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The *Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods (Tanfa yize)*:
Prolegomenon to the Study of a Chinese Esoteric Buddhist Ritual Compendium
From Late-Medieval Dunhuang

By

Amanda K Goodman

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Robert H. Sharf, Chair
Professor Alexander von Rospatt
Professor Mark Csikszentmihalyi
Professor Jacob Dalton

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Abstract

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This dissertation offers the first comprehensive overview of a little-studied Chinese Buddhist ritual compendium known as the *Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods* (*Tanfa yize*). Attributed to the mid-Tang translator and Buddhist mage Amoghavajara (704-774), the collection contains some forty-two individual items spread across four fascicles. Thematically, the work can be divided into two main parts. The first contains thirty-four individually named and numbered ritual texts, appended to which is a lengthy transmission account. In addition to providing a section outline of this voluminous work, the present study provides an account of the extant Dunhuang manuscript copies of the text, and considers their paleographical and codicological features in an attempt to aid in its dating and reconstruction. This study argues that the received text circulated in the Dunhuang region during the late-medieval period, and the late tenth century more specifically.

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I was unsure what that would mean. But it has meant the world, and I still can't believe that I get to spend the rest of my life watching them live theirs. And if all the late nights and lost weekends demanded by this dissertation have amounted to anything, it was for them. I dedicate this study, then, to my sons.

Abbreviations and Conventions

- B** Numbered Chinese-language manuscripts from Dunhuang held in the National Library, Beijing. Since 1910, some five separate systems have been used to number the various deposits of manuscripts now comprising the National Library collection, including the latest system launched in 2005 that is identifiable by the prefix “BD” (BeiDun 北敦). I try and use the most commonly published numbering system for individual manuscripts, and include, when possible, all common numbering systems to refer to individual manuscripts (e.g., B3554 = 獻29 = BD06329).
- Beijing catalogue Ren Jiyu, ed., *Guojia tushuguan cang Dunhuang yishu* 國家圖書館藏敦煌遺書, 106 vols. (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2005)
- BD** (BeiDun 北敦)
- Ch.** Numbered paintings from Dunhuang held in the National Museum, New Delhi
- EO** “Extrême-Orient”; numbered paintings once held in the Louvre but now held in the Musée Guimet, Paris
- G** Numbered Chinese-language manuscripts from Dunhuang held in the Gansu Provincial Museum, Lanzhou
- Giles** Lionel Giles, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Manuscripts from Tunhuang in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1957)
- IOL Tib J** Numbered Tibetan-language manuscripts held in the British Library, London.
- MG** Numbered paintings held in the Musée Guimet, Paris
- P** Numbered Chinese-language manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Fonds Pelliot chinois held at the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris Pelliot catalogue Bibliothèque nationale, Département des Manuscrits, *Catalogue des manuscrits chinois de Touen-bouang (Fonds Pelliot chinois)*, vols.1, 3-6 (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1970-2001)
- PT** Numbered Tibetan-language manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Fonds Pelliot tibétain held at the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris

S	Numbered Chinese-language manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Stein collection held at the British Library, London
Stein painting	Numbered paintings from Dunhuang held in the British Museum, London
T	Numbered Chinese and Japanese-language texts from the modern <i>Taishō shinsbū daizōkyō</i> 大正新脩大藏經, edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺旭 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924-1932). The following citation method is used: T followed by volume number, text number, page, register (a, b, or c), and line number(s) (e.g., T18.865.207a10)

1. All Dunhuang manuscripts are referred to here by (1) a letter representing the general collection and (2) an item number. For example, B7667 refers to item number 7667 held in the Beijing collection (B) at the National Library of China.
2. Following Dalton and van Schaik (2006: xxiii), a distinction is made here between the *manuscript*, the *original manuscript*, the *text*, and the *item*, as many of the tenth century manuscripts contain multiple items in a format first identified by Makita (1976: 39) as the “linked sūtra” (C. *lianxie jing*, J. *rensha kyō* 連寫經) style. In addition, a great many Dunhuang manuscripts were recycled over time and thus contain multiple items on the recto (r) and verso (v) – a practice that has greatly aided in their dating (usually to the tenth century). For manuscripts containing multiple items, individual texts are numbered sequentially, and the recto side is assumed. For example, P3920.7 refers to the seventh item on the recto of ms. P3920, whereas P3835V9 refers to the ninth item on the verso of ms. P3835.
4. Unless otherwise noted, physical descriptions of individual manuscripts (basic dimensions, paper types, book formats, special binding techniques, and so on) are based on information provided in the Beijing, Giles and Pelliot catalogues. Rather than cite individual entries for each reference, I refer the reader to the respective catalogues here at the start.
5. Thanks to the pioneering work of the International Dunhuang Project (British Library) and contributing institutions, a great number of the Stein and Pelliot manuscripts are now available online in high quality digital (and downloadable) format (<http://idp.bl.uk/>).
6. Although a number Sanskrit terms have become permanent parts of the English lexicon (e.g., mantra) I have retained the use of diacritics for all Sanskrit terms appearing in this study (e.g., maṇḍala).
7. I use the Pinyin romanization system throughout this study, noting in brackets any changes made to citations that originally appeared in Wade-Giles.

1. Introduction

In 1975 the early Chan (J. Zen) specialist Tanaka Ryōsho published the first in a series of pioneering essays exploring what he called the “interrelations” between the so-called Chan and esoteric “schools” of Tang dynasty (618-907) Chinese Buddhism.¹ Specifically, Tanaka identified a number of key works that, in his estimation, demonstrate a clear history of exchange and debate between prominent members of eighth-century Northern Chan and esoteric Buddhist circles in the two Tang capitals.² Added to his list of transmitted or “canonical” sources was an otherwise unknown ritual compendium recovered from the Dunhuang Buddhist cave site in northwest China that Tanaka referred to as the *Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods* (*Tanfa yize* 壇法儀則; hereafter *Altar Methods*).³ That “text,” an indigenous Chinese compilation of several dozen altar (*tan* 壇) or *maṇḍala* (*mannaluo* 曼拏羅) rites (the text alternates between the two terms) dating to what appears to be the tenth century, claims to be the work of the mid-Tang translator and esoteric “patriarch” Amoghavajra (C. Bukong 不空, 704-774). Curiously (and it was this final section of the text that caught Tanaka’s attention), the text closes with a composite chronicle that traces its own transmission in China not to Amoghavajra, but to a lineage of Indian and Chinese patriarchs that circulated in a number of influential late-eighth and early-ninth century Chan works.⁴ For Tanaka, the discovery at Dunhuang of an “esoteric” text with a “Chan” pedigree offered tangible proof of what he saw as a widespread synthesis of the two “schools” that had resulted in an idiosyncratic Chinese Buddhist “apocrypha” that consciously combined elements of both.

Just months earlier, in 1974, the Dunhuang manuscript expert Hirai Yūkei had published his own brief survey of the lengthy *Altar Methods*. In that article, Hirai examined the esoteric or tantric credentials of the roughly three dozen ritual texts comprising the first

¹ Tanaka’s 1975 article, *Tōdai ni okeru zen to mikkyō to no kōshō* 唐代における禪と密教との交渉, draws heavily on the groundbreaking work of a number of early Chan specialists, including Hu Shih, DT Suzuki, and Yanagida Seizan, along with the work of the early Dunhuang catalogers. For his subsequent work on the topic, see Tanaka’s 1983 monograph on the Dunhuang Chan manuscripts.

² Faure (1997: 125-129) provides an English summary of Tanaka’s evidence for the Chan-Tantra connection during the mid-Tang period, and McRae (2003: 45-73) provides a lively sketch of these eighth-century metropolitan scenes.

³ The complete title of the text reads *Jin’gangjun jing jin’gangding yiqie rulai shenmiao mimi jingangjie dasanmeiye xiuxing sishierzhong tanfa jing zuoyong weiyi faze, Dapiluzhenafu jingang xindi famen mifa jietanfa yize* 金剛峻經, 金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二種壇法經作用威儀法則, 大毘盧遮那佛金剛心地法門秘法戒壇法儀則.

⁴ The final section of the *Altar Methods*, entitled the *Fu fazang pin* 付法藏品 (Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository), in fact contains four separate historical accounts. Tanaka 1981 (translated by Kenneth Eastman) provides an English summary of the lineage accounts found in the *Fu fazang pin*, as does Faure (1997: 127) and Adamek (2007: 104-105). Sharf (2002: 268-269) provides a critical re-reading of the *Fu fazang pin* transmission account in light of the recent debate over the status of an independent esoteric Buddhist “school” or “lineage” in Tang China.

part of the collection by suggesting a connection between those rites and the basic ritual system outlined in a seminal Buddhist scripture associated in China with Amoghavajra, the *Jin'gangding jing* 金剛頂經 (*S. *Vajroṣṇīṣa sūtra, Vajra Pinnacle Sūtra*).⁵ However, where Tanaka saw proof of a synthesis of distinct schools in the text, Hirai saw a series of methodological red flags that signaled, to his mind at least, a scholarly failure to account for the work either in whole or in part. In what amounted to a critical state-of-the-field of medieval Chinese Buddhist studies, Hirai called for the systematic study of the *Altar Methods* outside of Tanaka's sectarian framework, as well as contemporary Japanese Shingon classification schemes that would reduce the text to a spurious work falling outside the

⁵ Hirai's 1974 article is titled *Tonkō shutsudo gigikyō bunken yori mita Mikkyō to Zen* 敦煌出土偽疑經文獻よりみた密教と禪. In the opening section of that article, Hirai references Tanaka's [forthcoming?] work on the *Altar Methods*, suggesting that his piece was intended as a critical response to Tanaka's ongoing research on the text. Hirai suggests, but does not explore in detail, the relationship between the *Altar Methods* and several additional Dunhuang manuscripts, including S2272, which contains excerpts of the *Altar Methods*, and B7666, which contains, among other things, a liturgical manual based on the ritual system promoted in the *Jin'gangding jing*.

The complete title of Amoghavajra's text reads *Jin'gangding yiqie rulai zhenshishe dasheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經 (T18.865). Amoghavajra's is listed in the *Kaiyuan lu* 開元錄 (T2154.55.700a10), and twice mentioned in the *Zhenyuan lu* 貞元錄, once in a list of texts translated under the three successive reigns of Xuanzong 玄宗 712-756), Suzong 肅宗 (756-761), and Daizong 代宗 (762-779) of the Tang dynasty (T2157.55.879a27), and again in a list of texts entered into the canon during the Zhenyuan era (T2157.551034a28). Amoghavajra's text is also listed in Ennin's 圓仁 (794-884) 入唐新求聖教目錄 (T2167.55.1080a26), the anonymous 錄外經等目錄 (T2175.55.1112.b18), as well as in Annen's 安然 (fl. 884) 諸阿闍梨真言密教部類總錄 (T2176.55.1114a25-9). Curiously, this same title is appended to a one of a pair of liturgical manuals attributed to Amoghavajra (T18.874; see Section 8.2 below for a discussion of this text), which I argue was a source text of the *Altar Methods*. Giebel 2001: 5-107 provides a translation and analysis of this title, which is also presented below in my analysis of the title of the *Altar Methods*.

Two abridged Chinese versions of the STTS were translated during the Tang. The first is a four-fascicle work attributed to Vajrabodhi produced sometime around 723 in collaboration with others that bears the title *Jin'gangding yuqie zhonglue chu niansong jing* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經 (*Recitation Sūtra Extracted from the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga*, T18.866). Vajrabodhi's text is not, properly speaking, a translation of the STTS, but an overview of, or introduction to, the STTS, as well as an introduction to the larger system of eighteen texts outlined in Amoghavajra's *Synopsis* (see above). The lack of systematization or organization of the text has been used by some to call attention to the "primitive" nature of Vajrabodhi's text (Todaro 1985: 11; Gobel 2012: 83), but as Weinberger (2003: 9) notes, a number of sections of Vajrabodhi's text correspond verbatim to sections of the extant Sanskrit text of the STTS. On Vajrabodhi's text (T18.866), see also Matsunaga 1980: 194-196 and Takahashi 1982: 74-77, who takes issue with Matsunaga's reading of the text as "primitive."

A second abridged version of the text is attributed to the monk Prajñā 般若 (744-810) and bears the title *Zhufo jingjie she zhenshi jing* 諸佛境界攝真實經 (T18.868). For details of Prajñā's activities at the Tang court, see Yoritomi 1979: 1-107. In addition, a complete translation of the STTS that corresponds in large part to the extant Tibetan recension of the text was made in 1015 by Dānapāla (Shihu 施護, active 982-1017) under the title *Yiqie rulai zhenshishe dasheng xianzheng sanmei dajiaowang jing* 一切如來真實攝大乘現證三昧大教王經 (T18.882).

purview of a “pure esoterism” (J. *junmitsu* 純密).⁶ Free of such reductive frameworks, Hirai ventured to ask, what might such a text look like, and where might its study lead?

