Furthermore, the narrative of esoteric Buddhist doctrine in ninth-century Japan should be revised to account for the writings of Tendai scholiasts as antecedents to the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*.



## **Part II: Annotated Translation**

## Introduction to the Translation

The *Essay on the Similarities and Differences in the Two Schools of Tendai and Shingon* (*Tendai shingon nishū dōi shō* 天台真言二宗同異章, hereafter *Essay on the Two Schools*) is a single-fascicled work concerning the topic of esoteric Buddhist doctrine in the Tendai and Shingon schools. The author of the essay, Hōjibō Shōshin 寶地房證眞 (active 1153–1214), was the head of curriculum for the Tendai school on Mt. Hiei and one of the preeminent Buddhist intellectuals in medieval Japanese Buddhism. The author of over two dozen sub-commentaries and scholastic works, he is best known for his thirty-fascicle study on the exegetical writings of the Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi 智顛 (538–597) called the *Personal Notes on the Three Major Works of Tendai* (*Tendai sandaibu shiki* 天台三大部私記), which was the most detailed study on Tendai doctrine until the twentieth century.

My first encounter with the *Essay on the Two Schools* occurred during a year of study at the University of Virginia with Paul Groner, who kindly introduced me to Shōshin's work as well as other writings on esoteric Buddhism and Tendai. These sources, and the *Essay on the Two Schools* in particular, prompted me to reconsider esoteric Buddhism from a broader doctrinal perspective than typically represented in the anglophone scholarship. Shōshin's essay also exposed me to the writings of the Tiantai patriarchs Zhiyi and Zhanran 湛然 (711–782) as well as the substantial commentaries and exegetical works on esoteric Buddhism authored by Tendai scholastics such as Ennin 圓仁 (794–864) and Annen 安然 (841–889/915).

The influence of Tendai doctrine on the formation of a Japanese school of esoteric Buddhism can be seen in the scholastic discourse as well as medieval Japanese culture in general.<sup>1</sup> However, this tradition has received little attention from scholars of esoteric Buddhism. In his review of Yoshito Hakeda's study and translation of Kūkai's works, Stanley Weinstein criticized Hakeda and other Shingon scholars for neglecting the prominent role Tendai has

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1. For several examples of Tendai influence on art and literature in medieval Japan, see Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, ed., *Tendaigaku tanjin—Nihon no bunka • shisō no kakushin wo saguru* 天台学探尋—日本の文化・思想の核心を探る (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2014). In his recent dissertation, Ethan Bushelle discusses Annen's theories of practice and their influence on the liturgical context of composing poetry. See Ethan David Bushelle, "The Joy of the Dharma: Esoteric Buddhism and the Early Medieval Transformation of Japanese Literature" (Ph.D., Harvard University, 2015).

played in the development of Japanese esoteric Buddhism. The vast body of scholarship on the life and thought of Kūkai 空海 (774–835) has become its own genre in the field of Japanese Buddhist Studies, thanks in part to the vigorous and thorough research of scholars such as Ōyama Kōjun, Katsumata Shunkyō, Matsunaga Yūkei. I discuss their scholarship at length in the preceding chapters, and without these studies of Kūkai this dissertation would never have been possible. However, as Weinstein notes, focusing solely on the figure of Kūkai has created a skewed, and I would add inaccurate, view of esoteric Buddhism in Japan.<sup>2</sup>

From the time of its introduction in the early ninth century, Tendai had always been an undeniable force in the development of esoteric Buddhism. Saichō 最澄 (766–822), like Kūkai, received initiation into *abhiṣeka* rites, the hallmark of esoteric rituals. He also studied the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and included the study of this esoteric sutra and its commentary, along with several *dhāraṇī* texts, as a component of his monastic training program. The next generation of Tendai scholiasts expanded on both Saichō and Kūkai's interpretations of esoteric Buddhism. In particular, Ennin wrote extensive commentaries on esoteric texts in which he combined Kūkai's doxographical category of esoteric texts with the classical Tiantai category of the singular-vehicle Mahāyāna sutras. Building on this new doxography, his disciple Annen devised an elaborate taxonomy that equated the esoteric teachings with the Tiantai perfect teachings. Shōshin's *Essay on the Two Schools*, written three centuries later, is a synopsis of esoteric Buddhist doctrine from the perspective of this "neglected tradition."

Since Weinstein published his critical review almost half a century ago, there has emerged a growing body of Japanese scholarship on Tendai esoteric Buddhism. The work of Misaki Ryōshū and Ōkubo Ryōshun, in particular, are indispensable not only for the study of Tendai, but early medieval Japanese Buddhism in general. However, in the anglophone scholarship on esoteric Buddhism, Kūkai and his attributed writings remain the primary topic of interest. I have included a translation of the *Essay on the Two Schools* in the dissertation to address this lacuna and as a response to Weinstein's plea for further study of Tendai perspectives on esoteric Buddhism. Furthermore, I believe that Shōshin's propensity for the rigorous evaluation of his sources and his direct style of argumentation in criticizing his rivals will be accessible and familiar to modern researchers. Although my translation is a work in progress, I nonetheless present Shōshin's essay as an example of esoteric Buddhist scholasticism par excellence.

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2. See Stanley Weinstein, Review of "Kūkai: Major Works, translated, with an Account of his Life and a Study of his Thought by Yoshito S. Hakeda," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 34/1 (1974):177-191.

The Legacy of Hōjibō Shōshin

Before discussing the content of the *Essay on the Two Schools*, a brief note on its author may illuminate some of his reasons for composing this work. Despite having produced an extensive body of writing and achieving a high rank within the monastic hierarchy, very little is known about Shōshin's life. His elite status may have shielded him from the social and political upheaval of late twelfth-century Japan. The Genpei Wars had ravaged the capital of Heiankyō as well as the former capital in Nara to the south. The monastic communities in these areas and the surrounding mountains were no mere bystanders to the destruction caused by the Taira and Minamoto armies. The Tendai monasteries on Mt. Hiei and neighboring Onjōji, as well as the Hossō center at Kōfukuji, chose sides and fought alongside the aristocratic and warrior clans, and, if we are to believe the tales recorded in the *Tale of the Heike* (*Heike monogatari* 平家物語), some of the most fierce combat was perpetrated by militant monks. These stories may have been exaggerated over time, but the fact that the Buddhist monasteries were involved in the conflict cannot be denied.

With these military and political conflicts came shifts in Buddhist ideology as well. The Tendai school, which had dominated the institutional and intellectual landscape for centuries, was challenged both internally and externally. From within the Tendai tradition, figures such as Yōsai 榮西 (1141–1215) and Hōnen 法然 (1133–1212) broke away from Tendai orthodoxy to establish new institutions. From without, Shingon monastic centers, which had recently gained a foothold on the performance of rituals for the imperial household, began to differentiate their doctrines from the Tendai school. The Ninnaji monks Saisen 濟暹 (1025–1115) and Kakuban 覺鑊 (1095–1143), for example, promoted the writings of Kūkai as the orthodox model of the esoteric Buddhist school. Prior to these efforts, treatises on esoteric Buddhist doctrine were primarily the domain of Tendai scholiasts. However, by the twelfth century, the Shingon and Tendai schools became not only distinct institutions, but competing intellectual traditions as well.

During this transformative period in Japanese Buddhism, Hōjibō Shōshin, the eventual head of monastic training on Mt. Hiei, remained a staunch advocate of classical Tiantai Buddhism. He managed to avoid the chaos of the Genpei Wars by confining himself to a temple on Mt. Hiei, where, according to his biography in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks in Japan* (*Honchō kōsō den* 本朝高僧傳), he was oblivious to the carnage taking place only a short distance down the mountain. The biography also claims that, during this sixteen years of

### Introduction to the Translation

isolation, Shōshin focused solely on the study of the Buddhist canon, which later led to his promotion as lecturer in the Eastern Pagoda cloister of temples on Mt. Hiei and finally the establishment of his own temple Hōjibō.<sup>3</sup>

This brief account of Shōshin's life lacks specifics regarding his origins, and, considering it was recorded several centuries after his death, the historical accuracy of the biography is doubtful. Unfortunately, there are no extant biographies of Shōshin predating to the *Biographies of Eminent Monks in Japan*. In his compilation of Shōshin's notes from debate sessions on Tendai doctrine, Jihon 慈本 (active 1830) notes that Shōshin may have been the son of Taira no Noritsune 平教經, a general in the Taira clan and reoccurring character in the *Tale of Heike*. However, Noritsune was born around 1160, making it chronologically impossible for him to be Shōshin's father.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Jihon notes that the connection between Shōshin and the Taira was based on "various stories from elders" (老人雜話), suggesting that he was also skeptical of this link to the Taira clan. It is possible that such tales stemmed from the same speculation regarding Shōshin's life as the passage in the biography claiming that he spent the Genpei Wars in seclusion. Recorded several centuries later, the account of Shōshin's seclusion and alleged innocence with respect to the political and military events of the time was undoubtedly an exaggeration meant to emphasize his aptitude for textual study and scholastic rigor.<sup>5</sup> It nonetheless provides us with an image of Shōshin as the ideal scholiast, which is how he has been remembered in the history of Japanese Buddhism.

Although his biography does not hint at a possible date of birth or provide details regarding his early life, there is sufficient documentation to outline the development of Shōshin's career and his rise through the Tendai hierarchy. The earliest appearance of Shōshin's name is found in the introductory remarks to a mid-year session of the Kōgaku ryūgi (廣學豎義), the

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3. Jacqueline Stone mentions Shōshin's biography and his activities during the Genpei Wars. See Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 224. Satō Tetsuei discusses Shōshin's biography in greater detail. See Satō Tetsuei 佐藤哲英, Kōdera Bun'ei 小寺文顯, et. al., "Hōjibō shōshin no kyōdō kenkyū" 宝地房証真の共同研究, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 18.2 (1970):749-768. For the original biography, see the *Honchō kōsō den* 本朝高僧傳, fas. 13, *DNBZ* 102.209a-210a.
  4. Jihon appended this note regarding candidates for Shōshin's father to an excerpt from a *ryūgi* session. The passage is published in the second fascicle of the sixth volume the *Tendai kahyō* 天台霞標. See *DNBZ* 126.694b (180). I could find no other references to Shōshin's family or account of his life prior to ordination. Most dictionaries do not include a date of birth for Noritsune, but Stephen Turnbull provides a birth date of 1160 in *The Samurai Sourcebook* (London: Cassell, 2000), 81. He also notes that Noritsune drowned at Dan no Ura in one of the final battles of the Genpei Wars in 1185.
  5. Stone also discusses the claim in the biography regarding Shōshin's activities during the Genpei Wars in a footnote. See Stone 1999, 427n99.

### Introduction to the Translation

doctrinal debate system in Tendai.<sup>6</sup> According to this document, recorded by the renowned preacher and ritualist Chōken 澄憲 (1126–1203) in 1153, Shōshin joined the debate as a candidate (立者).<sup>7</sup> Considering this position was typically reserved for advanced monks, we can surmise that Shōshin must have already been active in the Tendai hierarchy well before the 1153 session.<sup>8</sup> Shōshin also seems to have been in attendance for the Ōhara debate of 1186. Held at Shōrinji in the area of Ōhara to the north of Mt. Hiei, the topic of the debate was whether or not *nenbutsu* recitation alone was a sufficient course of Buddhist practice. Hōnen famously argued that recitation of the *nenbutsu* allows the practitioner to be reborn in Amitābha's pure land, where one can adequately perfect more advanced practices. The opposition to Hōnen's system of *nenbutsu* was led by the future abbot of Mt. Hiei Kenshin 顯眞 (1131–1192). Shōshin is reported to have attended the debate, although his position and participation in these events are unclear.<sup>9</sup>

Subsequent dates for Shōshin are documented in his earliest writings. In 1161, he produced an abbreviated commentary on the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*Dazhidulun* 大智度論, *Taishō* 55, no. 1509). These works were followed in 1177 by sub-commentaries on the *Commentary on the Avalokiteśvara Sūtra* (*Guanyin jingshu* 觀音經疏, *Taishō* 39, no. 1800) and *Commentary on the Passages from the Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (*Weimo jing wenshu* 維摩經文疏, *ZZK*, 27-28), both attributed to Zhiyi. In the preface to the *Essay on the Two Schools*, Shōshin notes that he completed this work in the twelfth month of 1188. The following year he was appointed judge (探題職) of Kōgaku ryūgi and recorded many of these debates in the *Kōgaku ryūgi tandai hyōbaku* 廣學豎義探題表白.<sup>10</sup> According to his own account in the postscript to the *Personal Notes on the Three Major Works of Tendai*, Shōshin began

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6. The Kōgaku ryūgi was established by Ryōgen in 967 as an alternative debate forum to the Yuimae, which had been dominated by the Hossō school. The forum was designed to test the novice's knowledge of Tendai doctrine, but also institute a basic curriculum of Buddhist thought. See Paul Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 139-141.
  7. Chōken's document, the *Rokugatsu e ryūgi daisha hyōbaku* 六月會立義題者表白, is published in a collection of Tendai writings, the second fascicle of the sixth volume in the *Tendai kahyō* 天台霞標. See *DNBZ* 126.690a-b (176).
  8. Satō Tetsuei argues that it would have been unprecedented for a monk under the age of twenty-five to serve in this position, suggesting that Shōshin must have been born no later than 1129. See Satō 1970, 750.
  9. Shōshin is depicted as an attendee of the Ōhara debates in the fifth fascicle of the *Illustrated Biography of Hōnen Shōnin* (*Hōnen shōnin gyōjō ezū* 法然上人行狀畫圖). He is listed as a participant in an early biography of Hōnen, the *Kurotani genkū shōshin den* 黒谷源空上人傳, which simply states that he was one of the last to enter the lecture hall. See *ZGRJ* 216.13.
  10. Shōshin's commentary on the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, the *Daichidoron ryakushō* 大智度論略抄, is extant but unpublished. His essays on the *Guanyin jingshu*, the *Kannongen ryakushō* 觀音玄略抄 and *Kannonsho ryakushō* 觀音疏略抄, can be found in *DNBZ* 24. Also, his notes on Zhiyi's *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* commentaries, the *Yuima gen ryakushō* 維摩玄略抄 and *Yuima sho shiki* 維摩疏私記, are available in *NDZ* 7. His writings from the 1190 session of Kōgaku ryūgi can be found in the third fascicle of the second volume of *Tendai kahyō*. See *DNBZ* 125.214a-b (214).

### Introduction to the Translation

compiling his magnum opus in the mid 1160's. In this note, he also explains why it took him so long to complete, stating that he was initially skeptical of his own interpretation of Chinese Tiantai writings and abandoned the project several times. He revived his efforts after Zhiyi appeared in a dream and encouraged him to propagate the Tiantai doctrine. After subsequent nocturnal visits from the Tiantai patriarch, as well as a tepid approval from Zhanran to correct errors and inconsistencies in his writings, Shōshin finally distributed his thirty-fascicle tome in 1207.<sup>11</sup>

In 1192, Jien 慈圓 (1155–1225), the author of the *Gukanshō* 愚管抄 and younger brother of the regent Fujiwara no Kanezane 藤原兼實 (1149–1207), was appointed abbot of Mt. Hiei. Shortly thereafter, he instituted the *kangaku* lecture series (勸學講) at Mudōji and invited Shōshin to lecture on the *Vimalakīrti* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtras* along with their various commentaries. Seven years later Shōshin again led the series, lecturing on the writings of the Tiantai patriarchs. From 1207, he included the writings of Saichō among his lecture topics as well as treatises such as the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*, and the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*.<sup>12</sup>

Shōshin's close relationship with Jien undoubtedly advanced his position in the monastic hierarchy. By 1203, he attained the honorary rank of supernumerary lesser bishop (權小僧都). This period also provided him with the economic resources to devote himself to his writing. In his overview of Shōshin's biography, Satō Tetsuei suggests that the relationship between the two elite monks was mutually beneficial, noting that Shōshin's leadership of the *kangaku* lectures led to a revival of Tendai studies and an increase in the number of new initiates. In exchange, Jien awarded him estates in the northern province of Echizen for his accomplishments.<sup>13</sup> The final record documenting Shōshin's activities confirms the close relationship between the two monks. According to the *Record of Tendai Abbots* (*Tendai zasu ki* 天台座主記), Shōshin was summoned along with Jien to the imperial palace on the sixth month of 1214. Although his exact dates are unknown, based on the earliest records of his activities he would have been at least eighty years old at this time.<sup>14</sup>

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11. See *DNBZ* 22.1138b-1141a.

12. See Satō 1970, 751. The study of these and other basic Buddhist treatises was also a component of the *Kōgaku ryūgi* system.

13. Satō does not provide sources for the claim that Shōshin was awarded estates in Echizen. See Satō 1970, 752.

14. According to Satō 1970, 751, Shōshin's participation in this ceremony is recorded in the Shōren'in version of the *Tendai zasu ki* 天台座主記. However, I could not find such a record in the published version of the text.

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Shōshin's Doctrinal Studies and the *Essay on the Two Schools*

A central theme throughout Shōshin's writing is the revaluation and definition of taxonomies of teaching (教相判釋). By creating taxonomies, scholastics were attempting to position the doctrines of their own school as superior while simultaneously accounting for competing interpretations within a single, all-encompassing system. Tiantai and Huayan, in particular, considered their schools to constitute the complete, or "perfect," form of the buddha dharma. In this sense, taxonomies are dogmatic assertions of orthodoxy. However, they are by no means invariable. Taxonomies are always posed in response to opposing interpretations. For instance, Zhanran elaborated on the meaning and scope of the perfect teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* in opposition to the Huayan interpretation of the perfect teachings. Saichō argued for the validity of the Tendai doctrinal system in response to criticism from Hossō school. Likewise, Annen advocated for the the unification of the perfect and esoteric teachings (圓密一致) in contrast to Kūkai's taxonomy that asserted the esoteric teachings of his Shingon school to be superior to the *Lotus Sūtra* and other Mahāyāna scriptures, which he similarly proposed as an alternative to the taxonomical models of other schools. This polemical background to the development of Buddhist thought in Japan was the basis for Shōshin's exegetical writings on Tendai doctrine.

The shifts in the intellectual landscape of the late twelfth century may have motivated Shōshin to focus his writings primarily on the doctrinal writings of Tiantai patriarchs. In contrast to his contemporaries, such as Yōsai, Hōnen, and the so-called Eshin and Danna lineages, Shōshin's scholastic efforts were quite conservative. Approximately three dozen works have been attributed to Shōshin, most of which are sub-commentaries on the writings of Zhiyi and Zhanran.<sup>15</sup> In these works, he sought to explain away inconsistencies in the writings of the Tiantai patriarchs and defend the Tiantai notion of the perfect teaching against criticism from other Chinese scholastics such as Jizang 吉藏 (549–623) and Fazang 法藏 (643–712). His dogmatic views on the correct interpretation of Tiantai/Tendai doctrine are the driving force behind his lengthy exegesis in a three-part *Personal Notes on the Three Major Works of Tendai*. Although this work is clearly a sub-commentary on the three major treatises attributed to Zhiyi,

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15. Satō lists these works in 1970, 752. Also, see BKJ, index, 326.



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*Fahua xuanyi* 法華玄義, *Fahua wenju* 法華文句, and *Mohezhiquan* 摩訶止觀, it was also Shōshin's attempt to critically compare different models of doctrinal taxonomies to determine the orthodox Tendai position.<sup>16</sup>

The scant body of scholarship available on Shōshin and his studies of Tendai doctrine tends to focus on his reaction to original awakening thought (本覺思想). Tamura Yoshirō was perhaps the first scholar to claim that Shōshin was an early opponent of the "original awakening" doctrine of the so-called Eshin and Danna lineages. According to Tamura, Shōshin was critical of the proposition advocated in these lineages that sentient beings are inherently enlightened. Rather, he insisted that all beings must properly cultivate the bodhisattva path before achieving buddhahood.<sup>17</sup>

There are a couple of reasons to be skeptical of Tamura's claim. First, he cites a single passage from the seventh fascicle of Shōshin's exegesis of Zhiyi's *Fahua xuanyi*, which is the first of the three divisions of his *Personal Notes on the Three Major Works of Tendai*. Without considering the context of the passage, Tamura merely assumes that Shōshin dismissed original awakening thought as heterodox to Tendai doctrine. However, this was not the case. Rather than refuting this concept, Shōshin clarifies the meaning of "original awakening" (本覺) in contrast to the usage of the term "initial awakening" (始覺) in the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*, a source for much of the debate regarding this concept in medieval Japanese Buddhism.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, this passage is just a small excerpt from Shōshin's broader discussion of bodies of the buddha, particularly the correlation between the buddhas Mahāvairocana and Śākyamuni. Shōshin notes that "original awakening" also denotes the buddha who actually achieved awakening long ago (久遠實成). In the *Lotus Sūtra*, this buddha is called Śākyamuni. However, according to the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, Mahāvairocana is the name of the buddha that

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16. For a study of Shōshin's views on taxonomies of teachings, see Matsumoto Tomomi 松本知己, "Hōjibō shōshin no kyōhan ron" 宝地房証真の教判論, *Nihon bukkyō sōgō kenkyū* 日本仏教総合研究 10 (2012):23-43.

17. See Tamura Yoshirō 田村芳朗, "Tendai hongaku shisō gaisetsu" 天台本覺思想概説, in *Tendai hongaku ron* 天台本覺論, edited by Tada Kōryū 多田厚隆 and Okubo Ryōjun 大久保良順 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 545-546. In his biography of Shōshin, Satō Tetsuei claims that Shōshin studied in Eshin and Danna lineages, but I can find no evidence to support this. See Satō 1970, 749. For the original passage, see *DNBZ* 21.286-287.

18. In her study of original awakening thought, Jacqueline Stone agrees with Tamura's claim that Shōshin rejected this concept, but suggests that he did so due to the influence of esoteric Buddhism. See Stone 1999, 38-39.

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originally achieved awakening on his own accord in the beginningless past. Shōshin is critical of claims that these names refer to two distinct buddhas, rather than merely two names for the "originally awakened" buddha.<sup>19</sup>

The *Essay on the Two Schools* is an auxiliary work to the *Personal Notes on the Three Major Works of Tendai*. In this brief essay, Shōshin further elaborates on his interpretation of original awakening in the context of the long-ago awakened buddha, arguing that any knowledge of the awakening of the buddha is inaccessible to all non-buddhas. Thus, it is called "secret." Furthermore, any teaching regarding this secret is called an "esoteric teaching." Shōshin viewed the esoteric teachings from a classical Tiantai perspective revised to account for sutras and treatises that had been translated into Chinese subsequent to the exegetical writings of Zhiyi and Zhanran. Based on the writings of Ennin and Annen, he argued that so-called esoteric sutras (i.e. the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, and their commentaries and ritual manuals) should be interpreted within the framework of Tiantai doctrine and scriptural hermeneutics, rather than constituting a separate school of teachings.

In the preface to the essay, Shōshin explicitly states that he wrote it at the request of his fellow Mt. Hiei clerics to explain the meaning of the esoteric teachings. This was necessary, he notes, because monks in the Tendai school had come under the impression that only the Shingon school properly explained the esoteric teachings. Therefore, he offered this essay as a corrective to this mistaken view. This statement has led scholars to speculate on possible addressees of the essay. Some have suggested members of the Eshin and Danna lineages, while others have named Tendai dissidents such as Yōsai or Hōnen as possible targets.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, the content of the essay makes clear that Shōshin's criticism was primarily directed at the *Treatise Distinguishing the Two Teachings of the Exoteric and Esoteric* (*Ben kenmitsu nikyō ron* 辨顯密二教論).

Although the title of the *Essay on the Two Schools* suggests it is a comparison of the Tendai and Shingon schools, Shōshin's objective is actually to demonstrate that they both maintain the same interpretation of the esoteric teachings. According to Shōshin, the notion that Tendai and Shingon were different schools of esoteric Buddhism was a misconception propagated by polemical works such as the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, which claimed that

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19. See *DNBZ* 21.285-286. For detailed discussions of this passage, see Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, "Tendai hongaku ron—Shōshin setsu ni chakumoku shite" 天台本覚論—証真説を着目して, in *Shūkyō to hyōshō* 宗教と表象, *Inseiki bunka ronshū* 院政期文化, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Shinwasha, 2004), 37-54, and Miura Kazuhiro 三浦和浩, "Tendai shingon nishū dōi shō ni okeru Shōshin no hongaku rikai" 『天台真言二宗同異章』における証真の「本覚」理解, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 55/2 (2007):679-682.

20. For instance, Ōkubo Ryōjun suggests any of these individuals or unorthodox groups may have been the target of Shōshin's preface. See Ōkubo Ryōjun 大久保良順, "Tendai kuden hōmon to mikkyō" 天台口伝法門と密教, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 18/1 (1969):1-7. Kōdera Bun'e'i also notes Yōsai as a possibility along with the Shingon monk Kakuban. See Kōdera Bun'e'i 小寺文穎, "Hōjibō shōshin no mikkyō kan—Tendai shingon nishū dōi shō wo chūshin ni—" 寶地房證眞の密教觀—天台真言二宗同異章を中心に—, *Tendai gakuho* 12, (1969):95.

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only the Shingon school was the heir to a superior form of the buddha dharma. Such assertions stemmed from Kūkai's taxonomy of teachings in which he ranked Tendai and other Mahāyāna schools below the Shingon school due to their inability to account for the esoteric teachings of the buddha in their doctrinal systems. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* further emphasized this division between the Shingon school and the Tendai school by asserting that the singular-vehicle of the Mahāyāna was an inferior teaching in the same manner that Hīnayāna was inferior to Mahāyāna. In his *Essay on the Two Schools*, Shōshin categorically rejects such claims, dismissing the polemics of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* as a misunderstanding of Mahāyāna sutras and Chinese exegetical works. By thoroughly examining these sources and the exegetical tradition surrounding the esoteric teachings in the Tiantai/Tendai school, Shōshin attempts to expose the shortcomings of Kūkai's taxonomy and the poor scholasticism of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*.

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### Summary of the *Essay on the Two Schools*

Shōshin organizes his argument for the cohesion of Tendai and Shingon interpretations of esoteric Buddhist doctrine into two parts. The first part enumerates passages from authoritative sources that support his claim, while the second part refutes the misconception that only the Shingon school clarifies the meaning of the esoteric teachings. He further divides each part into four sections under the rubrics of "teaching" (教), "practice" (行), "person" (人), and "principle" (理).<sup>21</sup>

Although this paradigm is based on Zhiyi's *Fahua xuanyi*, Shōshin appears to have interpreted these categories through the lens of Annen's taxonomy in the *Interpretation of the Teachings and Time Periods in the Mantra School* (*Shingonshū kyōjigi* 眞言宗教時義). This four-fascicle work is structured according to a four-part taxonomy of "all buddhas" (一佛), "all time periods" (一時), "all locations" (一處), and "all teachings" (一教). Within each of these categories, Annen incorporated all known taxonomies, thus creating a taxonomy of taxonomies. In other words, by combining all of the various schematics for explaining the bodies of the buddha, Annen devised a supra-category of "all buddhas." He treated each of these essential components of the preaching of the buddha in a similar fashion, ultimately concluding that the esoteric teachings of the Shingon school constitute the sum of all teachings in all locations

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21. Paul Swanson briefly discusses this paradigm from the *Fahua xuanyi*. See Paul L. Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-t'ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 127.

during all possible time periods by all buddhas.<sup>22</sup> In the *Essay on the Two Schools*, Shōshin combines the traditional rubric from Zhiyi's *Fahua xuanyi* with Annen's definition of the esoteric teachings in the Shingon school to assert that the perfect teachings in the Tendai school likewise account for the totality of the buddha dharma.

In the first section, Shōshin outlines the seven primary sources he uses throughout the remainder of the essay. I discuss the details of these references in the notes to the translation, but a couple of works are worth noting here. Yixing's 一行 (683–727) commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* was undoubtedly the most important canonical work for esoteric Buddhist doctrine. It features prominently in the essay as well as the writings of Ennin and Annen. Since the mid-ninth century, two versions of Yixing's commentary have circulated in Japan. The twenty-fascicle version published in the *Taishō* canon is often associated with Kūkai and his Shingon school, although a manuscript of this version had previously been imported to Japan earlier in the eighth century. The fourteen-fascicle version, commonly called the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, was brought to Japan by Ennin in 847 and became the preferred version of Tendai scholiasts. For the most part, the two versions of the commentary are identical except for the parsing of the chapters and fascicles. However, the fourteen-fascicle version includes several passages comparing the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* with the *Lotus Sūtra* that are not found in the earlier version. These passages are the canonical basis of Shōshin's claim that the two sutras propagate the same esoteric teaching.

Another textual source central to Shōshin's argument is a sub-commentary to Yixing's commentary attributed to the Liao Buddhist exegete Jueyuan 覺苑 (active late eleventh century). Imported to Japan in the late eleventh century, Jueyuan's sub-commentary was often quoted by both Tendai and Shingon scholastics, despite that fact that Jueyuan was not included in either of their lineages. Although Jueyuan's interpretation of mantra practice was influenced by Huayan doctrine rather than Tiantai, Shōshin cites his equation of the esoteric teaching of mantra and the perfect teaching in his defense for a unified perfect-esoteric teaching. Shōshin seems to have been under the impression that Jueyuan was a direct disciple of Śubhakarasiṃha (637–735) along with Yixing. Because Jueyuan was a fellow disciple of the translator of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, Shōshin deemed his sub-commentary to be more authoritative than later Japanese exegetical works concerning this sutra.

In the section labelled "practice," Shōshin argues that both schools stress the same methods of contemplation (觀). Citing Yixing's commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* as a source text, he notes that the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and the *Lotus Sūtra* both preach the contemplation of the emptiness of all dharmas as the primary method for cultivating

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22. See *Taishō* 75.374a16-18. For studies of Annen's taxonomy, see Misaki Ryoshū 三崎良周, *Taimitsu no riron to jissen* 台密の理論と実践 (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1994), 78-81 and Sueki Fumihiko 末本文美士, *Heian shoki bukkyō shisō no kenkyū—Annen no shisō keisei o chūshin toshite* 平安初期仏教思想の研究—安然の思想形成を中心として (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1995), 219-227.

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buddhahood. Although the Shingon school promotes the contemplation of the A-syllable as a form of contemplation practice, Shōshin explains the A-syllable as simply a metaphor for the emptiness of all dharmas. As the first of forty-two syllables constituting the Siddham alphabet, the A-syllable is the source of all utterances. However, it is also an a-privative, thus negating the meaning of any term to which it is affixed. Therefore, to contemplate the A-syllable simply means to concentrate one's mind on the rising and ceasing of all dharmas. Shōshin also equates the recitation of mantra with the Tendai practice of contemplating the middle way. Mantra, and incantations in general, are merely a skillful means for concentrating the mind. Quoting Jueyuan, he asserts that the objective of chanting is not the words themselves, but to realize the ultimate truth of the middle way invoked by these provisional utterances.

The category of "person" actually refers to the buddha as the preacher of the esoteric teachings. In this section, it is clear that Shōshin has conflated Zhiyi's category of "person" in the *Fahua xuanyi* and Annen's "all buddhas" in the *Interpretation of Teachings*. He argues that the buddhas who preach the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and the *Lotus Sūtra* are ultimately the same buddha by different names. Shōshin lists several sources that reiterate this point. Perhaps the most succinct is a line from Ennin's commentary on the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* in which Ennin purports to quote his master as saying Mahāvairocana and Śākyamuni of the *Lotus Sūtra* are the same buddha. Shōshin then claims these two names simultaneously denote the body of the buddha that awoke long ago, as stated in the *Lotus Sūtra*, and pervades all locations and times, which refers to the buddha in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. He concludes that the preacher of both sutras is ultimately the dharma body of the buddha.

In the final section, Shōshin declares that the "principle" of both schools is the middle way. By principle, he simply means the underlying foundation of the teachings. Therefore, the aim of contemplation practice is to realize the middle way, but it is also the middle way that legitimizes such practice. He equates this ineffable middle way with other vague terms such as the "singular-vehicle," "suchness," "the true characteristics of the buddha," and "buddha-nature." Shōshin argues that if the Shingon school claims to promote an esoteric teaching superior to the middle way, then it must also explain how this teaching is superior to these concepts. Because such concepts are all-encompassing, this is impossible. Therefore, the Shingon school must also be premised on the middle way.

In the second part of the essay, Shōshin employs the same four-part structure, but presents refutations of the "other tradition" in questions and responses rather than quotations from canonical sources. Some scholars have suggested that this half of the essay may have implicitly been a slight toward esoteric Buddhism in general, but it is clear from the content that Shōshin's primary target is the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* and Kūkai's taxonomy.<sup>23</sup> In the first

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23. Misaki suggests that Shōshin may have been implicitly criticizing Annen or *taimitsu*, but he also notes that the *Essay on the Two Schools* was primarily directed toward Kūkai. See Misaki 1994, 84.

section, he paraphrases Annen's five-part criticism of Kūkai's taxonomy. The gist of this critique is that Kūkai misunderstood Yixing's commentary when devising his ten-part taxonomy and should have included the Tendai and Kegon schools in the highest stage. Yixing equated the esoteric teachings with the singular-vehicle of Mahāyāna, therefore Annen dismissed Kūkai's taxonomy as flawed. Shōshin adds the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* to this critique. The *Treatise* claims that the esoteric teachings are expounded by the dharma body of the buddha, whereas the exoteric teachings of the *Lotus Sūtra* are preached by the reward body of the buddha. Shōshin rejects this claim for its distorted interpretation of buddha-body theory in Tendai. He explains that Śākyamuni preached the *Lotus Sūtra* on Vulture Peak in the form of a human body. However, from the perspective of the perfect teachings, all teachings of the buddha are ultimately expounded by the dharma body, and, therefore, the *Lotus Sūtra* was preached by the dharma body of the buddha. According to Shōshin, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* failed to explain that the purport of the esoteric and perfect teachings are the same.