This dissertation is, in part, a response to Hirai’s call to rethink the composite *Altar Methods* outside of those normative frameworks. It builds on the text- and source-critical scholarship of Tanaka and other early Chan specialists who first brought the text to light, and draws on more recent attempts to reconstruct the socio-historical, literary, doctrinal, and ritual ground out of which the “mature” tantric tradition sprang. Importantly, it stands alongside a number of innovative studies that trace the localization or alteration of those tantric teachings in medieval China specifically, studies that work against certain methodological oversights, intentional or otherwise, that long kept scholars of medieval Chinese religions, Buddhism included, from reaching certain insights into the nature of those traditions – in other words, certain conceptual blind-spots in the study of Chinese religions that stem from a sectarian-based, urban-based, canonical-based approach that overlooks the particular and often fragmentary in favor of a coherent and convenient whole.

I do so by presenting the first comprehensive overview of the *Altar Methods* in all its parts. Rather than a text in the traditional sense of the term, the *Altar Methods* is perhaps best thought of as an ritual collection or anthology comprised of some thirty-four individually named and numbered texts or sections, appended to which is a composite chronicle outlining the history of the transmission of the compendium itself in China. It is likely that the composite nature of the text indicates successive stages in its developments, but for now we can say little more than this. This study begins with an overview of the extant manuscript copies of the text, and goes on to present an outline of the critical text based on some thirteen extant manuscripts. Along the way, this study considers the date and provenance of the collection by considering its ascription to Amoghavajra. Based on an analysis of several key sections of the *Altar Methods*, this study suggest that the attribution of this “apocryphal” work to Amoghavajra served both to add to the status and prestige of the text (he was, after all, one of the most prolific translator-authors of medieval China), but also to help clarify, or underscore, the ritual system on which its central teachings were based. Here I am referring to the basic five-buddha *mandala* scheme presented in the *Altar Methods*, but also in that key scripture cited above, the *Jin’gangding jing*, or in reconstructed Sanskrit, the *Sarvatahāgathatattvasaṃgraha* or (*Compendium of Truth of All the Tathāgatas*; hereafter, STTS).⁷ This study concludes by speculating on the possible context(s) in which a

⁶ On the problematical Japanese Shingon classification of the Esoteric Buddhist teachings (J. *mikkyō* 密教) into “pure” and “miscellaneous,” see esp. Abé (1999: 152-157, 165-77, 182), who calls for the outright abandonment of this scheme in critical scholarship.

⁷ On the extant Sanskrit text of the STTS, see esp. Horiuchi 1983 and 1996. See also Snellgrove 1981. For a somewhat outdated survey of the Indo-Tibetan and Chinese editions of the STTS, including a discussion of the history of the reception of that text in Japan, see Todaro 1985, esp. 8-19. Weinberger 2003, to which this study is greatly indebted, provides what is perhaps the most succinct and thorough discussion of the STTS within the broader context of the emergence of what comes to be classified as the Yoga Tantra class of scriptures.

The Chinese title is typically rendered by the reconstructed Sanskrit title *Vajrasekhara sūtra*. Giebel (1995: 109-110) states that Śubhakarasiṃha, like Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, also referred to

a larger work by the title *Jin'gangding jing*, although it is unclear whether all three figures used the title to refer to one and the same work.

Eastman 1981 provides a reconstruction of this early tantric canon based on both Tibetan and Chinese sources, and Giebel 1995 provides an introduction to and annotated translation of Amoghavajra's digest of that early canon (Synopsis of the Yoga of Eighteen Assemblies of the Vajra Pinnacle Scripture, T18.869; Giebel translates the title as "Indications of the Goals of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Pinnacle Scripture"). Both Eastman and Giebel are cautious in making any firm connection between the eighteen Mahāyoga tantras presented in Tibetan sources and the eighteen assemblies outlined in Amoghavajra's work. On this early canon of 18 texts see also Matsunaga 1980: 39, 187-188; Yoritomi 1990: 172-179; Lu 1995: 265-274; Davidson 2002a: 145-146.

Giebel (1995: 111) stresses, and it bears repeating here, that he does not mean to suggest that the extant texts he identifies *correspond* to the assemblies of the *Vajra Pinnacle Scripture* described by Amoghavajra. Rather, the extant texts seem only to be *related* to those assemblies. Although many of Amoghavajra's synopses do read as accurate descriptions of extant, independent texts, we cannot say with any certainty that the texts with which Amoghavajra was familiar – if, in fact, such texts even existed as such at the time – are identical to the received versions. At any rate, scholars continue to weigh the evidence over whether this title (and in fact the entire eighteen-text corpus itself) represented an Indian convention or an innovation on the part of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra in China. On this issue see esp. Weinberger 2003. It should also be noted that there is a text bearing the title *Vajrasekhara tantra* preserved in Tibetan, which has been classified an "explanatory tantra" of the second and third sections or "assemblies" of the STTS. On this text see Giebel 2001: 109 and esp. Weinberger 2003: 94-106.

What is no longer in dispute, it seems, is the Sanskrit reconstruction of that Chinese title. As Giebel (2001: 109), Todaro (1985: 22), and especially Davidson (2012) have noted, the reconstructed Sanskrit of the Chinese *Jin'gangding jing*, although typically rendered in western scholarship as "*Vajrasekhara sūtra*," is unanimously rendered in medieval East Asian sources as **Vajroṣṇīṣa sūtra*. For example, in his *Kongōchōkyō kaidai* 金剛頂經開題 (T61.2221.2b11-15) Kūkai 空海 (774-835) offers a transliteration of the title in *siddham* that reads "Vajra-uṣṇīṣa sūtram." A similar transliteration ("vajra-uṣṇīṣa," 縛日嚩瑟拈沙) is found in the *Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shize fufa ji* 兩部大法相承師資付法記 (T51.2081.784b23) attributed to ninth-century Chinese master Haiyun 海雲 (fl. 822-874; see note xx below for more on the figure Haiyun).

Rather than a trivial issue of transliteration or transcription, Davidson argues that recognition of the title as *Vajroṣṇīṣa sūtra*, and not *Vajrasekhara sūtra*, is key to understanding the historical development of two early and distinct developmental stages within the burgeoning tantric tradition. He identifies these two stages as the (1) *Buddhoṣṇīṣa* system, which he identifies with an early strata of texts, including Atikūṭa's 阿地瞿多 *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* (*Tuoluoniji jing* 陀羅尼集經 T18.901; cf. S2392, B7456 at Dunhuang), and a slightly later corpus of material he identifies as the (2) *Vajroṣṇīṣa* system, which includes the STTS and other Yoga Tantra scriptures.

Davidson attempts to define early tantric practice by citing the *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha*, which he dates to the mid-seventh century, as "the first text that crosses the threshold of the minimum essentials of the Buddhist tantric system" defined by "a gateway rite, the *abhiṣeka*, into a *maṇḍala* of Buddhist divinities, employing *homa* rituals and implicating *mudrās* and *mantras* while admonishing the candidates to secrecy, perhaps the earliest surviving invocation to secrecy in Mahāyānist history" (2012: 77). According to this biography in the *Song Gaoseng zhuān* (T50.2061.718b17-718c2), Atikūṭa (or Atigupta?) arrived in the Tang capital of Chang'an in 652 and translated the *Tuoluoniji jing*, the preface of which states outlines its "methods of *dhāraṇī* (*tuoluoni* 陀羅尼), seals (*yin* 印), and altars (*tan* 壇)." That text also records an altar-ceremony he presided over on behalf of members of the ruling

compendium like the *Altar Methods* would have circulated. To this end, I consider the circulation dates (as opposed to an original date of compilation) of the extant copies of the *Altar Methods* and related manuscripts in order to try and give some definition to the local Dunhuang Buddhist community that seems to have made copies of, if not ritual use of, the *Altar Methods*.

Chinese Buddhism, 8th-10th centuries

The wider historical backdrop to the Altar Methods is understood here as a complex series of overlapping Chinese Buddhist trends that began to coalesce in the critical eighth through tenth centuries, but which had their roots much earlier in the formative fifth and sixth centuries. These trends centered on domestic Chinese attempts to interpret the core doctrine of innate buddhahood set forth in key Mahāyāna scriptures that lay out the stages of the bodhisattva path and its ultimate aims. Central to this endeavor was the interpretation and conferral of the bodhisattva precepts themselves in a complex, multi-limbed ritual program comprised of elaborate repentance rituals comprised of a number of ritual steps, including meditative and programs and consecration sequences, that had been under construction since the early days of Buddhism in China.⁸

By the Tang dynasty, Chinese Buddhist efforts to interpret the doctrine of inherent awakening were taking polemical turns, and competing formulas (in the form of new ordination rites centered on the conferral of unique sets of bodhisattva precepts) for the proper transmission of the most advanced Buddhist teachings were being devised and recorded in a number of indigenous Chinese works, including those associated with the burgeoning Chan tradition.⁹ The backdrop to (and perhaps impetus for?) these internal Chinese Buddhist debates was a shifting social and political landscape that witnessed the emergence of massive public ordination ceremonies (aimed at both monastic and lay audiences) designed to create a “universal” Buddhist community that would continue to grow and expand through the late-medieval and early-modern periods.¹⁰

elite (T18.90-1.785a19-24). See also Shinohara 2010: 389-420 who discusses the “all-gathering mandala initiation ceremony” found in that text in his attempts to reconstruct the evolutionary development of esoteric Buddhist ritual.

⁸ On these ritual developments see esp. Yamabe 1999, etc. See also Kuo 1994; Greene 2012.

⁹ Faure (1997: 125) notes that one of the main internal doctrinal developments within the Northern Chan movement rested on internal debates over the interpretation of the role of *vinaya* and the conferral of the bodhisattva precepts.

¹⁰ Adamek 2007: 55-56 provides a sketch of the eighth-century scene in which the conferral of the bodhisattva precepts during mass bodhisattva precepts ceremonies was increasingly popular. These developments must be considered within the wider socio-historical context of the An Lushan rebellion (755-6), and its socio-economic and political impact. One result was the public sale of ordination certificates, and hence the proliferation of ordination platforms, in urban areas across China.

The locus for working these issues out in the eighth century appears to have been the precepts platform (*jietan* 戒壇) itself, a centuries-old Buddhist institution that was debated and deployed across medieval China. Beginning with the revelatory writings of the famed *vinaya* master Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667) in the late-seventh century, we begin to see a growing concern over the orthodox construction, interpretation, and ritual implementation of those platforms – a concern that is said to have reached a peak by the mid-eighth century, when we see the emergence of a full-fledged ordination platform “movement.”¹¹ Evidence of a widespread interest in large-scale public ordination ceremonies (and the platforms on which they were conducted) is reflected in the very titles of some of the most important scriptures of the period, including the famous *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* and Heze Shenhui’s (684-758) *Platform Sermon*, both of which, it should be noted, present innovative ceremonies for conferring their own brands of precepts.¹²

It is perhaps no coincidence that this same period saw the influx of powerful new Buddhist ritual technologies, translated into Chinese as “altar methods” (*tanfa* 壇法) or “*maṇḍala* methods” (*mantuluo* 曼荼羅法) – technologies that were promoted in an innovative class of scriptures that would come to be identified by later doxographers outside of China as the Yoga tantras.¹³ At their core, these altar-*maṇḍala* rites consist of a meditative and ritual program intended to bring about (or underscore) the basic unity of the practitioner with the central deity of the rite, thereby empowering the practitioner and ensuring her attainment of buddhahood, along with any number of sundry mundane and supramundane accomplishments promised in the course of the rite. The ritual procedures for conducting these altar or *maṇḍala* rites circulated in China in a vast constellation of liturgical manuals, many of which, including the *Altar Methods*, draw explicitly on the a unique class of scriptures referred to outside of China as the Yoga tantras, and exemplified in the sinic world by the *Jin’gangding jing*.¹⁴ The timing of the circulation of these altar-method texts has

¹¹ See McRae 2005, Shinohara 2000.

¹² Those texts not only offer their own interpretation of the precepts – think of the formless precepts (*wuxiang jie* 無相戒) promoted in that same *Platform Sutra*, which were grounded in particular doctrinal debates. The precept conferral ceremonies themselves are embedded within those same texts, rendering them ordination manuals. This was fact was not lost on the famous Japanese pilgrim to China, Ennin 圓仁 (793-864), who listed the *Platform Sūtra* under not Chan texts, but under ordination manuals (Barrett 2005: 116-117; Barrett is citing Ono Katsutoshi 1966, 4: 589). It was appear that it went a step further – the Dunhuang versions of the *Platform Sūtra* seem to suggest that possession of the physical text itself served as proof of ordination, even a talisman. On these issues, and the role of the lay community in the formulation of the precepts forwarded in the *Platform Sūtra*, see Anderl 2011, 2012.

¹³ Like the *Altar Methods*, the Tang dynasty sources promoting altar-*maṇḍala* methods use the two terms interchangeably.