The section on practice focuses on two issues. The first concerns a line in the *Treatise on Giving Rise to Anuttarā-samyak-sambodhicitta through the Vajraśekhara Yoga (Jingangding yujia zhong fa anouduoluo sanmiaosanputi xin lun 金剛頂瑜伽中發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心論*, hereafter *Treatise on Bodhicitta*) claiming that a practitioner can only become a buddha in the current lifetime through mantra practice. This text, traditionally attributed to Nāgārjuna, was pivotal for both Kūkai's view of buddhahood and central to the role of mantra practice in the Shingon school. Furthermore, Annen's second major work on esoteric Buddhist doctrine, the *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta*, was primarily a commentary on this text. However, Shōshin takes issue with the interpretation of a specific line in this treatise stating that *only* mantra practice is essential for achieving immediate buddhahood. He argues that the grammar of the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* is misleading and the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* misreads the character 唯 to mean "only," as in the term "consciousness-only" (唯識). However, as Shōshin explains, this character can also simply be used as the relative pronoun "this" or "these." Therefore, he claims that this line should be interpreted to mean that the recitation of mantra is one of many practices through which the practitioner can attain buddhahood; it is not the *only* method.

The second issue regarding practice concerns to utility of images and objects in contemplation and ritual practices. Specifically, Shōshin mentions the *goma* rite (護摩) in which a fire is ritually constructed to metaphorically burn away the afflictions and purify the minds of the patron and participants. Shōshin notes that preliminary rites outlined in sources such as the *Mohezhi guan* serve the same function. Furthermore, Shōshin suggests that Shingon practices utilizing images, such as mandala or lunar discs, were designed for practitioners with dull faculties. These images are merely skillful means that assist the novice in focusing his mind. They do not have merit in and of themselves. The more advanced practitioner cultivates the

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Tendai practice of discerning one's own mind (觀心), which does not rely on external objects. Shōshin concludes that the practice of discerning one's own mind produces the same result of becoming a buddha in the current lifetime referenced in the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*.

In the section on bodies of the buddha in part two of the essay, Shōshin addresses the notion of the three secret activities (三密). This concept is often presented as Kūkai's innovation, but it is actually quite common in East Asian Buddhism. The earliest text to discuss this concept is the *Miji jingang lishi hui* 密迹金剛力士會, translated by Dharmarakṣa in the late third century, but it is also ubiquitous in the writings of Chinese exegetes such as Zhanran.<sup>24</sup> The three secrets are simply the buddha counterpart to the three activities (三業) of sentient beings. Chinese and Japanese exegetes presumed that in order for buddhas to respond to the needs of sentient beings, they must possess the same capacity for speech, thought, and movement. However, unlike sentient beings, whose three karmic activities are impure and produce negative karma, the activities of buddhas are pure and only result in positive effects. Because sentient beings are impure and ignorant, they cannot fully comprehend the activities of the buddha. Thus, these activities are called "secret."

The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* claims that three secret activities in the Shingon school signify the body, speech, and mind of the dharma body of the buddha. Therefore, the esoteric teachings of Kūkai's Shingon school are superior to all other teachings. However, as Shōshin points out, the three secret activities do not directly reveal the body, speech, and mind of the dharma body. Rather, they signify the means through which the body of the dharma is transmitted, namely, the multifarious bodies of the buddha and his teachings. Perceiving the dharma as it is, without being interpreted through skillful means, is tantamount to becoming a buddha. Shōshin argues that Tendai takes into consideration the fact that sentient beings have varying degrees of capabilities for realizing such a profound truth, and, therefore, the claim that the dharma body directly preaches the dharma has no practical value. Shōshin reminds his interlocutor that in Tendai buddha-body theory, as with all orthodox views of the buddha, the differences between buddhas is merely cosmetic. Essentially, they are all of the same buddha, and the essence, or suchness, that makes them a buddha is that they all expound the dharma. In their capacity as preachers of the dharma, all bodies of the buddha are the dharma body of the buddha. To claim that one body is superior to another is to assume there are teachings or phenomena that exist outside of the body of the dharma, which is a patently heterodox view.

In the final section, Shōshin notes that both Saichō and Kūkai transmitted the esoteric teachings. The main difference between their interpretations of the esoteric teachings is not the purport of the teaching. Rather, Saichō studied esoteric teachings and practices in tandem with

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24. The *Miji jingang lishi hui* 密迹金剛力士會 is published as the eighth fascicle of the *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra in Taishō* 11, no. 310. For a study of the Tiantai usage of this concept, see Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良, *Taimitsu kyōgaku no kenkyū* 台密教学の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2004), 64-71.

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the Tendai perfect teachings and *shikan* practice. Kūkai, on the other hand, had no training in Tendai, which is why he did not include Tendai in the ultimate stage of his taxonomy. Ultimately, of course, the principle of their traditions is the same. They merely expressed this principle in different terms.

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The following translation of the *Essay on the Two Schools* is from the edition published in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, vol. 74, no. 2372, pp. 417a7-423b10. The *Taishō* publication is based on a manuscript held at Ōtani University dated to 1848 (弘化 5). An extant manuscript dating to 1697 (元錄 10) is held at Ryūkoku. The oldest known manuscript dating to 1238 (嘉禎 4) is unpublished and currently held at Kanazawa Bunko. I have also consulted Tajima Tokuon's Japanese rendering (*kundoku*) of the text published in *Kokuyaku issai kyō wakan senjutsu bu* 國譯一切經和漢撰述部, vol. 18, pp. 215-238 as well as a revised and expanded study in Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, *Tendai kyōgaku to hongaku shisō* 天台教学と本覚思想 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1998), 269-352. All translations are my own unless noted.



## *Essay on the Similarities and Differences between the Two Schools of Tendai and Shingon*

### Preface

**417a7-a18:**二宗同異者兩家爭論也。高野和上云一乘宗劣。叡山大師判二教義齊。他家意趣如十住心等。山門義勢如教時義等。學者各把掌中立破皆明眼前。山家門人誰敢違者。而今天台末學之中、或云、法華宗猶不及祕教云云。此乃不知宗源、不辨文理者也。今爲斷後輩之迷執、重鈔集先德之所述。文治四年冬十二月、叡山沙門證眞、因同朋勸、聊以草之。將明此義、略開二門、一立文理、二遮外難。

The similarities and differences between the two schools constitute a dispute between two lineages. The master of Mt. Kōya {Kūkai} contended that the tenets of the singular-vehicle are inferior.<sup>1</sup> The great master of Mt. Hiei {Saichō} determined the meaning of these two teachings to be equal. The viewpoint of the other tradition is advanced in such taxonomies as the ten-abiding minds, etc. The interpretation of the mountain teachings {i.e. Tendai} is defended in works such as the *Interpretation of Teachings*, etc.<sup>2</sup> Students [of these schools] grasp in their palms the very propositions and refutations that, before their own eyes, clarify these positions. Who in the mountain school dare to deviate from them? However, recently some Tendai

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1. The singular, or one vehicle (一乘), denotes the doctrine that all teachings progress toward buddhahood. See RB 34. The terms is also used to refer to the Tendai and Kegon schools. In his taxonomical writings, Kūkai insinuates that the Tendai and Kegon schools are inferior to Shingon by ranking them lower in his ten-stage taxonomy. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, however, explicitly asserts that the singular-vehicle is not esoteric and, therefore, inferior.
  2. Shōshin is referring Kūkai's taxonomy of teachings in the *Ten Stages of the Abiding Minds in the Secret Maṇḍala* (*Himitsu mandara jūjūshin ron* 祕密曼荼羅十住心論, or *Ten Abiding Minds*) and *Key to the Secret Treasury* (*Hizō hōyaku* 秘藏寶鑰). See *Taishō* 74, no. 2425 and 2426, or TKDZ 2 and 3.21-175. The second reference is to Annen's compendia on esoteric Buddhist doctrine, the *Interpretation of Teachings and Time Periods in the Mantra School* (*Shingonshū kyōji gi* 眞言宗教時義, also called the *Kyōjimonō* 教時問答) and the *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta* (*Taijō kongō bodaishingi ryaku mondō shō* 胎藏金剛菩提心義略問答抄), published in *Taishō* 75, no. and 2396 and 2397, respectively.

Annotated Translation: Preface

scholastics say that the tenets of the *Lotus Sūtra* fail to match the esoteric teachings. They, therefore, do not know the foundation of this school, and do not understand the principle meaning of the texts. Now, in order to prevent mistakes among later generations, I have compiled selections from writings by masters from the past.

In the twelfth month of the fourth year of Bunji {1188}, I, the Hieizan monk Shōshin, have been encouraged by my colleagues to write on this issue. I shall clarify these doctrines and briefly discuss them in two parts. First, I establish the textual sources. Second, I refute arguments from the other [school].

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## Textual Sources

**417a18-a19:**初文理者、其意雖多、略寄四一。教行人理、二宗不別。

First, regarding the textual sources, although they have multiple meanings, I will briefly base this work on the unification of the four taxonomies. The two schools do not differ regarding teachings, practices, preacher and audience, and principle.

### (i) The Teachings are the Same in the Two Schools

**417a20-27:** 第一明教同者、略出七同。一者二宗同明一佛乘。故金剛頂經說三摩地法云、演說如來三密門金剛一乘甚深教。義釋第八云、諸佛說法原其旨趣不出四宗。所謂阿阿引暗惡也。阿字門故一切衆生本有佛知見性。如來以種種因緣、爲彼淨除眼膜、使開明故。法華第一句云、開佛知見使得清淨、即是淨菩提心也乃至以示悟入配下三字亦爾。

Section One: I clarify that the teachings are the same and briefly enumerate seven points of congruence. First, the two schools similarly explain the singular buddha-vehicle. Therefore, the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* preaches the method of *samādhi*, stating, "[Vairocana Buddha] preaches the gateway of the three secret activities of the tathāgata and the profound teaching of the vajra singular-vehicle."<sup>1</sup> The eighth fascicle of the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

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1. Although Shōshin claims to cite the *Jingangding jing* 金剛頂經, which is normally shorthand for the first chapter of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, this quotation is actually from the second line of Vajrabodhi's translation of the *Practice of the Vajraśekhara Yoga and the Samādhi Teaching of Vairocana (Jingangding jing yuqie xiuxi piluzhena sanmodi fa* 金剛頂經瑜伽修習毘盧遮那三摩地法), a short collection of mantra associated with the sutra. See *Taishō* 18.327a27:

歸命毘盧遮那佛身口意業遍虛空演說如來三密門金剛一乘甚深教。

*Namas*, Vairocana Buddha, whose actions of body, speech, and mind permeate empty space, preaches the gateway of the three secret activities of the tathāgata and the profound teaching of the vajra singular-vehicle.

Tendai is generally more cautious when referring to the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and its related manuals, but Kūkai and the later Shingon school tend to use the title 金剛頂經 to include not only the first chapter of this sutra but Chinese commentaries as well. However, in this passage Shōshin also uses the term to generally refer to a genre of texts rather than a specific sutra.

Annotated Translation: Textual Sources

Regarding the preaching of the buddhas, when one investigates their origin, their purport is none other than the four gateways.<sup>2</sup> These are called 'a', 'ā', 'am', and 'aḥ'. Thus, by means of<sup>3</sup> the method of the a-syllable, all sentient beings are originally endowed with the nature of the buddha's insight. The tathāgata, by means of various causes and conditions, removes their cataracts<sup>4</sup> and causes them to see. Thus, a verse in the first fascicle of the *Lotus Sūtra* states, "They open to the insight of the buddha and are able to be purified."<sup>5</sup> In other words, this is the pure awakened mind.<sup>6</sup>

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2. The *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra (Piluzhena chengfo shenpian jiachi jing yishi 毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經義釋)* uses the character 門 rather than 宗. My translation follows the original text rather than Shōshin's essay.
  3. The published version of the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* also includes 以.
  4. Morohashi defines the character 瞶 as "being cloudy-eyed," or "eyes that are not clear" (目不明). See number 23638 in MH 8:250a.
  5. This line is from Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra* in *Taishō* 9.7a24. The following sentence identifying this quote with the notion of the pure *bodhi* mind is Yixing's summation of the line. The phrase "pure *bodhi* mind" (淨菩提心), or "purely awakened mind," denotes the inherent endowment of a pure and awakened mind in all people. See RB 590. This term also refers to the bringing about of the awakened mind through mantra practice, and, in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* it is the first stage of the mantra practitioner. See *Taishō* 18.32b16-17:

應當爲弟子 而淨菩提心 護以不動尊 或用降三世。

For the sake of the disciple, the [ācārya] should purify his *bodhi* mind and protect him by means of Acalanātha or by using Trailokyavijaya."

For an alternative English translation of this passage, see Rolf Giebel, trans., *The Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Translation and Research, 2005), 129.

6. This quotation is from the eighth fascicle of the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. Shōshin is paraphrasing the original passage. See *ZTZm* 1:401a:謂十方三世一切諸佛各以無量無邊巧度門種種因緣譬喻言辭演說諸法今則統而論之原其旨趣不出四字門。所謂A阿A阿(引去)Am暗Ah 惡也。以A阿字門故一切衆生本有佛知見性。This passage includes Siddham scripts.

The *Taishō* version of Yixing's *Commentary* differs from this passage and does not mention the *Lotus Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 39.694c7-15: 次真言體。阿(上)阿(上引)暗噫。此四字義已說之。從是普遍等正覺(迴文也)心從是普遍。即時一切法界諸聲門。從正等覺[巾\*票]幟之音者。則從是真言四德。普遍一切如來之心。如從一字而生二字。二字生四字。四字生八。八生十六。如是展轉無窮。然最初字即同第二字。第二字亦即同第三。平等無差別也。此四字是此一部經中正宗體也。一切祕藏皆從此生。即是毘盧遮那佛心也。

([The commentary] continues to associate the three latter characters with signifying, awakening, and entering in the same manner.)<sup>7</sup>

**417a27-b10:** 第四云、成辨大事因緣、所謂開示悟入如來知見。故經中會意言之。又云、此中開示與法華義同。第二云、心續生之相諸佛大祕密。外道不能知。法華藥草喻品意在於此。第七云、經云、時釋迦牟尼佛入於寶處三昧、說自心及眷屬真言者、同法華經化城喻品。此中當廣說之。第三云、以一道成佛。如法華廣說。第四釋降三世云、持<sup>8</sup>五股印、首戴寶冠、而在風輪。即法華經諸有所作皆為佛知見意也。守護章云、貞觀以後、日照實又難陀流志金剛智善無畏不空般若等三藏所傳一乘正義、皆符天台義門。已上諸文並界抄。

The fourth fascicle [of the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*] states:

Generating the causes and conditions of awakening<sup>9</sup> is said to open, signify, awaken, and cause [sentient beings] to enter the insight of the tathāgata. Therefore, [the buddha] says this in the sutra to reconcile the various meanings of [the *abhiṣeka* rite].<sup>10</sup>

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7. This comment summarizes the next page of the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See ZTZm1:402. The four-character compound 開示悟入 is an abbreviation for the four goals of a buddha when preaching to sentient beings, namely, to open them to the teachings, display the teachings to them, cause them to realize the meaning of the teachings, and finally to assist them in entering the path toward buddhahood. The locus classicus for this concept is the second chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 9.7a23-27:

諸佛世尊欲令衆生開佛知見使得清淨故出現於世。欲示衆生佛之知見故出現於世。欲令衆生悟佛知見故出現於世。欲令衆生入佛知見道故出現於世。

The buddhas and honorable ones appear in this world to cause sentient beings to aspire toward purity and the wisdom and insight of the buddhas. He appears in this world to manifest the wisdom and insight of the buddhas to sentient beings. He appears in this world to cause sentient beings to attain the wisdom and insight of a buddha's enlightenment. He appears in this world in order to cause sentient beings to enter the path of the wisdom and insight of the buddha.

For an alternative translation of this passage, see Tsugunari Kubo and Akira Yuyama, trans., *The Lotus Sūtra* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Translation and Research, 2007), 30.

8. The *Taishō* edition of the text includes the character 時 instead of 持. I have corrected this error in the text above.
9. The phrase 成辨大事因緣 refers to the clarification of the causal conditions that bring about the manifestation of the buddha in the world and is synonymous with the phrase 一大事因緣. However, it can also simply denote the result of attaining buddhahood. See RB 716.
10. This quotation is from the fourth fascicle of the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See ZTZm1:127b. The *Taishō* version of the *Commentary* uses identical phrasing. See *Taishō* 39.627b16-17. In this line, Yixing addresses why the sutra lists the required actions of an *ācārya* when bestowing *abhiṣeka* on an initiate. His point is that the purport of the *abhiṣeka* rite preached in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* serves the same function as the 開示悟入 in the *Lotus Sūtra*.

Moreover, it states, "As for what it opens and signifies, this is the same doctrine as the *Lotus Sūtra*."<sup>11</sup>

The second fascicle states:

"The characteristics that continually arise in the mind are the great secret of the buddhas. Those of outside paths are unable to know this."<sup>12</sup> This is the purport of the "Medicinal Herbs Chapter" in the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>13</sup>

The seventh fascicle states:

The statement in the sutra, "At that time, Śākyamuni Buddha entered the *samādhi* of the place of jewels, preaching in his own mind as well as mantra to his retinue,"<sup>14</sup> is the same

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11. This passage is from the fifth fascicle of the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See ZTZm1:201b:諸佛所開示。此中開示即是佛之知見。與法華義同。The *Taishō* version is the same. See *Taishō* 39.657c18-19.
12. The locus classicus for the phrase 心續生之相 is the first chapter of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. In this *gāthā*, the Buddha praises Vajrapāṇi for his questions concerning *bodhicitta* and promises to reveal to him the method for arousing the awakened mind. See *Taishō* 18.2a7-14:

爾時執金剛祕密主。復以偈問佛。云何世尊說 此心菩提生 復以云何相 知發菩提心 願識心心勝 自然智生說 大勤勇幾何 次第心續生 心諸相與時 願佛廣開演 功德聚亦然 及彼行修行 心心有殊異 惟大牟尼說 如是說已。

At that time, the vajra-wielding Lord of Mysteries again questioned the buddha with a *gāthā*. "How, World Honored One, do you explain /This mind that arises from *bodhi*?/Moreover, by what characteristics./Is the *bodhi* mind revealed? /I ask that you explain the cognizant mind, the supreme mind./The arising of inherent wisdom./Greatly Diligent and Courageous One, in how many sequences will the mind continually arise./ And what are the characteristics and time period of these minds?/I ask the buddha to thoroughly expound/ The collection of merit, as well as/The practice of cultivation./ The mind, and the distinctions that the mind possesses./ I hope Great Muni that you explain [these things]."/In this way, he finished speaking.

13. This passage is from the second fascicle of the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See ZTZm1:46b:故云最上大乘句。心續生之相。諸佛大祕密。外道不能知。法華藥艸喻品意亦在於此也。The *Taishō* version is practically identical and also mentions the *Lotus Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 39.596a26-27.

In the fifth chapter of Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the buddha explains the diversity of the teachings in accordance with the capabilities of the practitioner through a metaphor of plants and trees. See *Taishō* 9.a27-b18.

14. This passage is from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 18.14c15-19:

時釋迦牟尼世尊。入於寶處三昧。說自心及眷屬真言。南麼三曼多勃馱喃一薩婆吃麗二合奢儻入素捺那二薩婆達摩嚩始多引鉢囉二合鉢多三伽伽娜三摩引三麼四莎訶五

Then the World-honored One Śākyamuni entered the *samādhi* "Place of Jewels" and uttered his own heart[-mantra] and the mantras of his attendants: *Namaḥ samantabuddhānām, sarva kleśaṇiṣūdana sarvadharmā vaśitāprāpta gaganasamāsama svāhā*. (Homage to all buddhas! O you who destroy all defilements! you who have won control over all dharmas! you who are equal to the sky and unequaled! *svāhā!*). Giebel 2005, 61.

as the "Conjured City Chapter" in the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>15</sup> One should fully explain this [passage] according to the [*Lotus Sūtra*].<sup>16</sup>

The third fascicle states:

By uniting with the singular path, one becomes a buddha...This is expounded upon at length in the *Wondrous Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>17</sup>

Regarding an interpretation of the 'subduer of the three worlds',<sup>18</sup> the fourth fascicle states:

He clasps the five-point mudra, wears a crown of jewels on his head, and is in a wind wheel.<sup>19</sup> This is to say, the function of all beings<sup>20</sup> in the *Lotus Sūtra* is to [purify their] minds in order to [realize] the insight of the buddha.<sup>21</sup>

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15. Yixing is probably referring to an episode in chapter seven of Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra* in which the buddha who deeply penetrates the supremacy of wisdom (Mahābhijñāñābhībhū) arises from *samādhi* to preach to an assembly of monks about the sixteen bodhisattvas. See *Taishō* 9.25b10-25.
  16. Shōshin paraphrases a passage from the seventh fascicle of the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See *ZTZm* 1:292a:經云。時釋迦牟尼佛。入於寶處三昧。說自心及眷屬真言者。由此三昧故如來出現于世。以如來出現故則有無量無邊五乘法寶悉皆出現。猶如輪王正位時世間種種伏藏自然開發。又如諸寶山無所不有隨諸衆生有信手者則能自恣取之。法華經化城喻品。此中當廣說也。The *Taishō* version does not include this section of the commentary.
  17. This passage is from the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in *ZTZm*:94b, and, again, Shōshin is paraphrasing the original text: 唯以一道成佛。更無餘道也。以佛佛同道故。今還引諸佛證明。是事如法華中廣說。The *Taishō* version is identical. See *Taishō* 39.614c29-615a1.
  18. The epithet 降三世, or "subduer of the three worlds," denotes Trailokyavijaya, the wrathful deity who subdues Maheśvara in the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. In the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, he is a manifestation of the unhindered power of Vairocana. See the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in *Taishō* 18.7b7, the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in *ZTZm* 1:143b and the *Commentary* in *Taishō* 39.633b21 for an explanation of this title.
  19. The five-pronged vajra mudra (五股印) is the primary mudra of Trailokyavijaya in both the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. There are inner and outer versions of this mudra; in the inner, the left ring finger is positioned inside the right index finger, and in the outer, the same finger is positioned between the right middle and ring fingers. The basic Trailokyavijaya mudra consists of crossing the pinkies with the right looped inside the left; the thumbs and index fingers are extended to form five points. See Lokesh Chandra and Sharada Rani, *Mudras in Japan: Symbolic Hand-Postures in Japanese Mantrayāna or the Esoteric Buddhism of the Shingon Denomination*, Sata-Pitaka Series 243 (New Delhi: Jyayed Press, 1978), 258.
  20. Oda defines the term 諸有所作 as the various forms in which sentient beings can exist as a result of their previous actions. These forms are listed in sets of three, four, seven, nine, and twenty-five, but the term 諸有所作 simply denotes any possible form of existence. See *BDJ* 844b.
  21. This quotation is from the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in *ZTZm*:143 and Yixing's *Commentary* in *Taishō* 39.633b21. Shōshin is paraphrasing the line, which reads 持五股印。首戴寶冠。而在風輪之中。即法華經諸有所作皆爲闢佛知見使得清淨意也。Yixing appears to be referring to a passage in the second chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* in which the buddha explains to Śāriputra the reason buddhas appear in the realm of form. See *Taishō* 9.7a29-b1:

The *Essay on Protecting the Realm* states:

The correct meaning of the singular-vehicle that was transmitted by masters Divākara,<sup>22</sup> Śikṣānanda,<sup>23</sup> Bodhiruci,<sup>24</sup> Vajrabodhi, Śubhakarasiṃha, Amoghavajra, and Prajñā after the period of Zhenguan,<sup>25</sup> all agree with the interpretation<sup>26</sup> of Tiantai.<sup>27</sup>

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佛告舍利弗。諸佛如來。但教化菩薩。諸有所作常爲一事。唯以佛之知見示悟衆生。

The buddha addressed Śāriputra, saying: "The buddha tathāgatas lead and inspire only bodhisattvas. All the acts of a buddha are always for one purpose. The buddhas manifest their wisdom and insight solely to inspire sentient beings to enlightenment." Kubo and Yuyama 2007, 31.

22. Rizhao日照, translation of Divākara (Dipoheluo 地婆訶羅), was a monk from Central India active between 676–688. In 683, he translated a twenty-seven chapter, twelve-fascicle version of the *Vaipulya-mahāvūha-sūtra* (*Fanguang da zhuangyan jing* 方廣大莊嚴經) published as *Taishō* 3, no. 187. More significant for esoteric Buddhism, however, is his early three-fascicle translation of the *Ghana-vyūha Sūtra* (*Dasheng miyan jing* 大乘密嚴經) published in *Taishō* 16, no. 681. The *Ghana-vyūha* was an obscure work in China, but became important to the Hossō school and esoteric schools after the late ninth century. Cited in Yixing's commentary and later in Annen's treatises, this text, along with Amoghavajra's revised translation (*Taishō* 16, no. 682) became a source text for esoteric interpretations of buddha lands. I discuss this text and its importance in Japanese esoteric Buddhism in "Saisen no *shishu hosshingi* ni okeru hosshin seppō ron" 濟暹の『四種法身義』における法身說法論, *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 63/2 (2015):641-644. Rizhao's biography is mentioned in Fazang's commentary on the *Awakening of Faith*, the *Dasheng qixinlun yiji* 大乘起信論義記 (*Taishō* 44.242b01-10).
23. Śikṣānanda 實叉難陀 was a Khotanese monk who arrived in China around 695. He is most famous for his translations of the eighty-fascicle *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (*Taishō* 10, no. 279) and seven-fascicle version of the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* (*Taishō* 16, no. 672).
24. The *Taishō* edition of Saichō's essay notes the variant 志 in the Chinese translation of Bodhiruci's name. There were two Bodhirucis, 流支 and 流志. The first Bodhiruci was active prior to the period of Zhenguan, and therefore the variant is probably correct. Bodhiruci, transliterated as 菩提流支 (ca. 527), translated versions of the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* (*Taishō* 16, no. 671) and *Diamond Sūtra* as well as the *Treatise on the Scripture of the Ten Stages* (*Shidi jinglun* 十地經論). Bodhiruci, transliterated as 菩提流志, was a monk from South India active in the Tang from 696–727. Under the patronage of Empress Wu, he translated several *dhāraṇi* texts, most notably the *Yizi fodinglun wang jing* 一字佛頂輪王經 (*Taishō* 19, no. 951) and *Wu foding sanmei tuoluoni jing* 五佛頂三昧陀羅尼經 (*Taishō* 19, no. 952). He also translated half of the 120-fascicle *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* (*Da baoji jing* 大寶積經) published in *Taishō* 11, no. 310.
25. The period of Zhenguan refers to the years 627–649, which denotes the beginning of Emperor Gaozong's reign.
26. Shōshin adds 門, which does not appear in Saichō's text.
27. This quote is from Saichō's *Essay on Protecting the Realm* (*Shugo kokkai shō* 守護国界章) in *DDZ* 2.413-414, and *Taishō* 74.191a7-13: 愍諭曰。此說非理。古今諸龍象。多有異宗故。汝不指一兩人。但是妄說耳。若不指一乘師。不足爲證。若指一乘宗。天台有依憑。貞觀以後。日照三藏。實叉難陀三藏。流(志)支三藏。金剛智三藏。無畏三藏。乃至不空三藏。般若三藏等。所傳一乘正義。皆符天台義。Saichō wrote the *Shugo kokkai shō* in 818 as a refutation of Tokuitsu's work on the one and three vehicles in the Hossō school. For a discussion of the debate between Saichō and Tokuitsu, see Paul Groner, *Saichō* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1980), 91-101. In this passage, Saichō accuses Tokuitsu of neglecting textual evidence proving that previous masters concurred with his claims, and he offers the above names as proof that the singular-vehicle was the orthodox view in the Tang.



(The above lines are each abbreviated.)

**417b11-20:** 二者二經同名祕密藏。故法華云、當知是妙法諸佛之祕要。又云、一切如來祕要之藏。又云、如來祕密神通之力。法華論列十七名、第八名一切諸佛祕密處。天台法華玄云、祕密奧藏爲妙。蘇悉地疏云、教有二種。一顯示教。謂阿含深密等諸三乘教也。二祕密教、謂華嚴維摩般若法華涅槃等也。祕密教亦有二。一唯理祕密教、謂華嚴等唯說圓融不說三密行故。二事理俱密教、謂大日金剛頂等說圓融不二、亦說三密行故云。

Second, the two sutras {i.e., *Lotus Sūtra* and *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*} are both called the "secret treasury." Thus, the *Lotus Sūtra* states, "Truly you should know that the wondrous dharma is the secret essence of the buddhas."<sup>28</sup> Again, [the sutra] refers to "the treasury of the secret essence of

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28. This quotation is from the "Skillful Means Chapter" of Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. In this verse at the end of the second chapter, the Buddha addresses Śāriputra, śrāvakas, and bodhisattvas, exclaiming the *Lotus Sūtra* is the secret essence of the buddhas. See *Taishō* 9.10b7-8:汝等舍利弗 聲聞及菩薩 當知是妙法 諸佛之祕要. For an English translation, see Leon Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 46.

Annotated Translation: Textual Sources

all tathāgatas."<sup>29</sup> Also, it mentions "the secret supernatural powers of the tathāgata."<sup>30</sup> The *Treatise on the Lotus Sūtra* lists seventeen titles [for the sutra], the eighth being called the "secret location of all buddhas."<sup>31</sup>

Tiantai's {i.e. Zhiyi} *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra* states:

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29. Shōshin quotes a passage from the the twenty-first chapter of Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the "Chapter on the Supernatural Powers of the Thus Come One," but reverses the first four characters of this line. See *Taishō* 9.52a19:

如來一切所有之法。如來一切自在神力。如來一切祕要之藏。如來一切甚深之事。

[I have preached] all dharmas of the tathāgata, all supernatural powers of the tathāgata, all secret treasuries of the tathāgata, all profound deeds of the tathāgata.

Instead, Shōshin writes, "the secret storehouse of all tathāgatas" (一切如來祕要之藏). The term "secret essential" 祕要, or "profound importance," refers to something hidden from sight but is nonetheless essential. See RB 905. The *Lotus Sūtra* seems to use the term interchangeably with 秘密. An alternative manuscripts includes 密 instead of 要, which seems to be the source of Hurvitz's translation: "The treasure house of all the Thus Come One's secrets." See Hurvitz 1976, 288.

30. This line is a reference to a passage in the "Longevity of the Tathāgata Chapter" of the *Lotus Sūtra* in which the Buddha reveals that he actually attained awakening in the distant past, not under the the *bodhi* tree during Śākyamuni's lifetime. See *Taishō* 9.42b7-11:

爾時世尊。知諸菩薩三請不止。而告之言。汝等諦聽。如來祕密神通之力。一切世間天人及阿修羅。皆謂今釋迦牟尼佛出釋氏宮。去伽耶城不遠坐於道場。得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。

At that time, the Honored One was aware that the bodhisattvas have not ceased to petition him three times and replied to them saying, "You, listen carefully to the secret, supernatural powers of the tathāgata. The deities, humans, and asuras in all worlds say that the current Śākyamuni Buddha left the palace of the Śākya Clan, traveled to Gayā where on a nearby terrace he sat on the seat of awakening and obtained supreme enlightenment (*anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi*)." For an alternative English translation, see Kubo and Yuyama 2007, 223.

31. Shōshin uses the title "Treatise on the *Lotus Sūtra*" to refer to the *Disputations on the Lotus of the Wondrous Law Sūtra* (*Miaofa lianhua jing youbotishe* 妙法蓮華經憂波提舍, Skt. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkōpadeśa*). See *Taishō* 26.2c25:

八名一切諸佛祕密處者。以根未熟衆生等非受法器不授與故。

The eighth title is called 'the secret location of all buddhas. Sentient beings whose faculties have yet to mature do not obtain a vessel for the dharma and are not bestowed this [title].

This short commentary was translated by Bodhiruci and Tanlin 曇林, which they believed to have been originally composed by Vasubandhu. For a study of this text, see Terry Rae Abbott, "Vasubandhu's Commentary to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*: A Study of Its History and Significance" (PhD diss. UC Berkeley, 1985). The passage quoted above is from a list of seventeen titles for the *Lotus Sūtra*. Abbott translated the eighth title and Vasubandhu's explanation of the title as, "It is called 'The Mysterious Subject of All the Buddhas' since it is not conferred on those, such as living beings with immature faculties, who do not have the capacity to receive the teachings." See Abbott 1985, 141.