¹⁴ The term “altar-*maṇḍala*” is attested in Song dynasty sources. On the possible link between the esoteric altars and the ordination platform movement of the eighth and ninth centuries, see McRae 2005. Yanagida 1985 was the first to propose a connection between esoteric Buddhist altar-*maṇḍalas* and the ordination platforms of the period.

led some to speculate that the growing interest in esoteric or tantric altar-*maṇḍalas* may have “influenced the Chan understanding of the word *tan* in a variety of eighth-century texts,” including in the two “platform” (altar?) texts mentioned above.¹⁵

This study understands the author-compiler(s) of the *Altar Methods* to have been weighing in on these issues from an innovative perspective. As we will see, the *Altar Methods* text is a compilation consisting of two main parts. The first is a compendium of thirty-four individually named and numbered texts centered on altar rites. These rituals address a variety of purposes, including consecration or initiation rites (C. 灌頂壇 *guandingtan*; *S. *abhiṣeka maṇḍala*), repentance rituals (*chanbui tanfa* 懺悔壇法), rites to maintain and assist the dead (“altars for creatures of water and land” or *shuilu tanfa* 水陸壇法), and rites for safeguarding the state (*buguotan* 護國壇) – all of which are presented within the “structural grid” of the five-buddha *maṇḍala* scheme promoted in the *Jin’gangding jing* and other Yoga Tantra scriptures.¹⁶ Central to the ritual methods is the altar itself, although what is meant by the term “altar” is ambiguous. Part Two of the *Altar Methods* consists of a composite transmission account of the text itself. The text as a whole offers its own brand of “secret dharma precepts” (*mifa jie* 密法戒) to be conferred within an elaborate ritual program designed to deliver all beings (dead or alive) to enlightenment.

Far from a “misreading” of the traditional Chinese Buddhist *tan*, then, this study suggests that the author-compiler(s) of the *Altar Methods* was drawing on the widely understood multi-valence of the term *and* the ritual technologies used to wield those altars. As we will see, a range of medieval Chinese Buddhist technologies were subsumed under the single term *tan*, including monastic ordinations (*jietan* 戒壇法), imperial consecrations (灌頂壇法), salvific or therapeutic (*tuoluonitan* 陀羅尼壇法) and repentance (*chanbuitan* 懺悔壇法) rites, and esoteric or tantric *maṇḍala* initiations (曼荼羅壇法) – all of which are presented in a coherent scheme in the *Altar Methods*.¹⁷ Although the *Altar Methods* prefers the translated term *tan* over the transliterated forms of the Sanskrit word *maṇḍala* (a preference reflected in its title), it alternates between the two (like most medieval Chinese esoteric Buddhist texts), supporting Robert Sharf’s recent claim that medieval Chinese Buddhists did not distinguish between the “divine technology used to secure and consummate an ordination ritual, and the divine technology that we associate with invocation rites.”¹⁸ In this respect, the *Altar Methods* should be read as one in a series of domestic Chinese Buddhist attempts to use the transformative power of the altar-*maṇḍala* presented in the *Jin’gangding jing* and related

¹⁵ Sharf 2011: 58, n. 58.

¹⁶ Schmid 2011: 373, citing Kuo 1994, makes mention of these overlapping purposes. I have appropriated the language of the “structural grid” of the five-buddha family *maṇḍala* rite from Dalton and van Schaik 2004: 65-66.

¹⁷ We must also call attention to the indigenous (pre- or non-Buddhist) Chinese altar methods. On these methods, and the Chinese provenance of the term *tan*, see Section 9 below.

¹⁸ Sharf 2011: 50.

liturgical texts to address the most pressing ritual concerns of the late-medieval community, including the elimination of karmic defilements, state, personal, and ancestral well-being, and, more generally, progress on the bodhisattva path.

Location of the Dissertation

The present study is located at the intersection of three broad fields of inquiry within Chinese Buddhist studies: the study of (1) Chinese Buddhist “apocrypha,” (2) Chinese “esoteric” materials, and (3) Dunhuang Buddhism. The first focuses on the body of so-called Chinese Buddhist “apocrypha” in order to account for the socio-historical, literary, doctrinal, and practical contexts out of which those indigenous Chinese Buddhist compositions emerged.¹⁹ For our purposes, this includes consideration not only of the “unidentified” *Altar Methods* itself, but the domestic Chinese Buddhist compositions on which the *Altar Methods* appears to draw on in order to forge an historical link between its own brand of teachings and an authoritative line of Buddhist patriarchs going back to India. This includes the relationship between the *Altar Methods* and the aforementioned *Platform Scripture*, along with two of the “lost” Chan chronicles, namely the *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳 (Transmission of the Baolin [Monastery]) and the *Shengzhou ji* 聖胄記 (Record of the Sagely Descendants) – all of which would appear to locate our text within the wider historiographical project that dominated Tang and Song dynasty Chinese Buddhism.²⁰ To these texts we must add the fifth-century *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (*Brahma’s Net Sūtra*), arguably the single most influential bodhisattva precepts texts to emerge in medieval China, and a text cited at several points in the *Altar Methods*.²¹ And while it is not cited directly in our text, the *Renwang jing* 仁王經 (*Sūtra on Humane Kings*) is identified here as the likely inspiration for one of the main ritual actors in the *Altar Methods*, the “humane king royal preceptor” (*renwang dizhu* 仁王帝主), as well as the text’s overriding concern with large-scale imperial consecrations and other state protection rites.²²

The second research area is concerned with charting the dissemination and appropriation of the vast textual, ritual, and material “complex” referred to simply, and

¹⁹ On the methodical issues bound up in the study of the so-called Chinese Buddhist “apocrypha,” see the collection of essays in Buswell 1990, and esp. Kyoku Tokuno’s contribution to that volume. For a discussion on the production, canonization, and, in some cases, censorship or suppression of indigenous Chinese Buddhist scriptures (a phrase she prefers to “apocrypha,” and one I adopt here) during the early medieval period, see Tokuno’s 1994 dissertation. Over the past two decades a number of groundbreaking studies of indigenous Chinese Buddhist scriptures have been published, including, the work of Stephen Teiser (1988, 1994), Charles Orzech (1998), and Robert Sharf (2002).

²⁰ It also reveals several points of similarity with the *Lidai fabao ji* 曆代法寶記 (Record of the Dharma-Jewel through the Generations). On this text, see Adamek 2007.

²¹ T24.1484.

²² T8.246.

rather problematically, as Esoteric Buddhism (C. *mijiao*, J. *mikkyō* 密教).²³ While scholars continue to debate the “fate” of the esoteric or tantric teachings in medieval China, this study explores the connections between the ritual system presented in the *Altar Methods* and that presented in the constellation of Yoga tantra works surrounding the *Jin’gangding jing* 金剛頂經, including the *Foshuo dasheng guanxiang mannaluo jing zhu equ jing* 佛說大乘觀想曼拏羅淨諸惡趣經 or as it is better known, the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra* (Elimination of All Evil Destinies).²⁴ One of the central questions guiding this study is what, if anything, the ritual, literary, and iconographical appropriations from these Yoga tantra scriptures traceable in the *Altar Methods* tell us about the underlying ritual logic of our text. In other words, to what extent does the underlying ritual technology promoted in the *Altar Methods* reflect or correspond to the technical ritual methods promoted in those early tantric texts?

In addition, the *Altar Methods* includes some of the earliest textual references to a number of “quasi-esoteric” rites that first appear in ninth- and tenth-century Chinese Buddhist circles. This includes repentance (read: renewal) rites for “creatures of land and water,” together with a number of miscellaneous rites like “food dispersal” rites (*shishi* 施食) and “invocation” rites (*qiqing* 啟請).²⁵ These late-medieval ritual and textual trends are said to mark the “esotericization” of post-Tang Chinese Buddhism – a thematic and temporal rubric still under construction in the secondary literature, but one provisionally adopted here to refer to the growing elaboration of a few key ritual methods, centered on a few key ritual goals, that rose to prominence during the Tang-Song transition.²⁶ While I do little more than address these trends in the present study, it is interesting to note how many appear in the *Altar Methods* themselves.

²³ Sørensen 2011; Kuo 1994, 2002. For the most up-to-date summary of the decades-old debate over the nature and status of the Buddhist tantras in China, see Orzech 2012. See also the dozen of recent articles on the topic, including an excellent introductory survey of the secondary literature on the topic, see Orzech et al. 2011.

²⁴ The Chinese version of the latter text is entitled, *Foshuo dasheng guanxiang mannaluo jing zhu equ jing* 佛說大乘觀想曼拏羅淨諸惡趣經 (T19.939). As we will see, the deity assemblies found in the *Altar Methods* generally conform to a basic assembly centered on five buddhas and eight bodhisattvas (*wufo bapusa tan* 五佛八菩薩壇), and follow a standardized color/directional scheme: Vairocana (center), yellow; Akṣobhya (east), white; Ratnasambhava (south), blue; Amitabha (west), red; Amoghasiddhi (north), green.

²⁵ On these post-Tang ritual developments, see esp. Orzech 1994, 1996a, Stevenson 2001, and Getz 2005. The invocation rites are found in a class of invocation texts (*qiqing wen* 啟請文) and “prayer” formularies (*fayuanwen* 發願文) commonly affixed to *dhāraṇī* scriptures.

²⁶ Just what marks this “esotericization” is still up for debate, but scholars like Orzech explain that that period is marked by “a growing elaboration, variation, and adaptation of specific rites” centered around “a few key genera,” by which he means a gradual sinification of imported tantric ritual methods. “One such process might be characterized as the spread and fusion of esoteric rites into popular religious settings and the concomitant elaboration of new forms of religious and social organization” (Orzech 1998: 136, n. 2).

The third research area, albeit the least explored in this thesis, is concerned with reconstructing the local Chinese Buddhist community at Dunhuang itself – a project based in what is now a recognized field of its own, namely Dunhuang studies or Dunhuangology (Dunhuangxue 敦煌學), that draws on the work of historians, textual scholars, archaeologists, and art historians alike to isolate site-specific and regional Buddhist trends, which are then located as points on the medieval Chinese religious map. While much of this work is still speculative, it reinforces the value of the “historical turn” in Buddhist studies, and the promise of the periphery to overturn the provincializing and reductive reading of regional sites like Dunhuang in the study of pre-modern Chinese Buddhism. With respect to the *Altar Methods* specifically, consideration of the local transmission of the text at Dunhuang allows us to consider the possible regional context(s) in which the three extant copies of the text circulated – and why. This move is particularly helpful for thinking through the “syncretic” label that has been applied to the *Altar Methods*, a reference to the Chan-Tantra connection outlined at the start of this introductory essay and the topic of the concluding section of this study. This “connection” is presented here less as a sectarian strategy than a historical and geographical reality, recognition of which holds important implications for the study not only of the *Altar Methods*, but the nature and degree of interaction between the local Dunhuang Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist communities at the site.²⁷

This study contributes to all three research areas by turning directly to our Dunhuang sources. This study inventories more than two dozen handwritten texts, ink drawings, and finished paintings from the site that bear on the study of the *Altar Methods*, marking an important step in the identification, classification, and synthesis of a rich body of primary archival materials dating to a relatively overlooked period of Chinese Buddhist history. Here I am referring to several long decades, situated between the “golden age” of the medieval Tang dynasty and the rise of the early-modern Song dynasty (960-1276), known as the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907-960). Significantly, the constellation of textual and visual materials assembled here includes a number of otherwise undocumented indigenous Chinese Buddhist ritual works, including the *Altar Methods*, that apply the basic meditative and ritual system promoted in the *Jin’gangding jing* (and related Yoga tantra works) to a number of practical Buddhist concerns in a uniquely Chinese idiom – all of which suggests that at least some members of the local Dunhuang Chinese Buddhist community were engaged in a highly sophisticated literary, artistic, doctrinal, and possibly ritual undertaking, the outlines of which are presented in the various sections comprising this study.

Dissertation Outline

²⁷ On the Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts bearing on the Chan-Tantra connection, see van Schaik and Dalton 2004. One of the most interesting, and important, questions raised by the parallel Chinese and Tibetan materials is the degree to which these synthetic works are reflective of wider trends across the medieval Buddhist map, and not simply the product of a local “hybrid” community.

This dissertation unfolds in four main parts, appended to which is an outline of the various sections of the *Altar Methods*. I have not attempted a complete translation of the text, and rely instead on select translations to convey a sense of its overall structure, orientation, and aims. Rather than a definitive study of the *Altar Methods*, then, this thesis represents the “next-step,” if you will, in the scholarly process of identifying and interpreting the textual, ritual, and historical layers of this unique ritual anthology – a significant Chinese Buddhist literary compilation that rightly constitutes a chapter of its own in the “sinification” of Buddhism.²⁸

In Section 2 I introduce the three extant manuscript copies of the text from Dunhuang, which, again, is unattested outside the site. The *Altar Methods* is a lengthy (122 printed pages in the 2008 critical edition of the text compiled by the Chinese scholars Hou Chong and Fang Guangchang) compilation divided into two main parts that contains a total of forty-two individual texts or textual excerpts. This section of the thesis lays out the extant manuscript copies of the *Altar Methods*, and present an overview of Hou Chong’s critical edition of the text. It also discusses a second, related text from Dunhuang, identified here as the *Supplementary Manual* that circulated at the site under the same basic title as the *Altar Methods*, and that appears to be a recension of, or companion text, to the *Altar Methods*.