The secret depths of the treasury is called "wondrous."<sup>32</sup>

The *Commentary on the Susiddhikara Sūtra* states:

The teachings have two types. The first is the revealed teaching, which are the various three-vehicle teachings, namely the *Āgamas*,<sup>33</sup> the *Samdhanirmocana Sūtra*,<sup>34</sup> etc. The second is the secret teaching, namely the *Avataṃsaka*, *Vimalakīrti*, *Prajñā*, *Lotus*, *Nirvāṇa*, etc. Among the secret teaching, there are also two types. The first is the principle-only secret teaching, namely the *Avataṃsaka*, etc., because they only preach complete interfusion and do not preach the practice of the three secret activities. The second is practice-and-principle secret teaching, namely the *Mahāvairocana* and *Vajraśekhara*, because they preach the non-duality of complete interfusion as well as preach the practice of the three secret activities.<sup>35</sup>

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32. Shōshin is paraphrasing a line from Zhiyi's *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra* (*Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義), Zhiyi's primary commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra* and the source of the doctrine of four teachings. See *Taishō* 33.681c2-3: 咸令一切普得見聞。發祕密之奧藏稱之爲妙。Paul Swanson provides a partial translation of this work in *Tien'tai Philosophy*, but unfortunately his translation does not cover the sections quoted by Shōshin.
33. Of the four divisions of the *Āgamas* the teaching of the three vehicles is only mentioned in the *Ekōttarāgama* once. See *Taishō* 2.550b29-c1: 如是阿含增一法三乘教化無差別佛經微妙極甚深能除結使如流河。In the four-teaching taxonomy in Tendai, the *Āgamas* are classified as a *tripiṭaka* teaching along with *Abhidharma* and *Vinaya* texts.
34. The *Sūtra on Explicating the Underlying Meaning* (*Jie shenmi jing* 解深密經, Skt. *Samdhanirmocana Sūtra*) is the primary sutra of the East Asian Yogācāra tradition and is the authoritative source for doctrines on the *ālayavijñāna*, the three natures, and the Yogācāra interpretation of the path and the bodies of the buddha. There are four Chinese translations: Bodhiruci (深密解脫經, 5 fascicles in *Taishō* 16.668-687; translated in 514) and Xuanzang (解深密經, 5 fascicles in *Taishō* 16.688b-711b translated in 647), and partial versions by Guṇabhadra (相續解脫地波羅蜜了義經 1 fascicle in *Taishō* 16.711-719; translated between 435–443) and Paramārtha (佛說解節經, 1 fascicle in *Taishō* 16.711-713 translated in 557). For a translation of the Chinese, see John P. Keenan, *The Scripture on Explanation of the Underlying Meaning* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Translation and Research, 2000) and for a study of the Tibetan see John Powers, *Wisdom of Buddha: The Samdhanirmocana Sūtra* (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1994).
35. This quotation refers to Ennin's *Abbreviated Commentary on the Susiddhikara Sūtra* (*Soshitsuji kyarakyō ryakusho* 蘇悉地羯羅經略疏). However, Shōshin's quotation is not found in the extant version of the commentary. In his notes on Shōshin's text, Ōkubo suggests that this passage is loosely based on a series of questions and responses in *Taishō* 61.393b13-26. See Ōkubo 1998, 276n6. However, this quote is probably taken from Annen's *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta*, which paraphrases Ennin's commentary. See *Taishō* 75.471c9-16: 答。蘇悉地經疏云。有二種教。一顯示教。二祕密教。顯示教謂阿含深密等諸三乘教也。祕密教謂華嚴維摩般若法華涅槃等諸一乘教。祕密教亦有二種。一理祕密教。謂彼華嚴等一乘唯說世俗勝義圓融無二。不說三密行相故。二事理俱密教。謂大日金剛頂蘇悉地經等能說世俗勝義圓融不二。亦說三密行相故取意文。

**417b20-29:** 私云、若天台判教有二。一者四教相望、三教爲麤。圓教爲妙。故諸大乘有妙有麤。二者五味相望、四味爲麤。雖有圓妙、以兼權教故總爲麤。唯以法華純圓爲妙。準例應云四教相望。故諸大乘亦名祕密。圓是密故。若約五味、唯以法華爲祕密耳。高麗覺苑師大日經疏演密抄云、顯者五性三乘是也。密者總持祕藏是也云云。此師面受善無畏三藏演祕密宗。彼亦於顯教不取一乘也。

I say that the Tendai taxonomy of teachings has two ways of classifying these [the esoteric teachings]. First, regarding the configuration of the four teachings, the first three teachings are coarse and the perfect teaching is wondrous. Therefore, the Mahāyāna [teachings] consist of both wondrous and coarse teachings. Second, regarding the configuration of the five flavors, the first four flavors are coarse. Although there is the perfect-wondrous teaching, I take these to include provisional teachings and, therefore, on the whole are coarse. I only take the pure-perfect teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* to be wondrous. Accordingly, if I must discuss the [esoteric teachings] in terms of the four-teaching paradigm, then Mahāyāna is also called "secret." Thus, the perfect teaching is the esoteric teaching. If I consider [the esoteric teaching] in terms of the five flavors, I only take the *Lotus Sūtra* to be esoteric.<sup>36</sup>

Master Jueyuan of Koryō<sup>37</sup> states in the *Compendium of the Expounded Secrets of the Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*:

The exoteric [teachings] are the five natures<sup>38</sup> and the three vehicles. The esoteric [teachings] are the secret treasury of *dhāraṇī*.<sup>39</sup>

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36. In Zhiyi's application of the five flavors metaphor, the *Lotus Sūtra* and *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* are both ghee. However, Shōshin argues that of these two only the *Lotus Sūtra* is equal to the secret teachings. He also divides the perfect teachings in terms of mixed and pure. However, he seems to follow Ennin's view that the esoteric teachings denote the Mahāyāna sutras in general.

37. Shōshin mistakenly presumes Jueyuan was from the kingdom of Koryō on the Korean Peninsula, instead of from Liao. Jueyuan was a scholar monk in late eleventh-century China, who flourished under the patronage of the Liao emperor Daozong 道宗 (1055–1101). For more on esoteric Buddhism in Liao, see Robert M. Gimello, "Manifest Mysteries: The Nature of the Exoteric/Esoteric (Xian 顯 / Mi 密) Distinction in Later Chinese Buddhism" (paper presented at annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Washington DC, November 21, 2006). Jueyuan's sub-commentary arrived in Japan via the Korean Peninsula in the late eleventh century, which is probably why Shōshin associates him with the Koryō kingdom.

38. The five natures (五性·姓) is a Yogācāra concept stipulating that sentient beings are endowed with one of five fixed natures (定性): that of a bodhisattva, a pratyekabuddha, a śrāvaka, that which is indeterminate among the three vehicles, and those who lack the capability of obtaining buddhahood (Skt. *icchantika*). In medieval Japan, the doctrine of five natures was commonly used as shorthand for the Hossō school. See RB 312b-c.

39. This quote is from Jueyuan's ten-fascicle *Compendium on the Expounded Secrets of the Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (*Darijing yishi yanmi chao* 大日經義釋演密鈔), which was a sub-commentary on Yixing's *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See MDJ 1.214. The phrase cited above is actually the preface written by Zhao Liyan 趙孝嚴. See Ōkubo 1998, 276n8. This passage is published in ZZK 23.523a22.

This master received the teachings directly from *Tripitaka*-master Śubhakarasiṃha and propagated the esoteric school.<sup>40</sup> He also claimed that the singular-vehicle is not to be taken as an exoteric teaching.

**417c1-7:**三者二經同是圓教義。故演密抄云、今神變經與此大同圓教所攝。又云、問。華嚴般若劣於如來祕藏耶。答。此乃宗果是同、但顯祕為異。前約教相圓極、攝諸了義。後約威靈光驗、屬以祕宗。復何疑哉云云。他家以圓教佛果、為祕密因分。即違此文。菩提心義云。法華與真言同是超八圓教云云。

Third, both sutras {i.e., *Lotus Sūtra* and *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*} are the same regarding the meaning of the perfect teachings. Thus, the *Compendium of Expounded Secrets* states, "The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and this mostly contain the same perfect teachings."

Again, it states:

Question: Are the *Avatamsaka* and *Prajñā* inferior to the secret treasury of the tathāgata?

Response: The fruits of these schools are the same, only what is revealed and kept secret differ. The prior concerns the perfect and ultimate<sup>41</sup> of the teachings and encompasses various doctrines. The latter concerns the majestic and luminous efficacy [of performing esoteric rites],<sup>42</sup> which are classified according to secret tenets. What is there to doubt?<sup>43</sup>

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40. Shōshin must have been mistaken regarding the dates of these individuals to state that Jueyuan living in the eleventh century could have directly received the teachings from Śubhakarasiṃha, who arrived in Changan around 717. However, Shōshin may be referring to the Tendai esoteric lineage in general, which traces its authority to Śubhakarasiṃha and his disciples Yixing and Faquan.

41. Oda's entry for this term notes that it is an abbreviation of 果海圓極. See BDJ 1869b. Jueyuan probably took this term from the first fascicle of Fazang's *Essay on the Five Teachings of Huayan* (*Huayan wujiao zhang* 華嚴五教章, also known as the *Huayan yisheng jiaoyi fenzhai zhang* 華嚴一乘教義分齊章) in which he argues that the *Avatamsaka* is the "secret unhindered teaching of the perfect and ultimate sea of buddhahood" (說於如來無礙解脫究竟果海圓極祕密自在法門。即此經是也) See *Taishō* 45.480b22-28.

42. The phrase "majestic and luminous efficacy" (威靈光驗) refers to the effects of performing esoteric rites. See BDJ 1809c. The *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* uses such terms when describing the effects of properly constructing the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala. See *ZTZm1.135a-b*. Shōshin refers to this passage later in the essay.

43. Ōkubo notes that the source of this passage is unclear. See Ōkubo 1998, 277n1-2. However, in a similar passage in the first fascicle, Jueyuan implies that the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and the perfect teachings are the same, but similar to Ennin's view, he asserts that they merely differ regarding what they reveal and what they keep secret. See *ZZK* 23.525a:

五圓教明一位即一切位一切位即一位。十信滿心即攝五位成正覺等。依普賢法界帝網重重主伴具足。故名圓教。廣如彼疏、今神變經典與此大同。但顯密為異耳。

The other school takes buddhahood in the perfect teaching to be the cause leading to the secret teachings.<sup>44</sup> This differs from the [above] passage.

The *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta* states:

The *Lotus* and mantra are both the perfect teaching that transcends the eight [teachings].<sup>45</sup>

**417c8-18:** 四者二經同是醍醐味。故六波羅蜜經以三藏及般若爲前四味、以陀羅尼祕藏爲醍醐味。涅槃經中以諸經爲前四味、以法華涅槃爲醍醐味。德圓和尚遣唐疑問云、大日經五時中何時攝、四教中何教攝耶。爲是法華前後說耶。宗穎決云、義推可屬第五時攝。純談圓教無兼等故、四教中是圓教。彼經云。舉足下足皆是印契一切語言無非眞言。又云、

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Fifth, the perfect teaching clarifies that a single stage [of the path] is precisely all stages, and all stages are a single stage. The mind that has completed the ten stages of faith embraces the five phases [of the bodhisattva path] and will achieve perfect awakening. Because this is in accordance with the universal and virtuous *dharmadhātu*, the interconnectedness of the Indra's next, and the complete [infusion] of host and guest {i.e. buddha and practitioner}, it is called the "perfect teaching." As expansively explained in this commentary {i.e. Yixing's commentary}, the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and this [perfect teaching] are mostly the same. They simply differ in terms of what is revealed and what is secret.

As a fuller explication of this passage demonstrates, Jueyuan actually compares the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* with the perfect teachings in the Huayan five-teachings paradigm, not the Tiantai four teachings taxonomy. Shōshin intentionally leaves the "this" to which Jueyuan compares the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* vague, implying that the *Compendium on the Expounded Secrets* supports his claim that the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and the *Lotus Sūtra* both preach the perfect teachings. Furthermore, Shōshin fails to mention that Jueyuan is actually quoting Fazang's *Huayanjing tanxuanji* 華嚴經探玄記 (*Taishō* 35.115c17-20). It is doubtful that this omission was simply overlooked, considering Shōshin cites Fazang's text several times in his *Personal Notes on the Three Major Works of Tendai*. See Matsumoto Tomomi 松本知己, "Hōjibō shōshin no kyōhan ron" 宝地房証眞の教判論, *Interdisciplinary studies in Japanese Buddhism* 10 (2012):35.

44. Shōshin is referring to Kūkai's claim in the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* that Tendai is only the eighth level of his taxonomy. See *Taishō*, 77.371c10-13. For Kūkai, the practitioner at the eighth stage, i.e. Tendai, realizes the principle, but stops short of realizing the "mind which transcends no self-nature" (極無自性心), or the ninth stage of Kegon. See Sanja Jurković, "On the Ninth Stage in Kūkai's Ten Abodes of the Mind of the Mysterious Mandala: In Relation to the Mind Which Transcends No Self-Nature," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 53/2 (2005):55-57.
45. This citation is from Annen's *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta* located in *Taishō* 75.465b2-3: 答。藏通爲二。華嚴爲別無量義爲圓是爲四教。法華與眞言教同爲超八之圓。故不違也。Shōshin adds 教 to the end of the quote. "Transcending the eight" (超八) is the notion held in the Tendai school that the perfect teachings of the *Lotus Sūtra* supersede the perfect teachings of prior sutras and is therefore the pure perfect teachings (純圓教). It is also expressed in the term 超八醍醐, which combines the notion of surpassing the eight with five flavors metaphor. See RB 763a. Fukuda Gyōei explains the debate within Tendai regarding whether or not the perfect teachings included all other teachings, or all teachings can ultimately only be understood from the perspective of the perfect teachings. See Fukuda Gyōei 福田堯穎, *Tendaigaku gairon* 天台學概論 (Tokyo: Seikōsha, 1954), 134 and 208.

從佛至于蝸蟲等、無非毘盧遮那法界身等。便同圓門一色一香無非中道。所以一行禪師全用圓義。釋經文也略抄。

Fourth, the two sutras are both the flavor of ghee. Thus, the *Six Pāramitā Sūtra* takes the *Tripitaka* and the *Prajñā[pāramitā]* to be the prior four flavors and the secret treasury of *dhāraṇi* to be the flavor of ghee.<sup>46</sup> The *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* takes the various sutras to be the prior four flavors and the *Lotus* and *Nirvāṇa* to be the flavor of ghee.<sup>47</sup>

Master Tokuen's question sent to Tang inquires:

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46. The original version of this text is no longer extant. Translated by the central Asian monk Prajñā 般若 (744–ca. 810) and Jingjing 景淨 (n.d.), a Nestorian Christian from Persia, in Tang China around 788, the *Dasheng liqi liuboluomiduo jing* 大乘理趣六波羅蜜多經 had little impact on Chinese Buddhism at the time. However, Kūkai later took an interest in the work due to its classification of *dhāraṇi* as the highest ranking of text. For a summary of the content, see BKJ 7.358a-b and MH 3288. Yoritomi discusses the historical context of the translation in Yoritomi Motohiro 賴富本宏, "Daijō rishu roku harumitta kyō ni tsuite" 大乘理趣六波羅蜜多經について, *Mikkyō gaku kenkyū* 7 (1975):57-70. For a brief biography of Prajñā, see Paul Copp, "Prajñā," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, edited by Charles D. Orzech, et al (Leiden: Brill Hotei Publishing, 2011), 360-362. For Prajñā's translation, see *Taishō* 8.868b29-c16. Shōshin specifically refers to a line in *Taishō* 8.868c16:

契經如乳調伏如酪。對法教者如彼生酥。大乘般若猶如熟酥。總持門者譬如醍醐。

The sutras are like fresh milk, and the vinaya is like cream. Regarding the teachings of the *Abhidharma*, these are like curdled milk. The Mahāyāna *Prajñā[pāramitā]* is like butter. The gateway of *dhāraṇi* is like ghee.

47. Shōshin is referring to a passage in the thirteenth fascicle of Huiyan's translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Daban neipan jing* 大般涅槃經), which is the source of the five-flavors metaphor. See *Taishō* 12.690c28-691a8:

善男子。譬如從牛出乳從乳出酪從酪出生酥從生酥出熟酥從熟酥出醍醐。醍醐最上。若有服者衆病皆除。所有諸藥悉入其中。善男子。佛亦如是。從佛出生十二部經。從十二部經出修多羅。從修多羅出方等經。從方等經出般若波羅蜜。從般若波羅蜜出大涅槃。猶如醍醐。言醍醐者喻於佛性。佛性者即是如來。善男子。以是義故。說言如來所有功德無量無邊不可稱計。

Good son, as fresh milk comes from a cow, cream from fresh milk, curdled milk from cream, butter from curdled milk, and ghee from butter, ghee is the best. If one digests it, all illness are eradicated and various medicines are completely accessible to him. Good son, the buddha is also like this. From the buddha arises the twelve-fold scripture. From the twelve-fold scripture comes the sutras. From the sutras come the Mahāyāna sutras. From the Mahāyāna sutras come the *Prājñāpāramitā* sutras. From the *Prājñāpāramitā* comes the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, which is like ghee. This so-called "ghee" is a metaphor for buddha-nature. Buddha-nature is the tathāgata. Good son, based on this interpretation, I proclaim that the virtues of the tathāgata are unlimited, boundless, and cannot be calculated.

Regarding the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, among the five periods, to which period does it belong, and among the four teachings, to which teaching does it belong? Is it a preaching that is contemporaneous with the *Lotus*?<sup>48</sup>

Zongying offers his decision, stating:

Based on my interpretation, I conclude that it should belong to the fifth period. Because it specifically discusses the perfect teaching and is not combined with other teachings, among the four teachings it is a perfect teaching. The sutra states, "Either lifting the foot or putting it down, all [actions] are mudra. All language is nothing other than mantra."<sup>49</sup> Again it states, "From the buddha down to the scorpions, all things are none other than

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The *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra* does not actually mention the *Lotus Sūtra*, but Shōshin's assertion is rather based on Zhiyi and Zhanran's association of the two texts. Zhiyi and the later Tiantai tradition applied this metaphor to the abilities of practitioners to perceive the various teachings of the buddha. Therefore, the *Avatamsaka* was the fresh milk of the buddha's teachings directed toward those with superior faculties; the *Āgamas* were the cream of the teachings designated for śrāvakas; early Mahāyāna sutras were the curdled milk for those who enter the bodhisattva path; the *Prajñāpāramitā* was butter for those practitioners who grasped the concept of emptiness; and the *Lotus* and *Nirvāṇa Sūtras* were equalvent to ghee, the final and most refined teachings of the buddha. See BDJ 573a-b. Shōshin's objective in juxtaposing the Prajñā translation and the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra* is to demonstrate that they are using the same metaphor, in contrast to Kūkai's claims that the Prajñā's use of the paradigm was atypical of the Mahāyāna sutras. Shōshin discusses Kūkai's interpretation of this passage in greater detail in Part Two of the essay.

48. The following question and response are from the seventh question in Tokuen's *Questions and Zongying's Responses* (*Tokuēn gimon shūei kettō* 德門疑問宗穎決答, or *Tōketsu* 唐決). See SMDK 78.217-218. Tokuen, the interim abbot on Mt. Hiei, sent a letter with a series of questions to Zongying, a Tiantai monk in Chang'an, inquiring about the differences between the teachings in *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and Tiantai doctrine. In this question, he asks where the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* fits in the Tiantai paradigm of the five time periods and eight teachings. Shōshin is actually paraphrasing the question, which states: 今天台一處所立初自華嚴終至涅槃一代之教以四教五時攝盡。而今未知中天三藏善無畏所譯毗盧遮那經五時之中何時攝。四教八教之中何教攝也。是法華之前說。爲復在法華後說。此義如何。

49. Although it is unclear what passage Zongying is referencing, the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* makes a similar equation of language and mantra at the end of the fourth fascicle. See *Taishō* 18.30a18-23:

又祕密主乃至身分舉動住止。應知皆是密印。舌相所轉衆多言說。應知皆是眞言。是故祕密主。眞言門修菩薩行諸菩薩。已發菩提心。應當住如來地。畫漫荼羅。若異此者。同謗諸佛菩薩。越三昧耶。決定墮於惡趣。

Furthermore, Lord of Mysteries, you should know that [the activities of] the limbs too, in motion or at rest, are all mystic seals, and you should know that the many utterances made by the tongue are all mantras. Therefore, Lord of Mysteries, bodhisattvas cultivating bodhisattva practices via the gateway of mantras should, after having generated the *bodhi* mind, abide in the stage of the tathāgata and [only then] draw a maṇḍala. If they do otherwise, it is tantamount to slandering buddhas and bodhisattvas, and they will transgress the samaya and certainly fall into an evil destiny. Giebel 2005, 117-118.



the *dharmadhātu* body of Vairocana."<sup>50</sup> This is the same as the perfect teaching of "every single form and every single fragrance is none other than the middle way."<sup>51</sup> Therefore, meditation master Yixing utilized the meaning of the perfect teaching to interpret passages in the sutra.<sup>52</sup>

(I have abbreviated this letter.)

**417c19-22:** 五者二宗同依智論等。故大日經疏釋彼宗義、但依龍樹智論釋義。亦以中論中道爲本。義釋云、龍樹阿闍梨中道正觀無生義成云云。天台亦爾。豈可不同耶。

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50. Presumably, Zongying is citing the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. However, as Ōkubo notes, nothing similar to this line can be found in the extant version of the sutra. See Ōkubo 1998, 280n5. Zongying may be alluding to a passage in Yixing's *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. In the second chapter of the sutra, the buddha instructs the interlocutor on how to prepare a space for creating a mandala, telling him to clear away all stones and insects (*Taishō* 18.4c2). In the commentary, Yixing explains why the grounds must be purified. See *ZTZm1:100b*:

義可準知。毒蟲謂蛇蝎・蜈蚣・蚰蜒之類、皆應作方便、驅遣令去。若多不可除、即是有妨難處。應可棄之。

The meaning of this must be understood accordingly: poisonous insects, such as types of scorpions, centipedes, or millipedes, must all be skillfully removed and driven out [of the area of the mandala]. If there are too many and cannot be removed, then they will become an obstacle. You must dispose of them.

Perhaps Zongying is elaborating on Yixing's instructions for purifying the mandala platform by asserting that even the lowliest beings in this space, such as scorpions who are relegated to the periphery, are still a part Vairocana's *dharmadhātu*.

51. Zongying is alluding to a ubiquitous line found in Tiantai texts. For instance, see Zhiyi's commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Fahua xuanyi*, in *Taishō* 33.688c19-22:

一切陰入即是菩提、離是無菩提。一色一香無非中道、離是無別中道。眼耳鼻舌皆是寂靜門、離此無別寂靜門。

All aggregates and sense fields are precisely *bodhi*, apart from which there is no *bodhi*. Every form and every scent is none other than the middle way, apart from which there is no middle way. The eye, ear, nose, and tongue are all precisely gateways to quiescence, apart from which there is no gateway to quiescence.

52. As the interliner notation states, Shōshin is paraphrasing Zongying original response: See *SNKD* 218: 通曰。將毗盧遮那經於五時中收攝。又與法華經辨其前後者。本宗教中未見明文。輒難的折。若以義推。毗盧遮那經可屬第五時攝。所以然者。前四味中有兼但對帶之義。今大日教純談圓教無兼等之殊故也。如別有憑說者愈妙耳。但四教中合是圓教。何以得。彼經云。舉足下足盡是印契。一切語言無非真言。又云。從佛至于蛄蟲等。無非毗盧遮那法界身等。便與圓一色一香無非中道。義理冥符。固宜是圓教攝。所以一行禪師全用圓義。消釋經文也。 Groner also discusses this quotation in Paul Groner, "Early Japanese Tendai Views on the Realization of Buddhahood by Grasses and Trees: Determinations from China (*Tōketsu* 唐決)," in *Bukkyō to kankyō* 仏教と環境 (Tokyo: The Faculty of Buddhist Studies, Rissho University, 2000), 34.

Fifth, the two schools are both based on the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, etc. Therefore, the commentaries on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* as well as their interpretations are based on Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, they take the middle way of the *Middle Treatise* as their basis.<sup>54</sup>

The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

Nāgārjuna Ācārya takes the proper contemplation of the middle way to mean there is nothing that arises.<sup>55</sup>

This is also the case for Tendai. How then are they not the same?

**417c23-c26:** 六者二宗同明界外義。故菩提心論云、若定性者難可發生。要待劫限等滿方乃發生云云。此明定性二乘界外回心。不同唯識入寂定性也。

Sixth, the two schools both explain the meaning of the super-mundane realm. Thus, the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* states:

If one has a fixed nature, it is difficult to give rise [to *bodhicitta*]. It is necessary that one waits aeons to pass before this begins to occur.<sup>56</sup>

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53. Shōshin is referring to the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*Dazhidulun* 大智度論), Kumārajīva's hundred-fascicle "translation" of Nāgārjuna's commentary on the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. There is much debate among modern scholars over the authorship of this extensive commentary, but intellectuals in East Asian, where it was utilized as an encyclopedia on Buddhist doctrine, have long attributed it to Nāgārjuna. The *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* was influential on Zhiyi and subsequent Tiantai/Tendai scholastics, who often abbreviated the text as 智論 or 釋論.

54. Shōshin notes that Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārika* (*Zhonglun* 中論) is, like the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, an important textual source for both Tendai and Shingon doctrine. Also translated by Kumārajīva, the *Middle Treatise* was the basis of Zhiyi's doctrine of the three truths. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* dismisses this work as an inferior teaching. See Part Two of the essay.

55. Shōshin paraphrases a line in Yixing's commentary referencing Nāgārjuna's explanation of the pure *bodhi* mind, but this passage is not in the *Middle Treatise*. See *ZTZm*1:37a:何以得此淨菩提心。龍樹阿闍梨中道正觀、正以從緣起故、無生義成。

56. Shōshin is quoting from Amoghavajra's translation of the *Jingangding yujia zhong fa anouduoluo sanmiaosanputi xin lun* 金剛頂瑜伽中發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心論, or *Treatise on Bodhicitta*, which is traditionally attributed to Nāgārjuna. See *Taishō* 32.573a17-18:有定性者。難可發生。要待劫限等滿。方乃發生。Kiyota Minoru translates this text in *Shingon Buddhism: Theory and Practice* (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1978).

This passage clarifies that those with a fixed nature, or those of the two vehicles {i.e. śrāvaka and pratyekabuddhas} turn their minds toward the super-mundane realm. This is not the same as the Yogācāra notion of a fixed nature for reaching *nirvāṇa*.<sup>57</sup>

**417c27-418a6:** 七者真言祖師依天台。故山家依憑集云、真言宗沙門一行依天台義造大日經疏具引疏文。教時義云、義釋是無畏說一行記。說云、此經本地身即是法華最深祕處。智儼温古治定亦同。法全亦云、經義同。而海和尚違衆師義。於諸大乘輒判淺深果位高下難矣。又云、一行和上元是天台一行三昧禪師。能得天台圓滿宗趣。故凡所說文言義理動合天台云云。

Seventh, the Shingon patriarchs relied on Tiantai. Thus, Sange's {i.e. Saichō} *Collection of Doctrines that Rely on Tiantai* states:

The monk Yixing of the mantra tradition wrote the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* based on Tiantai doctrine.<sup>58</sup>

(He extensively quotes passages from the commentary.)

The *Interpretation of Teachings* states:

The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* is Śubhakarasiṃha's preaching recorded by Yixing. He explains, "The original grounds body of this sutra is the locus for the most

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57. In the Yogācāra doctrine of five natures (五性(姓)各別), the first two correspond to the nature of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. Together, these first two categories denote a "fixed nature," meaning that the result for those who enter this path is already determined. The third category, bodhisattvas, attain buddhahood after accomplishing numerous stages of development. The fourth category consists of those with an indeterminate nature (不定性), meaning they can enter any of the first three categories. Finally, the fifth category consists of *icchantika* (一闍提), those who lack the nature to become buddhas. Soteriological discourse in the Tendai and Shingon schools was primarily a rejection of the fifth category of the Yogācāra doctrine. For a study of the development of this doctrine in China and Japan, see Yoshimura Makoto 吉村誠, *Chūgoku yuishiki shisō kenkyū: Xuanzang to yuishiki gakuha 中国唯識思想研究—玄奘と唯識学派— (A Study of the History of Chinese Yogācāra Philosophy: Xuanzang and the Weishi School)* (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 2013), 354-393.

58. First compiled in 813, this polemical work, also called the *Collection of Doctrines and Scholars from the various Traditions of the Great Tang and Silla that relied upon Tendai Doctrine* (*Daitō shinra shoshū gishō ehyō tendai gishō* 大唐新羅諸宗義匠依憑天台義集), was Saichō's earliest attempt to argue that Tendai was a central component to the doctrines in other schools. For more on this text, see Groner 1980, 88-91. For this passage, see *DDZ* 3.358-359: 大唐南岳真言宗沙門一行同天台三德數息三諦義。其毘盧遮那經疏第七下云。三落又是數。數是世間也。出世落又是見。三相謂字印本尊等。隨取其一。一合相是也。字印尊等。身語心等。名見實相。乃至能令持誦者。淨令一切罪除。若不淨。更一月等如前也。所說念誦者。數牒上文也。不應異此法則也。是故。令耳聞。息出時字出。入時字入。令隨息出入也。今謂。天台之誦經。是圓家數息。是此意也。 In this passage, Saichō argues that Yixing studied Tiantai, and, therefore, the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* is a Tiantai text. Saichō quotes several passages from the commentary as proof of this claim. Shōshin, on the other hand, does not simply subordinate Yixing's commentary to Tiantai. Rather, he argues that Yixing comes to the same conclusions in his commentary regarding the singular-vehicle of the *Lotus* and *Mahāvairocana Sūtras* as Zhiyi and Zhanran claimed in their treatises on the perfect teachings.

profound secret of the *Law of the Lotus*."<sup>59</sup> The corrections made by Zhiyan and Wengu are also the same.<sup>60</sup> Faquan also determined that the meaning of the sutra is the same.<sup>61</sup>

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59. Annen expounds on a passage from the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* located in ZTZm1:202a. The term "body of the original grounds" *bendi zhi shen* 本地之身 denotes the body or form through which the buddha preaches the sutra (i.e. the source of this body of teachings). In Shingon, this body is the root-source of all phenomena represented as Mahāvairocana. In Tendai, this term refers to the long ago awakened buddha represented as Vairocana. See RB 999c.
60. Zhiyan (n.d.) and Wengu (n.d.) were Yixing's fellow disciples of Śubhakarasiṃha. After Yixing's death in 727, they edited his commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, which became the edition used in the Japanese Tendai school. Annen is simply noting that edits made to the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* did not change the meaning of the commentary as dictated by Śubhakarasiṃha.
61. Faquan 法全 (n.d.) was the head abbot at Qinglongsi in the mid-ninth century. Ennin, Enchin, and Shūei 宗叡 (809–884) all studied under him during their travels in China. See BDJ 1610c. His attributed works are *Piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing lianhua taizang beisheng mantuluo guangda chengjiu yigui gongyang fangbian hui* 毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經蓮華胎藏悲生曼荼羅廣大成儀軌供養方便會 (*Taishō* 18, no. 852), *Da piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing lianhua taizang puti chuangbiaozhi putong zhenyanzang guangda 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儀軌 (Taishō 18, no. 853), *Gongyang hushi batian fa* 供養護世八天法 (*Taishō* 21, no. 1295). For a study of Faquan's commentaries, see Misaki Ryōshū 三崎良周, "Taizōkai no nenzū to mandara" 胎藏界の念誦儀軌と曼荼羅, in *Taimitsu no kenkyū* 台密の研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1888), 244-332. For an English language study of these ritual commentaries, see Dale Todaro, "A Study of the Earliest *Garbha Vidhi* of the Shingon Sect," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 9/2 (1986):109-146; and for a study of Faquan's influence on Ennin's view of the *Susiddhikara Sūtra*, see Harriet Hunter, "Faquan's Transmission of the Susiddhi Category of the Esoteric Buddhist Teachings," *Kokusai bukkyō daigakuin daigaku kenkyū kiyō* 国際仏教大学院大学研究紀要 8 (2004):43-93.

Shōshin omits Annen's citation of Ennin's *Commentary on the Susiddhikara Sūtra* (*Taishō* 61.393b13-26) and *Commentary on the Vajraśekhara Sūtra* (*Taishō* 61.39b7-16). In both passages, Ennin purports to cite the "ācārya of Daxingxiansi in the Great Tang" (大唐大興善寺阿闍梨). Annen, however, simply abbreviates this title, simply referring to this individual as "master" 師. See *Taishō* 75.403c6-15:

蘇悉地疏述師說云。教有二種。一顯示教。三乘是也。二祕密教。一乘是也。祕中又二。一唯理祕密。華嚴般若維摩法華涅槃等也。二事理俱密。大日金剛頂等也。金剛頂疏述師說云。法華明久遠成佛。此經明頓證成佛二說雖異實是一佛。

The master's explanation in the *Commentary on the Susiddhikara Sūtra* states, "The teachings have two types. The first are the exoteric teachings, which are the three vehicles. The second are the esoteric teachings, which are the one vehicle. Among the secret teaching, there are also two types. The first is the doctrine-only secret teaching, namely the *Avataṃsaka*, *Prajñāpāramitā*, *Vimalakīrti*, *Lotus*, *Nirvāṇa*, etc. The second is practice-and-doctrine secret teaching, namely the *Mahāvairocana* and *Vajraśekhara*. The master's explanation in the *Commentary on the Vajraśekhara Sūtra* states, "The *Lotus* illuminates becoming a buddha long ago. This sutra illuminates the sudden awakening to become a buddha. Although these two preachings differ, really this is the same buddha."

In the this essay, Shōshin seems to believe this person to have been Faquan. See Ōkubo 1998, 282n2.

However, master [Kū]kai differs from the interpretations of the other masters.<sup>62</sup> In Mahāyāna, it is difficult to simply distinguish between the shallow and profound and rank the stages of the path in which one obtains buddhahood.<sup>63</sup>

Again it states:

Master Yixing was originally a meditation master of the Tiantai single practice *samādhi*<sup>64</sup> and was able to obtain the full magnitude of Tiantai. Therefore, he generally unifies the passages, interpretations, and actions explained [in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*] with Tiantai.<sup>65</sup>

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62. Annen is referring to Kūkai's claim in the *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* that his Shingon school is superior to the teachings in the Mahāyāna sutras. Shōshin discusses this issue in Part Two, Section One.
63. Shōshin paraphrases another passage from Annen's *Interpretation of Teachings and Time Periods in the Shingon School*. See *Taishō* 75.403c6-15: 大日義釋。是無畏說。一行記。說云。此經本地之身即是妙法蓮華最深祕處。智儼溫古治定亦同。蘇悉地疏述師說云。教有二種。一顯示教。三乘是也。二祕密教。一乘是也。祕中又二。一唯理祕密。華嚴般若維摩法華涅槃等也。二事理俱密。大日金剛頂等也。金剛頂疏述師說云。法華明久遠成佛。此經明頓證成佛二說雖異實是一佛。而海和上於諸大乘輒判教理淺深果極高下難知矣。 The final line in Annen's original passage reads, "However, master [Kū]kai's ranking of the Mahāyāna [schools] in terms of the shallowness and depth of their teachings and attainment of the result [of buddhahood] is difficult to comprehend." In other words, Kūkai's taxonomy does not follow the normative rules for devising taxonomies of teachings in East Asian Buddhism. One might argue that this was due to the fact that he was introducing a new system of Buddhist doctrine. However, Annen and Shōshin imply that he did not properly understand scholastic Buddhism.
64. Oda lists several possible definitions for the term 一行三昧. See BDJ 59a-b. The most basic use of the term simply denotes the practitioners ability to obtain meditative absorption in a single form of practice. In the *Awakening of Faith*, it refers to the realization of the non-duality of the dharma body and the various birth bodies of the buddha. Bernard Faure also discusses this usage in "The Concept of One-Practice Samādhi in Early Ch'an," in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, edited by Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986). It may also refer to the first of the four types of *samādhi* in Tiantai, which consists of seated meditation. See Daniel B. Stevenson, "The four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism," in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, edited by Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986). In a slightly different use of the term, Zongmi also discusses one-practice *samādhi* in his *Chan Preface* as the highest of his five-fold taxonomy of chan practices. See *Taishō* 48.399b19. Finally, Oda notes that this term is sometimes synonymous with 念佛三昧. However, it is unclear based on context of this passage alone what exactly Annen meant by this phrase. Annen appears to be the first person to label Yixing a chan master of the single-practice *samādhi*. In this passage, he makes a polemical assertion that Yixing, the author of the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, was also adept at Tiantai practice.
65. Shōshin again quotes from Annen, but this time from his other major work on esoteric Buddhism, the *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta*. See *Taishō* 74.495b13-19: 一行和上元是天台一行三昧禪師能得天台圓滿宗趣。故凡所說文言義理動合天台。不空三藏門人含光歸天竺日。天竺僧問。傳聞彼國有天台教理致圓滿。可須翻譯將來此方乎云云此三藏旨亦合天台。今或阿闍梨云。欲學真言先共學天台。而門人皆瞋云云。

**418a7-a19:** 如此諸義既同。豈可二宗是異耶。故傳教大師上表云、眞言止觀其旨一故、於一山弘兩宗云云。講演法華義智證大師以眞言門釋法華云、爲救世人迷教、諍言法華所詮永異祕宗、破法趣向三惡道中云云。兜率僧都池上阿闍梨等諸先德皆云。眞言教行同天台義。今世末學何故違背將墜惡道耶。五大院教時諍云、天台四教開十六門攝一切宗。三藏有門攝俱舍論。空門攝成實論。藏通毘尼攝四分律。通教有門攝唯識論。別教有門攝華嚴宗<sup>66</sup>。別教空門攝三論計。圓教空門攝禪門傳。圓教有門攝眞言教。宗宗義理門門各會云云。

As I have noted, the various interpretations of [the esoteric teachings] were already the same as the [perfect teaching]. How could the two schools of [Shingon and Tendai] be any different? Thus, Dengyō Daishi {Saichō} writes in his memorial petition:

Because mantra and *shikan* have the same purport, both traditions are propagated on one mountain.<sup>67</sup>

In the *Lectures on the Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra*, (Chishō Daishi {Enchin}) interprets the *Lotus* through the gateway of mantra, stating:

[The first reason] is for the sake of saving people of this era from becoming confused about the teachings by arguing that sections from the *Lotus* are drastically different from the esoteric school, disparaging the dharma, and being reborn in the three evil destinations.<sup>68</sup>

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66. The version of Annen's *Debates on the Teachings and Time Periods* (*Kyōjijōron* 教時諍論) published in the *Taishō* uses the character 地 instead of 宗 and notes that an alternative manuscript has 經.

67. Ōkubo notes that the source of this quotation is unclear. This passage is also cited several times in Kōshū's 光宗 (1276–1350) *Keiran shūyō shū* 溪嵐拾葉集, a 113-fascicle collection of writings on Tendai esoteric Buddhism. However, Kōshū, like Shōshin, only states that Saichō said this phrase and does not provide a textual reference. See *Taishō* 76.532a23–29, 535a25–29, 537c24–28.

68. Shōshin paraphrases a passage at the end of the second fascicle of the *Nyū shingon mon jū nyojitsu ken kōen hokke ryaku gi* 入眞言門住如實見講演法華略儀. This work is traditionally attributed to Enchin. However, Ōkubo notes that the authenticity of this work is questionable. In a manuscript by Sōjitsu 相實 (ca. 1165), the text is simply labeled "a collection of the master's explanations" (師說集). See Ōkubo 1998, 284n2. The full passage is published in *DNBZ* 27.939b–940a:

問。此一釋是祕中又祕。經云。在所遊方勿妄宣傳。師師密授未聽顯示。然今輒記者何。

Question: Regarding the first interpretation {i.e., of the principle meaning of the *Samantabhadra Contemplation Sūtra*}, this is the secret within the esoteric teachings. The sutra states, "Wherever you travel, do not dishonestly transmit [the teachings]." {From the *Lotus Sūtra*, *Taishō* 9.15b7-9} The secret received from master to master is neither heard nor revealed. If this is case, why is it so easily recorded?"

答。一者爲救世人迷教諍言法華所詮永異祕宗。破法趣向三惡道中。二者爲示一代釋尊開演眞言更無他事。三者爲標所有顯教皆爲能詮。唯此祕宗即名所詮。四者爲返論義師輕毀阿闍梨云。但解呪印不達講經。五者令諸顯教疏師朗達彼經典有本源。故出此釋耳。

The director of Tosotsu,<sup>69</sup> the *ācārya* of Ikegami,<sup>70</sup> and other past virtuous ones all contended that the teachings and practices of Shingon are entirely the same as the Tendai doctrine. Why would recent scholiasts contradict this and fall into the evil destinations?

Godaiin's {i.e. Annen} *Debates on the Teachings and Time Periods* states:

In the four teachings of Tendai, the unpacking of the sixteen gateways encompasses all traditions.<sup>71</sup> The substance-approach of the *tripiṭaka* [teachings] consist of the *Abhidharmakośa*, and the emptiness-approach consists of the *Tattvasiddhi-śāstra*. The [precepts] for monks and nuns of the *tripiṭaka* [teachings] and shared [teachings] consists of the four-part vinaya. The substance-approach of the shared teachings consists of the

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Response: The first reason is for the sake of saving people in this era from becoming confused about the teachings by arguing that sections from the *Lotus* are drastically different from the esoteric school. This will cause them to disparage the dharma and be reborn in the three evil destinations. The second reason is for the sake of displaying the mantra preached during Śākyamuni's lifetime, but not other practices. The third reason is for the sake of pointing out matters not explained in the exoteric teachings for which only the esoteric school is said to have an explanation. The fourth reason is for the sake of defeating an opposing master in debate by citing the *ācārya*'s explanation of incantations and mudra that are not explicated in lectures and sutras. The fifth reason is to make the exegetes of the exoteric teachings aware of the source of the sutras. We only interpret the [esoteric teachings] for these reasons.

69. This title refers to Kakuchō 覺超 (960–1034), who was a prominent figure in Tendai during the mid-Heian period. According to his biography, he was a disciple of Ryōgen 良源 (912–985) and received *abhiseka* from Keien 慶圓 (944–1019), who was a Fujiwara related to the imperial family. Kakuchō became head of Tosotsuin as well as Shuryōgon'in 首楞嚴院 at Yokawa 横川 and is considered the founder of the Kawaryū 川流, one of the thirteen *taimitsu* lineages. He was originally from Izumi 和泉 located in modern day Osaka Prefecture, and his clan name was Kose 巨勢. See *Nihon jinmei daijiten* 日本人名大辞典, cited from JapanKnowledge (accessed on November 22, 2010), and Ono Tatsunosuke's 大野達之助 entry in *Kokushi daijiten* 国史大辞典, cited from JapanKnowledge (accessed on November 22, 2010).
70. This title refers to Kōgei 皇慶 (977–1049), who was a contemporary of Kakuchō. According to his biography, he was the great grandson of Tachibana no Hiromi 橘廣相 (837–890), a renowned scholar and scribe who in the service of Fujiwara Mototsune helped design the position of *kampaku*. Kōgei was also a nephew of Shōkū 性空 (910–1007), who was a disciple of Ryōgen. On Mt. Hiei, Kōgei studied under Jōshin 静真 (n.d.) and also studied Shingon in Kyūshū under Keiun 景雲 (n.d.). He founded the Taniryū lineage of *taimitsu* and was also referred to as the Tani Ācārya 谷阿闍梨. See *Nihon jinmei daijiten* 日本人名大辞典, cited from JapanKnowledge (accessed on November 22, 2010).
71. The phrase "opening the sixteen gateways" (開十六門) appears to be an invention of Annen. He employs this phrase to assert that each of the four teachings contains four methods for understanding that teaching. In other words, each of the four teachings can be understood to exist (有), be empty of existence (空), both exist and not exist (亦有亦無), and neither exist nor not exist (非有非無). He simply associates the *tripiṭaka* teachings with the *Abhidharmakośa*. The *Tattvasiddhi-śāstra* uses a similar scholastic approach to determining the causes of cognitive experience, but places a particular emphasis on emptiness. Therefore, Annen associates the text with the *tripiṭaka* teachings, but distinguishes it from the *Abhidharmakośa*. "Vinaya" refers specifically to the *Dharmagupta-vinaya*. The three treatises is a reference to the Sanron school. These three treatises are the *Madhyamaka-śāstra* (*Zhong lun* 中論) and *Dvādaśanikāya-śāstra* (*Shiermen lun* 十二門論) attributed to Nāgārjuna and the *Śata-śāstra* (*Bai lun* 百論) attributed to Āryadeva. All three were translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva. However, in Japan, the Sanron school was also associated with the writings of Jizang.

*Treatise on Consciousness Only*. The substance-approach of the distinct teachings consists of the Kegon school. The emptiness-approach of the distinct teachings includes the calculations of the *Three Treatises*. The emptiness-approach of the perfect teachings includes the transmission of methods for meditation. The substance-approach of the perfect teachings consists of the teaching of mantra.<sup>72</sup>

## (ii) Practice is the Same in the Two Schools

**418a20-a28:** 第二明行同者、略出五同。一者祕教觀門同法華。故義釋第八云、入阿字門即是毘盧遮那本地身也。如自觀心實相、諸法亦然。是故諸法皆悉甚深。唯佛與佛乃能證之。故法華云、諸佛兩足尊知法常無性、佛種從緣起。是故說一乘。統論彼經深趣。在斯一偈也。又云、觀行心中見佛真實加持身。故法華明深信解相則爲見佛常在耆闍崛山也。

Section two: I clarify that practice [in the two schools] is the same by briefly enumerating five points of congruence. First, the method of contemplation in the esoteric teachings is the same as in the *Lotus Sūtra*. Thus, the eighth fascicle of the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

If one enters the gateway of the 'a' syllable, then this is the original-ground body of Vairocana. The contemplation of all dharmas is just like contemplating one's own mind as having the ultimate characteristics [of Vairocana]. For this reason, all dharmas are extremely profound [and are difficult to perceive]. This can only be realized from buddha to buddha. Therefore, the *Lotus Sūtra* states, "The buddhas, the Honored Ones among the two-legged beings, know that dharmas are always without substance and that the seed of

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72. Ōkubo notes that this passage is actually from Annen's *Debates on the Teachings and Time Periods (Kyōjijōron 教時諍論)*, which is a revised and extended version of the earlier *Kyōjijō*. See Ōkubo 1998, 284n5. This passage is from *Taishō* 75.368c26-396a3. In this passage, Annen argues that Tendai constitutes all of the other schools. He refers to zen as the perfect teaching of emptiness, but elsewhere calls this the bodhidharma school. His main point in this passage is that Tendai encompasses the other schools. See Sueki 1995, 184-204.



buddhahood arises through dependent origination. Therefore, they preach the singular-vehicle."<sup>73</sup> This single verse governs the debate over the profound meaning of this sutra.<sup>74</sup>

Again, it states:

During contemplation practice, one perceives within his mind the buddha's ultimate body of empowerment. Thus, the *Lotus Sūtra* explains that if one has the characteristic of deeply believing and understanding, then he will perceive the buddha as he permanently abides on Mt. Gr̥dhrakūṭa.<sup>75</sup>

**418a29-b11:**二者同明中道三觀行。故義釋第二云、中道正觀即是心佛顯現。故曰正等覺句。又、即空即假即中故曰如實遍知。又第一釋方便為究竟云、以中智觀之。又云、方便波羅蜜滿足即是究竟不思議中道。又第七釋佛告毘俱胝汝住云、然此大悲忿怒劑至中道亦當止息。故佛告言姊妹汝住也云云。如此等文並以中道名為究竟。而他家云、中道唯初心者違諸文也。演密抄云、持明藏世修學者、但守文失意。多存有相、罕契中道云云。授決集云、謬誦真言、不會一心妙趣。恐不及於歷別之人。不證妙理云云。

Second, they both explain the practice of the three contemplations of the middle way. Thus, the second fascicle of the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states, "Correctly contemplating the middle way...this is the manifestation of the buddha in the mind. Therefore, the [sutra] calls this the state of supreme awakening."<sup>76</sup> It continues:

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73. Yixing quotes the "Skillful Means Chapter" in Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra* located in *Taishō* 9.9b6-9:未來世諸佛 雖說百千億 無數諸法門 其實為一乘 諸佛兩足尊 知法常無性 佛種從緣起 是故說一乘。For an English translation of this passage, see Hurvitz 1976, 41. Hurvitz also notes that the Sanskrit version of this passage reads somewhat differently: "For permanent is this dharma-eye, and the nature of the dharmas ever radiant. Having seen [this eye,] the Buddhas, the Supreme among the Two-Legged Beings, shall set forth my One Vehicle." See Hurvitz 1976, 352n11.

74. This passage on the method of the A-syllable is from *ZTZm* 1:380a. This passage is not found in the *Taishō* version of Yixing's commentary.

75. Shōshin quotes the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in *ZTZm*1:407a. Again, this passage is not found in the *Taishō* version of the *Commentary*.

Yixing paraphrases a passage from the "Differentiating Merits Chapter" in Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra* located in *Taishō* 9.45b16-18:阿逸多。若善男子善女人。聞我說壽命長遠深心信解。則為見佛常在耆闍崛山。Hurvitz translates this passage as, "O Ajita! If a good man or a good woman, hearing me preach of the great length of my life-span, with profound thought believes and understands, then he or she thereby shall ever see the Buddha on Gr̥dhrakūṭa Mountain..." Hurvitz 1976, 252.

76. Shōshin is paraphrasing a passage in the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in *ZTZm*1:80a:中道正觀離有為無為界極無自性心生。即是心佛顯現。故曰正等覺句。In this passage, Yixing is commentating on a line at the end of the first chapter of the sutra. See *Taishō* 18.4a5-9:

Annotated Translation: Textual Sources

Because [all things that conditionally arise] are simultaneously empty, provisionally existent, and the middle, [the sutra] says, "One truly and universally knows [all thoughts in the mind]."<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, the first fascicle interprets the phrase "skillful means is the ultimate," stating, "Contemplate based on the wisdom of the middle way."<sup>78</sup>

Again, it states:

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祕密主。應如是了知大乘句心句。無等等句必定句。正等覺句漸次大乘生句。當得具足法財。出生種種工巧大智。如實遍知一切心想。

Lord of Mysteries, in this manner one should understand this state of the Great Vehicle, this state of the mind, this state of what is equal to the unequalled, this state of certainty, this state of perfect and full awakening, and this state of gradual birth in the Great Vehicle. One will [then] be able to completely possess the riches of the dharma, bring forth great knowledge with various skills, and fully know all notions about the mind as it really is. Giebel 2005, 14.

Based on the context of this passage from the sutra, the phrase "state of supreme awakening" (正等覺句) denotes awakening as a buddha, or *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*. The term "phrase" 句 is generally used to demarcate a semantic phrase, verse, or a citation of the sutra or the buddha's teaching. See BDJ 276b. However, in this section of the sutra, it seems to suggest a mental state or condition.

77. This quote is from the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in ZTZm1:80a:若於一念心中明見十緣生義。則上窮無盡法界下極無盡衆生界。其中一切心相皆能了了覺知。以皆從緣起即空即假即中。故曰如實遍知一切心相。Yixing is commenting on the final line in the first chapter of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*: "Truly and universally know all thoughts" (如實遍知一切心想). The phrase "precisely empty, precisely provisional, precisely middle" alludes to the Tiantai doctrine of the three truths.

78. Shōshin quotes from the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in ZTZm1:22a:經云。佛告金剛手。菩提心爲因。大悲爲根。方便爲究竟者。猶如世間種子藉四大衆緣〔故〕得生根。如是次第乃至果實成就名爲究竟。然以中智觀之。畢竟不生不滅非不生非不滅。是故因果義成。The term 中智 denotes the wisdom of the middle way. See RB 757. In this passage, Yixing points out that the notion of skillful means in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* is the same as in the *Lotus Sūtra*. The sutra passage is found in *Taishō* 18.1c1-5:

佛言菩提心爲因。悲爲根本。方便爲究竟。祕密主云何菩提。謂如實知自心。祕密主是阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。乃至彼法。少分無有可得。何以故。虛空相是菩提無知解者。亦無開曉。何以故。菩提無相故。祕密主諸法無相。謂虛空相。

The buddha said, "The *bodhi*-mind is its cause, compassion is its root, and expedient means is its culmination. Lord of Mysteries, what is *bodhi*? It means to know one's mind as it really is. Lord of Mysteries, this is *anuttarā-samyak-sambodhi*, and there is not the slightest part of it that can be apprehended. Why? [Because] *bodhi* has the characteristic of empty space, and there is no one to comprehend it, nor is there any understanding of it. Why? Because *bodhi* has no [differentiating] characteristics. Lord of Mysteries, all dharmas are without characteristics. That is to say, they have the characteristic of empty space. Giebel 2005, 5.

If one fulfills the perfection of skillful means,<sup>79</sup> then this is the ultimately inconceivable middle way.<sup>80</sup>

The seventh fascicle interprets a passage in which the buddha addresses Bhṛkuṭi saying, "You, abide!" and states, "Accordingly, this wrathful [form] of great compassion attains the middle way and settles into quiescence. Hence, the buddha addresses her saying, "You abide!"<sup>81</sup> Several passages such as these also call the middle way the ultimate. However, the other school claims that the middle way is only the initial mind, and this differs from many texts.<sup>82</sup>

The *Compendium of Expounded Secrets* states:

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79. In many Mahāyāna texts, including the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, the traditional six pāramitās are extended to ten: *dāna*, *śīla*, *kṣānti*, *vīrya*, *dhyāna*, *prajñā*, plus *upāya*, *prañidhāna* (vow), *bala* (power), and *jñāna* (omniscient wisdom).

80. Shōshin quotes from the *Interpretation of the Meaning of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in ZTZm1:28b.

81. This quote paraphrases a passage in the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in ZTZm1:279a:佛謂毘俱胝言。姊妹汝住。彼即住立而白佛言。唯佛所教救我當奉行。於是諸執金剛怖畏亦除。皆大歡喜言。此大悲者而能現此威猛大勢甚希有也。所以然者。執金剛眷屬用畢竟空智摧滅人法惑顛倒無復遺餘。乘此威猛之勢并欲損壞大悲功德。是故觀自在者為護蓮華藏故以毘俱胝三昧伏而折之。然此大悲忿怒齊至中道并當止息。故佛告言姊妹汝住也。

The *Taishō* version provides a different interpretation of this passage. See *Taishō* 39.681c29-682a2-6: 時觀音額上現此菩薩。西方謂額上現文為毘俱胝。如今人忿時額上有皺也。此菩薩現身作大忿怒之狀。時諸金剛皆生怖心。入金剛藏身中。時彼毘俱胝進至執金剛藏前。時彼亦大怖畏。入如來座下而言。願佛護我。時佛謂彼毘俱胝言。姊妹汝住。時毘俱知即住已白佛。唯佛所教救我當奉行。

Both versions elaborate on Bhṛkuṭi's mantra recited in the sutra in *Taishō* 18.14b5-7:

大毘俱胝眞言曰 南麼三曼多勃駄喃一薩婆陪也怛囉 二合引 散爾平 二 禰薩破 二合 吒也三莎 訶四。

The mantra of Great Bhṛkuṭi: Namaḥ samantabuddhānāṃ, sarvabhayaatrāsani hūṃ sphotaya svāhā. (Homage to all buddhas! O you who frighten away all fears! hūṃ! rend! svāhā!). Giebel 2005, 60.

The *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* states that Bhṛkuṭi was born from the crown of Avalokiteśvara's head and notes that this is the meaning of the bodhisattva's Sanskrit name. The *Taishō* version, however, states that Bhṛkuṭi is said to be born out of Avalokiteśvara's crown because he is in the westward direction, that is, directly above Avalokiteśvara in the mandala. In the *genzu* version of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala, Bhṛkuṭi is located north east of Avalokiteśvara on the center dais. See MJ 577.

82. Shōshin is specifically referring to Kūkai's argument in the eight stage of the *Ten Abiding Minds* and in parts of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* that the ultimate level for Tendai is merely the beginning stage for the Shingon practitioner.

Regarding the treasury of incantations...practitioners in this world merely cling to the words and lose their purport. They frequently uphold the form [of these teachings], but rarely adopt the middle way.<sup>83</sup>

The *Collections of Decisions* states:

To error in chanting mantra means one does not encounter the wondrous intent of unifying the mind [in the three contemplations]. Perhaps, this is inappropriate for a practitioner of the distinct [teachings], who will not realize its wondrous meaning.<sup>84</sup>

**418b12-b16:**三者同明自心成佛行。故義釋云、供養自心如來、證自心菩提云云。此同天台觀心。彼云、觀己心高廣、叩無窮聖應云云。教時義云、圓人初心事理具足。此義的與此宗意同云云。

Third, they both clarify the practice of becoming a buddha in one's own mind. Thus, the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

Exalting the tathāgata in one's own mind is to realize *bodhi* in one's own mind.<sup>85</sup>

This is the same as the Tendai notion of observing the mind. [Zhiyi] states:

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83. This passage is from Jueyuan's sub-commentary on the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See ZZK 37:15b:持明藏或宗分或條流雖傳譯久矣然世修學之者但守文失意多存有相牽契中道。Shōshin omits a portion of the passage. Basically, this passage asserts that the middle way and the practice of mantra are the same, although many practitioners of the latter mistakenly presume they are different.

84. Shōshin paraphrases a line from *Enchin's Collection of Decisions (Juketsushū 授決集)*, one of the few works attributed to Enchin for whose authenticity most scholars tend to agree upon. Enchin wrote this letter to his disciple Ryōyū 良勇 (854–923) to explain the oral teachings he received while residing at Chanlinsi on Mt. Tiantai. See Tajima Tokuon's entry on this text in BKJ 5.107-108. The original passage can be found in *DNBZ* 26.389b and *Taishō* 74.309b9-10:謬誦真言不會三觀一心妙趣。恐同別人不證妙理。Shōshin's quotation differs slightly from the passage in Enchin's text. Rather than "inappropriate for a practitioner of the distinct [teachings]," the original passage states, "in the same way a practitioner of the distinct teachings." The term 妙趣 is an abbreviation of 微妙旨趣. See BDJ 1729b.

85. The precise source of Shōshin's quotation is unclear, but he appears to be alluding to a passage in Yixing's commentary that summarizes the meaning of the first chapter of the sutra. See *ZTZm*1:3b-4a:此品統論經之大意。所謂衆生自心即是一切智智。如實了知名爲一切智者。是故此教諸菩薩。直以真語爲門。自心發菩提。即心具萬行。見心正等覺。證心大涅槃。發起心方便。嚴淨心佛國。從因至果。皆以無所住而住其心。故曰入真言門住心品也。 The *Taishō* version is identical. See *Taishō* 39.579b21-27. However, it is important to note that neither of these passages refer to the "tathāgata in one's own mind." Rather, Yixing simply states that through the gateway of the "true speech" of bodhisattvas one gives rise to *bodhicitta*. He explains that the main point of this chapter is that the so-called "individual minds of sentient beings" in the sutra are really just the wisdom of all wisdoms, in the same way that having complete knowledge of reality is called "universal wisdom."

Contemplating the expansion of your own mind establishes an inexhaustible resonance with the buddha.<sup>86</sup>

The *Interpretation of Teachings* states:

For the practitioner of the perfect teachings, the initial mind [toward giving rise to *bodhi*] is replete with phenomena and principle.<sup>87</sup> This interpretation is exactly the same purport as this school {i.e. mantra school}.<sup>88</sup>

**418b17-19:** 四者同明速疾成佛行。故無量義云、即於是身得無生忍。天台云、一生超登十地。義釋云、現身證十地波羅蜜云云。

Fourth, they both clarify the practice of rapidly becoming a buddha. Thus, the [*Sūtra of Innumerable Meanings*] states:

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86. Shōshin cites Zhiyi's *Fahua wenju*. The text was based on Zhiyi's lectures in 587, which were edited and redacted by Guanding in 629. See *Taishō* 34.2b9-10: 但觀己心之高廣。扣無窮之聖應。機成致感速得己利。故用觀心釋也。Ishida defines the concept of 叩無窮聖應 as an endless or continual resonance with the buddha. See RB 551, 1043. For a study of the notion of resonance in Chinese Buddhist thought, see Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise*, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism 14 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 82-97.

87. The compound 事理具足, or alternatively 理事, is a technical term denoting the totality of all phenomena (事) and the underlying principle (理) forming the basis of all phenomena. This concept is often explained through a variety of analogies, such as function and essence (用體), or characteristics and nature (相性). See BDJ 997a-b.

88. Shōshin cites a passage from Annen's *Interpretation of Teachings* in which Annen equates the Tendai perfect teachings and the teaching of mantra. See *Taishō* 75.381c20-21: 天台宗云。佛果已滿從事而說。初地初住分具十界。乃至凡夫但是理具。又云。圓人初心事理具足。此義的與此宗意同。In this passage, Annen refers to the Tendai structure of the path, which stipulates that the initial ground (初地) in the distinct teachings actually occurs in an earlier stage of initial abiding (初住) on the path according to the perfect teaching. Typically, the practitioner of the perfect teachings arouses *bodhicitta* and begins the path toward becoming a buddha at the stage of the initial abode. The Shingon/mantra teachings also allow for practitioners in the worldling stages to give rise to *bodhicitta*. Thus, Annen argues that the Tendai and mantra schools are the same in this regard. As Ōkubo points out, Annen proposed that this development actually occurred much earlier in the worldling stages. See Ōkubo 1998, 289n3.

In this body one attains the patient awareness of the non-arising [of phenomena].<sup>89</sup>

Tendai {Zhiyi} states:

In a single lifetime, one transcends the ten stages.<sup>90</sup>

The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

In the present body, one realizes the perfection of the ten stages.<sup>91</sup>

**418b20-21:**五者同明即身成佛義。故法華龍女即身成佛。眞言亦同云云。

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89. This passage is from the *Sūtra of Immeasurable Meaning* (*Wuliangyi jing* 無量義經), which is one of the three texts constituting the three-fold *Lotus Sūtra* in the Tiantai school. For the full passage, see *Taishō* 9.388c1-4: 是故善男子、善女人即於是身、得無生法忍、得至上地、與諸菩薩以為眷屬、速能成就眾生淨佛國土、不久得成無上菩提。是名是經第八功德不思議力。 Traditionally, this text was thought to have been translated into Chinese by Dharmagātayaśas (Tanmoquietuoyeshe 曇摩伽陀耶舍) in 481, but recently scholars have doubted this attribution. For an early critique of this attribution, see Ōchō Enichi 橫超慧日, “Muryōgikyō ni tsuite” 無量義經について, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 22 (1954):100-109. The application of the term 忍 in the phrase *wusheng faren* 無生法忍 seems to differ from the standard notion of endurance or forbearance. See Genjun Sasaki, “Khanti, kānti, ksānti,” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 13 (1) (1958):359-354. However, Shōshin is probably paraphrasing Saichō's commentary on the *Sūtra of Immeasurable Meaning*, the *Chū muryōgi kyō* 註無量義經. See Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, *Saichō no shisō to tendai mikkyō* 最澄の思想と天台密教 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2015), 12.

90. Shōshin is referencing passage in Zhiyi's other major commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Fahua xuanyi*. See *Taishō* 33.702a28-b1:

然圓教肉身於一生中。有超登十地之義。此則煩惱已破無地獄業。猶有肉身未免惡獸。餘教肉身一生之中。不登十地。

Accordingly, the perfect teachings are the interpretation that the physical body transcends the ten grounds in a single lifetime. If the afflictions have already been eradicated, then there is no karma causing one to be reborn in the hell realm. However, if one has a physical body, then he has not yet overcome the evil and animal destinies. In the other teachings, the physical body cannot ascend the ten grounds in a single lifetime.

91. Shōshin is paraphrasing a passage from *ZTZm1:4a*:乃至能於此生滿足地波羅蜜。 Note that Yixing does not state that the practitioner transcends all ten *bhūmi* in a single lifetime, just the perfection of the *bhūmi*(s). Shōshin also discusses this problem with path structure in the *Hokke gengi shiki* (*DNBZ* 21.90c), *Hokkesho shiki* (*DNBZ* 22.676a), and *Shikan shiki* (*DNBZ* 22.1076a).

Fifth, they both clarify the doctrine of becoming a buddha in this very body. Thus, the *nāga*-girl in the *Lotus Sūtra* became a buddha in her current body.<sup>92</sup> This is the same in the Shingon school.

### (iii) The Preacher of the Sutra is the Same in the Two Schools

**418b22-c1:**第三明人同者。一者同明久遠成佛果。故義釋云、此經是法王祕寶、不妄示卑賤之人。如釋迦四十餘年、慇懃三請方說妙法蓮華。今此本地之身是妙法蓮華最深祕密處。故壽量品云、常在靈鷲山及餘諸住處。即此宗瑜伽之意略抄。金剛頂疏云、今經頓成、法華久成。雖有傍正二佛不異。故大興善寺阿闍梨云、法華久遠成佛。只是此經毘盧遮那。不可異解云云。

Section Three: I clarify that the preacher is the same [in the two schools].<sup>93</sup> First, they both explain that buddhahood occurred long ago. The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

This sutra is the secret treasure of dharma kings, and it is inappropriate to reveal it to lowly people. It is similar to when in the latter forty years of his life, Śākyamuni was reverently asked three times to preach the *Wondrous Law of the Lotus*. This source body [of the buddha] is the locus for the most profound secret of the *Wondrous Law of the Lotus*.

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92. The story of the *nāga*-girl appears in the "Devadatta Chapter" of Kumārajīva's translation. See *Taishō* 9.35b27-c26. For an English translation, see Hurvitz 1976, 200-201. For more on Tendai notions of buddhahood, see Paul Groner, "Shortening the Path: Early Tendai Interpretations of the Realization of Buddhahood with This Very Body (*Sokushin Jōbutsu*)," in *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and its Transformation in Buddhist Thought* (Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism no. 7), edited by Robert Buswell and Robert Gimello (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), 439-473. Shōshin discusses the issue of becoming a buddha in the current body at length in his essay on Zhiyi's *Fahua wenju* in his *Personal Notes on the Three Major Works of Tendai*. See *DNBZ* 22.706b.

93. The term "preacher" (人) refers to both the buddha who preaches the sutra (教主) and the person with the appropriate capability to hear it (機根). A major difference between the Tendai and Kūkai's interpretations of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* is that Annen and the Tendai esoteric school uphold the classical Tiantai doctrine that the teachings are always adapted to the capabilities of the practitioner. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* rejects this notion and asserts that the teachings in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* are directly spoken by the dharma body of the buddha. Based on this text, later *tōmitsu* scholastics contended that the Shingon teachings are superior, because they are not adapted to the needs of the practitioner, but rather are the unaltered truth of the dharma body.

Annotated Translation: Textual Sources

Therefore, the "Longevity Chapter" states, "I always dwell on Mt. Ḡḍhrakūṭa as well as many other locations."<sup>94</sup> This is simply the meaning of "yoga."<sup>95</sup>

(I have abbreviated the text.)

The *Commentary on the Vajraśekhara* states:

The buddha in this sutra suddenly awakens, and the buddha in the *Lotus Sūtra* awoke long ago. Although there are secondary and primary [modes of awakening], the two buddhas do not differ. For this reason, the *ācārya* of Daxingshansi said, "The long-ago realized buddhahood of the *Lotus Sūtra* is merely Vairocana of this sutra. It cannot be interpreted any other way."<sup>96</sup>

**418c2-21:** 二者同名毘盧遮那佛。故觀經云、釋迦牟尼名毘盧遮那。大日經云、毘盧遮那。又云、釋迦牟尼入寶處三昧云云。德圓和上遣唐疑問云、觀經云、釋迦名遮那。法華文句云、釋迦遮那乃是異名非異體義。玄義云、三佛不一不異。今天台門人依上文云、遮那釋迦同體別名。又大日經云、華臺大日。初門釋迦。疏云、遮那法門眷屬為第一、釋迦生身眷屬為第二。今真言宗人依上文云、法華經佛為劣、大日經遮那為勝。此義云何。宗穎和尚決云、釋迦遮那一體異名也。只赴緣以假示。實無中邊。只見一體之差別、不識差別之一體。大日為勝釋迦為劣者、太昧平等之體理。仍違經文。大日經云、願大牟尼說。

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94. This quotation of Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra* is from Yixing's commentary. For the original passage, see *Taishō* 9.43c05.