In Section 3 I address the dating of the text through an examination of the internal textual and physical manuscript evidence. According to its colophon, the *Altar Methods* is a ritual manual (*yize* 義則) attributed to the Tang dynasty mage, Amoghavajra, though the text appears to be an indigenous Chinese Buddhist composition dating at least a full century after Amoghavajra’s time.

Section 4 considers the two main parts of the *Altar Methods*. As was stated above, the *Altar Methods* is a composite work divided into two main parts. The first part is a collection of several dozen independent ritual texts, while the second is a composite chronicle that presents the history of the transmission of the *Altar Methods* in China. To date, these two parts have been read in relative isolation, but here I bring both parts together to demonstrate why they are most productively read together. I begin with a discussion of the second part of the *Altar Methods*, a composite chronicle containing six separate texts under the general heading *Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository* (*Fu fazang pin* 付法藏品). Here I reconsider the Chan-Tantra connection first theorized by Tanaka Ryōsho to explain the text. While I acknowledge the “syncretism” (a loaded, if useful, term) of the transmission account presented in the text, I argue for the need to look beyond a strictly sectarian framework to get at the real “how” and “why” of the text. I do so by examining the chapter’s “esoteric” revisions to the “Chan” lineage transmission accounts found in the *Platform Sūtra*, the *Shengzhen ji*, and other works that chronicle the transmission of Buddhism to China. I also consider the Chan terminology of one of two contemplation or *sādhana* texts appended to the transmission account found in this chapter that has contributed to the syncretic reading of the *Altar Methods*.

In the final section of the thesis, “In Lieu of a Conclusion,” I attempt to weave together the many disparate threads running throughout this study by situating the composite *Altar Methods* within two main contexts, and thereby laying the groundwork for future research on the “text.” The first is the Chan-Tantra connection with which this study

²⁸ Kuo Liying and Tanaka Kimiaki are exceptions.

began. I try and nuance just what that “connection” is in our text, and then step back to rethink how that potentially reductive classification of text is in fact revealing of a number of doctrinal, ritual, and literary trends that cut across the whole of the Chinese Buddhist community during the late-medieval period. In other words, I take the Chan-Tantra connection to be just one of many complex connections evident in our text, and I take our one text to be evidence of those many complex connections.

Postscript

Throughout this study I pay special attention to the physical manuscript copies of the *Altar Methods* and related Dunhuang documents, and highlight several distinguishing features (scribal and artist’s notations, colophons, ownership inscriptions, highlighting techniques, paper types, book formats, and wear patterns) that aid in their dating and identification. Based on a careful analysis of these codicological features, this study suggests, pace several previously published studies, that the bulk of the Dunhuang documents compiled here date not to the eighth or ninth centuries, but to the tenth century, and more specifically to the late tenth century, a conclusion that is supported by parallel Tibetan manuscript evidence from the site.²⁹ While the haphazard nature of the recovered Dunhuang finds renders any conclusions regarding the provenance or actual use of the manuscript copies of the *Altar Methods* tentative at best, I argue that an analysis of the different formats in which the text circulated at the site sheds light on a number of otherwise invisible aspects related to the production, circulation, and possible consumption of that text (and others like it) during the age of the Buddhist manuscript.

To this end, I include a brief description of the Dunhuang manuscripts discussed in the body of the thesis in the Bibliography. The individual manuscripts inventoried there fall into seven major categories, several of which overlap, and are discussed either in the main body or the footnotes (or both) of this study. These include (1) all manuscript copies of the Altar Methods, (2) those manuscripts containing *Jin’gangding jing*- or *Vajrasekhara*- lineage texts at Dunhuang, including well as additional works from the site attributed to (3) Vajrabodhi and (4) Amoghavajra. Also included in the bibliography are (5) a select number of manuscripts containing altar or *maṇḍala* sketches or drawings in ink and color on paper that I connect to *Altar Methods*, as well as select (6) portable polychrome paintings – all of which share a common iconographic program based on the five-buddhas scheme promoted in the Yoga class of tantric scriptures generally. In addition, (7) manuscripts containing the distinctive red ink “highlighter” mark first noted by Giles (1957: 19) have been included. This mark was used to highlight individual texts and/or sections of many manuscript copies of *Jin’gangding jing* lineage texts, suggesting perhaps the intervention of a single reader or at least a common reading convention or practice at the site.

²⁹ Dalton and van Schaik 2006: xxi.

2. Manuscript Copies of the Altar Methods

In 2008 the Chinese scholar Hou Chong published a critical edition of the *Altar Methods* based on his identification of three extant copies of the text (one complete, two partial) spread across eight unique manuscripts housed in four separate Dunhuang collections.³⁰ The relationship between the extant copies remains unclear, but given the highly stable nature of the text on all three copies, it is possible that they were based on a (hypothetical) common source.³¹ Four additional manuscripts (S2272, B7677, P3835, P2197) contain what appear to be selections or excerpts from the compilation, while another manuscript (B7667; hereafter also referred to as the *Supplementary Manual*) contains what Hou identifies as an alternate recension of the text.³² This brings the total number of manuscripts bearing on the critical reconstruction of the *Altar Methods* to thirteen. What follows is an overview of these thirteen manuscripts, followed by a discussion of their paleographical and codicological features (which tend to be overlooked by Hou and others) that aid, I argue, in our understanding of (a) the possible textual layers of the anthology, along with (b) the circulation date, if not the date of compilation, of the received text of the *Altar Methods*. Along the way I provide two tables intended to clarify the various sections of the text. The first outlines the various manuscripts under consideration. The second identifies one of only two known external references to the *Altar Methods* found on an additional manuscript from the site (P3920).

Copy A: Pothī Booklet P3913

The only “complete” copy of the *Altar Methods* is found on a stitched *pothī* booklet housed in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, manuscript no. 3913 (P3913; hereafter also Copy A). That booklet measures 28.5 x 10.1 cm and is constructed of 86 folios of thick, irregular clear

³⁰ See Hou Chong, compiler, “*Jin’gangjun jing, jingangding jing yiqie rulai shenmiao bimi jingangjie dasanmaye xiuxing sishierzhong tanfa jing yong wei yi fazhe, Da Pilushenafu jingang xindi famen mifa jietanfa yize* 金剛峻經, 金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二種壇法經作儀法則, 大毘盧遮那佛金剛心地法門秘法戒壇法儀則,” in *Zangwai Fojiao wenxian* 佛教文獻, no. 11., ed. by Fang Guangchang, 17-144 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2008). Li 2003: 8-9 identifies seven manuscripts copies of the *Altar Methods*. For earlier transcriptions of the critical text of Fascicle 4 of the *Altar Methods*, see Hirai 1974; Tanaka 1975, 1980: 120-123; 167-69, 1981; 1983: 135-66.

³¹ Scribal errors, corrections, and additions abound on all three recovered copies of the *Altar Methods*, but speculation regarding the order in which the copies were made, along with their possible relationship to each other, must await further study.

³² Hou does not consider S2272 or P2197 in his critical reconstruction of the text. Kuo 1998, like Hou 2008, treats the *Supplementary Manual* (B7667) as an alternate recension of the *Altar Methods*, but I will present a slightly different interpretation of the text below.

chamois paper containing a total of 1,015 lines.³³ The folios were folded in half and bundled into small gatherings that were then sewn together to form the spine. In addition, each folio is pierced for string. There is little evidence of wear. One folio serves as a cover, and contains notations on the front and back in what look to be different hands. As we will see below, the notation found on the front cover, contains what appears to be an ownership inscription that includes the name “Yuanshou” 願受. The enumeration of the individual sections comprising the text on this manuscript copy differs from other known copies beginning with Section 8 (see Table 1 below). That said, given the intact nature of the manuscript, along with its availability for study, I treat P3913 as the base text of the *Altar Methods* throughout this study.³⁴

Copy B: Scroll Fragments BD15147+G015

Hou has identified a second partial copy of the *Altar Methods* found on two fragments of what was originally a long roll of coarse yellow paper now divided between the National Library in Beijing and the Gansu Provincial Museum in Lanzhou. The first fragment, identified by the shelfmark BD15147, contains a total of 450 lines that correspond to Sections 1-17 of the critical text.³⁵ The second fragment, G015, corresponds to Sections 28-

³³ Six ruled columns appear on most folios, and contain roughly 30 characters each. The text was executed in black ink using dark, semi-cursive writing. Several additions, corrections, and erasures, as well as section markers or highlights in black, are found throughout the manuscript.

³⁴ What was originally labeled “Section 8” (*bu diba* 部第八) (and then blotted out) on P3913 is not in fact a ritual text at all, but an unidentified “invocation text” (*qiqing zhenyan* 啟請真言) consisting of 15 stanzas of verse followed by an end title that reads *Foshuo pubian guanming xx wubou qingjing zongchi siwei ruyi baoyin xin wunnengsheng damingwang jide dazizai zongchi dajiaowang jin’gangjie tuoluoni qiqing zhenyan* 佛說普遍光明焰髮無垢清淨總持思惟如意寶印心無能勝大明王即得大自在總持大教王金剛界陀羅尼啟請真言. Copies B and C of the *Altar Methods* include the same invocation text, but count that text as the eighth item in the compilation (and suggesting that the invocation has been fully incorporated into the transmitted anthology, and not simply inserted between texts by the scribe or copyist of P3913). In his critical edition of the text, Hou follows the numbering scheme found on copies B and C, both of which contain 36 numbered sections in total, including the invocation text (again, Section 8). This leads to a certain amount of confusion when consulting previous studies of the *Altar Methods* that follow the numbering convention of P3913, which contains only 35 numbered sections (see esp. Tanaka’s 1983 transcription of Fascicle 4 of the text). I follow Hou’s critical numbering system throughout this study, but make special reference to the section numbers of P3913 for clarity.

In addition, Fascicle 2 (cols. 233-235) on P3913 is erroneously marked “Fascicle 3” (*juan disan* 卷第三; cols. 486-488). The incipit and explicit of Fascicle 3 have also been omitted on this copy, as has the incipit of Fascicle 4. The explicit to Fascicle 4 is present, however, which consists of the complete title of the *Altar Methods*, along with the colophon bearing Amoghavajra’s name.

³⁵ I was unable to access a copy of BD15147 while preparing this thesis, and so rely exclusively on Hou Chong’s description of that manuscript.

36.6 of critical text (cf. P3913.27-25.6, cols. 489-1,105). When joined, the two texts represent a total of 810 lines, or roughly two-thirds of the “complete” text found on Copy A. It should be noted that most of Fascicle 2 is missing from Copy B.³⁶ Hou further suggests that both BD15147 and G015 are written in the same hand, lending weight to his claim that the two fragments were once a single manuscript.³⁷

Copy C: Recycled Fragments B1388V, S2316V+B3699V, B3554V, S2144V

Hou has identified a third, partial copy containing nineteen of the thirty-six sections of the critical text of the *Altar Methods*. This fragmented copy is executed on the verso of five recycled manuscripts and appears to be written in two separate hands.³⁸ These recycled manuscripts (a manuscript type addressed below) include: (1) B1388V, which, according to Hou, bears a distinctive hand and contains a total of 308 lines corresponding to Sections 13-21 of the critical text (cf. P3913.12-20, cols. 194-363);³⁹ (2) S2316V, which contains 48 lines of text corresponding to Section 27 (erroneously labeled “Section 28”) of the critical text,⁴⁰ appears to be part of the same original manuscript as (3) B3699V, which itself contains 277 columns corresponding to Sections 28-35 of the critical text;⁴¹ (4) B3554V contains a total of 252 lines corresponding to sections of Fascicle 4 of the critical text (cf. P3913.35, cols. 801-968);⁴² and (5) S2144V contains 63 lines corresponding to the final sections of Section 36.4-

³⁶ In addition, the end title (explicit) of Fascicle 3 is missing on this copy, as is the incipit, or head title, of Fascicle 4.

³⁷ Again, I have been unable to examine BD15147. For a recent attempt to identify scribal hands among the recovered Tibetan Buddhist manuscripts from Dunhuang based on handwriting analysis, see Dalton et al. 2007.

³⁸ Hou is the first to put these manuscripts together. Hou claims that the handwriting on B1388V is different than that of the other excerpts. Hou further asserts that S2144V was written with a pen.

³⁹ B1388 is a scroll measuring 21 x 25.5 cm, comprised of 14 sheets. The beginning and the end of scroll are damaged, and three of the glued pages are loose. The manuscript shows insect damage and oil stains throughout. The recto contains the second fascicle of the *Jingguangming jing* 金光明經, the text of which has been dated by the Beijing catalogers as an 8-9th century copy. They have assessed the text on the verso as a Guiyijun period (9th-10th century) addition.

⁴⁰ The explicit for Fascicle 2 found on S2316V (cols. 45-48) reads *juan dier zhang* 卷第二竟. Following the final title and colophon, S2316V includes a second, abbreviated (?) title that reads *Jingang xindi famen mifajie tanfa yize* 金剛心地法門密法戒壇法儀則.