95. This quote is an abbreviation of a longer passage in the commentary. See *ZTZm*1:202a-b: 不共一切聲聞緣覺亦非世尊普為一切衆生者。此經是法王祕寶不妄示卑賤之人。如釋迦出世四十餘年因舍利弗等慇懃三請方為略說妙法蓮華義。今此本地之身。又是妙法蓮華最深祕密處。故壽量品云常在靈鷲山及餘所住處。乃至我淨土不毀而衆見燒盡。即此宗瑜伽之意耳。

In this passage, Yixing explicates a passage from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. *Taishō* 18.10c2-6:

爾時執金剛祕密主白佛言。希有世尊。佛說不思議真言相道法。不共一切聲聞緣覺。亦非普為一切衆生。若信此真言道者。諸功德法皆當滿足。唯願世尊。次說漫荼羅所須次第。如是說已。

Then the vajradhara Lord of Mysteries said to the buddha, "World-honored One, the inconceivable method of the path of the characteristics of mantras taught by the buddha is remarkable; it is not shared with any śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas, nor is it for all beings everywhere. If one believes in this mantra path, meritorious dharmas will all be fulfilled." Giebel 2005, 44.

96. This passage is from Ennin's commentary on the first chapter of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. Shōshin's citation varies slightly from the *Taishō* version. See *Taishō* 61.39b12-16: 今此經。為顯頓證之相。是故廣演此現證相略說。彼久成事雖有傍正。二佛不異。是故大唐大興善寺阿闍梨云。彼法華久遠成佛。只是此經毘盧遮那佛。Ennin does not explicitly compare this sutra with the *Lotus Sūtra*. Shōshin is probably quoting from Annen's paraphrasing of this commentary, not the original. See Annen's quotation of this passage in the *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta* in *Taishō* 75.509a26-b7.



Annotated Translation: Textual Sources

觀經云、釋迦名遮那。華嚴云、或名釋迦、或名遮那云云。略抄。授決集云、大日即釋迦、釋迦即大日。遍一切處本來常住無始無終。若不然者非法華實相妙極之旨云云。私云、色頂報佛。靈山應佛。於圓即是實相法身。故彼此佛同是法身。彼報應者非宗正意也。

Second, they both call [the preacher] Vairocana Buddha. Thus, the *Contemplation Sūtra* states, "Śākyamuni is called Vairocana."<sup>97</sup> The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* says, "Vairocana." It also says, "Śākyamuni enters the place of jewels *samādhi*."<sup>98</sup>

Master Tokuen's question sent to Tang states:

The *Contemplation Sūtra* states, "Śākyamuni is named Vairocana." The *Passages and Phrases from the Lotus Sūtra* states, "Śākyamuni and Vairocana go by different names, but this does not mean they have a different essence."<sup>99</sup> The *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra* states, "The three buddhas are neither the same nor different."<sup>100</sup> Now,

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97. This title is an abbreviation of the *Sūtra on Contemplating the Rites for Samantabhadra Bodhisattva* (*Guan puxian pusa xingfa jing* 觀普賢菩薩行法經), translated by Dharmamitra (Tanmomiduo 曇摩蜜多). The full passage reads: *Taishō* 9.392c15-16:

釋迦牟尼名毘盧遮那遍一切處。其佛住處名常寂光。

Śākyamuni is named Vairocana, who is universally in all places. The location where this buddha abides is called "eternally tranquil radiance."

This passage is the basis for Tiantai buddha-body theory, which stipulates that Śākyamuni and Vairocana are simply two names for the buddha.

98. Shōshin is referring to a list of mantras in the fourth chapter, "Treasury of Mantras," of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. This particular line is followed by a mantra to Samantabhadra. See *Taishō* 18.14c15-16:

時釋迦牟尼世尊。入於寶處三昧。說自心及眷屬真言曰。

Then the World-honored One Śākyamuni entered the *samādhi* "Place of Jewels" and uttered his own heart[-mantra] and the mantras of his attendants. Giebel 2005, 61.

99. Zhiyi also discusses the relationship between these buddhas in the *Fahua wenju*. See *Taishō* 34.128a20-29, specifically the following line:

普賢觀結成法華文云、釋迦牟尼名毘盧遮那。乃是異名非別體也。總衆經之意。當知三佛非一異明矣。

A line from the *Samantabhadra Contemplation Sūtra*, the caping sutra to the *Lotus Sūtra*, states that Śākyamuni is called Vairocana. Their names are different, but they do not differ in essence. This is the purport of all of the sutras. You should know that the three forms of the buddha are neither the same nor different.

100. This passage is from Zhiyi's *Fahua xuanyi*. See *Taishō* 33.746c12-15:

第六明感應妙者。上來四妙名爲圓因。三法祕藏名爲圓果。境妙究竟顯名毘盧遮那。智妙究竟滿名盧舍那。行妙究竟滿名釋迦牟尼。三佛不一異不縱橫。故名妙果。

students of Tendai, based on the above passages, will say, "Vairocana and Śākyamuni have the same essence and different names." Furthermore, the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* states, "Upon the lotus dais is Mahāvairocana and at the first gate is Śākyamuni."<sup>101</sup> This *Commentary* states, "The retinue of Vairocana and his teachings are at the first level, and the retinue of the birth-body of Śākyamuni are at the second level."<sup>102</sup> Now, those in the mantra school, based on the above passage, will say, "The buddha of the *Lotus Sūtra* is inferior, and Vairocana of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* is superior." What do you say about this interpretation?<sup>103</sup>

Master Zongying offers his decision, stating:

Śākyamuni and Vairocana are different names for the same essence. It is merely due to conditions that these names are provisionally expressed. Actually, there is neither a center nor periphery. If one just perceives the differentiation of this single essence, then he is not aware of the single essence that is differentiated. The notion that Mahāvairocana is superior and Śākyamuni is inferior greatly obscures the fundamental principle that they are equivalent. Therefore, this claim differs from the sutra passages. The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* states, "I humbly request, Great Sage, that you preach."<sup>104</sup> The *Contemplation Sūtra*

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Sixth, clarifying the wonder of resonance: The above four wonders are called the "perfect cause." The secret treasury of the three points of the dharma is called the "perfect result." The ultimate manifestation of the wonder of domain is Vairocana. The ultimate fulfillment of the wonder of wisdom is Locana. The ultimate fulfillment of the wonder of practice is Śākyamuni. The three buddhas are neither the same nor different, neither hierarchical nor equivocal. Therefore, they are called the wondrous results.

101. Shōshin paraphrases Tokuen's citation. The sutra reads somewhat differently. See *Taishō* 18.6c17: 從此華臺中大日勝尊現。
102. The *Tōketsu* predates the arrival of the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in Japan. Therefore, Tokuen must be citing the *Taishō* version. See *Taishō* 39:633c2-6: 已安立第一漫荼羅上首諸尊竟。次往第二院畫釋迦牟尼。阿闍梨言。此中第二是隱密語耳。若從中向外。當以釋迦牟尼眷屬為第三院。今則以毘盧遮那法門眷屬為第一。釋迦牟尼生身眷屬為第三。諸菩薩在悲智之間上求下化。故為第二。The manuscript used in the *Taishō* version differs from the *Tōketsu* regarding the position of Śākyamuni in the mandala. An accurate rendition of Tokuen's question is found in *ZTZm* 1.143b: 次往第二院畫sa釋kya迦mu牟尼。阿闍梨言。此中第二是隱密語耳。若從中向外。當以釋迦牟尼眷屬為第三院。今則以毘盧遮那法門眷屬為第一。釋迦牟尼生身眷屬為第二。諸菩薩在悲智之間上求下化。故為第三。
103. Shōshin paraphrases an exchange from question six of Tokuen's *Questions and Zongying's Responses*. See *SNDK* 78.216-217. I discuss this text in the first section of Part One of the translation.
104. Shōshin paraphrases Zongying's full response, which identifies Vairocana as the Great Sage. The original passage in the sutra is in the form of a *gāthā*. See *Taishō* 18.2a7-15:

爾時執金剛祕密主。復以偈問佛 云何世尊說 此心菩提生 復以云何相 知發菩提心 願識心心  
勝 自然智生說 大勤勇幾何 次第心續生 心諸相與時 願佛廣開演 功德聚亦然 及彼行修  
行 心心有殊異 惟大牟尼說 如是說已。

Annotated Translation: Textual Sources

states, "Śākyamuni is called Vairocana."<sup>105</sup> The *Avataṃsaka* states, "In some cases he is called Śākyamuni, and in some cases he is called Vairocana."<sup>106</sup>

(I have abbreviated the text.)

The *Collection of Decisions* states:

Mahāvairocana is Śākyamuni, Śākyamuni is Mahāvairocana. They universally permeate all places, and constantly abide without beginning or end. If this is not the case, then there is no purpose to the wondrous and ultimate teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>107</sup>

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Then the vajradhara Lord of Mysteries again questioned the buddha in verse: "How, World-honored One, do you explain the arising of *bodhi* in this mind? And by what signs does one know that one has generated the *bodhi*-mind? I beg you to explain the arising of the knowing mind, the mind, and excellent spontaneous knowledge. Great Striving Hero (mahāvīra), through how many stages does the mind successively arise? I beg you, O Buddha, to explain in full the characteristics of the mind and the time [necessary to attain *bodhi*], as well as the mass of merits and the practice of cultivated practices, the mind and the distinctions possessed by the mind—please, O Great Muni, explain them!" Giebel 2005, 7.

105. This is the same passage cited above from the *Sūtra on Contemplating the Rites for Samantabhadra Bodhisattva* in *Taishō* 9.392c15-16.

106. This line is taken from a passage in Śikṣānanda's translation of the eighty-fascicle *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (completed around 699) in which the text explains how the buddhas of the ten directions all have various bodies, speech, locations, sizes, etc., and that sentient beings are aware of these characteristics in a variety of manifestations, all of which are metaphors or epithets for the buddha. See *Taishō* 10.58c14-18:

諸佛子。如來於此四天下中。或名圓滿月。或名師子吼。或名釋迦牟尼。或名第七仙。或名毘盧遮那。或名瞿曇氏。或名大沙門。或名最勝。或名導師。如是等。其數十千。令諸衆生。各別知見。

Disciples of the buddha, the tathāgata descends from the four heavens in all directions {i.e. the center for the ten directions 十方中}. In some cases, he is called a full lunar-disc, a lion's roar, Śākyamuni, the Seventh Sage {i.e. the seventh buddha of this world, Śākyamuni}, Vairocana, Gautama, the Great Monk, the most Supreme, or the Teacher. In such a manner, there are tens of thousands of titles, permitting sentient beings to perceive them.

107. This passage is from Enchin's *Juketsushū*. See note above on the authenticity of this text. In this line, Enchin summarizes a previous discussion of the passage from the *Samantabhadra Contemplation Sūtra*. He interprets the above passage to mean that all Mahāyāna texts explain that Śākyamuni and Vairocana are identical and that both are omnipresent and eternally abide without a beginning. See *Taishō* 74.308b8-11: 唯見大日法身即釋迦牟尼。釋迦牟尼即大日法身。遍一切處本來常住無始無終 云云。若不然者。皆小乘義也。絕非法華實相妙極之旨矣。

I interpret this to mean that the buddha of reward resides in the upper level of the realm of form {i.e. Akanīṣṭha Heaven}, and the buddha of response resides on Vulture Peak. According to the perfect teachings, they are both the dharma body in its ultimate form.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, these buddhas are both the dharma body. The [preacher] as the reward or response body [of the buddha] is not the correct purport of our school.

**418c22-c26:** 三者同明佛果是中道。故理趣釋云、金剛大空智處加持者、表如來於中道。又釋金剛手、抽擲五智金剛杵唱咩字、字即契中道云云。私云、此等諸文並以中道爲果佛。而他家云、中道是初心者、即違之也。

Third, they both clarify that buddhahood is the middle way. Thus, the *Interpretation of the Principle* states:

The "empowerment at the point of the wisdom of great emptiness in the vajra" expresses the tathāgata through the middle way.<sup>109</sup>

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108. The term 實相法身 is found in several lists explaining the qualities of the dharma body of the buddha. It is often associated with Huayan, where it is one of the five categories of the dharma body enumerated in the Chengguan's commentaries on the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. See BDJ 899c and 1606c. However, in his sub-commentary, the *Dafanguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, Chengguan attributes this five-part definition of the dharma body to Kumārajīva's disciple Sengrui. See *Taishō* 36.27c29-28a7. Jizang, in his commentary on the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, also associates this term with Kumārajīva. See *Taishō* 38.b8-10. This term also appears in several of Zhiyi's commentaries. The application of this term may differ between the Huayan and Tiantai schools, but it is generally used as a personification of emptiness. The dharma body is ultimate form, because it is the same as emptiness. Therefore, it's "ultimate form" is that it does not have form.

109. The quote is from the *Liqushi* (*Dale jingang bukong zhenshi sanmeiye jing banruo boluomiduo liqushi* 大樂金剛不空真實三昧耶經般若波羅蜜多理趣釋), Amoghavajra's commentary on the *Adhyarthaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (*Dale jingang bukong zhenshi sanmeiye jing* 大樂金剛不空真實三摩耶經). For the full passage, see *Taishō* 19.607a22-29: 一切如來者。准瑜伽教中五佛是也。其五佛者。即盡虛空遍法界無盡無餘佛。聚成此五身也。金剛加持者。表如來十真如十法界十如來地。以成上下十峰金剛大空智處。加持者。表如來於中道十六大菩薩普賢智。從此展轉流出。共成三十七位。已成解脫輪大曼荼羅。三昧耶智者。誓也亦曼荼羅也。 In this passage in the opening of the commentary, Amoghavajra explains the meaning of the phrase "empowered by the adamant wisdom of the great emptiness" (金剛大空智處加持) in the context of the five buddhas of the *vajraśekhara* yoga teachings and proposes that they denotes the totality of the buddha in all worlds throughout the *dharmadhātu* as expressed in five bodies. The "empowerment of the vajra" expresses the tathāgata as the ten-fold suchness, ten-fold *dharmadhātu*, ten grounds of the tathāgata, which are the upper and lower peaks. Shōshin's point is that this ritual commentary by Amoghavajra also equates the vajra-yoga tradition with the Mahāyāna notion of the middle way. Oda defines 大空智 as the realization that all phenomena are empty, a general reference to the Mahāyāna notion of *śūnyata*. In esoteric Buddhism, the A-syllable of the Sanskrit alphabet came to symbolize this concept. See BDJ 1129a. For a study of the *Liqushi* and its significance in Japan, see Wayne Thomas Gelfman, "The *Rishukyo* and its Influence on Kūkai: The Identity of the Sentient Being with the Buddha," (Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1979).

Moreover, [the *Interpretation of the Principle*] interprets the meaning of Vajrapāṇi, stating that when he wields the five-pronged vajra and utters the 'un' syllable, the syllable encompasses the middle way.<sup>110</sup> I say that these passages both take the middle way to be the fruits of buddhahood. However, the other school's claim that the middle way is the initial mind differs from this passage.

**418c27-419a2:** 四者祕教佛德同天台。故義釋第十四云、普賢是菩提心、文殊是慧、彌勒是慈。此菩提心即是大日。不離大日、而有菩提心也乃至。當知、準說之萬德皆爾。猶如天台法身般若解脫略抄。

Fourth, the merits of the buddha in the esoteric teachings is the same as in Tendai. Thus, the fourteenth fascicle of the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

Samantabhadra is the *bodhi* mind, Mañjuśrī is wisdom, and Maitreya is compassion. This *bodhi* mind is precisely Mahāvairocana. Apart from Mahāvairocana, there is no *bodhi* mind. (ellipsis) You should know that when properly explained, the myriad of merits are also like this. This is akin to the notions of dharma body, *prajñā*, and liberation in Tiantai.<sup>111</sup>

(I have abbreviated the text.)

#### (iv) The Principle is the Same in the Two Schools

**419a3-a12:** 第四明理同者。同明中道爲極理。故義釋第一云、彼言諸法實相者、即是此經心之實相。又云、一切字門不可得者即中道也。五佛頂經云、一字佛頂於諸經中、說爲中道。一乘眞如實相佛性等名、皆是一字佛頂異名。他家云中道是初心、違此等文也。金剛頂

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110. This final sentence is a summary of the original text corresponding to *Taishō* 18.609c1-c19. This section of the text provides an iconographic description of Vajrapāṇi. However, in contrast to Shōshin's interpretation of this passage, Amoghavajra actually equates the middle way with the utterance of Vajrapāṇi's entire mantra, not just the syllable 'un.'

111. In the original text, Yixing discusses the meaning of these three bodhisattvas as they are positioned in the Garbhadhātu Mandala. See *ZTZm* 1.657a: 又云。如八葉中普賢是菩提心。文殊是慧。彌勒是悲。此菩提心即是大日如來。不離大日如來有菩提心也。大慧即是大日如來。不離此大日如來別有慧也。悲即是大日如來。不離於大日如來別有悲也。當知準此說之萬德皆爾。猶如天台法身・般若・解脫義。若但法身不得名法身之類。與此相合也。The final line in this passage references Zhiyi's *Fahua wenju* quoted above. Ōkubo notes in 1998, 297 that Saichō also discusses the last sentence in the passage regarding the body of the dharma, *prajñā*, and liberation in Tendai in the *Ehyō tendai shū* 依憑天台集. See *DDZ* 3.358-360.

疏云、若深達者、一切語言無非念誦、一切語言眞如法體。故法華云。皆與實相不相違背。治世語言皆順正法即此義也。菩提心義云、一色一香無非中道。色塵法界皆作佛事。尤合此宗云云。

Section Four: I clarify that the principle is the same. Both [schools] clarify that the middle way is the ultimate principle. Thus, the first fascicle of the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

What is referred to as the "true characteristic of all dharmas" is the true characteristic at the heart of this sutra.<sup>112</sup>

Moreover, it contends:

The inconceivability of the gateway of all syllables is the middle way.<sup>113</sup>

The *Sūtra of the Five Buddha Peaks* states:

The *One-Syllable Buddha Peak*, among the various sutras, is a preaching of the middle way. The designations of "singular-vehicle," "suchness," "true characteristics," "buddha-nature," etc. are all different names for *the One-Syllable Buddha Peak*.<sup>114</sup>

(The other school's claim that the middle way is the initial mind contradicts with this passage).

The *Commentary on the Vajraśekhara Sūtra* states:

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112. From the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in ZTZm1:28b-29a: 如一切經中或說諸蘊和合中我不可得。或說諸法從緣生都無自性。皆是漸次開實相門。彼言諸法實相者。即是此經心之實相。心實相者。即是菩提更無別理也。Shōshin does not cite the final sentence, but implies it in his claim that the sutra is defining the meaning of "principle" as the *bodhi* mind. The point is that *bodhicitta* is the true characteristic of the mind of the practitioner according to Yixing's commentary. This makes it possible for the practitioner to ascertain the principle.

113. Shōshin paraphrases a line from the *Interpretation of the Meaning of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in ZTZm1:199a:

復次一一字門皆言不可得者爲明中道義故。

Next, each and every gateway of syllables called "inconceivable" illuminates the meaning of the middle way.

114. Neither of Bodhiruci's translations, the *Sūtra of the Dhāraṇī of the Five Buddha Peak Samādhi* (*Wu foding sanmei tuoluoni jing* 五佛頂三昧陀羅尼經) in four fascicles (*Taishō* 19, no. 952) nor the *Sūtra on the Cakravartin of the One-syllable Buddha Peaks* (*Yizi foding lunwang jing* 一字佛頂輪王經) in five fascicles (*Taishō* 19, no. 951), contains this passage. Shōshin is likely quoting from Annen's *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta* in *Taishō* 75.483a2-4: 名一字佛頂。五佛頂經云。諸經所說一乘中道實相法界皆是一字佛頂之異名也 云云。It is unclear why Annen attributes this statement to the this text.

Annotated Translation: Textual Sources

If a practitioner deeply penetrates [the four types of recitation], then all language is none other than recitation.<sup>115</sup> All language is the essence of the dharma as it is. Therefore, the *Lotus Sūtra* states, "All [teachings] are not contrary to the true characteristics [of the dharma]. The language of the secular world is in accord with the true dharma." This is the meaning [of this sutra].<sup>116</sup>

The *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta* states:

Every color and every scent is none other than the middle way. Material objects and the *dharmadhātu* are both generated by the deeds of the buddha. This corresponds to [the doctrines] in our school.<sup>117</sup>

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115. In the previous passage in the commentary, Ennin proposes a four-part taxonomy of recitation practice: 1) recitation of sound, 2) vajra recitation in which the practitioner recites by just moving his mouth but not making sound, 3) *samādhi* recitation in which one recites in his mind, and 4) true recitation in which the practitioner cultivates much like interpreting syllables. See *Taishō* 61.75a8-10: 所謂一音聲念誦。二金剛念誦。合口動舌默誦是也。三三摩地念誦。心念是也。四真實念誦。如字義修行是也。

116. Shōshin is paraphrasing a passage from Ennin's commentary. See *Taishō* 61.75a12-18: 若深達者。一切語言。一切籌量。無非念誦。一切語言文字等事。皆是真如法界體故。法華云。若受持此經。諸所說法。隨其義趣。皆與實相不相違背。若說俗間經書。治世語言。資生業等。皆順正法。是人有所思惟籌量言說。皆是佛法。無不真實者。即此義也。 The quotation from the *Lotus Sūtra* is also abbreviated. The original passage is from Kumārajīva's translation of the "Merits of the Dharma-Preacher Chapter." See *Taishō* 9.50a23-24: 皆與實相不相違背。若說俗間經書、治世語言、資生業等，皆順正法。 For an English translation see Hurvitz 1976, 276.

117. This passage is from Annen's *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta*. See *Taishō* 75.495a7-8.

## Critique of Kūkai's Esoteric Buddhism

**419a13:** 大文第二遮外難者、亦約四一以爲問答。

Part Two: While objecting to arguments from the other [school], I also consider the unification of the four taxonomies through questions and responses.

### **(i) Critique of the Claim that the Teachings in the Two Schools Are Not the Same**

**419a14-21:** 第一遮教同難者。問。高野十住心論十住心中、第八如實知自心爲天台宗、第九極無自性心是華嚴宗、第十祕密莊嚴心爲眞言宗。次第展轉前劣後勝。師釋第八心云、大日經云、如實知自心乃至廣引經文、此淨菩提心門、名初法明道。於諸顯教究竟理、望眞言門是則初門。龍猛說、如是一心無明邊域非明分位云云。此義云何。

Section One: I object to arguments against the congruence of these teachings.



Question: Among the ten abiding minds in Kōya's {i.e. Kūkai} *Ten Abiding Minds*, the eighth 'the mind that knows itself as true reality' is the Tendai school, the ninth 'the mind that [knows] there is ultimately no self-nature' is the Kegon school, and the tenth 'mind adorned with the secret' is the Shingon school.<sup>1</sup> Proceeding in order, the former are inferior, and the latter are superior. The master interprets the eighth 'mind [that knows itself as true reality]' stating:

The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* states, "The mind that knows itself as true reality (ellipsis: this passage extensively quotes from the sutra), this gate to the pure *bodhi* mind is called the path of the initial illumination of the dharma."<sup>2</sup> In the various exoteric teachings, there is also the ultimate principle, but the teachings of Shingon determine that this is the initial gateway [to the path]. Nāgārjuna explains that "such a unified mind is the domain of ignorance and not the stages of knowledge."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Shōshin is referring to Kūkai's taxonomy in his *Ten Abiding Minds*. The section on Tendai is located in *Taishō* 77.350c3-353a28. For the correlating passage in the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, see *Taishō* 77.371a6-c22. In his summary of the *Ten Abiding Minds*, Yoshito Hakeda translates this phrase as "The Eighth Stage: The Mind that is truly in Harmony with the One Way." See Yoshito S. Hakeda, *Kūkai: Major Works* (New York: Columbia University, 1972), 73. As Kūkai points out in the following quote, this phrase can be found in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. It is also found in Bodhiruci's translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 16.547c21-27: 大慧。我說不同彼外道法。何以故。以不執著外物有無11故。建立說於自心見故。不住二處不行分別諸相境界故。以如實知自心見故。不生自心分別見故。以不分別一切相者。而能入空無相無願三解脫門名為解脫。

Ennin also makes reference to this passage in his commentary on the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. See *Taishō* 61.10c6: 若見本不生際。即是如實知自心。如實即知自心。是一切智智。故毘盧遮那唯以此一字為真言也。 This passage equates the A-syllable in the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* with the *bija* of Mahāvairocana in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, which is "originally non-arising and pervades all places. To know this is to know one's mind as it really is and all wisdom."

2. In his critique of Tendai in the *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, Kūkai quotes extensively from the opening chapter of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, specifically *Taishō* 18.1c2-27.
3. This passage is not in the *Ten Abiding Minds*. Rather, Shōshin is abbreviating the entire section on Tendai in Kūkai's *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* by simply noting the beginning and end of this section. For the entire text, see *Taishō* 77.371a6-c22 or *TKDZ* 3.156-161. The final line of this section in Kūkai's texts quotes from the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* (*Shi moheyān lun* 釋摩訶衍論). See *Taishō* 32.637c11-15:

若爾一法界心。非百非背千是。非中非中背天非天。演水之談足斷而已止。審慮之量手亡而已住。如是一心為明無明。如是一心無明邊域非明分位。

If this is the case, unifying the *dharmadhātu* and the mind is not found in a hundred negations and defies a thousand affirmations. It is neither the center nor not the center, neither defies the heavens nor does not defy the heavens. Eloquent speeches that flow like water are stopped in their tracks and deliberations passed from hand to hand have nowhere to proceed. In this way, is the unified mind [a stage of] knowledge or ignorance? In this way, the unified mind is the domain of ignorance and not the stages of knowledge. Giebel 2004, 23.

The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* also quotes this passage. See *Taishō* 77.375c11-22 or *TKDZ* 3.80.

What do you say about this interpretation?

**419a21-b12:** 答。教時義云、有五失故、不用十住心次第。一者違大日經及義釋失。義釋云、此經橫統一切佛教。如說唯蘊無我攝小乘。如說觀蘊阿賴耶覺心不生攝諸經八識三性三無性義。如說極無自性心攝華嚴般若。如說如實知自心則佛性一乘如來祕藏。今海和上多違此文。經中觀蘊阿賴耶乃至覺心不生等文、義釋以爲一種阿闍梨、亦攝八識等。此法相宗所用經論。而海和上以觀蘊阿賴耶攝法相宗、以心不生攝三論宗。經中所謂空性乃至極無自性心等文、義釋以爲一種阿闍梨、亦攝華嚴般若。此中華嚴是華嚴宗、般若是三論宗。而海和上以所謂空性等文爲天台宗、以極無自性一句爲華嚴宗。經中亦云、一切智智菩提心爲因大悲爲根方便爲究竟云何菩提心如實知自心之文。義釋以爲十重深行阿闍梨、亦攝佛性一乘如來祕藏。此中佛性即涅槃經、一乘即法華經、祕藏即眞言。而海和上如實知自心等文下所謂空性等文爲天台宗、安華嚴下乃至。

Response: The *Interpretation of Teachings* states:

Because it has five errors, I do not use the sequence of the ten abiding minds.<sup>4</sup>

First is the error of differing from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]*. The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

This sutra unifies all Buddhist teachings. It similarly preaches 'only aggregates and no-self' as constituted in Hīnayāna. It similarly preaches 'observing the *alāya* of the aggregates and awakening to the non-arising of the mind' as encompassed in the doctrines of eight consciousnesses and the three natures/three non-natures in the various sutras. It similarly preaches 'the mind that ultimately has no self-nature' as included in the *Avatamsaka* and *Prajñā[pāramitā]*. It similarly preaches the 'mind that knows itself as true reality' as buddha nature, the singular-vehicle, and the secret treasury of the tathāgata.<sup>5</sup>

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4. Shōshin summarizes a passage in Annen's *Interpretation of Teachings* that outlines five points of criticism regarding Kūkai's taxonomy in the *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*. The first point is found in *Taishō* 75.402b1-403b11.

5. The phrase "only aggregates and no-self" refers to śrāvaka, which is the fourth stage in Kūkai's taxonomy. Annen does not actually quote the commentary, but cites the reference to 唯蘊無我 in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (*Taishō* 18.3b1) and merely summarizes the commentary as "According to the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]*, this is the śrāvaka vehicle" (准義釋是聲聞乘). Similarly, the phrase "observing the *alāya* of the aggregates and awakening to the non-arising of the mind" refers to Yogācāra doctrines of the eight consciousness and three natures of cognition. Of course, the sutra does not explicitly refer to Yogācāra. See *Taishō* 18.3b8-15:

Now, master [Kū]kai radically diverges from this passage. The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* takes the passages "observing the *alāya* of the aggregates," up to and including "awakening to the non-arising of the mind," in the sutra to be a one type of *ācārya*<sup>6</sup> as well as constituting the eight consciousnesses. These [categories] are from the sutras and treatises utilized in the Hossō school. However, master [Kū]kai takes "observing the *alāya* of the aggregates" to be the Hossō school and "the non-arising of the mind" to constitute the Sanron school. The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* takes passages in the sutra referring to the so-called "nature of emptiness," up to and including "the mind that is ultimately without self-nature," to be one type of *acārya* as well as constituting the *Avatamsaka* and *Prajñā[pāramitā]*. Among these, the *Avatamsaka* is the Kegon school and the *Prajñā[pāramitā]* is the Sanron school. However, master [Kū]kai takes the passage referring to the so-called "seed of emptiness" to be the Tendai school, and the single verse on "ultimately no self-nature" to be the Kegon school. In the sutra, a passage that again refers to "omniscient wisdom" states that "the *bodhi*

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祕密主。彼離違順八心相續。業煩惱網。是超越一劫瑜祇行。復次祕密主。大乘行。發無緣乘心。法無我性。何以故。如彼往昔如是修行者。觀察蘊阿賴耶。知自性如幻陽焰影響旋火輪乾闥婆城。祕密主。彼如是捨無我。心主自在覺自心本不生。何以故。祕密主。心前後際不可得故。如是知自心性。是超越二劫瑜祇行。

Lord of Mysteries, when one leaves behind this sequence of eight minds and the net of karmic affliction, then they are overcome in one *kalpa* of yogic practice. Next, Lord of Mysteries, when one cultivates the Mahāyāna, he gives rise to the the mind of a non-referential vehicle and [realizes] that dharmas do not have nature of abiding self. Why is this? Just as those who long ago practiced in such a way, one analyzes the *alāya* of the aggregates and realizes that the self-nature [of everything] is like and an illusion, a mirage, a reflection, an echo, a fire wheel, a *gandharva* city. Lord of Mysteries, if one discards the no-self in such a way, the lord of the mind is free and awakens to [the fact] that his own mind is originally unborn. Why is this? Lord of Mysteries, because it is impossible to obtain the limits of the mind's beginning or end. In this way, one realizes the nature of ones own mind, and this is overcome in two *kalpa* of yogic practice.

Shōshin quotes Annen's summary of a passage from the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See *ZTZm1.87b-88a*.

6. Shōshin cites Annen's summary of a long passage in Yixing's commentary explaining how there are various types of *ācārya* who master an array of practices. This appears to be Annen's classification scheme. Yixing lists several meanings of the term *ācārya*, but he does not systemize them in a particular order. The key passage for Annen is *ZTZm1.85b-86a*, which he interprets as a typology in the *Interpretation of Teachings*. See *Taishō 75.402c24-3a1*. As both Yixing and Annen suggest, the term *ācārya* is broadly applicable to practitioners who master higher levels of practice. At the most basic level, the initiand who receives *abhiṣeka* is called an *ācārya*. The practitioner who perfects the disagreeable senses in the eight consciousness and realizes quiescence in the current world is a type of *ācārya*. The term also denotes the practitioner who realizes that his mind is ultimately impermanent and successfully enters the ocean-like assembly of the mandala. However, Annen interprets this specific definition of *ācārya* to be the basis for ten levels of ascetic practice, which culminate in manifestations of Vajrasattva and, finally, Vairocana. Shōshin's reason for appropriating this passage, however, is to remind the interlocutor that the title *ācārya* encompasses the mastery of ascetic practice in general, not just mandala praxis.

mind is the cause, compassion is the source, and skillful means is the culmination."<sup>7</sup> This is explained in the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* to be the *ācārya* of ten levels of deep practice as well as constituting buddha-nature, the singular-vehicle, and the secret treasury of the tathāgata. Among these, buddha-nature is the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, the singular-vehicle is the *Lotus Sūtra*, and the secret treasury is mantra. However, master [Kū]kai takes the passage on the "mind that knows itself as true reality" and the following passage on the so-called "nature of emptiness," etc., to be the Tendai school, which he ranks below Kegon. (ellipsis)

**419b13-16:** 二者違金剛頂經失。金剛頂經五相成佛、自心流出三十七尊、成至<sup>8</sup>金剛界。是真言宗果佛。而海和上引五相成佛、爲華嚴宗初心成佛因也。

The second error<sup>9</sup> is that [Kūkai] differs from the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*. Regarding the five stages of becoming a buddha in the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*, [the practitioner] emits the thirty-seven honorable ones from his mind and generates the Vajradhātu. This is buddhahood according to the Shingon school. However, master [Kū]kai refers to the five stages of becoming a buddha, but [asserts] that the cause for initially [giving rise to] mind to become a buddha is [propagated] in the the Kegon school.

**419b16-18:** 三者違守護經失。彼經說五相成佛同金剛頂經。而海和上以彼經文、入極無自性心爲華嚴宗。

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7. Shōshin refers to a passage in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* located in *Taishō* 18.1b29-c2. In the *Interpretation of the Teachings*, Annen replaces 佛言 with 一切智智。See *Taishō* 75.403a27-b3: 經中上文一切智智菩提心爲因。大悲爲根。方便爲究竟。云何菩提。謂如實知自心之文義釋以爲從此復有十重深行阿闍梨。亦攝佛性一乘如來祕藏。此中佛性即涅槃經。一乘即法華經。祕藏即真言教。In the previous dialogue in the sutra, the buddha explains the meaning of 一切智智, which is why Annen includes it as the topic of this passage.