⁴¹ Beijing catalogers have identified the text on the recto of B3699 as a 7-8th century partial copy of the *Jin'gangbanruo jing* 金剛般若經. B3699V omits the end title for Fascicle 2, but includes all sections of Fascicle 3, including the head title and colophon found at its start.

⁴² S2144 is a recycled scroll measuring 11 1/2 ft., the recto of which contains the story of the monk Fahua 法華 of the Huichang period (841-47) featuring Wen Di, founder of the Sui dynasty, and his

6 of the critical text (cf. P3913, cols. 968-1,016),⁴³ and includes an additional prayer formulary in 69 lines.⁴⁴ This is the only copy of the *Altar Methods* to include the prayer formulary, and Hou presents it as Item 7 of Fascicle 4 (Section 36.7) of his critical edition of the *Altar Methods*.

Additional Manuscripts

In addition to the eight manuscripts outlined above, Hou draws on two additional manuscripts to reconstruct his critical text of the *Altar Methods*. These include B7677, which contains three separate sections of the *Altar Methods*, along with Item 9 on the verso of P3835, which corresponds to Section 36.6 in the critical edition (cf. P3919.35.6). To these we can add an additional manuscript, namely S2272, which was first noted by Hirai (1974), and which contains several excerpts from the *Altar Methods* that differ from those found on B7677 or P3835. The exact relationship between B7677, P3835, and S2272, like their relationship to the three extant copies of the *Altar Methods* themselves, remains unclear. Given the messy nature of B7677, P3835, and S2272, however, it seems likely that the excerpted sections from the *Altar Methods* found on these manuscripts represent either writing exercises or personal notes – two possibilities considered in more detail below.

Recycled Scroll B7677

general Han Qinhu 韓擒虎. The verso contains two short Chinese *sādhana* texts appended to the end of the *Altar Methods* (Section 36.5-6; P3913.35.5-6), along with a prayer formulary that makes reference to a local Dunhuang altar ritual. Hou 2008 identifies this manuscript as one of five recycled manuscripts (see also B1388, S2316V, B3699, B3554V) that together represent a partial copy comprised of nineteen of the thirty-six “complete” chapters of the *Altar Methods*. All four texts on the verso of this manuscript appear to be written in the same hand (Hou further asserts that S2144V was written with a pen, and I would add that it is possible to note where tip of the pen was dipped in ink, and where that ink runs out in the course of each column). The verso includes a partial copy of the *Fendeng zhi lu jing cong shang xitian [nian]bazu shou ji, Tang lai liudai zusbi michuan xinyin* 分燈之陸經從上西天[廿]八祖受記, 唐來六祖祖師密傳心印) corresponding to Section 36.4 (cf. G015.41-38) of the critical text.

⁴³ This section runs from the seventeenth Indian patriarch Saṃghānandi’s transmission verse through to the end of 36.6 of the critical text. This manuscript copy also includes the end title for Fascicle 4, which includes the colophon bearing Amoghavajra’s name. In this way, the complete title of the *Altar Methods*, along with its attribution to Amoghavajra, close out the compendium.

⁴⁴ B7677.5 also contains a copy of this prayer formulary. See below.

B7667, is a recycled scroll located in the National Library collection in Beijing, and contains fourteen unique items in an irregular layout.⁴⁵ Among those fourteen items are three that correspond to sections of the *Altar Methods*. These include: (1) Item 5, which is a prayer formula entitled, *Jietan sanshi huixiang fayuan wen* 結壇散食迴向發願文, and which corresponds to the prayer formulary found on S2144V; (2) Item 7, which is an excerpt of Section 9 of the *Altar Methods* that bears the heading *Shuo wufo bapusa zhi tan jing* 說五佛八菩薩之壇經。佛說水陸燈壇功德部第九 (the punctuation is transcribed here); and (3) Item 13 on the verso, which bears the heading *Shou jin'gang xindi famen jie* 授金剛心法心地法門戒, followed by text that corresponds to sections of the *Fu fazang pin* found in Fascicle 4 of the *Altar Methods* (cf. P3913.36.1). In addition, Item 10 on the verso of B7667 contains a *maṇḍala* sketch that promotes a basic color/directional scheme that corresponds to that found in both the *Altar Methods* and *Supplementary Manual*.⁴⁶

Recycled Booklet P3835

P3835 is a concertina booklet assembled from twenty-two sheets of fibrous, beige paper, the present layout of which is exceptionally complicated.⁴⁷ In total, the booklet contains some

⁴⁵ Several sections of B7667 are written upside down, and in multiple hands, and it appears that several extra sheets were glued at various points to the manuscript. Among the 14 individual items contained on the front and back of the roll we find: (1) a series of spells bearing the titles, including *Guanzizai pusa dabei zhou* 觀自在菩薩大悲咒, *Suixin zhou* 隨心咒, *A[?]rulai mieqing zhongzui zongchi zhou* 阿[?]如來滅輕重罪總持咒, and (d) *Tianwang zixin zhenyan* 天王自心真言, and so on; (2) a copy of a *dhāraṇī* spell, along with what appear to be its preliminary rites *Da cuisui jin'gang yanshou tuoluoni zhenyan ji qianyi* 大摧碎金剛延壽陀羅尼真言及前儀; (3) a copy of the *Zhou shishi yiqie mian ran egui yinshibhui fa* 咒食施一切面燃餓鬼飲食水法, which appear to be a variant of the text found in T21.1315 attributed to Amoghavajra; (4) miscellaneous mantras of the “five buddhas” (*wufo* 五佛), including *Duobao rulai* 多寶如來; (5) a prayer formulary entitled, *Jietan sanshi huixiang fayuan wen* 結壇散食迴向發願文, which corresponds to that found on S2144V4; (6) two mantras bearing the titles (a) *Deshi zhenyan* 得食真言 and (b) *Bianshi zhenyan* 變食真言; (7) an excerpt corresponding to Section 9 of the *Altar Methods* that bears the heading *Shuo wufo bapusa zhi tan jing* 說五佛八菩薩之壇經。佛說水陸燈壇功德部第九. All of these sections appear on the recto of the manuscript.

On the verso, we find copies of several additional texts or textual excerpts, including: (8) a copy of the *Pishamen tianwang jing chao* 毗沙門天王經鈔; (9) a text on the language of Buddhist spells entitled, *Fojiao zhouyu* 佛教咒語; (10) the *maṇḍala* sketch noted above; (11) what appears to be a repeat item containing the same two mantras found on Item 6 of the recto, albeit in reverse order; (12) the phrase *Fanwen zhongzi zixi zaxie* 梵文種子字習字雜寫 written upside down; (13) again, the heading *Shou jin'gang xindi famen jie* 授金剛心法心地法門戒 followed by text that corresponds to parts of Section 36.1 of the *Fu fazang pin* of Fascicle 4 *Altar Methods*; and (14) random Chinese verses written in a carefree hand.

⁴⁶ Again, we find a basic five-buddha scheme in both ritual collections based on the following configuration: east/white, south/blue, west/red, north/green, with the center seat designated yellow.

⁴⁷ Portions of the manuscript incorporate recycled sheets from other Dunhuang manuscripts, including P2837, and several hands are apparent in the various sections of the manuscript. The

fourteen separate items ranging from scriptural excerpts to mantra collections to ritual texts, and includes numerous seals, illustrations, and distinctive “reading” marks in red and black ink. Important for our purposes is one distinct red-ink marker used to highlight Item 9 on the verso. That text, entitled *Jin’gangzang pusa sanziguang* 金剛藏菩薩三字觀, is a short *sādhana* text that appears as Section 36.6 in the *Altar Methods*. No less important is the dated colophon appearing at the end of Item 8 (cols. 301-301), which states that the text was copied by a “disciple of pure faith, Yang Yuanshou” (*qingxin dizi Yang Yuanshou* 清信弟子楊願受) on the fifth day of the eighth month of the *wuyin* 戊寅 year (978). This is the very same date as that found on sheet 2 of the loose leaf “sketchbook” P4009 discussed below, and the name Yang Yuanshou appears to match the name inscribed on the back cover of *pothī* booklet P3913 discussed above.⁴⁸

Scroll S2272

S2272 is mediocre scroll measuring 11ft. containing, among other things, several sections repeated on the recto and verso that corresponds to portions of Fascicle 4 of the *Altar Methods*.⁴⁹ In terms of overall content and style (the text is executed in an unrefined hand), S2272 bears a close resemblance to S2144V and B7677, both of which are notable for their messy compositions. Like P3835, S2272 also includes several examples of a stylized red-ink marker used to highlight sections of the text, a feature discussed in more detail below.

Interesting, the recto of the manuscript opens with a title that reads *Jin’gangjie dapilusbenafu zuishang dasheng bimi zbenshen xindi famen chuanshou mifajie dasanmeiye xiuxing yuqie xinyin yi* 金剛界。大毗盧遮那佛。攝最上大乘秘蜜甚深心地法門傳受蜜法界。大三昧耶修行瑜伽。心印儀 (the title is punctuated in red in the manner transcribed here, and highlighted throughout using the red-ink highlighter noted above), which is followed by a colophon that reads “Foreign [text] of the Secret Dharmadhātu in one *juan*, respectfully translated on Imperial Command by Bukong, a Tripiṭaka [Master] and *śramaṇa* of

manuscript includes several sections that were glued on to the main booklet, resulting in a complex manuscript, the description of which falls outside the scope of the present study. Contains numerous illustrations drawn over ruled lines, suggesting that at least some of the sheets were ruled and lined before the specific texts to be included were planned.

⁴⁸ I have located the name Yang Yuanshou on five additional manuscripts from Dunhuang, including S542V, S2614V, P3423, B7707V, 5631, all of which date to the tenth century, and several of which are club circulars for local Buddhist lay societies in the Dunhuang region.

⁴⁹ This text corresponds to Section 1 of the *Fu fazing pin* 付法藏品 (cf. P3913.35.1), which itself includes a lengthy quotation from Fascicle 2 of the *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (cf. T24.1484.1003b10-c25) in which Vairocana expounds his teaching of the “mind-ground precepts” (*xindi* 心地戒). This same passage is also quoted verbatim in Section 15, and in shorter form in Section 16, of the *Altar Methods*, and again, in abbreviated form, in B7677.13. The recto of S2272 contains a copy of the *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經 in one fascicle (cf. T19.967). Li (2003: 10, 42-49) provides an overview of the multiple recensions of this text recovered from Dunhuang.

Daxingshan Monastery, a [Lord] Specially Advanced, and Probationary Chief Minister of the Court of State Ceremonial 持進試鴻臚大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空奉詔譯蕃譯蜜法界一卷.⁵⁰

On the verso of S2272 we find several randomly placed notations, including a title that reads “Chapter on Buddha Mahāvairocana Transmitting the Dharma Repository” (*Dapilushenafu fu fazang pin* 大毗盧遮那佛付法藏品). This appears to be a variation on the title of the final chapter of the *Altar Methods*, the *Fu fazang pin* 付法藏品 (cf. P3913.35). In addition, we find a list of *mudrās* for several bodhisattvas, including Cintamanicakra Bodhisattva (Ruyilun pusa 如意輪菩薩) and Vajragarbha Bodhisattva (Jin’gangzang pusa 金剛藏菩薩), a key figure appearing in more than half of the ritual texts comprising the *Altar Methods* and referenced throughout the *Supplementary Manual*.

The *Supplementary Manual* (B7667)

Hou 2008 also provides a transcription of the text found on B7667, a long scroll dated to the tenth century by catalogers at the Beijing National Library that contains a total of nineteen sections in 993 lines executed on the front and back of the roll (507 lines on the recto, 488 lines on the verso).⁵¹ B7667 bears the same basic title as the *Altar Methods*, differing only in the number of rituals it is said to contain – whereas the *Altar Methods* cites forty-two separate rites in its title, the *Supplementary Manual* cites forty-nine.⁵² In addition, the colophon to B7667 corresponds exactly to that appearing at the end of each of the four fascicles of the *Altar Methods*, meaning that both works are attributed to Amoghavajra. What is more, the ritual sections contained in both the *Altar Methods* and the *Supplementary Manual* are numbered and titled in virtually identical a manner, such that the nineteen individual

⁵⁰ Both the title and colophon appearing on S2272 differ from those found at the start and finish of each for the four fascicles of the received *Altar Methods*. On the title “Lord Specially Advanced, and Probationary Chief Minister of the Court of State Ceremonial” (*chi jin honglu* 持進試鴻臚), see Giebel (1995: 124-125) and Hucker (1985: 6335, 5204, 2905).

⁵¹ On this manuscript see also Fumihiko 1997: 4; Hirai 1974; Kuo 1998; Lu Jianfu 1995: 255; and Tanaka 2000.