8. The *Interpretation of Teachings* does not include 至。

9. In this line, Shōshin paraphrases Annen's *Interpretation of Teachings*. See *Taishō* 75.403b12-18: 二者違金剛頂失。金剛頂經所說一切義成就菩薩坐菩提場五相成佛。自心流出三十七尊成金剛界大曼荼羅。乃至十八會是真言宗果佛自受用相。次請召十方諸佛菩薩說入曼荼羅行。是他受用相。而海和上引彼五相成佛之文名極無自性心爲華嚴宗初心成佛因也。

The third error<sup>10</sup> is that he differs from the *Sūtra of Protecting the Realm*.<sup>11</sup> The preaching of the five stages of becoming a buddha in this sutra is the same as that of the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*. However, master [Kū]kai, based on a passage from this sutra, [stipulates] that entering "the mind that ultimately has no nature" is the Kegon school.

**419b18-27:** 四者違菩提心論失。論有三門、所謂行願勝義三摩地也。行願者一切行願也。勝義者心性空寂。同大日經守護經、圓菩提心自性皆空同虛空無相文。三摩地者同金剛頂經三十七尊、及心地觀五相成佛、及以般若十六空法法華開示悟入、金剛頂經五相成身。而海和上以五相成身為華嚴宗、以菩提心論三摩地門為真言宗、亦以大日菩提心自性皆空入之文為天台宗。

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10. In this line, Shōshin continues his summary of Annen's *Interpretation of Teachings*. See *Taishō* 75.403b19-24: 三者違守護經失。守護經說菩提心無相同大日經。說五相成佛同金剛頂。為證其五相成佛佛引六年苦行不得菩提始觀月輪庵字而得菩提。此亦真言果佛自證化他法門。而海和上以彼經文入極無自性心為華嚴宗。

11. This title denotes the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Safeguarding the State and Lord of the Realm* (*Shouhu guojie zhu tuoluoni jing* 守護國界主陀羅尼經) translated by Prajñā and Muniśrī in 790 CE and published in *Taishō* 19, no. 997. In the *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, Kūkai cites a passage in the ninth fascicle of the sutra regarding the five stages of becoming a buddha. See *Taishō* 77.358a-b and 77.372b-c, respectively. However, Okubo points out that in both texts Kūkai cites the incorrect passage in the sutra regarding this practice. He cites a passage in the ninth fascicle in *Taishō* 19.565c:

佛告祕密主言。善男子毘盧遮那世尊。色究竟天為天帝釋及諸天眾已廣宣說。我今於此菩提樹下金剛道場。為諸國王及與汝等。略說於此陀羅尼門汝當諦聽。

The buddha beseeched the Lord of Mysteries, saying, "Noble son, Vairocana the honorable one, expansively preaches in Akaniṣṭha Heaven for the sake of Indra and heavenly beings. For the sake of kings such as yourself, I briefly preach *dhāraṇī* for your sake while I am seated on the vajra *bodhimāṇḍa* beneath the *bodhi* tree.

However, Kūkai should have quoted *Taishō* 19.570c:

佛言祕密主、我於無量無數劫中、修習如是波羅蜜多。至最後身六年苦行、不得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提成毘盧遮那。坐道場時無量化佛猶如油麻遍滿虛空。諸佛同聲而告我言。

The buddha said to the Lord of Mysteries, "Throughout the innumerable *kalpa*, I have cultivated the *pāramitā* in this way. During my final lifetime, even after suffering austerities for six years, I had yet to attain *anuttarā-samyak-sambodhi* and become Vairocana. While seated on the *bodhimāṇḍa*, the incalculable transformation buddhas filled the empty sky like sesame oil. Then, the buddhas spoke to me in a unified voice.

The fourth error<sup>12</sup> is that he differs from the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*.<sup>13</sup> In the treatise, there are three gateways, the so-called "practices and vows," "supreme doctrine," and "*samādhi*." "Practice and vows" consists of all practices and vows. "Supreme doctrine" denotes the emptiness and quiescence of the nature of the mind. This is the same as the passage in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and [*Dhāraṇī*] *Sūtra for Safeguarding [the State and Lord of the Realm]* asserting, "the self-nature of the perfect *bodhi* mind is empty in the same way that empty space is without form." "*Samādhi*" is the same as the thirty-seven honored ones of the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*; the five phases of becoming a buddha in the [*Sūtra*] of *Contemplation of the Stages of the Mind [that Arises from the Source of the Mahāyāna]*; the sixteen characteristics of emptiness<sup>15</sup> in the *Prajñā[pāramitā Sūtra]*; the unpacking, demonstrating, realizing, and entering of the *Lotus Sūtra*; and the five characteristics of becoming the body [of the buddha] of the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*. However, master [Kū]kai takes the five characteristics of becoming the body to be the Kegon school, the method of *samādhi* in the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* to be the Shingon school, and the passage in the *Mahāvairocana [Sūtra]* on "entering the *bodhi* mind whose self-nature is completely empty" to be the Tendai school.

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12. In this line, Shōshin paraphrases Annen's *Interpretation of Teachings*. See *Taishō* 75.403b25-c5: 四者違菩提心論失。論有三門。所謂行願勝義三摩地也。行願者一切行願同諸大乘菩薩行願。勝義者心性空寂。同大日經守護國菩提心自性皆空同虛空無相文。三摩地者同金剛頂三十七尊及心地觀五相成佛。及引般若十六空義。法華開示悟入。金剛頂五相成身之義。而海和上以金剛頂五相成身為華嚴宗。以菩提心論三摩地門為真言宗。亦以大日菩提心自性皆空之文為天台宗。

13. See Part One, Section One for details on this text.

14. The translation of the *Dasheng bensheng xindi guanjing* 大乘本生心地觀經 is attributed to Prajñā, but was probably translated sometime after his death. The original version is no longer extant, but is traditionally thought to have entered China from Sri Lanka in mid to late seventh century. For a summary of its contents and comparison to other Mahāyāna texts, see BJK 7.346-351 and Yoritomi Motohiro 頼富本宏, *Chūgoku mikkyō no kenkyū* 中国仏教の研究 (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1979):72-73.

15. The "sixteen teachings on emptiness" might refer to a passage in chapter 483 of Xuanzang's translation of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 7.454b9-12:

於外空內外空空空大空勝義空有為空無為空畢竟空無際空無散空本性空自相空一切法空無性空無性自性空無見無得。

There is nothing to perceive or obtain in external emptiness, internal and external emptiness, empty emptiness, great emptiness, supreme emptiness, conditioned emptiness, unconditioned emptiness, ultimate emptiness, unlimited emptiness, calculated emptiness, original-nature emptiness, self-nature emptiness, the emptiness of all dharmas, the emptiness of no self-nature, and the emptiness of no self-nature and self-nature.

However, based only on this short line in Annen's *Interpretation of Teachings*, it is impossible to precisely identify this reference. Oda lists the various typologies of emptiness in BDJ 277-278.

**419b27-c2:** 五者違衆師失。義釋云、此經本地身即是法華最深祕處。智儼温古治定亦同。蘇悉地疏述師說云、祕密教一乘是也。金剛頂疏述師說云、法華久成、此經頓成實是一佛已上教時義文略抄。

The fifth error<sup>16</sup> is that he differs from other masters. The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states, "The body of the original ground for this sutra is the locus for the most profound mystery of the *Wondrous Law of the Lotus*."<sup>17</sup> The determinations of Zhiyan and Wengu are also the same. In the *Commentary on the Susiddhikara*, the master explains, "The secret teaching is the singular-vehicle." In the *Commentary on the Vajraśekhara*, the master explains, "The long-ago awakened [buddha] of the *Lotus* is actually the same buddha that suddenly awakens in this sutra."<sup>18</sup>

(The above are abbreviated passages from the *Interpretation of Teachings*)

**419c3-5:** 問。眞言教是在色界頂、報佛所說。據深祕意、即是法身自受用說。法華是應身說。云何得同哉。

Question: The teaching of mantra occurs at the peak of the realm of form and is preached by the reward buddha. According to the profoundly secret purport [of the mantra teaching], this is the preaching of the dharma body as the internally directed reward. The *Lotus Sūtra* is the preaching of the response body. How can these be the same?

**419c5-19:** 答。在色界頂是他受用。天台判爲別教教主、眞言密意即是法身。靈山釋迦是生身佛、圓教實意亦是法身。其報應者只是初門。門雖不同、法身[無]<sup>19</sup>有別。故天台云、丈六即是毘盧遮那。若據久遠實成、常在靈山亦是自受用。故妙樂云、當知、法華報佛所說。例如華嚴是報佛說、法華是應身說。不以報應判經勝劣。故妙樂云、二處會主。雖即釋迦舍那不同、但是衣瓔少殊。內身不別。若以報佛說爲勝者、應云華嚴勝法華經。

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16. In this line, Shōshin paraphrases Annen's *Interpretation of Teachings*. See *Taishō* 75.403c6-15:五者違衆師說失。大日義釋。是無畏說。一行記。說云。此經本地之身即是妙法蓮華最深祕處。智儼温古治定亦同。蘇悉地疏述師說云。教有二種。一顯示教。三乘是也。二祕密教。一乘是也。祕中又二。一唯理祕密。華嚴般若維摩法華涅槃等也。二事理俱密。大日金剛頂等也。金剛頂疏述師說云。法華明久遠成佛。此經明頓證成佛二說雖異實是一佛。而海和上於諸大乘輒判教理淺深果極高下難知矣。

17. This quote is from *ZTZm1:202a*.

18. See Part One, Section One for an explanation of these passages.

19. An alternative manuscript includes the character 無, which is absent from the Ōtani manuscript used for the *Taishō* edition. Based on the context, the passage should read 無別 or 無有別.

唐決云、釋迦遮那一體異名具如上引。教時義云、眞言大日以他受用爲門。開顯內證。釋迦住變化身爲門、開顯內證。菩提心義云、色頂成佛者是別教義。故知金剛頂經 一<sup>20</sup>會別因果入圓因果云云。

Response: [The body of the buddha] residing at the peak of the form realm is the externally directed reward [body]. Tendai determines this to be the teacher of the distinct teachings, but in the secret purport of the mantra teaching this is the dharma body. Śākyamuni on Vulture Peak was the buddha in a birth-body, but according to the ultimate purport of the perfect teachings this is the dharma body. Its reward and response bodies are merely the initial gateway. Although these gateways are not the same, they cannot be differentiated from the dharma body. Thus, Tendai states, "The sixteen-foot tall [body of the buddha] is Vairocana."<sup>21</sup> If [this statement] is in accord with the buddha that awoke long ago, then the body that eternally abides on Vulture Peak is the internal reward [body]. Therefore, Myōan {Zhanran} writes, "You should know that this is the preaching of the reward buddha in the *Lotus Sūtra*."<sup>22</sup> For instance, the *Avatamsaka* is the preaching of the reward buddha, and the *Lotus* is the preaching of the response body. The ranking of these sutras as greater and lesser teachings is not due to the reward and response bodies. For this reason, Myōan writes:

[The sutra states that there are differences] in the two locations and leaders of the assembly. Although Śākyamuni and Locana are not the same, they simply have slightly different appearances. Their internal bodies are not different.<sup>23</sup>

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20. The 一 in Shōshin's quote of 金剛頂經會 is probably a scribal error.

21. This is a standard Tiantai doctrine and is probably meant as a general statement rather than a direct quote. Ōkubo suggests that Shōshin is likely alluding to a passage in the second fascicle of Zhiyi's *Fahua wenju*. See *Taishō* 34.29b18-19:

若丈六佛即毘盧遮那法身放光者、圓義也。

If the sixteen-foot tall buddha, that is Vairocana Dharmakāya, emits light, then this is the interpretation of the perfect teaching.

22. This line is from Zhanran's sub-commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Fahua wenju ji* 法華文句記. See *Taishō* 34.250c28-251a2.

23. This passage is from another commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra* by Zhanran, the *Fahua xuanyi shiqian* 法華玄義釋籤. See *Taishō* 33.950c16-18: 故云若爲有異二處會主雖即釋迦舍那不同。但是衣纓少殊內身不別。Zhanran is referring to the interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra* that stipulates it was preached in two different locations, twice on Vulture Peak, once in the sky. At each of these assemblies, the buddha preached in a different form. Zhanran discusses this theory in greater detail in the *Fahua wenju ji*. See *Taishō* 34.326a. Ultimately, his point is that each of these forms are the same buddha, but they differ in appearance. Likewise, Vairocana/Locana and Śākyamuni are the same buddha, but they differ in name and appearance.



If the preaching of the buddha of reward is a superior teaching, then we must say that the *Avatamsaka* is superior to the *Lotus Sūtra*. The *Tōketsu* states, "Śākyamuni and Vairocana are a single essence with different names." (See the complete quotation above.)<sup>24</sup> The *Interpretation of Teachings* states:

In the mantra [school], Mahāvairocana is taken to be the externally directed reward, which is a gateway that opens and reveals the internal realization [of the buddha]. Śākyamuni resides in a transformation body as a gateway that opens and reveals this internal realization.<sup>25</sup>

The *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta* states:

Becoming a buddha at the peak of the form realm is a distinct teaching. Therefore, we know from the assemblies in the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* that the causes and results of the distinct [teaching] leads one to enter the causes and results of the perfect [teachings].<sup>26</sup>

**419c20-21:** 問。入實之處雖同法身、若據初門報應優劣耶。

Question: Although entering the ultimate [awakening of the buddha] is the same as the dharma body, if we consider the initial gateway, would not the reward and response [bodies] be either superior or inferior?

**419c21-24:** 答。法華說一乘會諸人入實。故在同居以應身說。眞言演三密說如來自證。故在色界頂以報身說。彼此二宗不以報應爲眞佛。故不可以報應判宗勝劣也。

Response: The *Lotus* preaches the singular-vehicle to assemble various beings and cause them to enter ultimate [awakening]. Therefore, they dwell in the same location as the preaching of the response body. Shingon expounds the three secrets to explain the tathāgata's internal realization. Therefore, [the assembly] dwells at the peak of the form realm along with the preaching of the

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24. See the full quote in Part One, Section One.

25. See Annen's *Interpretation of Teachings*, *Taishō* 75.382c18-22: 天台判云。丈六身即毘盧遮那。故知眞言大日住他受用。以此爲門開顯內證。顯教釋迦住變化身。以此爲門開顯內證。若從外迹證入內證。即於一身具是四身。不同顯教三身各別分量差別。Annen is summarizing Zhiyi, perhaps the same line that Shōshin notes above from the *Fahua wenju*.

26. See Annen's *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta*, *Taishō* 75.483c16-22: 此開藏通菩薩因果爲圓因果。金剛頂於色界頂一切義成就菩薩五相成道出金剛界十八會曼荼羅。天台判諸經中後身菩薩於色界頂灌頂授職現生成佛義云。若說一切諸佛色究竟天皆成佛者是別教義云云。故知金剛頂經會別因果入圓因果。

reward body. Neither of these two schools deem the actual buddha to be the reward or response [body]. Therefore, you should not rank these schools as greater or lesser based on the reward or response [body].

**419c25-26:** 問。天台教門無三密說、不說真言及手印等。豈可是同耶。

Question: Tendai teachings do not explain the three secret activities, nor do they explain mantra and mudras. How could they be the same [teaching as Shingon]?

**419c26-28:** 答。泥洹真法寶衆生以種種門入。印呪只是入理之門。門雖不同、談理不別。

Response: Sentient beings can enter the true dharma treasure of *nirvāṇa* through multifarious gateways. Mudra and incantations are gateways for entering the principle. Although these gateways are not the same, their explanation of the principle does not differ.

**419c29-420a2:** 問。真言是諸佛密語。一一文字皆含萬德。故誦持者靈驗殊勝。密印亦是諸佛身密。故印印物亦有神驗。既闕此事寧非劣耶。

Question: Mantra is the secret language of the buddhas. Each and every word and syllable consist of myriad virtues. Therefore, the spiritual potency for those who incant [these words] is extraordinary. Furthermore, secret mudras are the somatic secret of the buddhas. Therefore, each and every mudra also has supernatural efficacy. If the [Tendai school] lacks these practices, how is it not inferior?

**420a2-18:** 答。大乘皆是諸佛祕藏實相印也。而佛赴機設教不同。或顯或密。各有利益。故誦諸經亦有靈驗。雖用印呪不必有益。譬如治病或用針灸。或用呪禁。或用假想。各有其驗。今真言者是佛家之呪禁、法王之祕術也。治衆生病最爲祕要。而呪禁法必受其師、不顯露之、亦有禁忌。佛法真言例亦如是。若天台宗唯用觀心。義同假想。亦用禮懺義同針灸。或時亦用呪禁、如止觀中誦呪治方。或時亦用手印、亦如止觀用金剛刀治鬼魔等。但此等事不爲正行。若利根人唯用無相觀念。若鈍根人兼助有相方便。故天台云、理觀雖勝、若鈍根人不兼有相不能入理。利人但用理觀入理出淨名疏。今末代人其根既鈍。故三密行有相方便最堪今世行者要也。

Response: Mahāyāna is the secret treasury and sign of the ultimate reality of the buddhas.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the buddha proceeds according to the capabilities of the individual, and the teachings he imparts to them are not the same. In some cases they are exoteric, and in some cases they are esoteric. Each has its benefits. Therefore, reciting the sutras also yields spiritual efficacy. However, using mudras and incantations is not necessarily beneficial. For example, when curing illness one might use acupuncture or moxibustion in some cases and spells in others. In some cases, one might use temporary illusions. Each has its own efficacy.

Now, mantra are Buddhist spells and the secret ritual techniques of dharma kings. For healing the afflictions of sentient beings, they are most essential. One who has mastered the rites for spells must not disclose them, for there are also taboos against this. Mantra of the buddha dharma are also regulated in this way. If in the Tendai school one only applies the contemplation of mind, then the result is the same as using a provisional illusion. If one also uses repentance rites, then the result is the same as acupuncture and moxibustion. If one sometimes uses spells, then this is similar to using incantations to harness the [ten] directions during *shikan*. If one sometimes also uses mudra, then this is similar to using a vajra-blade during *shikan* to tame demons. These activities are not correct practice on their own. Only in the case of a person with sharp faculties does one use the contemplation without form. In the case of a person with dull faculties, he is assisted by the skillful means of [practices] with forms. Therefore, Tendai {Zhiyi and Zhanran} states:

Although contemplating the principle is superior, if one has dull faculties they can not enter the principle without the assistance of having form. A person with sharp faculties just uses the contemplation of the principle to enter the principle. (Taken from the *Commentary on the Vimalakīrti Sūtra*.)<sup>28</sup>

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27. The term 實相印 probably alludes to a passage in the *Lotus Sūtra* in the which the buddha explains his teachings as the "signs for the characteristics of ultimate reality." See *Taishō* 9.8b2-3:

我以相嚴身 光明照世間 無量衆所尊 爲說實相印。

Having a body adorned with the marks of a buddha, /Emitting a ray of light that illuminates the worlds/  
And revered by immeasurable sentient beings,/I teach the signs of the true aspects/Of the phenomenal world. Kubo and Yuyama 2007, 35.

28. This exact passage is not found in any of Zhiyi or Zhanran's commentaries on the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*. However, Shōshin may be summarizing a similar point regarding the dull and sharp faculties of the practitioner from each of these works. See Zhiyi's *Weimojing xuanshu* 維摩經玄疏 in *Taishō* 38.526b8-10:

今佛法正道緣理斷結。於見道中有二種人。鈍人用無常苦行入見道先斷愛。利人用空無我行入見理斷見。

Among recent generations, the faculties individuals have grown dull. The cultivation of the three secret activities is a skillful means that utilizes forms. This is the most appropriate practice for practitioners in this age [of the decline of the dharma].

**420a19:** 問。何以得知真言是有相方便哉。

Question: How do we know that mantra are skillful means that utilize form?

**420a19-22:** 答。大日經云、甚深無相法劣慧所不堪。爲應彼等故、兼存有相說。教時義云、有相者印真言也。亦如義釋云云。

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The correct path of the buddha dharma contemplates the principle and severs the bonds of the afflictions. There are two types people when it comes to perceiving the path. A person with dull faculties utilizes austerities [focused on] impermanence to enter and perceive the path before he can eliminate desires. A person with sharp faculties utilizes the practices of emptiness and no-self to enter and perceive the principle while eliminating [his attachment to] his own views.

Passages in the *Weimojing wenju* 維摩經文疏 and Zhanran's distillation of this text, the *Weimojing lueshu* 維摩經略疏, use a similar distinction between types of practitioners, but in correlation with the four teachings paradigm. See *Taishō* 38.633c2-5:

次意者即是佛從得道夜常說般若。此教若在三藏中爲利人說即祕密教。若諸菩薩別聞者即不定教。

The purport [of the sutra] is that from the night that the buddha attained awakening he has always preached the *Prajñā[pāramitā]*. For those of the *tripitaka* teachings, this teaching is preached for those with sharp faculties and is an esoteric teaching. If the various bodhisattvas hear this teaching independently, then it is an indeterminate teaching.

Response: The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* states, "The most profound dharma without form is inappropriate for those of inferior wisdom. In order to respond to these individuals, there are additional teachings that have form."<sup>29</sup> The *Interpretation of Teachings* states, "'Having form' denotes mudra and mantra."<sup>30</sup> The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* also states this.

**420a23-25:** 問。蘇悉地疏云、彼華嚴等雖俱爲密、未盡如來祕密之旨。故異眞言究盡如來事理俱密云云。若爾者二宗其義不同。云何。

Question: The *Commentary on the Susiddhikara* states:

Although the *Avatamsaka*, etc. {i.e. other Mahāyāna sutras} are fully esoteric, they do not entirely reveal the purport of the tathāgata's secrets. Therefore, they differ from mantra, which fully reveal the secret of phenomena and principle of the tathāgata.<sup>31</sup>

If this is the case, then the doctrines in these two schools are not the same. What do you say about this?

**420a25-b5:** 答。法華等經雖談理密未明事密。故云別也。手印眞言皆是如來甚深祕密義。諸教不明故、云未盡。今言、同者論其實理。若身口密等只是入理門。其入理門一經一宗尚有多門。況於二宗耶。如善財入法界中、或水、或火、或沙、或字、皆破無明入深境界。今眞言宗即是字門入深境界。亦如天台隨自意三昧行住坐臥語默作作、皆以觀察爲實相門。今眞言宗即是語門入實相義也。

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29. This passage is a verse from the closing of the appended chapter to the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 18.54c24-26:

如所說優陀那偈言 甚深無相法 劣慧所不堪 爲應彼等故 兼存有相說。

As exclaimed in a verse of proclamation: The most profound dharma without form is not suitable for those with inferior wisdom. In order to respond to such individuals, additionally there are preachings that have forms.

In other words, the external manifestation of the buddha dharma is intended for those who cannot mentally grasp these teachings. Shōshin's point is that mudra and mantra are simply skillful means to serve such ends. For an alternative English translation, see Giebel 2005, 250.

30. Annen quotes the same passage from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in *Taishō* 75.445a15-17. However, it is not clear if Shōshin paraphrases Annen or just extrapolates the meaning of the sutra passage and attributes it to Annen.

31. This passage includes Ennin's definition of esoteric Buddhism in his *Commentary on the Susiddhikara Sūtra*. See Part One, Section One.

Response: Although the *Lotus* and other sutras explain the secret of the principle, they do not clarify the secret of phenomena. Therefore, [Ennin] states that they differ. Mudra and mantra are the profound and secret meaning of the tathāgata. Because the various teachings do not illuminate this [meaning], they are said to be incomplete.

Now, to say that [the mantra and *Lotus* teachings] are the same is to discuss their true principle. The secrets of body and speech are merely a gateway for entering the principle. Even in a single sutra or school there are numerous gateways for entering the principle. How much more so for two schools? Just as Sudhana entered the *dharmadhātu*, whether by water, fire, sand, or syllables, all [gateways] destroy ignorance and allow one to enter the profound realm.<sup>32</sup> The Shingon school is the gateway of syllables for entering the profound realm. Moreover, this is similar to the Tendai practice of generating *samādhi* in accordance with one's own mind by walking or being still, sitting or lying down, speaking or remaining silent, all of which take introspection to be the gateway to ultimate reality. The Shingon school posits an interpretation of the true characteristics for entering the gateway of ultimate awakening.

**420b6-7:** 問。菩提心義中、三教爲下、圓爲中、眞言爲上云云。如何可得意哉。

Question: In the *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta*, the three teachings {i.e. *tripitaka*, shared, distinct} are lesser, the perfect is neutral, and mantra are superior.<sup>33</sup> What should we take as the purport of this statement?

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32. The sentence references an episode in the "Entering the Dharmadhātu" chapter of the sixty-fascicle *Avatamsaka Sūtra* beginning from *Taishō* 9.700b and continuing to page 704. However, Shōshin may also be alluding to Zhiyi's interpretation of this passage in the third fascicle of the *Fahua xuanyi*. See *Taishō* 33.716a29-b6: 別教增數行者。如善財入法界中說。於一善知識所。各聞一法爲行。或如幻三昧。或投巖赴火。算砂相壓。發菩提心等。種種一行皆云佛法如海。我唯知此一法門餘非所知。乃至一百一十善知識。一一法門皆如是。是一一行皆破無明入深境界。若二法三法百千萬億等法。亦應如是云云。

33. It is unclear to which passage in the *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta* Shōshin is referring, but he is probably summarizing *Taishō* 75.554b2-6:

答。今眞言宗一切佛教判爲五教。一藏。二通。三別。四圓。五密。前四天台大師所立。不空三藏門人含光遊天竺日。彼方諸僧問云。傳聞。大唐有天台教理致圓滿。當譯以傳此方耶否云云。

Response: In the Shingon school, all Buddhist teachings are categorized into five teachings: 1) *tripitaka*, 2) shared, 3) distinct, 4) perfect, and 5) secret. The prior four were proposed by Tendai Daishi {Zhiyi}. Hanguang, the disciple of *Tripitaka*-master Amoghavajra, traveled to India, where he was asked by several monks, "It has been said that in the Tang there are Tiantai teachings that are complete and perfect. You must translate these and send them to us."

In this passage, Annen adds mantra to the Tiantai paradigm of the four teachings, but he does not explain his reason for doing so. He probably got this paradigm from Enchin, who proposed a similar five-part taxonomy. This taxonomy, however, differs considerably from Annen's project in the *Interpretation of Teachings* in which he argues for the unification of the perfect and esoteric teachings.

**420b7-18:** 答。具談三密故、且爲上。不論實理之勝劣也。餘文以眞言爲勝、準例可知。若論理實、天台眞言二圓不別。故教時諍云、圓教有門攝眞言宗。圓教空門攝達磨宗云云。私云、達磨宗者是天台四種三昧中、常坐一行三昧也。眞言宗者是第四非行非坐三昧攝諸經行法。豈可不攝眞言行耶。如請觀音七佛八菩薩眞言行等皆攝之故。若云必以神呪勝者、天台四種三昧中、應云方等三昧請觀音等勝法華三昧也。若云手印必殊勝者、應云有相行勝無相行也。

Response: Because [Annen] is discussing the three secrets as a whole, for the time being he ranks [mantra teachings] as superior. He does not argue for their superiority or inferiority regarding the true principle. In other passages in which he takes mantra to be a superior teaching, you must understand that [he is discussing it] in terms of a taxonomy. If we were to debate the ultimate of the principle, then the two perfect [teachings] of Tendai and Shingon are indistinguishable. Therefore, the *Debates on the Teachings* states, "The gateway of [practices] having form in the perfect teachings constitutes the mantra school. The gateway of not having form in perfect teachings constitutes the [bodhi]dharma school."<sup>34</sup>

I say that among the four types of *samādhi* in Tendai, the [bodhi]dharma school is the single practice of 'always sitting' *samādhi*. The mantra school is the fourth type of *samādhi* that is neither walking nor sitting and includes rites for the sutras {i.e., recitation of various sutras}. Why would this not include the practice of mantra? Mantra practices such as recitations to the various forms of Avalokiteśvara, the seven buddhas, and eight bodhisattvas are all included [in this *samādhi*].<sup>35</sup> If we were to say that we must take incantations to be superior, then among the four types of *samādhi* in Tendai we should say that the *samādhi* of walking and sitting as well as the [recitations] to the various Avalokiteśvara are superior to the *Lotus samādhi*. If we were to say mudra must be extraordinary, then we should say that the cultivation of practices with forms is superior to the cultivation of practices without forms.

**420b19-20:** 問。常云法華是顯教。如何爲密同眞言耶。又天台云、法華是顯露非祕密。如何。

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34. Shōshin paraphrases a passage from one of Annen's early essays on sectarian debate, the *Debates on the Teachings* (*Kyojijōron* 教時諍論). See *Taishō* 75.368c26-a3. He also discusses this text in Part One, Section.

35. Ōkubo suggests that "various Avalokiteśvara" refers to *dhāraṇī* listed in Zhu Nandi's 竺難提 (active 419) translation of the *Qing guanshiyin pusa xiaofu duhai tuoluoni zhoujing* 請觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼呪經 (*Taishō* 20.34b-38a) and "seven buddhas and eight bodhisattvas" similarly references *dhāraṇī* in the *Qifo bapusa suoshuo datuoluoni zhoujing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神呪經 (*Taishō* 22.536b-561a). However, as he notes, Shōshin is probably relying on Zhiyi's interpretation of these texts rather than referencing them directly. See Ōkubo 1998, 315n3.

Question: It is often said that the *Lotus* is an exoteric teaching. How is it esoteric like mantra? Furthermore, Tendai asserts that the *Lotus* is a revealed [teaching], and that it is not esoteric.<sup>36</sup> Why?

**420b20-25:** 答。若據顯了無密語者、法華是顯。若以圓理爲祕密藏、是祕密教。泛論祕密者更有多義。一是祕密同聽異聞。天台云、法華非祕密者據此說也。二佛密意不了義說。三者甚深祕密藏也。四者對非機人不顯說之。後二祕密是真言教也。

Response: If we determine that it is fully revealed and not esoteric language, then the *Lotus* is exoteric. If we take the principle of the perfect teaching to be the secret treasury, then it is an esoteric teaching. Whenever one debates the meaning of "esoteric," it will have multiple meanings. First, esoteric means that practitioners hear the same teaching but understand it differently. (Tendai's {Zhiyi} statement that the *Lotus* is not a secret is in accordance with this explanation.) Second, as the secret mind of the buddha, this explanation is not fully disclosed. Third, it denotes the profoundly secret treasury. Fourth, this explanation is not revealed in accordance with an individual's level of capability. The latter two [definitions] of "esoteric" are the Shingon teachings.

**420b26-28:** 問。他家云、六波羅蜜經云、契經如乳總持門如醍醐。今依此文、總持稱醍醐。振旦人師爭盜醍醐各名自宗云云。此義云何。

Question: The other school cites the *Six Parāmitā Sūtra*, stating:

The sutras are like milk, the gateway of *dhāraṇī* is like ghee...Based on this passage, *dhāraṇī* are deemed to be ghee. Chinese masters debated who stole this [category of] ghee, each attributing to their own school.<sup>37</sup>

What do you say about this interpretation?

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36. Shōshin is probably referring to a passage in the first fascicle of the *Fahua xuanyi* in which Zhiyi argues that the teachings are either revealed (顯露) or kept secret (祕密). When revealed, they buddha uses four modes to communicate the teachings, depending on the audience; they are revealed gradually, suddenly, indeterminately (i.e. either suddenly or gradually), or secretly. The *Lotus Sūtra* is revealed gradually and suddenly, not just gradually, nor is it not kept secret. See *Taishō* 33.683c21-684a9.

37. The *Treatise on the Two Teachings* quotes Prajñā's translation of the *Six Parāmitā Sūtra* (*Taishō* 8.868bc). In his commentary on this passage, the treatise interprets this passage to mean that *dhāraṇī* are a superior practice to the Mahāyāna sutras. See *Taishō* 77.378c2-24, 379a4-8. This text is discussed in Part One, Section One.



**420b28-c2:** 答。法華涅槃爲醍醐者出涅槃經、不依六波羅蜜經。豈可云盜。既同喻醍醐。故二經是同。如上已說也。

Response: The notion that the *Lotus* and the *Nirvāṇa* are ghee comes from the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, not the *Six Paramita Sūtra*. How could one say it was stolen? I have already explained how they are both ghee. Therefore, the two sutras are the same, as I have explained above.<sup>38</sup>

**420c3-5:** 問。或云、一行禪師是天台門人。故大日經疏依天台義。故不可以彼疏證二宗同也。此義云何。

Question: It is sometimes said that the meditation master Yixing was a practitioner of Tiantai. Therefore, the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* is based on a Tiantai interpretation.<sup>39</sup> For this reason, we cannot understand the similarities of the two schools based on this commentary. What do you say about this interpretation?

**420c5-13:** 答。眞言三藏無畏不空等雖譯其經、不釋其義。而一行和尚面受善無畏三藏、傳眞言義、製大日經疏。故眞言宗以義釋爲本文。以一行爲祖師。豈疑彼疏即失本宗。又高野所傳二十卷疏、亦同義釋、同天台義。高麗覺苑面受無畏。非天台人亦作此釋。又叡山大師本學法相。弘法大師本學三論。並無本執、以同密宗。故知、一行同天台者同於可同、不依本執也。

Response: Although the masters of the mantra school, Śubhakarasiṃha and Amoghavajra, translated the sutras, they did not interpret their meaning. Master Yixing recorded [the teachings] directly from Śubhakarasiṃha and transmitted his interpretation of mantra, which he articulated in the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. Therefore, the Shingon school takes his interpretation to be its primary text and Yixing as its patriarch. How could one doubt the commentary or be mistaken regarding the origin of this school? Moreover, the twenty-fascicle commentary transmitted on Mt. Kōya is identical to the *Interpretation of [the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]*, which is the same as the Tendai interpretation. Jueyuan from Koryō also obtained the teachings directly from Śubhakarasiṃha.<sup>40</sup> He was not a Tendai adherent, but still arrived at the same interpretation. Also, the master of Mt. Hiei {Saichō} originally studied Hossō. Kōbō Daishi {Kūkai} originally studied Sanron.<sup>41</sup> Neither were fundamentally persuaded by these schools,

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38. Shōshin discusses this issue previously in the essay. See Part One, Section One.

39. See Part One, Section One.

40. See notes in Part One regarding Jueyuan and Shōshin's mistaken view that he was from the Korean Peninsula.

41. Early biographies of Kūkai claim that he studied with the Sanron master Gonsō before he travelled to China. I discuss Kūkai and Saichō's relation with the Nara clergy in the third section of Chapter One.

and they both utilized the secret school {i.e. Yixing's commentary}. Therefore, you should know that Yixing's [commentary] is the same as Tendai, because they are identical, not because one is based on the other.

## (ii) Critique of the Claim that Practices in the Two Schools are Not the Same

**420c14-18:** 第二遮行同難者。問。若云法華亦明即身成佛行者、菩提心論云、唯真言法中即身成佛故、是說三摩地。於諸教中闕而不書云云。三摩地法者、謂手印真言五相成身三密行也。故知、法華無即身成佛義也。云何。

Section Two: I object to arguments against the congruence of these practices.

Question: If you say the *Lotus* also illuminates practices regarding the attainment of buddhahood in this very body, then what about the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*, which states:

Because one becomes a buddha in this very body *only* through the rites of mantra, this is explained as *samādhi*. In the various teachings, [this *samādhi*] is lacking and undocumented.<sup>42</sup>

The rites of *samādhi* are the so-called mudra, mantra, the five phases of becoming the body, and the practices of the three secret activities. Therefore, we know that the *Lotus* does not have an interpretation of becoming a buddha in this very body. What do you say about this?

**420c18-25:** 答。唯者此也。意云、此真言法中有即身成佛故、是說三摩地法。此三摩地於諸教中闕而不書耳。指三密行故、云闕也。非謂餘經無即身義。准例應云、唯法華中即身成佛故、說圓觀。此圓頓觀於諸教中闕而不書。指前三教名三教耳。又菩提心義有兩解云云。

Response: "Only" means "these." To state the purport [of this passage]:

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42. This quote is from the closing lines of the the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*. See *Taishō* 32.572c9-15: 唯真言法中。即身成佛故。是故說三摩地於諸教中。闕而不言。一者行願。二者勝義。三者三摩地。This passage stipulates that three practices are necessary for attaining buddhahood in one's current body: vows 行願, ultimate truth 勝義, *samādhi* 三摩地. Shōshin argues against interpretation of this passage in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* claiming that this passage proves mantra are a superior practice by pointing out the ambiguity of the grammar. The term 唯 can mean "only," which is how the *Treatise* reads this term. However, Shōshin explains that this character can also be read as a relative pronoun. Therefore, he rewords the passage in the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* to read "one becomes a buddha in this very body through *these* rites of mantra" rather than "one becomes a buddha in this very body *only* through rites of mantra."

Because one becomes a buddha in this very body through "these" rites of mantra, this is explained as the method of *samādhi*. This *samādhi* is lacking among the various teachings, but it is "only" that they do not record it.

Because [this treatise] addresses the practices of the three secret activities, it says [the various teachings] lack these. It does not say that other sutras do not have an interpretation of [buddhahood] in this very body. Generally, we should say that because one becomes a buddha in this very body through the *Lotus*, it is explained as the contemplation of the perfect teachings. The contemplation of the perfect-sudden teachings are absent from the various teaching and are not recorded. [The treatise] only addressed the prior three teachings {i.e. *tripiṭaka*, shared, distinct} and calls them the "the three teachings." Furthermore, the *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta* has two interpretations.<sup>43</sup>

**420c26-27:** 問。龍女即身成佛、天台判爲初住。豈同眞言即身大日耶。

Question: Regarding becoming a buddha in the very body of the *nāga* girl, Tendai stipulates that this is the first abode.<sup>44</sup> How could this be the same as the Shingon [doctrine] of becoming Mahāvairocana in this very body?

**420c27:** 答。此如別章。

Response: I have explained such matters in a separate essay.<sup>45</sup>

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43. Shōshin also discusses this passage from the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* in the eighth fascicle of his essay on *Lotus Sūtra* commentaries, the *Hokkesho shiki*. See *DNBZ* 22.680b-681a. In this text, Shōshin references Annen's compendium on the *Treatise on Bodhicitta*, and Ōkubo suggests that he is probably noting the same passage here. According to Ōkubo, Annen equates the three secret activities in the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* with the three Tendai practices of maintaining and breaking the precepts (開遮), preaching and remaining silent (説黙), ceasing and contemplation (止觀). See Ōkubo 1998, 21n2.

44. Shōshin is referring to a passage in the fifth fascicle of Zhiyi's *Fahua xuanyi*. See *Taishō* 33.734b18-27:

即是今經爲令衆生開佛知見。亦是龍女於刹那頃。發菩提心成等正覺。

This sutra causes sentient beings to be open to the perception of the buddha. It also tells of the *nāga* girl who in an instant gave rise to bodhicitta and achieved supreme awakening.

45. This refers to a passage in the *Hokkesho shiki*, *DNBZ* 22.678a. Also, see Ōkubo Ryōshun, "Isshō myōkaku ni tsuite —Shōshin wo chūshin ni—" 一生入妙覺について—證眞を中心に, *Tendai gakuho* 28 (1983):178-181.

**420c28-421a2:** 問。蘇悉地經等明修三密細行、重重破障。加持成就物、得三種悉地成。持明仙飛騰虚空、長壽久住、詣十方淨土、待三會說法。於天台行都無此事。豈可同耶。

Question: The *Susiddhikara Sūtra* illuminates how to cultivate the detailed practices of the three secret activities, to increasingly eradicate obstacles, to be empowered to achieve [all] things, and to obtain the three-fold *siddhi*. A *dhāraṇī* ascetic<sup>46</sup> flies about in empty space, his life is extended, he transverses the pure lands of the ten directions, and he possesses the preaching of the three assemblies.<sup>47</sup> In Tendai praxis, there are no such things. How could they be the same?

**420a2-9:** 答。大聖說教各赴機宜。若求長生而修道者、即說仙方。如真言教。若但求斷惑證理。唯說觀行。如餘教說。天台宗意、五番五法以爲方便、十境十乘以爲正觀。現身即證五品六根。或證無生、現身成佛利益衆生以爲所期。若論細行重重破障、望蘇悉地互有存沒也。

Response: The teachings of the Great Sage are delivered according to the capacities of the individual. If one seeks to extend his life and cultivates such a path, he preaches the way of the ascetic. This is akin to the mantra teaching. If one simply seeks to cut off delusion and realize the principle, then he only preaches contemplation practice. This is similar to other teachings. The purport of the Tendai school takes the five-fold five rites as skillful means<sup>48</sup> and takes the ten

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46. The term "*dhāraṇī* ascetic" (持明仙) is found in numerous esoteric texts. It simply means a sage or advanced practitioner of *dhāraṇī* or other incantation practices. See BDJ 1222b. Yixing defines this term in his commentary. See *ZTZm*1.76b or *Taishō* 39.608a4-13.

47. Ōkubo notes that the "three assemblies" denotes Maitreya's preaching in the past, present, and future, and is synonymous with the phrase 龍華三會. See Ōkubo 1998, 324n1.

48. Ōkubo notes that 五番五法 denotes the twenty-five skillful means that assist practitioners to achieve proper meditation. See Ōkubo 1998, 324n2. These twenty-five are divided into five groups of five. The first grouping consists of five conditions necessary for proper meditation: 1) keeping the precepts, 2) sufficient clothing and food, 3) dwelling in a quiet location such as the mountains or forest, 4) surrendering worldly possessions, 5) seeking out a good teaching. The second grouping requires the practitioner to reject the desires caused by the five senses of sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch. The third grouping stipulates that the practitioner abandon the five obstructions to practice: greed, anger, sleep, regret, and doubt. The fourth grouping consists of the five activities required for proper meditation: 1) controlling the mind so that it is neither depressed nor unfocused, 2) controlling the body so that it is neither limp nor stiff, 3) controlling the breath so that it is neither too shallow nor too deep, 4) controlling sleep so that it is neither too brief nor too long, and 5) controlling one's diet so that it is neither too little nor too much food. The final grouping is a list of five rules for practice: 1) aspire to practice, 2) endeavor to practice, 3) being mindful of one's practice, 4) cultivating the wisdom that comes with practice, and 5) focusing the mind on practice. See BDJ 1323b. Zhiyi discusses these twenty-five skillful means extensively in the fourth and ninth fascicles of the *Mohezhi guan*. See *Taishō* 46.48c and 126b.

fields<sup>49</sup> and ten vehicles<sup>50</sup> as proper contemplation. One realizes the five grades and six [purified] faculties in the current body.<sup>51</sup> In some cases, one realizes the non-arising [of all phenomena], becomes a buddha in his current body, and takes the benefiting of sentient beings as his aim. If we were to debate the details of these practices and how they increasingly eradicate obstacles, there are positives and negative for seeking these along with *siddhi*.

**421a10-12:** 問。教時義云、圓教人但見隨分大日、未知法界曼荼羅中邊本末云云。即知、天台行劣真言哉。

Question: The *Interpretation of Teachings* states:

A practitioner of the perfect teachings only perceives portions of Mahāvairocana and does not yet understand the source and branches within the mandala of the *dharmadhātu*.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, we know that Tendai practice is inferior to Shingon.

**421a12-16:** 答。圓教只就釋迦一化以明觀行。故云一分。真言即就色頂大日、報土一界攝一切界。故云本末。此乃門、異其理不別。天台觀心、一念凡心已有理性三密相海。乃至具有三千性相。豈闕本末哉。

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49. The term 十境 refers to the ten fields of observation in Tendai contemplation practice. Similar to the twenty-five skillful means, the ten fields guide the practitioner through the necessary steps of the path toward buddhahood. The ten fields are contemplated in the following order: the five skandhas, the afflictions, sickness and death, karmic influences, Māra, the conditions of meditation after defeating Māra, insights regarding the correct path, the pride one senses from having such insights, the minds of a śrāvaka or pratyekabuddha, and, finally, the mind of a bodhisattva. See BDJ 907a-908a. This list is from fifth fascicle of the *Mohezhiquan*. See *Taishō* 46.49a-b.

50. The ten vehicles for contemplating the dharma (十乘觀法) is the instrumental counterpart to the ten fields. See BDJ 920 for an explanation of this list.

51. The term five grades denotes the five stages of practice for disciples of the perfect teachings: 1) the stage of relative bliss, 2) the stage of recitation, 3) preaching the dharma, 4) preliminary practices for the six *pāramitās*, and 5) perfecting the six *pāramitās*. These stages are the second of the six identities (六即), which are the six categories of stages for disciples of the perfect teachings. The term "six faculties" is shorthand for the stage of purifying the six faculties (六根清淨位). This is the third of the six identities, which consists of the stages of faith wherein the disciple of the perfect teachings purifies his faculties until becoming a bodhisattva. See Fukuda 1954, 241-245. Shōshin is alluding to a debate in Tendai regarding whether or not it was possible to achieve such high levels of practice and become a bodhisattva in a single lifetime, or if one have to first be reborn before entering the "sagely" levels of the path.

52. Shōshin is playing devils advocate by asking this question by taking Annen's passage out of context in order to offer his own interpretation. For the full passage, see *Taishō* 75.390c1-291a8. This specific line is from 391a1: 但彼圓教人但見隨分大日未知法界曼荼羅中邊本末耳。

Response: The perfect teachings are merely the contemplation practices illuminated during the period of Śākyamuni. Therefore, they are called a single portion [of the teachings]. Shingon concerns Mahāvairocana at the peak of the form realm, and this single realm of the reward land encompasses all realms. Therefore, it is called "source and branch." In other words, their gateways differ, but their principle does not. Regarding the Tendai practice of discerning the mind, in a single thought of the worldling's mind there is already the sea of mutual identity that is the three secret activities of the nature of the principle. This includes the nature and form of all things in the great trichilocosm. How could this lack a source and branch?<sup>53</sup>

**421a17-19:** 問。眞言教明三部五部、部主部母明王明妃、都法別法諸尊行法、於天台宗都無此事。豈不異哉。

Question: The Shingon teachings illuminate the three and five divisions {i.e. buddha families of the Garbhadhātu and Vajradhātu Maṇḍalas}, the head of each division and the mother of each division, the luminous kings and queens, comprehensive rites and specific rites, as well as rites for the various honorable ones. There are no such things in Tendai. How are they not different?

**421a19-25:** 答。衆生感應隨時顯晦。上代根利、唯用觀行。末代根鈍、委明細行。衆聖與力能化一人。故眞言教末代方興。如開鐵塔於南天、傳金剛於東土、皆在像末。故眞言教宜今世也。又末世中、亦機不同。如唐朝今時、多好達磨宗。於日域今人亦有行不同。

Response: The [buddha's] response to sentient beings is either revealed or concealed depending on the time period. In previous times, people's faculties were sharp, and they only used contemplation practices. In latter times, these faculties have become dull, and specific practices were brought to light. The sages also possess powers that can transform the individual. Therefore, the Shingon teachings have arisen at a later period. As the iron stupa was opened in southern India and the vajra [teachings] were transmitted to the eastern lands, everyone was living in the semblance and degenerative periods of the dharma.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, the Shingon teachings are suitable for this time. Furthermore, in these latter days the capabilities of

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53. Shōshin's summary of contemplating the mind (觀心) is based on Zhanran's *Fahua xuanyi shiqian*. See *Taishō* 33.918b22-918c10.

54. The term 像末 refers to the last two of the three periods of Śākyamuni's teaching. Shōshin is making an implicit argument that the Shingon lineage is illegitimate, because it entered our world at a time when the buddha dharma was already waning. Although he states that these teachings are suitable for this time, the implication of this statement is that they are a less potent teaching that has been adapted for partitioners with dull faculties. I discuss the issue of the iron stupa in Chapter Four.

individuals are not the same. Just like during the Tang Dynasty, there is much support for the [bodhi]dharma school these days.<sup>55</sup> In this land, there are also individuals who cultivate different practices.

**421a26-27:** 問。眞言行者得受灌頂、現身即入大日尊位。於天台教都無此事。云何。

Question: The Shingon practitioner receives *abhiṣeka* and assumes the position of Mahāvairocana in his current body. There is no such thing in Tendai. What do you say about this?

**421a27-b10:** 答。此等皆是寄事明理、說於從等覺入妙覺之相也。由三密加持、觀行冥成生在佛家。故勝常人。顯教唯明理觀。己心即是遮那、由實相印亦冥成佛身也。於灌頂中、祕密灌頂不假支分、但觀身分。義同之也。義釋云、佛意言、甚深法相不可直宣說。故以方便力寄此曼荼羅具緣支分、令初業者攝心有地、蒙佛加持住於無相。又云、金罍明鏡輪商佉等者、凡祕密宗中皆託因緣事相。以喻深旨。又云、然此經宗種種具支方便。皆隨世俗。由此因緣得一切智智。世諦爲因、眞諦爲果云云。

Response: These [practices] rely on phenomena to illuminate the principle, which explains how one enters full awakening from virtual awakening. Due to the empowerment of the three secret activities, contemplation practice surreptitiously allows one to be born into the buddha group. Therefore, one overcomes being a worldlyling. The exoteric teachings only explain the contemplation of the principle. One's own mind is Vairocana, and due to the characteristic of ultimate form, one surreptitiously becomes the body of the buddha. Among the *abhiṣeka* rites, the secret *abhiṣeka* is not limited to a specific limb, but contemplates the entire body. These doctrines are the same. The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

The buddha explained his intentions, "The profound characteristics of the dharma cannot be preached directly. Therefore, through the power of skillful means and relying on sections of the full accouterment of the mandala, initiands are made to concentrate their minds in stages... and being empowered by the buddha, abides without form."<sup>56</sup>

Again it states:

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55. Shōshin might be referring to Yōsai. Kōdera Bun'ei and Ōkubo Ryōjun both suggest Yōsai as a possible audience for the *Essay on the Two Schools*. See the introduction to the translation.

56. Shōshin paraphrases the following passage from the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See ZTZm1.108b: 佛意言。我以甚深法相不可直宣說故。以方便力寄此曼荼羅具緣支分令初業者措心有地所作不空。即以此蒙佛加持兼得觀察十緣生句故。能不動實相遊戲神通普觀一切善知識莊嚴一切諸佛土。不欲令諸行人放捨諸行住於無相。

The blade, mirror, wheel, conch shell, etc. in the esoteric school generally are practices based on causal conditions and are metaphors with deep meaning.<sup>57</sup>

Again it states:

In this way, the multifarious skillful means in the tradition of this sutra are all based in the profane world. Due to these causal conditions, one obtains omnipresent wisdom. The truths in this world are the cause, and the ultimate truth is the result.<sup>58</sup>

**421b11-13:** 問。眞言行中有護摩法。以般若智火、燒煩惱薪。增法威驗、於諸行中靈驗殊勝。天台行法都無此事。云何。

Question: Among the Shingon practices there is the *goma* rite. By means of the fires of *prajñā* wisdom, one burns the kindling of the afflictions. As the spectacle of the rite increases, so does the extraordinary efficacy of these practices. There are no such things in Tendai rites. What do you say about this?

**421b13-16:** 答。此亦如向有相方便。鈍人寄事觀理爲便。故佛在世及正法中、則無燃火得道之人。亦是一種得道之門。如勝熱婆羅門投火行也。

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57. This line is probably based on *ZTZm1.223a-224b*.

58. See *ZTZm1.131b*.



Response: Again, this is like the skillful means of preparatory [practices] that utilize forms. For a person with dull faculties, relying on objects to contemplate the principle is a skillful means. Therefore, when the buddha dwelled in this world as well as in the period of the correct dharma, nobody followed the path of fire {i.e. *goma*}.<sup>59</sup> However, this is also one gateway for following the path. It is like the brahmin Jayōsmāya's practice of jumping into the fire.<sup>60</sup>

**421b17-19:** 問。眞言行者於壇上安鈴杵羯磨線縋檪等。各有幟幟、法驗速成。天台行中全無此事。云何。

Question: The Shingon practitioner arranges a bell, pronged karma-vajra, hammer, cords, and dagger on the platform. Each of these has its banner, and the efficacy of the rite is immediate. There are no such things in Tendai practice. What do you say about this?

**421b19-21:** 答。此亦寄事。如上所引義釋中說。又寄事觀理。天台亦有之。如止觀中方等法華三昧中說。

Response: These [practices] also rely on phenomena. The passage from the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* that I quote above also applies here. Moreover, based on phenomena, one contemplates the principle. Tendai also has such rites. These are similar to the *shikan* practices of walking and sitting *samādhi* and the lotus *samādhi* in Tendai.

**421b22-24:** 問。眞言行者觀心月輪八葉白蓮。炳現種子三摩耶尊形、爲本尊等。行者即成本尊身等。此等深觀天台都無之。云何。

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59. In other words, *goma* rites would not be necessary during the time of Śākyamuni. Again, Shōshin asserts that the Shingon lineage began after the age of the true dharma began to wain.

60. Jayōsmāya is one of the fifty-three teachers sent to guide the boy Sudhana in the "Entering the Dharmadhātu Chapter" of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. This particular story is recorded in Buddhahadra's translation of the sixty-fascicle *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 698c25-702a16. The story begins with Sudhana coming across Jayōsmāya practicing austerities, one of which consisted of throwing himself into a fire. After the boy pleads with the brahmin to teach him the bodhisattva path, Jayōsmāya finally explains to him that to become a bodhisattva he must know the teachings, eradicate doubt, constantly focus his mind on reverence, cultivate the correct path, know the true and ultimate form of the dharma, abide on the seat of awakening (*bodhimanda*), and achieve the awakening of a buddha. Sudhana then, following the brahmin's example, threw himself into the flames at which time he became a bodhisattva and abided in *samādhi*. See *Taishō* 702a9-16: 而說偈言 欲求菩提者 當順知識教 除滅諸疑惑 一心常恭敬 修習於正道 知法真實相 安住於道場 成就佛菩提 爾時善財童子。即登刀山自投火聚。未至中間。即得菩薩安住三昧。既至火焰。復得菩薩寂靜安樂照明三昧。得三昧已。 Shōshin refers to this story to emphasize that the *goma* rite is just a skillful means for following the bodhisattva path. It is simply a metaphor for guiding individuals to the path, and, therefore, is itself a gateway to realizing buddhahood.

Question: The Shingon practitioner contemplates the lunar disc in his mind and the eight-petalled white lotus.<sup>61</sup> In particular, these [practices] reveal how the seed-syllable, symbol, and image of the deity become the main deity. The practitioner then becomes to body of the main deity. In Tendai, there are no such profound contemplations. What do you say about this?

**421b24-c1:** 答。此亦如向有相方便。心無形色。豈胸實有月輪華等。但是心性本淨。故類淨月理性萬德本來具足、故爲滿月。本覺佛性不爲煩惱染污、故爲白蓮。亦寄肉心八葉。故亦云八葉。從於性德起修德。故得云種子變爲佛等。顯教直說理具而已。

Response: Again, these [practices] are akin to the skillful means of preparatory [practices] having form. In the mind, there are no forms. How could one really have a lunar disc or lotus in their chest? This just refers to the original purity of the nature of the mind. Thus, [these practices] symbolize the principle nature of the pure moon that has always been replete in all things, hence, the "full moon." The buddha-nature of original awakening is not tainted due to the afflictions, hence, the "white lotus." It also conjoins the "eight petals" of the physical mind. That's why it is also called "eight-petalled." From natural virtues one gives rise to cultivated virtues. Therefore, we can say that seed-syllables transform into buddhas. In the exoteric teachings, this [process] is explicitly described as the complete attainment of the principle.

**421c2-6:** 問。他家云、眞言是性海果分法門、點一念心即是果滿。天台圓教四十二位、具斷無明入于妙覺。雖云速疾、不如眞言。故法華宗是因分可說之。菩薩道非佛乘云云。此義云何。

Question: The other school states that mantra are the teaching of the ocean-like fruits of awakening and that concentrating the mind on a single thought is to be fully awakened.<sup>62</sup> In the forty-two stages of the perfect teachings in Tendai, one completely severs ignorance and enters wondrous enlightenment. Although this is said to be expedient, it is not like mantra. Therefore, the Lotus school must preach from the causal stages. The path of the bodhisattva is not the same as the vehicle of the buddha. What do you say about this interpretation?

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61. Shōshin is probably referring to contemplation practices recorded in Yixing's commentary. See *ZTZm*1.115a.

62. Shōshin does not name of a source for this statement, but he may be paraphrasing the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See *ZTZm*1.192b. However, he is mostly likely referring to a passage in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, which cites a similar line from Fazang's essay on the five teachings in Huayan, the *Huayan yisheng jiao fenqi zhang* 華嚴一乘教義分齊章. See *Taishō* 45.477a13-16.

**421c6-13:** 答。若約觀心、天台亦云、一念心中已有理性三密相海。若約從證、眞言亦云漸歷地位。故菩提心論三摩地行即至初地。義釋云、當知、行人位同大覺。以其自覺心故得佛名。然非究竟妙覺大牟尼位云云。此同天台生身得忍。又義釋明六無畏位。仁王儀軌、從凡至聖總爲四位。理趣釋中三賢十聖。豈可眞言迴心即佛無地位耶。

Response: If we consider this from the viewpoint of discerning the mind, Tendai {Zhanran} also states:

In a single thought in the mind one already possesses an ocean of the identity of the three secrets of the principle.<sup>63</sup>

If we consider this from the standpoint of realization, then mantra can also be said to be the a [practice] in the gradual stages of the path. Thus, the practice of *samādhi* in the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* includes the initial stage [of the bodhisattva path].<sup>64</sup>

The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana]* states:

You should know that the practitioner, his level of practice, and supreme awakening are the same. By awakening in one's own mind, he obtains the title of "buddha." However, this is not the ultimate stage of the wondrously awakened Great Muni.<sup>65</sup>

This is the same as the Tendai notion of obtaining patience [based on the knowledge that all dharma's are non-arising] in one's current lifetime.<sup>66</sup> Again, the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* explains the stages of fearlessness.<sup>67</sup> The *Ritual Manual for the Sūtra of the Humane Kings* states that from the worldling to the sagely stages there are a total of four

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63. This quote is probably from Zhanran's discussion of the three secret activities in *Fahua xuanyi shiqian*. See *Taishō* 33.919c6-12: 若信因果方知三密有本。百界三業俱空假中。故使稱宜遍赴爲果。一一應色。一一言音。無不百界。三業具足。化復作化。斯之謂歟。故一念凡心已有理性三密相海。一塵報色同在本理毘羅遮那。方乃名爲三無差別。此以自他不二門成。

64. Shōshin is referring to a line from the *Treatise on Bodhicitta* regarding the initial stage of the bodhisattva *bhūmi*. See *Taishō* 32.574b9-10.

65. See *ZTZm*1.31b.

66. Zhanran discusses this concept extensively in the *Fahua xuanyi shiqian*. See *Taishō* 33.822b4-10. See Part One, Section Two on the concept of the 得忍.

67. See *ZTZm*1.70b-72a. Yixing provides a lengthy definition of the use of the term "fearlessness" in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, "Danichikyō gishaku no kyōgaku ni tsuite - Taimitsu kyōgaku no kiban toshite-" 『大日經義釈』の教学について—台密教学の基盤として—, in *Shinbutsu shūgo shisō no tenkai* 神仏習合思想の展開, edited by Sugawara Shinkai 菅原信海 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin 1996), 433-444.

levels.<sup>68</sup> In the *Interpretation of the Principle*, these are the three divisions of worthies and ten sagely stages.<sup>69</sup> How could mantra turn one's mind toward the attainment of buddhahood without stages of the path?

**421c14-15:** 問。出生義云、削地位之階漸、開等妙之頓旨。云何。

Question: The *Meaning of the Arising* states:

Shorten the gradual development of the stages of the path, and realize the sudden essential of virtual/wondrous awakening.<sup>70</sup>

What do you say about this?

**421c15-19:** 答。此約觀心、行者即成大日如來。菩提心義云、即從等覺入妙覺之行法也。大日經淨菩提心始文云、佛無說成佛因者、起入初地初住之功德也云云。天台超登何必經歷四十二位耶。

Response: If we consider the viewpoint of discerning the mind, the practitioner becomes Mahāvairocana Tathāgata. The *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta* states:

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68. Shōshin refers to a passage from Amoghavajra's commentary on the *Sūtra of the Humane Kings*, the *Renwang huguo bore boluomi duo jing tuoluoni niansong yigui* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經陀羅尼念誦儀軌. See *Taishō* 19.518c4-5: 然瑜珈中。從凡至聖總為四地。一勝解行地。通目地前。二普賢行願地。通目十地三大普賢地。即等覺地。四普照曜地。即成正覺地。

69. Shōshin references Amoghavajra's commentary on the *Adhyarthaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (see Part One, Section Three), but, as Ōkubo notes, it is unclear to which passage Shōshin might be referring. See Ōkubo 1998, 332n6. The phrase "three divisions of worthies and ten sagely stages" denotes the levels of the path at which the Tendai practitioner becomes a bodhisattva. Amoghavajra's commentary does not explicitly discuss path structure, but Shōshin may be extrapolating based on a passage in the opening of the text that describes the assembly of the sutra. When interpreting the term "vajra empowerment" (金剛加持), Amoghavajra states (*Taishō* 19.607a24-26):

金剛加持者、表如來十真如十法界十如來地。

"Vajra empowerment" expresses the tathāgata as the ten suchnesses, ten *dharmadhātu*, and ten tathāgata grounds.

Perhaps, Shōshin interprets these three categories to be the same as three divisions of ten abodes, ten practices, and ten dedications of merit and equates the "ten tathāgata grounds" with the ten *bhūmi*.

70. Shōshin paraphrases a passage from Amoghavajra's ritual commentary, the *Meaning of the Arising of the Thirty-seven Honorables of the Vajraśekhara Yoga* (*Jingangding yujia sashiqi zun chushengyi* 金剛頂瑜伽三十七尊出生義). See *Taishō* 18.297c19-25: 三祕密教說時方至。遂却住自受用身。據色究竟天宮。入不空王三昧。普集諸聖賢。削地位之漸階。開等妙之頓旨。從普賢金剛性海。出塵數加持色身。然後演普賢金剛語業之密言。示普賢金剛身業之密印。啓普賢金剛意業之意慧。成有情金剛三業之度門。

This is the practice of entering wondrous awakening from virtual awakening. The opening statement on the pure *bodhi* mind in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, "the buddha, without preaching, is the cause for becoming a buddha," denotes the virtue of giving rise to and entering the initial ground and initial abode.<sup>71</sup>

Why must the accention of the path in Tendai be consecutive in the forty-two stages?

**421c20-21:** 問。法華云、我於無量阿僧祇劫、難得菩提等。豈可速疾耶。

Question: The *Lotus Sūtra* states, "Through the innumerable *kalpa* it is difficult for us to attain *bodhi*."<sup>72</sup> How could this be expedient?

**421c21-24:** 答。於圓教中、約速疾理、雖云速疾未必皆速。眞言亦爾也。大日經云、眞言門修菩提行。無量百千那由他劫、積集無量功德智慧云云。

Response: Regarding the expediency of [realizing] the principle according to the perfect teachings, although this is said to be expedient, no [practice] is necessarily expedient. Shingon is also like this. The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* states, "The gateway of mantra cultivates practices of *bodhi*. Over the course of the incalculable *kalpa*, one accumulates incalculable merits and wisdom."

### (iii) Critique of the Claim that the Preacher of the Sutra in the Two Schools is Not the Same

**421c25-26:** 第三遮人同難者。問。眞言教明佛果五智以爲五佛。於天台教無此名目。云何。

Section Three: I object to arguments against the congruence of the preacher [in the two schools].

Question: The Shingon teachings explain the five wisdoms of buddhahood, taking them to be the five buddhas. In the Tendai teachings, there are no [buddhas] by this title. What do you say about this?

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71. Annen explains the opening of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in terms of Tendai path structure. See *Taishō* 75.462b2-19.

72. This line is from Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 9.52c5-7.

**421c27-422a3:** 答。菩提心義云、釋籤引唯識論四智三身。天台時未有真言五智等。一行弘真言教、追同天台三德等義云云。私云、天台但依大品大論三智四智、以彼五智亦可相攝。隨時雖無五智名目、而於佛德不可闕少。佛智無邊各說少分故也。

Response: The *Compendium on the Doctrine of Bodhicitta* states:

The *Explanation [of the Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra]*<sup>73</sup> quotes the *Treatise on Consciousness Only* regarding the four wisdoms and three bodies. During the time of Tiantai {Zhiyi}, there was no mantra [teaching] on the five wisdoms. When Yixing<sup>74</sup> propagated the mantra teachings he expanded on the Tiantai doctrine of the three virtues.<sup>75</sup>

I say that if the Tendai position is based on the notion of the three and four wisdoms in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, then these five wisdoms should also be included. Although such titles for the five wisdoms did not exist at the time, the merits of the buddha are without limitations. The wisdom of the buddha is boundless, and therefore is explained incrementally.

**422a4-5:** 問。真言宗云法身自受用報色身說法。天台法身不論三密。此豈同耶。

Question: The Shingon school claims that the form body of the inwardly-directed reward of the dharma body preaches the dharma.<sup>76</sup> The dharma body in Tendai does not expound the three secret activities. How are they the same?

**422a5-13:** 答。真言教以有相爲方便、寄他受用明佛內證。故論色相。亦以自受法樂假爲主伴說法供養。非下地境、唯佛內證。而天台宗且以妙智爲自受用。故無色相。亦望下地故無說法。若於內證論萬德者、何亦固遮妙色聲等。故章安云、法身非色非非色、不可思議云云。若依有門明佛德者、天台亦云、妙色湛然。具如別章。又教時義有異解云云。

Response: The Shingon teachings take [the dharma body of the buddha] as having form to be a skillful means and relies on the externally-directed reward [body] to illuminate the internal realization of the buddha. Thus, they argue that the [dharma body] has form. Furthermore, they

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73. For Zhanran's discussion of the four wisdoms and critique of the *Weishilun* in his *Fahua xuanyi shiqian*, see *Taishō* 33.899a11-16.

74. Annen is likely referring to a passage in the fourteenth fascicle of the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See Part One, Section Three.

75. Shōshin paraphrases the final question and response of Annen's essay. See *Taishō* 75.559b23-c21, specifically his response in line c5-9.

76. Shōshin is probably referring to the opening of the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. See TKDZ 3.75.

take the internally-directed bliss of the dharma provisionally to be the offerings and preaching between the main deity to his attendants. This does not occur in the lower levels of the path, but only in the internal realization of a buddha. However, the Tendai school takes the sublime wisdom [of the buddha] to be the internally-directed reward. Thus, it does not have form. Moreover, because we take the lower stages of the path into consideration, [the dharma body] does not preach. If one were to argue that myriad virtues exist in the internal realization [of becoming a buddha], why also refute the inherently subtle qualities of form and sound? Therefore, Shōan {Guanding} states:

The dharma body has neither form nor is it without form. It is inconceivable.<sup>77</sup>

If we rely on the teaching that form exists to illuminate the merits of the buddha, then Tendai {Guanding} further states, "the wondrous form is deeply profound."<sup>78</sup> I fully explicate this passage in a separate essay.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, the *Interpretation of Teachings* has a different interpretation.<sup>80</sup>

**422a14-16:** 問。他家云、楞伽法佛說法之文、智度性身妙色之句、此是法身有色身說法也云云。此義云何。

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77. This passage is from Guanding's commentary on the *Nirvāna Sūtra*, the *Daban niepan jing shu* 大般涅槃經疏. See *Taishō* 38.92b23-c2: 或者無緣作色無色。然法身非色非無色。而或色者是無色。或無色者是色無色。以是義故二乘不解非其境界。聲聞無色者小乘患色猶如桎梏爲說無色。菩薩能體色無色故言妙色湛然。今皆不然解脫之體何曾是色及與非色。下文云不可說色及以非色。不可說空及與不空。爲兩緣故言色非色非色亦色非色亦非色非色不可思議。

78. In another commentary, Guanding quotes this phrase in Faxian's translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 38.7c15-16:

六卷云。妙色湛然常安隱云云。

The wondrous form is deeply profound and always tranquil.