⁵² The complete title of the text found on B7667 reads *Jingangjun jing, jingangding jing yiqie rulai shenmiao bimi jingangjie dasanmaye xiuxing sishijiuzhong tanfa jing yong weiyi faze, Da Pilushenafu jingang xindi famen bifa jietanfa yize* 金剛峻經金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行, 四十九種壇法經作用威儀法則, 大毗盧遮那佛金剛心地法門密法界壇法儀則. Aside from the number of rites they cite, the only other difference I have been able to detect between the two titles comes with the phrase *mifajie* 密法界, which appears on B7667, and *mifajie* 密法戒, which occurs in the same place in the *Altar Methods* title. B7667 reads *jie* 界 or “realm,” whereas copies A, B, and C of the *Altar Methods* read *jie* 戒 or “precept.” Whether this substitution represents a simple scribal error or an intentional alteration is unclear, but it is a curious difference given the emphasis on the “secret mind precepts” promoted in the *Altar Methods*.

sections or texts found on B7667 correspond to nineteen of the thirty-four ritual sections comprising Fascicles 1-3 of the *Altar Methods*.⁵³

Significantly, the *Supplementary Manual* includes ritual details omitted, or withheld, from the *Altar Methods* itself, including the names, *mudrās*, colors, and seated positions of the complete deity assembly occupying the altars-*maṇḍalas* in each of the thirty-four ritual sections. It should also be noted that the *Supplementary Manual* contains little to no narrative content, aside from an opening preamble. Contrast this with the *Altar Methods* – each of the sections in Part One of that text provide a complete description of the location and circumstance of the teaching, an explanation of the name of the rite, a narrative description of its ritual sequence, and so on. When combined, the two manuals (and let us note that the full title of the *Altar Methods* identifies that text as a ritual manual, or *yize* 儀則) not only provide the specifications for the construction of each altar-*maṇḍala*, including an outline of the basic ritual program and full altar-*maṇḍala* assembly.

We have no hard evidence that any of the three extant copies of the *Altar Methods* or the single copy of the *Supplementary Manual* were ever directly used in a ritual context.⁵⁴ That said, the two manuals, through their use of specialized technical vocabulary for the different ritual procedures for “binding” (*jietan* 結壇) and “activating” altars (*kaitan* 開壇), preparing the ritual arena (including the use of stakes and cords), the steps of ritual preparation undertaken by the presiding dharma preceptors, together with their references to the use of *mudrās* and *mantras*, contemplative or visualization, and so forth, can be read as a comprehensive ritual program.⁵⁵ Either way, our two Dunhuang manuals raise a number of important questions with respect to the genre of ritual texts in the developmental history of

⁵³ These include Sections 1-8 (incomplete) on the recto, and Sections 15-19, and Sections 22-26, the final section of which is incomplete, on the verso. (Section 8 of the critical edition, which is not in fact a ritual text but an excerpt from an invocation or prayer text, numbered on only two of the three extant copies). Importantly, the *Supplementary Manual* does not include any of the sections found in the *Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository*.

⁵⁴ Only a small scattering of what we might call “reading marks” appear on Copy A (P3913) of the *Altar Methods*. Contrast this to the copies of various sections of the *Altar Methods* that circulated as independent texts. Specifically, the sections of the text that circulated independently are incredibly marked up, suggesting that someone perhaps used those for specific purposes, whether that was for reading those texts or using them in some other context. One example is the second of two contemplation texts appearing in Fascicle 4 of the *Altar Methods*, a text entitled *Vajragarbha Bodhisattva’s Three-Syllable Contemplation*. A copy of that text appears on P3835V9.

⁵⁵ I am uncertain if this helps or hurts the theory that the two texts represent complementary “manuals” or not, but it should be noted that Sections 16-20 (and only in these sections) of the *Altar Methods* include the names, colors, and seated positions for the main altar-*maṇḍala* assembly described in each of those sections, appearing almost like textual accretions from the corresponding section of the *Supplementary Manual*. It is possible that what we see in these sections of the *Altar Methods* is a vestige of an earlier stage of the text where the information now divided between the two manuals was once part of a single text.

Chinese Buddhism, including the relationship between so-called “root texts” and their ritual manuals.⁵⁶

The Critical Text

Based on his assessment of the three extant copies of the *Altar Methods*, in combination with the additional manuscripts outlined here, Hou presents the critical text of the *Altar Methods* in four fascicles: Fascicles 1 contains Sections 1-14, Fascicle 2 contains 15-27, Fascicle 3 contains Sections 28-35, while Fascicle 4 contains seven separate sections (Sections 36.1-7) that include four separate transmission accounts followed by three independent texts, including two short *sādhana* texts and one prayer formulary. Given the availability of Hou’s published work, this study relies on his critical edition when referring to the *Altar Methods*. Certain sections of Hou’s critical edition are tentative, however. This is most notable in what Hou identifies at Section 8, which again, is not a stand-alone ritual text, but an inserted invocation text that he renames and renumbers.⁵⁷ The result of Hou’s labor is a re-numbering of the majority of the sections of the text that differs from previously published studies on the *Altar Methods*. Table 1 below provides an overview of the multiple manuscript copies of the *Altar Methods* in all its sections.

Table 1. Dunhuang Manuscript Copies of the *Altar Methods* and the Supplementary Manual

Fascicle	Section (Critical	<i>Altar Methods</i>	Supplementary Manual	Additional Manuscripts
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⁵⁶ Scholars working on the history of the development of the early tantric tradition have placed tremendous significance on the genre in their developmental history of that tradition (*S. vidhi, kalpa, sādhana* texts, and so on). See for example Shinohara (2010).

Based on his extensive research into the Dunhuang Tibetan Buddhist ritual manuscripts, combined with his reflections on transmitted sources, Jacob Dalton traces the emergence of the ritual manuals in the Buddhist tradition to the mid-fifth century, and began proliferating in the sixth century. These manuals are no longer just liturgies, Dalton argues, but texts that stress more emphasis on just how to arrange the ritual space and how the practitioner should arrange her own body (Dalton forthcoming, 18).

⁵⁷ Section 7 on both P3913 (cols. 138-139) and BD15147 (according to Hou) ends with an explicit which reads *Fosbuo wufu guanding chanbui zhi tanfa chu* 佛說五佛灌頂懺悔之壇法處, followed by a long space. In the next column (P3913, col. 140) we find what appears to be an alternate name for Section 7 that reads *Jin’gangding jing yiqie rulai shenmiao mimi jin’gangjie da sanmeiye xiuxi qieying qingyi bu diqi* 金剛頂經一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修習伽迎請儀部第七. Interestingly, the character *jun* 峻 has been written in by hand next to the character *ding* 頂 on P3913. As we will see the *Jin’gangjun jing* 金剛峻經 is the title appearing in the complete title of the *Altar Methods*, likely marking, I assert, an indigenous Chinese “play” on the *Jin’ ganding jing* title itself.

(Critical Edition)	Edition	<i>Altar Methods</i>			<i>Supplementary Manual</i>	<i>Additional Manuscripts</i>
		Copy A ⁵⁸ (P3913)	Copy B ⁵⁹ (BD15147 + G015)	Copy C (B1388v + S2316v + B3669v + B3554v + S2144v)	B7667	S2272, P2197, P3835, B7677
I	1	cols. 4-32	BD15147		(recto) cols. 4-77	
	2	Section 2, cols. 32-48	BD15147		Cols. 78-105	
	3	Section 3, cols. 48-61	BD15147		cols. 106-197	
	4	Section 4, cols. 61-94	BD15147		cols. 198-254; 255-352	
	5	Section 5, cols. 95-111	BD15147		cols. 252-405	
	6	Section 6, cols. 111-126	BD15147		cols. 406-448	
	7	Section 7, cols. 126-140	BD15147		cols. 449-501	
	8	(unnumbered invocation text)	BD15147		cols. 502-507 (end missing)	P2197.10
	9	Section 8, cols. 148-161	BD15147			B7677.7
	10	Section 9, cols. 161-168	BD15147			
	11	Section 10, cols. 169-180	BD15147			
	12	Section 11, cols. 180-193	BD15147			

⁵⁸ Section numbers and corresponding column numbers are listed here owing to the unique numbering system found on Copy A.

⁵⁹ I have been unable to examine BD15147, and so am relying on the description of the text provided in Hou 2008, and unable to provide precise folio and/or column information.

	13	Section 12, cols. 194-211	BD15147	B1388V , cols. 2- 34 ⁶⁰		
	14	Section 13cols. 211- 230	BD15147	B1388V , cols. 35-70		
II	15	Section 14, cols. 236-247	BD15147	B1388V , cols. 79-100	(verso) cols. 1-26 (head missing)	
	16	Section 15, cols. 247-274	BD15147	B1388V , cols. 101-151	cols. 26-68	
	17	Section 16, cols. 274-289	BD15147	B1388V , cols. 152-176	cols. 69-116	
	18	Section 17, cols. 290-312		B1388V , cols. 177-209	cols. 117-161	
	19	Section 18, cols. 312-333		B1388V , cols. 210-248	cols. 162-204	
	20	Section 19, cols. 333-351		B1388V , cols. 249-280	(missing)	
	21	Section 20, cols. 351-363		B1388V , cols. 281-304 (end missing)	cols. 204-254	
	22	Section 21, cols. 364-378			cols. 255-299	
	23	Section 22, cols. 378-399			cols. 300-348	
	24	Section 23, cols. 400-418			cols. 349-406	
	25	Section 24, cols. 419-443			cols. 407-456	
	26	Section 25, cols. 443-459			cols. 457-488 (end missing)	
	27	Section 26,		S2136V,		

⁶⁰ The first line of B1388V reads *bu dishier* 部第十二.

		cols. 459-485		cols. 2-48		
III	28	Section 27, cols. 491-505	G015, cols. 5-35	B3699V , cols. 5-34		
	29	Section 28, cols. 505-519	G015, cols. 36-64	B3699V , cols. 35-62		
	30	Section 29, cols. 520-545	G015, cols. 65-102	B3699V , cols. 63-99		
	31	Section 30, cols. 545-559	G015, cols. 103-127	B3699V , cols. 100-123		
	32	Section 31, cols. 560-576	G015, cols. 128-156	B3699V , cols. 124-151		
	33	Section 32, cols. 577-592	G015, cols. 157-181	B3699V , cols. 152-175		
	34	Section 33, cols. 592-631	G015, cols. 182-247	B3699V , cols. 176-239		
	35	Section 34, cols. 632-658	G015, cols. 248-288	B3699V , cols. 240-277 (end missing)		
IV	36.1 ⁶¹	Section 35.1, cols. 659-835	G015, cols. 289-535	(end missing) B3554V , cols. 1-42 (cf. P3913, lines 805-835)		B7677.13, S2272
	36.2	Section 35.2, cols. 835-876	G015, cols. 535-602	B3554V , cols. 42-109		
	36.3	Section 35.3, cols. 876-941	G015, cols. 602-705	B3554V , cols.		P2791,

⁶¹ Again, the enumeration of Sections 36.1-7 is the result of critical editing, as only Sections 1-35 are numbered in the original manuscripts.

			109-220		P3212
	36.4	Section 35.4, cols. 941-996	G015, cols. 705-776	B3554V , cols. 220-252 (incomplete)	
	36.5	Section 35.5, cols. 996- 1,003	G015, cols. 777-788	S2144V, cols. 1- 10	
	36.6	Section 35.6, cols. 1,004- 1,014	G015, cols. 789-803	S2144V, cols. 11- 22 ⁶²	P3835V9
Prayer Text	36.7			S2144V, cols. 29- 69 (incomplete)	B7677.5

⁶² Explicit for Fascicle 4 runs from lines 23-28.

3. Dating Altar Methods

Virtually nothing is known of the original date or provenance of the *Altar Methods* – the title is not listed in any known medieval Chinese or Japanese Buddhist catalog or canon, nor is it recorded in the numerous local Buddhist inventories recovered from the Dunhuang site itself.⁶³ Whether the text was produced locally or imported from points elsewhere remains unclear, but several scholars have argued for the Dunhuang provenance of the text.⁶⁴ Regardless of its original place of composition (and again we should be cautious in treating the present compilation as a “coherent” text in any traditional sense), the three extant manuscript copies of the work suggest that it was considered worthy of reproduction, and the local manufacture of those manuscripts copies suggests that the text circulated in the Dunhuang region during the tenth century. Given the lack of references to the text outside the site, the most immediate context for situating the *Altar Methods* would be among the recovered Dunhuang manuscripts themselves.

The colophon to the text identifies it as a translation by the prolific mid-Tang figure Amoghavajra. Internal textual evidence, however, suggests that the *Altar Methods*, in its present form at least, dates two full centuries after Amoghavajra’s death in 774.⁶⁵ As such, the received text of the *Altar Methods* should be considered a work of medieval Chinese Buddhist pseudography.⁶⁶ Scholars continue to speculate about Amoghavajra’s ethnic heritage, they agree on the basic facts surrounding his arrival in China, his tutelage under the Indian master Vajrabodhi, his close connections to the Tang court over the course of some three decades, his diplomatic mission to the western regions, and his subsequent role as dharma preceptor at the great consecration or *abhiṣeka* altars established in and around the

⁶³ Although it is likely that the texts bearing his name reached the site through imperial and/or monastic library channels, Amoghavajra’s biography might offer clues regarding the circulation of his works in the region. On the history of the Buddhist library system, see Drège 1991. See also Fang 2006, which provides a comprehensive overview of the local Buddhist catalogs recovered from Dunhuang.