For the original passage, see *Taishō* 12.859b4-6: 究竟棄諸有 從此疾離一切數 猶如薪盡盛火滅 妙色湛然常安隱。 The "wondrous form" refers to the reward body of the buddha as it abides in a reward land. See BDJ 1728c.

79. Shōshin may be referencing his essay regarding *Lotus Sūtra* commentaries, the *Hokkesho shiki*, which he mentions in the previous section. See *DNBZ* 22.706b.

80. Annen has his own interpretation on the preaching of the dharma body of the buddha, which differs from the traditional Tiantai view. I discuss his interpretation in Chapter Three.

Question: The other school contends that the passage in the *Laṅkāvatāra* regarding the "dharma buddha that expounds the dharma" and the phrase in the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* on the "wondrous form of the essence body" denote the preaching of the dharma body in a body that has form.<sup>81</sup> What do you say about this interpretation?

**422a16-29:** 答。楞伽經云、法佛說法者離心相應體故。內證聖行境界故。離攀緣、能觀所觀故。離所作相故。非諸二乘外道境故略抄。既云離心離能所觀離所作等。故異真言爲自性所成眷屬說法。彼有能所所作等。故天台云、法身無緣冥資一切。無說而說。即是法身說法云云。又楞伽亦約有門而說。若智論中以小乘佛名生身佛、以大乘佛名法性身。故法性身義通三教、非必法身。論云、法性身佛以天衣爲座。此是通勝應身也。以證真諦法性而受用名法性身。又云、法性身佛有所說法、唯十住菩薩聽受。衆生見法性身佛、無衆煩惱無願不滿云云。此以他受用報爲法性身、非法身也。

Response: The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* states:

The preaching of the dharma buddha is distinct from the substance of the mental functions associated with the mind. It is the field wherein sagely practices are internally realized... It is distinct from the cognition of objects, that which contemplates and that which is contemplated. It is distinct from that which is generated. It is not the domain of the two vehicles or heretics.<sup>82</sup>

(I have abbreviated this passage.)

As already stated, [the dharma buddha] is distinct from the mind, that which contemplates and that which is contemplated, and that which is generated. Therefore, this differs from the Shingon notion that the preaching is for the sake of the retinue that comes into being by its own nature, which consists of a creator and the created. Therefore, Tendai {Zhiyi and Zhanran} states:

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81. Shōshin takes the beginning of this statement from Kūkai's *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. See *Taishō* 77.375b-13-15: 至如楞伽法佛說法之文。智度性身妙色之句。馳胸憶而會文。驅自宗而取義。惜哉古賢不啻醍醐。I discuss this passage from the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in Chapter Three.

82. Shōshin paraphrases a passage Bodhiruci's ten-fascicle translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. There are at least four extant Chinese translations of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, but Bodhiruci's was the most commonly cited version in Japan. Robert Sharf discusses variations in translations in Sharf 2002, 103. See *Taishō* 16.525b28-c11: 大慧。是名分別虛妄體相。大慧。是名報佛說法之相。大慧。法佛說法者。離心相應體故。內證聖行境界故。大慧。是名法佛說法之相。大慧。應化佛所作應佛說施戒忍精進禪定智慧故。陰界入解脫故。建立識想差別行故。說諸外道無色三摩跋提次第相。大慧。是名應佛所作應佛說法相。復次大慧。法佛說法者。離攀緣故。離能觀所觀故。離所作相量相故。大慧。非諸凡夫聲聞緣覺外道境界故。以諸外道執著虛妄我相故。是故大慧。如是內身自覺修行勝相當如是學。大慧。汝當應離見自心相以爲非實。



The dharma body, without conditions, surreptitiously assists all beings. Without preaching, it preaches. This is the preaching of the dharma body.<sup>83</sup>

The *Lankāvatāra* also advocates this same gateway.

If, in the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, the buddha of Hīnayāna is called the buddha in a living body, then the buddha of Mahāyāna is called the body of dharma-nature. Therefore, the interpretation of the body of dharma-nature pervades the three teachings {i.e. shared, distinct, perfect}, but it is not necessarily the dharma body. The *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* states:

The buddha as a body of dharma-nature takes the celestial robe to be a constellation of stars.<sup>84</sup>

This is the superior response body of the shared teachings.<sup>85</sup> Realizing and obtaining the ultimately true nature of the dharma is called the body of dharma-nature. Again it states:

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83. This passage is from Zhanran's sub-commentary on the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, the *Weimojing liushu* 維摩經略疏. See *Taishō* 38.566c2-6.

常寂光國說教不同者。若究竟寂光無說無示而言說者法身無緣冥資一切。無說而說即是法身說法。

If ultimately in the [land] of quiescent radiance there is no speech and nothing is manifested, then regarding the term "speech," the dharma body, without conditions, assists all [sentient beings]. Without speaking, it speaks. This is the preaching of the dharma body.

Zhanran's passage is based on Zhiyi's commentary. See *ZZK* 27.870a-b:

明常寂光國說教不同者、若究竟常寂光土、無說、無示、過茶無字可說也。而言說法者、法身即法界、常普冥資一切眾生、即是法身說法也。

To clarify that the preaching in the land of eternally quiescent radiance is not the same [as the other lands]: If ultimately in the land of eternally quiescent radiance nothing is spoken and nothing manifests, then beyond *ta* there are no words that can be expressed. Moreover, as for the term "preaching," the dharma body, that is the dharma realm, universally and subversively assists all sentient beings. This is the dharma body's preaching.

These two passages form the basis of the doctrine of the dharma body's preaching in taimitsu. Ōkubo Ryōshun 大久保良峻, "Shingonshū" 真言宗, in *Shin hasshū kōyō* 新八宗綱要 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001), 131 and *Taimitsu kyōgaku no kenkyū* 台密教学の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2004), 150-151.

84. See *Taishō* 25.310b20-c6.

85. Shōshin further discusses this category of buddha-body in the *Hokkesho shiki*. See *DNBZ* 22.711a.

There are teachings of the buddha as a body of dharma-nature, but only tenth-abode bodhisattvas can perceive it. If sentient beings see the buddha as a body of dharma-nature, they are without afflictions and there is no wish that will not be fulfilled.<sup>86</sup>

This [passage] takes the body of dharma-nature as the externally-directed reward. It is not the dharma body.

**422b1-4:** 問。他家云、天台言語道斷、法相廢詮談時<sup>87</sup>等者、彼宗不知果分之極、故絕言語不可思議。眞言宗獨知此奧、即於法身談相好說法等義云云。

Question: The other school states that the notion in Tendai that "the path is cut off from verbal expression" and in Hossō that "discussing the buddha while rejecting language" means these schools do not know the ultimate goal of buddhahood, and, therefore, they reject language by claiming that buddhahood is inconceivable.<sup>88</sup> Only the Shingon school understands this profound meaning, that is, the interpretation of the characteristics and preaching of the dharma body.

**422b4-10:** 答。眞言以有相爲方便、如上已論。若約實相、眞言亦云言語道斷。義釋第四云、世諦眞諦權實相即俱不可思議。又第五釋縛字離言說之義、有六重言語道斷。又第八云、如是法身等同虛空無分別云云。若以可思議爲勝者、應以不思議爲劣。若爾世諦是勝眞諦應劣也。

Response: Shingon takes "having form" to be a skillful means, as I have argued above.<sup>89</sup> If we consider the ultimate characteristics [of the buddha], Shingon also states that the path is cut off from verbal expression. The fourth fascicle of the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

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86. This passage is also from the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. See *Taishō* 25.278a-b2.

87. The *Taishō* version of the *Essay on the Two Schools* includes the character 時, but this passage from the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* in both the *Taishō* and *TKDZ* publications includes the character 旨.

88. Shōshin paraphrases two lines from the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* regarding the doctrine of the three truths in the *Mohezhiquan* 摩訶止觀 (*Taishō* 46.26c) and Kuiji's explanation of expressing the essence of the teachings in language through the two truths hermeneutic in the *Dasheng fayuan yilin zhang* 大乘法苑義林章 (*Taishō* 45.287b). See *Taishō* 77.376b25-c20 or *TKDZ* 3.84-85 and *Taishō* 77.377a13-28 or *TKDZ* 3.87, respectively.

89. Shōshin uses the term 有相 to refer both to practices that utilize images or procedures such as ritual and the physical body of the buddha.

The intersection of provisional and ultimate truth, as well as provisional and ultimate characteristics [of the buddha] are both inconceivable.<sup>90</sup>

Moreover, the interpretation in the fifth fascicle stipulates that "the *va*-syllable is beyond language" means "the path is cut off from language" in six degrees of separation.<sup>91</sup> Again, it states in the eighth fascicle:

In this way, the dharma body is identical to empty space and there is nothing that is differentiated from it.<sup>92</sup>

If we take the superior as that which is conceivable, then we should take the inferior as that which is inconceivable. If this were the case, provisional truth would be superior and the ultimate truth would be inferior.

**422b11-14:** 問。眞言宗云、大日萬德分別諸尊。如云大菩提心名爲普賢、大悲名觀音、大智爲文殊等。而天台宗諸聖行因得果各別。豈是同耶。

Question: The Shingon school states that the myriad virtues of Mahāvairocana are divided among the various honorable ones. Likewise, it is stated that the great *bodhi* mind is called Samantabhadra, great compassion is called Avalokiteśvara, and great wisdom is called Mañjuśri, etc. However, in the Tendai school the cultivation of causes to obtain the results differs for each of the various sagely beings. How are these the same?

**422b14-16:** 答。證入一理同會法身。若約因行諸聖不同。故眞言有從因至果從本垂迹。二義宛然。豈可一向。具如教時義。

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90. This is an excerpt from *ZTZm1.131b*.

91. This line is based on *ZTZm1.195a*: [Siddham va] 嚩字門一切諸法語言道斷故者。梵云嚩劫跋名爲語言。若見[Siddham va] 嚩字時即知一切諸法不離語言地。以是諸法無不有因有緣故。若法本來不生則是離諸因緣。是故語言道斷。

92. Shōshin may be referring to a passage in the sixth fascicle of the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See *ZTZm1.250b*:

如來法身本性淨故無分別故無邊際故、等同虛空。

Because the original nature of the dharma body of the tathāgata is pure, indivisible, and without spacial or temporal limitations, it is equal to empty space.

However, Shōshin could also be paraphrasing a passage in the eighth fascicle, *ZTZm1.379a*: 是故等同虛空深廣無盡離諸分別。如毘盧遮那法界門。乃至最下世天法界門一一成就之相悉皆如是。此是究竟實際。萬法所歸會處故名圓滿法句也。

Response: Realizing the singular principle is the same as uniting with the dharma body of the buddha. If we consider the cultivation of causes, then the various sages are not the same. Therefore, in Shingon there are the concepts of 'advancing from causes to the results' and 'traces suspended from the source.' These two interpretations are exactly the same. How could there be only one way of practice? This is comprehensively addressed in the *Interpretation of Teachings*.<sup>93</sup>

**422b17-18:** 問。他家云、天台佛果是真言因分。龍猛菩薩說、如是一心無明邊域非明分位云云。此義云何。

Question: The other school states that buddhahood according to Tendai is the cause that [allows one to enter the path of] the Shingon teaching. Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva explains that in the stage of unifying the mind {i.e. the Tendai school} one is still in a state of ignorance and has not achieved a position of knowledge.<sup>94</sup> What do you say about this interpretation?

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93. In the *Interpretation of Teachings*, Annen discusses these concepts in terms of mandala. See *Taishō* 75.398b8-23:

答。凡真言宗曼荼羅義略有二種。一者從本垂迹曼荼羅。是一切諸佛內證外化之三密也。釋迦一代亦攝此中。諸宗就此釋種種身。二者修因向果曼荼羅。是一切行人從凡入聖之三密也。釋迦所化亦攝此中。諸宗就此釋種種行。

Response: In general, there are two types of interpretations of mandala in the mantra school. The first is the mandala of 'traces suspended from the source.' This is the three secret activities of the external manifestations of the internal realization of all buddhas. Śākyamuni of the current age is also included among them. Regarding this [topic], the various schools explain many types of bodies. The second is the mandala of 'cultivating causes directed toward the result.' This is the three secret activities of all practitioners who enter the sagely stages from the worldly stages. The transformation of Śākyamuni is also included among them. Regarding this [topic], the various schools explain many types of practices.....

今真言中初心廣見法界諸尊。從本垂迹修因向果曼荼羅壇不以所入而為究竟。是故初入。第三重。次入第二重。次入第一重。終入中臺。又義釋中入曼荼羅有次入者有超入者有不定入者尋思可知云云。

Now, in the mantra [school], the initial mind expansively sees the honorables ones of the dharma realm. The mandala platforms of 'cultivating causes directed toward the result' and 'traces suspended from the source' are not, having been entered by [the practitioner], the final stage. Therefore, one first enters the third level, then enters the second level, then enters the first level, and finally enters the central dais. Furthermore, regarding entering the mandala, the *Interpretation* states that there are practitioners who enter in sequence, practitioners who surpass entering, and practitioners who indeterminately enter. You should reflect on this carefully.

94. Shōshin cites a passage from the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* found at the end of the Tendai section of Kūkai's *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*. See *Taishō* 77.371c18-22. The same line is quoted in the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. See *Taishō* 77.375c1-11. For the original passage from the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*, see *Taishō* 33.637b-c.

**422b19-c3:** 答。教時義云、有二失。一者義釋云、此經本地身即是法華最深祕處。又云、彼說實相即是此經心實相也。而判爲具惑佛<sup>95</sup>。二者所引龍猛菩薩說者、是釋摩訶衍論文。此論真偽未定、不足爲證云云。私云、義釋云、觀行心中見佛真實加持身。故法華明深信解相、則爲見佛常在耆山云云。故知、彼此二佛不別。又天台圓佛留何煩惱、未悟何理、爲具惑耶。如唯識等不明界外。故彼論佛具界外惑。若別教佛、但斷十二品。故望圓佛猶成因位。今眞言佛望圓教佛、進斷何惑、進悟何理耶。又釋摩訶衍論所云邊域、何以得知是天台佛。

Response: The *Interpretation of Teachings* states:

[Kūkai] makes two errors. First, the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states, "The original ground body of this sutra is the most profound and secret assembly of the Lotus."<sup>96</sup> Again it states, "This explains the true characteristics, that is, the true characteristics at the heart of this sutra."<sup>97</sup> However, [Kūkai] determines this to be a completely afflicted mind. Second, the quote from Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva is a passage from the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*. The authenticity of this treatise is unsubstantiated, and the evidence for it is insufficient.<sup>98</sup>

I say that the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

During contemplation practice one perceives the buddha's ultimate body of empowerment within his mind. Thus, the *Lotus Sūtra*<sup>99</sup> explains that if one has the characteristic of

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95. The *Taishō* publication includes 佛, but this character should be 心 based on Annen's text.

96. Shōshin cites this passage from *ZTZm1* in Part One, Section Three.

97. This passage from the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in *ZTZm1*:28b-29a. Also, see Part One, Section Four.

98. Shōshin paraphrases Annen's critique of Kūkai's *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*. See *Taishō* 75.390b8-29: 若爾天台妙覺毘盧遮那是眞言宗淨菩提心初門之佛。無明邊域非明分位。何言同佛 答。義釋中以普賢觀經觀普賢行乃至毘盧遮那遍一切處等文名爲八葉東南普賢淨菩提心也。即是如來內證之德。即一毘盧遮那之身。南海和上判爲無明邊域則有二失。一者不尋義釋文句首尾。如義釋云。此經本地之身即是妙法蓮華最深祕處。又云。彼說。諸法實相即是此經心實相也。而判爲具惑之心。二者不檢論文真偽是非所引龍猛菩薩說者是釋摩訶衍論文。此論是海和上及福貴和上以及眞論。比叡山及諸宗皆爲僞論。夫引論者可引自他共許之文。若一許一不許不足爲證況乎貶天台之妙覺爲具縛之凡夫。和上非佛何誑後學。故彼文云此經本地之身即是妙法蓮華最深祕處。又云彼說諸法實相即是此經心實相也。而判天台佛爲無明邊域則違義釋意矣。今依義釋正文故云眞言宗本地毘盧遮那即天台宗妙法蓮華最深祕處之同佛也。Annen points out that Saichō considered the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* to be apocryphal, but Kūkai cited it anyway.

99. Yixing paraphrases a passage from the "Differentiating Merits Chapter" in Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra* located in *Taishō* 9.45b16-18:

阿逸多。若善男子善女人。聞我說壽命長遠深信解。則 爲見佛常在耆闍崛山。

deeply believing and understanding, then he will perceive the buddha as he permanently abides on Mt. Gr̥dhraḥakūṭa.<sup>100</sup>

Therefore, we know that the buddha in these two [schools] does not differ.

Moreover, how could the buddha according to the Tendai perfect teachings possess afflictions, not yet realize the principle, or be replete with delusion? As in the consciousness-only [school], it is not clear what occurs outside the [three] realms. Therefore, this treatise {i.e. the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*} states that the buddha possesses subtle mental disturbances external to the [three] realms. If we consider the buddha according to the distinct teachings, then this buddha discontinues the twelve categories.<sup>101</sup> Therefore, he is in the causal position for aspiring to become a buddha according to the perfect teachings. If the buddha according to the Shingon teachings aspires to be the buddha according to the perfect teachings, what disturbances would he proceed to eliminate and what principle would he proceed to realize? Moreover, how could one know that this so-called "domain [of ignorance]" in the *Interpretation of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* is the buddha according to Tendai?

**422c3-5:** 問。眞言教云、法界宮中本來自覺大日如來、本覺法身遠離因果。天台云、久遠實成修因得果。寧是同耶。

Question: The Shingon teachings state that Mahāvairocana Tathāgata, who originally awoke on his own accord in the Dharmadhātu Palace, is the originally-awakened dharma body and transcends cause and result. Tendai states that the long ago awakened [buddha] came to be through the cultivation of causes and obtaining the result. How are these the same?

**422c5-8:** 答。若約事論、眞言亦云修因得果。故金剛頂經云、不久頓成。大日經云、我昔坐道場。義釋云、大日昔誓願漸次悟入等。若約理論天台亦云、無始無終等云云。

Response: If we discuss matters of practice, then Shingon also states that one cultivates causes to obtain the results. Therefore, the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* states:

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"O Ajita! If a good man or a good woman, hearing me preach of the great length of my life-span, with profound thought believes and understands, then he or she thereby shall ever see the buddha on Gr̥dhraḥakūṭa Mountain..." See Hurvitz 1976, 252. Also, see Part One, Section Two.

100. Shōshin quotes the *Interpretation of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in ZTZm1:407a. This passage is also cited in Part One, Section Two.

101. The "twelve categories" consist of the four kinds of endeavor to eliminate delusion (四意斷, also referred to as 四正勤), the four kinds of correct elimination of mental states (四正斷), and the four kinds of correct cultivation of the three activities of body, speech, and mind (四正勝) See BDJ 706c-707a.

One suddenly becomes [a buddha].<sup>102</sup>

The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* states:

I from long ago have sat upon the seat of *bodhi*.<sup>103</sup>

The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* states:

Mahāvairocana long ago vowed to gradually realize, enter, etc.<sup>104</sup>

If we discuss the principle, then Tendai also states, "Without beginning or end...."<sup>105</sup>

#### **(iv) Critique of the Claim that the Principle in the Two Schools is Not the Same**

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102. Shōshin is probably referring to the opening section of Amoghavajra's translation. This particular line is not in the sutra, but Ōkubo suggests that the phrase 不久頓成 might refer to the term 現證 in the title. See Ōkubo 1998, 346n1. It could also refer to the same phrase in the opening of the sutra. See *Taishō* 18.208b9-10.

爾時世尊毘盧遮那如來。不久現證等覺一切如來普賢心。

At that time, the world-honored Vairocana Tathāgata immediately realized perfect awakening and the sanguine mind of all tathāgatas.

103. This passage is from the second chapter of the sutra. See *Taishō* 18.9b9-13:

時佛入於一切如來一體速疾力三昧。於是世尊復告執金剛菩薩言 我昔坐道場 降伏於四魔 以大勤勇聲 除衆生怖畏。

Thereupon the Buddha [Vairocana] entered the *samādhi* "Swift Power of the Single Essence of All Tathāgatas," and while in this [*samādhi*] the World-honored One again addressed the bodhisattva Vajradhara, saying, "Formerly when I was seated at the site of *bodhi* (*bodhimāṇḍa*) I vanquished the four demons. And with the voice of a great striving hero I removed the fears of beings." Giebel 2005, 39.

104. Shōshin paraphrases a line from Yixing's commentary that elaborates on the vows of Mahāvairocana. See *ZTZm* 1.84a: 經云。爾時毘盧遮那世尊。本昔誓願成就無盡法界。度脫無餘衆生界故。一切如來。同共集會。漸次證入大悲藏發生三摩地者。以如來本行菩薩道時立如是誓願。

105. Shōshin may be referring to a passage from Zhiyi's *Fahua xuanyi* in *Taishō* 34.127b26-c2: 答云是我方便諸佛亦然。又諸菩薩聞壽量發願。願我於未來說壽亦如是。此即諸佛道同。亦不偏言一近一遠。故知寄無始無終無近無遠。顯法身常住。有始有終有近有遠。論其應迹。用此義望諸經。對緣雖異終不異也。 Zhanran further analyses Zhiyi's comments in his sub-commentary in *Taishō* 34.206b9-19.

**422c9-11:** 第四遮理同難者。問。他家云、天台隨智三諦此則顯教開<sup>106</sup>楔。是真言家人道初門。不是祕奧云云。此義云何。

Section Four: I object to arguments against the congruence of the principle [in the two schools].

Question: The other school states:

The Tendai doctrine that the [buddha preaches] the three truths in accordance with the wisdom [of the practitioner] is a pillar of the exoteric teachings. This is the initial gateway of the path for members of the Shingon school. It is neither secret nor profound.<sup>107</sup>

What do you say about this interpretation?

**422c11-13:** 答。義釋等中以三諦爲極理。如上數引。真言除中道、以何爲祕奧。

Response: The *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]* takes the ultimate principle to be the three truths, as in the above quotations. If Shingon ignores the middle way, how could it be profound?<sup>108</sup>

**422c14-16:** 問。他家云、智論云、不生不滅名無生忍。是助佛道初門。今依此文明知中道是入道初門云云。此義云何。

Question: The other school states:

The *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* states that that which is non-arising and non-ceasing is called the acceptance of the non-arising [of dharmas]. This assists [sentient beings] in reaching the initial gateway of the path toward buddhahood. Based on

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106.The Ōtani manuscript used in the *Taishō* publication includes the character 開, but it should be 關. Tajima includes the latter character in his study of the text, but does not provide details regarding differences in the manuscripts. See Tajima 1968, 238.

107.Shōshin paraphrases the critique of the *Mohezhiḡuan* from the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. See *Taishō* 77.376b25-377a1. However, this summary is a misrepresentation of the original passage in the *Mohezhiḡuan*. See *Taishō* 46.26c-27b.

108.See Part One, Section Two.



this passage, we clearly know that the middle way is the initial gateway for entering the path.<sup>109</sup>

What do you say about this interpretation?

**422c16-20:** 答。智論只是以無生忍爲初門、以佛果爲後位。非謂中道是初門也。不生不滅者、即是中論八不中道也。龍樹何以爲初門耶。又不生等即是阿字本不生義。何異眞言耶。

Response: The *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* simply takes the acceptance of the non-arising [of dharmas] to be the initial gateway, and takes buddhahood to be the final stage. It does not say that the middle way is the initial gateway. Non-arising and non-ceasing are the middle way of the eight negations in the *Middle Treatise*.<sup>110</sup> Why would Nāgārjuna take this as the initial gateway? Also, "non-arising" denotes the doctrine of the originally non-arising A-syllable. How is this different from Shingon?

**422c21-25:** 問。他家門人云、傳教大師是弘法大師之弟子也。彼送弘法狀云、雖渡大唐、依根愚鈍、但受十八道、未傳大法。願於尊者所、將受大法云云。故山家義應同弘法、不可判云兩宗義同。云何。

Question: Adherents to the other school assert that Dengyō Daishi {Saichō} was the disciple of Kōbō Daishi {Kūkai}. A letter he sent Kōbō [Daishi] states:

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109. This quote paraphrases the *Treatise on the Two Teachings*. See *Taishō* 77.377a18-28: 智度論第五云。不生不滅不斷不常不一不異不去不來。因緣生法滅諸戲論。佛能說是我今當禮。乃至諸法不生不滅非不生非不滅。非非不生滅亦非非非不生滅。已得解脫非空非不空。如是等捨滅諸戲論。言語道斷深入佛法。心通無礙不動不退名無生忍。是助佛道初門又三十一云。復次離有爲則無無爲。所以者何。有爲法實相即是無爲。無爲相者則非有爲。但爲衆生顛倒故。分別說有爲相者生滅住異。無爲相者不生不滅不住不異。是爲入佛法之初門。

As Ōkubo points out, the *Treatise on the Two Teachings* actually misquotes the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. See Ōkubo 1998, 348n2. The treatise combines a line from the fifth fascicle (是助佛道初門) with the thirty-first fascicle (是爲入佛法之初門) to conclude that the middle way is an initial gateway to the Buddhist path. However, the *Treatise on the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* does not make this claim. Kūkai makes a similar argument in the *Ten Abiding Minds* and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*. See *Taishō* 77.351a and 371b, respectively.

110. The eight negations are neither arising nor ceasing, neither permanent nor impermanent, neither the same nor different, neither coming nor going.

Although I traveled to the Great Tang, due to the dullness of my faculties I only obtained the eighteen practices and have not yet been transmitted the greater teachings. I wish to receive the greater teachings from your holiness.<sup>111</sup>

Therefore, the interpretations of Sange {Saichō} must be the same as Kōbō, but it cannot be said that the doctrines of the two schools are the same. What do you say about this?

**422c25-423a4:** 答。傳教歸朝於高雄寺修灌頂時、則依宣旨勤操修因等十八人碩德爲灌頂弟子。具在格條。若不受大法、寧修灌頂耶。又勤操是弘法之師、傳教之弟子也。故弘法是傳教之孫弟。如何還云山家師耶。又十八道是本朝古德所作也。寧於唐朝受之耶。又慈覺智證光定安然等山門先德、皆違弘法、或破德義。若彼弘法是祖師者、寧可違害。此事具如破邪辨正中云云。

Response: When Saichō conducted *abhiṣeka* on Mt. Takaō upon returning to Japan, by decree eighteen elite monks such as Gonsō and Shuen became *abhiṣeka* initiates.<sup>112</sup> There are records for all of these. If Saichō had not obtained the greater teaching, how could he have conducted *abhiṣeka*? Furthermore, Gonsō was Kūkai's master as well as Saichō's disciple. Therefore, Kūkai was Saichō's grand-disciple. Why else would he be called the master of the mountain school? Moreover, the eighteen essential practices were developed in the old capital {i.e. Nara} by masters in the past.<sup>113</sup> Why would Saichō have obtained these in the Tang capital? Again, Ennin, Enchin, Kōjō, Annen, and other masters of Tendai all disagree with Kūkai, and in some cases

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111. This letter is not found in Saichō's collection of letters in *DDZ* 5, nor is it included among the extant letters attributed to Saichō in the *Shōryōshū*. The fact that it refers to the *jūhachidō* is suspicious.

112. As Ōkubo notes, the name 修因 should be 修圓. Also, according to Saichō's account of these events, there were eight initiates not eighteen. See Ōkubo 1998, 350n1. Groner discusses Saichō's performance of *abhiṣeka* rites at Mt. Takaō in Groner 1980, 66-67.

113. The response brings up the controversial question of when the *jūhachidō* was established in Japan. Both the MDJ 889 and BDJ 941-944 explain the development from the *jūhachidō* to the *shido kegyō* in the late Heian period, but neither say when this practice started in Japan. In his article on esoteric Buddhism in Nara Japan, Misaki lists several texts such as Yixing's *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* as well as numerous *dhāraṇi* texts that had already been transmitted by the time Saichō and Kūkai returned from China. He also mentions that recitation practice and rudimentary variations of *abhiṣeka* rites were performed. However, he makes no reference to the *jūhachidō*. See Misaki Ryōshū 三崎良周, "Nara jidai no mikkyō ni okeru sho mondai" 奈良時代における諸問題, in *Mikkyō to jinshi shisō* 密教と神紙思想 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1992), 98-129. Shōshin is probably referring to recitation of *dhāraṇī* texts that were already common place in Nara prior to Saichō and Kūkai's return from China.

they refute his interpretations. If Kūkai were the founder of their school, how could they contradict him? These matters are comprehensively addressed in the *Record of Refutations and Deliberations*.<sup>114</sup>

**423a5-6:** 問。高野大師是第三地菩薩、面受慧果。如何彼義、今不用之耶。

Question: The Master of Kōya was a bodhisattva of the third *bhūmi* who received the teachings directly from Huiguo. What do you say about this interpretation, and why do you not utilize it?

**423a6-12:** 答。諸宗人師並是大聖也。但於迹化有不同耳。弘法唯弘真言教。故云真言勝。山家並弘真言止觀。故云齊等。然其同義順義釋等。若據本地傳教是藥王慈覺是觀音。故於彼義亦不可背。麤言及柔語皆歸第一義。願諸同遇者皆會阿字門。天台真言二宗同異章

Response: Masters of the various schools were all great sages. Only their revelations were not the same. Kūkai only spread the teaching of mantra. Therefore, he said that mantra were superior. Saichō spread both mantra and *shikan*. Therefore, he said that they were equal. Nonetheless, both doctrines follow the *Interpretation [of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra]*. If we were to determine the original ground [for their teachings], Saichō is the Medicine King and Ennin is Avalokiteśvara. Therefore, we must not defy their interpretations. Either in coarse words or delicate speech, they all take refuge in the ultimate truth. They vow, whomever they might encounter, to unite them with the gateway of the A-syllable.

*Essay on the Similarities and Differences Between the Two Schools of Tendai and Shingon*

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114. This title refers to the *Record of Refutations and Deliberations on the Curriculum for the Mahāvairocana Sūtra in the Tendai School (Tendaishū shanakyōgō bajabenshōki 天台宗遮那經業破邪辨正記)*. See TZ 7.189. Chen discusses this text in Jinhua Chen, *Crossfire: Shingon-Tendai Strife as Seen in Two Twelfth-century Polemics, with Special References to Their Background in Tang China* (Tokyo: the International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2010).

Colophons

**423a13-24:** 文治四年十二月二十九日、於叡山抄之。此中所引諸文、並是取意或是略抄。又所引他家宗義者、並在十住心論二教論寶鑰等也。學者本知此等諸文、故不的指彼等文、故不廣煩引。又天台宗龍女即身成佛、自受用相好等義、具在別章。故於此中不應記耳。元祿十丁丑年五月。

On the twenty-ninth day of the twelfth month of the fourth year of Bunji {1188}, this essay was composed on Mt. Hiei. It quotes several texts along with paraphrases and, in some cases, abbreviations. It also quotes from interpretations in the other school, namely the *Ten Abiding Minds*, *Treatise on the Two Teachings*, and *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*. Because scholiasts knew these passages from their original sources, the text does not clearly cite them, nor does it take pains to fully quote them. Furthermore, the Tendai doctrines of becoming a buddha in the very body of a *nāga*-girl and the characteristics of the internally-directed reward are more fully addressed in a separate essay. Therefore, there is no need to address them here.<sup>1</sup>

Fifth month of the tenth year of Genroku {1697}

**423a25-b10:** 顯密同會之義者、台宗之徒當研窮要復也。璠僧正適閱此章、歎學徒之莫耶。惜哉天明戊申原本罹災。於茲命予校而再刻。剞劂告竣。願使學者潤了因種、咸沿平等性海焉。

弘化五戊申春

紀陽和哥沙門貫應校

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1. This line again refers to Shōshin's exegesis of Zhiyi's commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra* in the *Personal Notes on the Three Major Works of Tendai*. See DNBZ 22.706b.

Annotated Translation: Colophons

The meaning of the unification of the exoteric and esoteric [teachings] is something that students of Tendai must study. The high priest [Jitsu]man<sup>2</sup> happened to investigate this essay by chance, and praised it as a useful tool<sup>3</sup> for students. Unfortunately, in the eighth year of Tenmyō {1788} the original text was damaged. I was permitted to copy and revise it. I have requested that it be completed as a woodblock. It is my wish that scholars will be enriched by these seeds of knowledge and fully immerse themselves in the ocean-like nature of equanimity.

Spring of the fifth year of Kōka {1848}

Copied by *śramaṇa* Kanō of Kiyō in Wakayama

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2. The colophon in an alternative manuscript identifies a high priest named Jitsuman 實璠 as the person responsible for perserving the text after it was damaged in 1788. However, I could not find any information regarding this individual.
  3. The term 莫邪 is a metaphor derived from a story in the *Wuyue Chunqiu* about a sword-smith named Gan Jiang 干將 and his wife Mo Xie 莫邪. The tale is later recounted in the *Konjaku monogatari* and *Taiheiki*. Eventually, the name Mo Xie became a metaphor for a reliable weapon or tool.

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Kumārajīva, trans.

*Lotus of the Wondrous Dharma Sūtra (Miaofa lianhua jing 妙法蓮華經)*. Taishō 9, no. 262.

Bodhiruci, trans.

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Bodhiruci and Tanlin, trans.

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