⁶⁴ Eastman 1983:54-7 suggests that the text was the product of a local Dunhuang community, but there is no direct evidence to support this claim. Kuo 2000: 696 also suggests that the text was a local Dunhuang compilation, and that the techniques it promotes were practiced in the Dunhuang region (1998: 227-228). Tanaka 2000 and Sørensen 2011b: 60 offer similar assessments of the text.

⁶⁵ The colophon bearing Amoghavajra’s names appears at the end of all four fascicles of the text, lending weight to the idea that the author-compiler of the collection was interested in presenting the *Altar Methods*, in its present form, at least, as a complete work by Amoghavajra.

⁶⁶ The colophon reads: “Translated on imperial command by the Tripitika [Master] and *śramaṇa* Bukong (Amoghavajra) of Daxingshan si, [posthumously entitled] ‘Great and Extensive Wisdom’” 大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空奉詔譯. This same colophon appears at the start of all four fascicles of the extant *Altar Methods*. Chou 1945: 284-307 provides an annotated translation of Amoghavajra’s biography found in Zanning’s 贊寧 (919-1001) *Song gaoseng zhuàn* 宋高僧傳 (T50.2061). This colophon is repeated at the start of each of the four fascicles of the received *Altar Methods*.

imperial Tang dynasty palaces.⁶⁷ Less well known, perhaps, is his residency in what is now Wuwei, a major town along the Hexi corridor that connects Dunhuang and central China between the years 754-756.⁶⁸ A number of historical documents related to Amoghavajra's official activities record that he was summoned to the region by the Military Commissioner (*jiedu shi* 節度使) of the Hexi-Longyou Defense Command, Geshu Han 哥舒翰. According to these records, Geshu requested an *abhiṣeka* initiation, and was instructed in the "five divisions" (*wubu* 五部) and the *Vajradhātu maṇḍala*.⁶⁹ It was in Wuwei, in fact, that Amoghavajra is said to have produced his translation of the *Jin'gangding jing*, arguably the

⁶⁷ There is no real consensus concerning Amoghavajra's birthplace, although northern India, Sri Lanka, and Samarkand are the most frequently cited possibilities. We know that Amoghavajra was Vajrabodhi's 金剛智 (671-741) chief disciple, and although our earliest records place him at Vajrabodhi's side, it is unclear just when and where the two met. For Vajrabodhi's biography, see Chou 1945: 276-84. We also know that Amoghavajra was active at the Tang court over the course of some three decades, spanning the reigns of Tang emperors Xuanzong (r. 712-756), Suzong (r. 756-62) and Daizong (r. 762-79). For the most part, Amoghavajra was based at the Da Xingshansi 大興善寺 in Chang'an. Following Vajrabodhi's death in 741, he traveled to India in search of the latest tantric scriptures, returning in 746 with texts, teachings and gifts from India and Sri Lanka. See Gibson 1997: 17-18, n. 87.

Upon his return to Tang China in 747, Amoghavajra was asked to establish an altar for the emperor's consecration (*guanding* 灌頂, S. *abhiṣeka*). He remained at the court in the emperor's service performing various rites and translating texts until the An Lushan Rebellion in 756. He was honored with the purple robe and the rank of third degree. Under Daizong's reign Amoghavajra gained privileged access to the inner palace, where he established an "inner chapel" or *nei daochang* 內道場 for *boma* and *abhiṣeka* rites in the Daming palace, as well as the Golden Pavillion 金閣寺 on Mt. Wutai. For a comprehensive overview of the extant Chinese documents pertaining to Amoghavajra's dealings with the Tang court, see Orlando 1981. For an extensive overview of Amoghavajra's oeuvre in the context of the mid-Tang dynasty, see Osabe 1971.

⁶⁸ A monument in present-day Wuwei stands as a testament to Amoghavajra's legacy in the region. During the late-medieval period the town was known as Liangzhou, and later came under the control of the Tibetans. Amoghavajra was sent to the headquarters of Geshu Han sometime in 754 or 755. It is important to note that "Amoghavajra's rise to influence in the Tang seems to have begun with the martial assistance he rendered to the Tang Emperors during the initial years of the An Lushan Rebellion. He received early and ongoing material support from the Tang military elite. But following the recovery of the Tang dynastic capitals in 757 until his death in 774 it was the continuous support of the bureaucratic elite that guaranteed his standing in the Inner Palace" (Goble 2012: 220-221).

⁶⁹ See Chou 1945: 293-94; Sørensen 1991-1992: 334, n. 201. Goble provides a thorough account of the numerous imperial officials and military commanders at work behind Amoghavajra's rise to prominence. He also spends some time speculating on Amoghavajra's popularity due to his ethnic origins among Central Asian communities. On this issue, see also Pulleyblank 1952: 317-356, esp. 318-319.

single-most influential title among the two hundred or so texts bearing his name in the received Chinese Buddhist canon.⁷⁰

This little-known chapter from Amoghavajra's life might explain the dozens of manuscripts bearing his name found at the nearby site of Dunhuang. This includes not only a number of "canonical" and "extra-canonical" works, including the posthumously ascribed *Altar Methods*, but a number of unidentified textual variants that resemble canonical versions of texts – a real textual "mess" that has the potential to tell us a good deal about the ways in which Chinese Buddhist texts, and specifically ritual texts, circulated in the age of the manuscript. In fact, the multiple forms (retranslations, redactions, creative "apocrypha") in which these texts circulated, I argue, gets right to the heart of the still-raging debate over the nature and status of tantra in medieval China, but one outside the parameters of the present study. According to recent scholarship on the developmental history of Buddhist tantra, these retranslations represent an important step in the introduction of the tantric teachings

⁷⁰ See Ōsabe 1971. See Lin and Shen 2000a, 2000b, 2003. The issue of the variety of texts, and their multiple recensions is central to the ongoing debate over the nature and status of tantra in China. It should be noted that the Chinese esoteric or tantric material from the site went largely unread, even unrecognized, for decades. In his classic study of Tang dynasty Chinese tantra published in 1945, for example, Chou I-liang [Zhou Yiliang] noted that, unlike the field of Zen (C. Chan) studies, "so far as the Esoteric Sect is concerned, I am not particularly benefited by any available Dunhuang manuscripts, except for a few pictures and sheets of paper on which *dhāraṇīs* were written (Chou 1945: 247)." This same sentiment is expressed in the work of Fang Guangchang (2006: 343-44). A very different trend has dominated the field of late, a trend marked by the 2011 publication of the voluminous Brill volume on *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*. Edited jointly by Charles Orzech, Henrik Sørensen, and Richard Payne, that volume contains 87 individual essays in more than 1,000 pages covering a range of topics, including canonical and extra-canonical sources that tackle the problem from a variety of angles.

The most comprehensive survey of the Chinese esoteric Buddhist manuscripts from Dunhuang is Li Xiaorong's 2003 descriptive catalogue. Li presents the material thematically, and goes on to identify five generic types: (1) *dhāraṇī* and other types of *sūtra* material, which account for roughly eighty percent of the recovered Chinese esoteric manuscripts at the site, including (2) mantra or spell texts, (3) "invocation" (*qiqing wen* 啟請文) and "prayer" texts (*yuanwen* 願文), (4) *mudrā* handbooks, and (5) liturgical texts and ritual manuals that prescribe altars-*maṇḍala* rites (*tanfa*), along with "esoteric" contemplations (*guanfa* 觀法). This latter group includes the *Altar Methods*.

What makes Li's study unique is her treatment of the recovered Chinese esoteric Buddhist texts (she does not survey the relevant visual materials) not as pieces in the historiographical puzzle of Indian tantric Buddhism, or as constellation points on the grid of the later Japanese Shingon tradition – uses to which Chinese esoteric Buddhist materials are routinely put, but as regional transmissions of specific textual and ritual traditions that reflect wider trends and developments across late-medieval China. In this way, Li's study represents a major methodological leap forward, if you will, in scholarly approaches to the material, and has helped pave the way for the critical study of the excavated Dunhuang Chinese esoteric finds, the present study included.

into the Buddhist fold generally, and in China specifically.⁷¹ In effect, Amoghavajra’s revisions represent a technological “upgrade” of previous altar methods (and other types of “esoteric” methods) that apply the basic ritual “grammar” of the five-buddha *maṇḍala* system promoted in the Yoga tantras.

While no copies of the *Jin’gangding jing* itself have been recovered from Dunhuang, I have identified nine separate titles spread across some thirty unique manuscripts that bear a close relationship to the *Jin’gangding jing* – texts that I am wont to refer to as a local constellation or “lineage” of *Jin’gangding jing* texts at the site Dunhuang.⁷² This includes the *Altar Methods*. Again, while the topic falls beyond the scope of the present study, the identification and examination of these texts not only provides crucial information regarding how those texts circulated in medieval Sinitic cultural spheres (as independent texts, as parts of larger liturgical compendia, and so on), but vital data about the extent (regional, temporal) of their influence in China – all of which force us to rethink some deeply held assumptions about the supposed “demise” of those *Jin’gangding jing* teachings in post-Amoghavajra China, including their role in the generation of indigenous Chinese Buddhist scriptures, like the *Altar Methods*, as well as their possible regional influence outside the Tang dynasty capitals. This is crucial evidence in our attempt to think through how, in the face of what has been noted as a lack of formal systematization in the medieval textual record noted above, Chinese Buddhists may have conceived of, and even possibly made use of, those texts.⁷³ That

⁷¹ See esp. Davidson 2012 and Shinohara 2010.

⁷² These nine titles include: (1) *Jin’gangding jing yiqie rulai shenmiao bimi jingangjie dasanmeiye xiuxi yuqie huanqing yi* 金剛頂經一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修習瑜伽迎請儀 (cf. P3920, S4510V, B7666); (2) *Jin’gangding lianhuabu xin niansong yigui* 金剛頂蓮華部心念誦儀軌 (cf. P3920); (3) *Jin’gangding yuqie niansong guiyi* 金剛頂瑜伽念誦軌儀 (cf. S3288V); (4) *Jin’gangding yuqie liqu banruo jing* 金剛頂瑜伽理趣般若經, attributed to Vajrabodhi (cf. T8.241; J. *Rishukyō*; S3018, S5703); (5) *Jin’gangding jing manshubili pusa quizi xin tuoluoni pin* 金剛頂經曼殊師利菩薩五字心陀羅尼品, attributed to Vajrabodhi (cf. B7352); (6) *Jin’gangjun jing jin’gangding yiqie rulai shenmiao mimi jingangjie dasanmeiye xiuxing sishierzhong tanfa jing zuoyong weiyi faze, Dapiluzhenafu jingang xindi famen mifa jietanfa yize* 金剛峻經, 金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二種壇法經作用威儀法則, 大毘盧遮那佛金剛心地法門秘法戒壇法儀則 (cf. P3913, etc; the *Altar Methods*), an unidentified text attributed to Amoghavajra; (7) *Jingangjun jing, jingangding jing yiqie rulai shenmiao bimi jingangjie dasanmaye xiuxing sishijiuzhong tanfa jing yong weiyi faze, Da Piluzhenafu jingang xindi famen bifa jietanfa yize* 金剛峻經金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行, 四十九種壇法經作用威儀法則, 大毗盧遮那佛金剛心地法門密法界壇法儀則 (cf. B7667; the *Supplementary Manual*), an unidentified text attributed to Amoghavajra; (8) *Jin’gangjie damantuoluo shiliu pusa zan* 金剛界大曼荼羅十六菩薩贊 (cf. P2322, folios 1-2, lines 11-49); and (9) *Foshuo wubu chinian zai daochang zhu pilu huashen guanding jixiang jinse dalun wang tuoluoni* 佛說五部持念在道場主毗盧化身灌頂吉祥金色大輪王陀羅尼 (cf. P2197.6).

⁷³ Against the long-standing Japanese convention of organizing Amoghavajra’s teachings under the rubric of the *Jin’gangding jing* title, McBride (2011a: 306, entry #26 in the 2011 Brill volume) rejects this classification scheme. He notes that some scholars (he explicitly cites Ōmura, Ōsabe, and Misaki), “imagine a Varjaśekhara (read: *Jin’gangding jing*) family of scriptures” to refer to those texts numbered T18.865-892 in the modern Taishō canon. Owing, it would seem, to his acceptance of the “demise”

said, such speculation is of little help in dating the Altar Methods specifically, or telling us much at all about the possible reception and circulation of the text. Again, given that the received *Altar Methods* clearly dates later than Amoghavajra's lifetime, we must look elsewhere to more precisely date of the received text. In the section that follows, I turn to other methods of internal textual dating, as well as to the physical manuscripts themselves for clues regarding the circulation, if not compilation, date of our text.

Dating the Manuals

In addition to the attribution of the text, which will be discussed next, several internal clues help date the received text of the *Altar Methods*. These include several dated references found in the text, along with implicit dates, detectable through the inclusion of special character sets (taboo characters, special dynastic characters, and so on), as well as several thematic elements that link the contents of the text to post-ninth century literary, doctrinal, and ritual developments. This last category includes references to rites for “creatures of land and water” (*shuilu tanfa* 水陸壇法), a ritual undocumented in the Chinese Buddhist textual or material record before the ninth century.⁷⁴ Add to those references the scattering of references to “food dispersal rites” (*shishi* 施食) in our text – rites that are said to taken on major significance in the Chinese Buddhist tradition in the tenth century.⁷⁵

Dated References in the Text

In addition to thematic elements that aid in the dating of the text, we find several dated references found in Fascicle 4 of the *Altar Methods*, the latest of which reads “the second year of the Guanghua era of the Great Tang” 大唐光化二年 (899).⁷⁶ While this internal textual

theory (namely that the *Jin'gangding jing* teachings in China died out when Amoghavajra did), McBride questions the likelihood of the dissemination and reception of Amoghavajra's teachings outside the medieval Tang capitals and major Buddhist centers like Mt. Wutai. McBride 2011c: 307-314 (entry #27 in the 2011 Brill volume) again rehearses the lack of clarity over the use of the term “esoteric Buddhism” in the Sinitic cultural sphere, and raises the question over whether the effects of what was potentially just a short-lived tradition were felt only at the imperial court or empire wide. Citing earlier scholarship (Birnbaum 1983, Gimello 1994) he states that there was “little evidence of interest in esoteric Buddhist scriptures outside of the court and ritual center of Mt. Wutai” (2011c: 308) after the An Lushan Rebellion. I would argue that McBride's claims are called into question by our Dunhuang evidence.

⁷⁴ See Stevenson 2001.

⁷⁵ See Orzech 1998 and Teiser 1988, 1994.

⁷⁶ Several additional references to Tang dynasty dates are found in Fascicle 4 of the Altar Methods, including (a) the fifth year (654) of the Yonghui 永徽 era (650-656) of Tang Emperor Gaozong's reign and (b) the fifteenth year (756) of the Tianbao 天寶 era (742-756) of Emperor Xuanzong's reign.

evidence suggests a terminus post quem of 899 for the text, it should be noted that this date, like all the dated references appearing in the final fascicle of the text, are in fact embedded within excerpts imported from independent texts, including several early Buddhist historical works that appear to have played a pivotal role in the burgeoning Chan tradition. To these internal dates we can add the presence of specialized characters that provide additional support for a late-Tang or Five Dynasties date. Hou Chong notes the avoidance of certain “taboo characters” throughout the text (*zhi* 治 and *min* 民, for example, are consistently avoided in the text), as well as several “newly instituted characters” from the late Tang or Five Dynasties period.⁷⁷ This evidence reinforces the theory that the text was compiled no earlier than the mid-Tang period, but more likely in the tenth century.

External Textual References

Hirai Yūkei (cited in Eastman 1983) identified one of two external textual references to the *Altar Methods* in the form of two inscriptions found on the second sheet of a six-sheet loose leaf sketchbook (P4009) date to the year 978. The second, identified here for the first time, appears as a series of interlinear notes found on a *pothī* booklet P3920, which includes a reference to what appears to be the Song dynasty (960-1279).

Loose-Leaf “Sketchbook” P4009

In the upper left-hand corner of the second sheet of the loose leaf sketchbook P4009 we find a messy notation that includes a reference to the seventh (?) day of the eighth month of the *wuyin* 戊寅 year (978).⁷⁸ That date, in combination with a careful consideration of the paper type and stylistic analysis of the sketch, further suggests a late tenth-century date for P4009. It should be noted that this is the very same date that is found in an inscription by the lay Buddhist scholar Yang Yuanshou on P3835 discussed above.

P4009 consists of three large sheets of heavy paper, covered on the front and back with drawings in black ink, the result being six separate but related sketches measuring approximately 31 cm x 42 cm each. Interestingly, the paper has been folded, accordion-style, and then flattened again, to create uniform columns, with between nine and twelve columns per page. In total the six sketches contain some three hundred individual figures depicted in a variety of seated and standing positions. Among the more recognizable figures we can

⁷⁷ Hou 2008: 19-20. Hou further claims that the text incorporates a number of Chinese characters that came into use only after the collapse of the Tang, although he does not identify these specifically. Hirai (1974: 142) discusses the Empress Wu characters present in the text.

⁷⁸ The inscription appear to reads: [會][今]者佛無頭 [crossed out] 手結之[X]; 南[X]; 東方十二上願佛; 佛金會; 戊寅年八月七[?]日 The first two lines on column eleven read: 今者佛無頭手結之[X], 東方十二上願[?]佛.

identify a set of five buddhas,⁷⁹ four offering deities, four wrathful guardian figures, as well as several other figures that are repeated on multiple sketches.

It should be noted that P4009 is just one of roughly three dozen ink sketched, detailed diagrams, and fine paintings scattered throughout the Stein, Pelliot, and Beijing Dunhuang collections loosely identified in the secondary literature as “magic diagrams,” “ritual diagrams,” “maṇḍalas” or “altars.”⁸⁰ Collectively these images appear to be the remains of once prolific regional workshops that demonstrate, among other things, that the Buddhist *maṇḍala* form, and by extension a set of technical ritual and learned artistic practices necessary for its transmission, had not only entered the Dunhuang region by the eighth and ninth centuries, but had become a fixture in the local Buddhist visual landscape of the tenth century.⁸¹ We know little of the actual provenance of this group of images. Given the haphazard nature of the Dunhuang documents, no definitive conclusions can be drawn over the degree to which they are representative of trends elsewhere during the late-medieval period, but what we lose in certainty we gain in seeing the process at work.⁸²

Pothī Booklet P3920

⁷⁹ The five buddhas can be identified from right to left, top to bottom as Ratnasambhava (south), Amitabha (east), Amoghasiddhi (north), Akṣobhya (east) and Vairocana (center). as well as a set of four buddha figures in the lower left corner (P4009b9-10) without implements or crowns but with hand gestures, P4009c3-4).

⁸⁰ These include, but are not limited to, Stein paintings 18, 172, 173, and 174, Stein Ch.1v.0024, S848v2.1-3, S2139r1, S4690, S5656, S6264, S6348, P2012, P3937, P3982, P4009, P4518.33, P4519, P4912r (fragment), P4991v, PT389, PT4216, Beijing *jiang* 姜 25, B7666v, paintings Ch.00383a-c (fragments), Ch.00379 and the drawing Ch.00398 held in the National Museum in New Delhi, as well as EO1131, EO1146, EO1148, EO1167, EO1182, EO3579, MG17780, and MG26466 held in the Musée Guimet. See also Yale University Art Gallery 1955.7.1. Several additional drawings labeled “maṇḍalas” by catalogers have been excluded from this list, including P3679, P3955, P4514, and P4903. All of these images have been published, and most are available for study on the Artstor and/or the International Dunhuang Project websites. See esp. Fraser 2004; Giès 1994; Klimburg-Salter 1982, 1997, 1999; Kuo 1998; Luczanits 2003, 2004, 2008; Musée Guimet 1994-XX; Nicolas-Vandier 1976; Tanaka 2000; and Whitfield 1982-85.

⁸¹ Scholars have begun to situate the recovered Dunhuang images within a developmental framework of tantric art generally, and the Buddhist maṇḍala specifically, with interesting results. See esp. the work of Tanaka 1992, 2000; Luczanits 2008; Sørensen (1991-1992: 290).

⁸² Much of the scholarship on these images is concerned with the representative style of the Dunhuang samples represent an Indo-Tibetan (or trans- or western Himalayan) tradition, a Chinese tradition, or something in between. There seems to be less evidence for identifying these images as “Tibetan” in style as some scholars have done than in speaking of a regional style. Given that the Dunhuang samples predate the earliest western Himalayan samples by at least a full century, it is unclear just what exactly a “Tibetan style” would mean this early. In fact, as Christian Luczanits (2008: 113) has pointed out, the majority of Dunhuang maṇḍala drawings attest more to early Indian models than anything we might call “Tibetan,” if for no other reason it is unclear just what a “Tibetan style” in the tenth century might mean. Instead, it might make more sense to speak of a regional style.

Placed at regular intervals throughout the eighth text of a twelve-text liturgical compendium are seventeen interlinear notations that correspond to the titles of Sections 16, 18, 20–29, and 31–35 of the *Altar Methods*, namely P3920.⁸³ Significantly, the inserted chapter titles follow along in the order of both texts in a manner that would appear to link specific

⁸³ Li 2003: 29–30 includes a transcription of fourteen of the seventeen inserted section titles found on P3920.8, but does not identify them as the section titles of *Altar Methods*.

P3920 is a *pōthi* booklet made up of 219 oblong sheets pierced in the center by a hole and gathered by a loose tie. The booklet contains twelve separate texts or excerpts: (1) *Qianyan qianbi guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神咒經 translated by Zhitong 智通 (cf. S3050, S3886, B7376, B7377, B7378, S1210, S3534, B8462), and the *Qianshou qianyan guanshiyin pusa guangda yuanman wuai dabeixin tuoluoni jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼經, which catalogers have treated as a single item. Complete, with several variants, in particular with the dharani, when compared to T1060.20.106a–111c. Text discusses the construction of a maṇḍala. Cf. S509, S1405V, P2291, S5768, P3829, S1210, S1405, S4512, S5460, S7375, P3473, S4543, B7460–B7463; (2) *Foding zunxing tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊 X 陀羅尼經 translated by Buddhapāli. Some variations, particularly with the dhāraṇī, when compared to T967.19.349c–352a25.6; (3) *Suiqiu jide dazizai tuoluoni shenzhou mantuolu* 隨求即得大自在陀羅尼神咒曼陀羅 translated by Baosiwei 寶思惟 (cf. T1154.20.637b14.1–642b4.3.); (4) Complete text of the *Ruyilun tuoluoni jing* 如意輪陀羅尼經 translated by Bodhiruci (cf. T1080.20). Text out of order. Folios 140V–142R contain fragments of an unknown apocryphal sutra prescribing offerings to preta, similar to those texts found in T1313–1321. 21. This same text is found on P.3835V2; (5) *Dalun jingang zhou* 大輪金剛咒 (cf. B7682). Some variations when compared to the *Dalun jin'gang tuluoni* 大輪金剛陀羅尼 found in the *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 T.901.18.803b11–23; (6) First section of the *Fosbuo dalun jingang zongchi tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 佛口大輪金剛總持陀羅尼神咒經 (cf. T1230.21.161b–162a23.7). A note under the initial title reads: *Jin'gangbu zhong luechu* 金剛部中略出; the (7) *Jin'gangding yiqie rulai shenmiao bimi jingangjie dasanmeiye xiuxi yuqie huanqing yi* 金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修習瑜伽迎請儀 attributed to Amoghavajra, although a comparison with his 金剛頂經一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經 (T8470//874???.18.310a–317a10). Cf. S4510V, B7666 Yields a number of omissions and variants, particularly in the transcription of the dhāraṇī. Cf. S4510V, B7666; the (8) *Jingangding jing yiqie rulai zhenzhi she dasheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing shenmiao bimi jingangjie dasanmeiye xiuxi yuqie huanqing yi* 金剛頂經一切如來真實攝大乘現証大教王經深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修習瑜伽儀 attributed to Amoghavajra (cf. T873). Cf. B7666V.

References: T. 873(?), B7666V, P3920 (text section?) (a) Some variations when compared to T.873.18.299b–310a. 金剛頂連華部心儀軌. (b) The initial title of the MS is the one in? T.874, mentioned in number 7 of P3920, which is added here to the subheading/subtitle of k. chang like that which appears in T. but arranged differently. Final title: 金剛頂瑜伽念誦儀軌, 竟; (9) *Fosbuo qiuba yankou egui tuoluoni* 佛口救拔焰口餓鬼陀羅尼經 translated by Amoghavarja (cf. T1313.21.464b–465b27). Complete, save the concluding dhāraṇī in twenty-eight characters. Folios 215V–216V contain various prescriptions and dharani with no canonical equivalent. Cf. S1896, S1397, S4119, S6323, P3022, B7374, B8685; (10) *Fosbuo dawei chibengguang rulai jixiang tuoluoni jing* 佛口大威德金輪佛頂熾盛光如來消除一切災難陀羅尼經 complete, except final dhāraṇī. Comparable to T964.19.338b–c26.8. Cf. P2382, P2194; (11) *Dawei yijing qingwen* 大威儀經請問 (a) in one juan. Virtually identical to S1032, which is reproduced in T2884.85.1390a; (12) *Gaowang guanshiyin jing* 高王觀世音經, an indigenous Chinese scripture in one juan. Some variations from T2898.85.1426b–c10.

chapters of the *Altar Methods* to specific sections of the manual inscribed on P3920.8, a liturgical manual attributed to Amoghavajra that belongs to the *Jin'gangding jing* cycle commonly referred to in English as the *Recitation Manual*.⁸⁴ The fact that the texts are aligned sequentially suggests that the ritual procedures outlined in the two texts were understood to correspond. Table 2 includes a list of all seventeen inscriptions, as well as their corresponding sections in the *Altar Methods* and *Supplementary Manual*.

Table 2. Interlinear Notations found on P3920.8, along with their corresponding sections in the *Altar Methods* and the *Supplementary Manual*

Interlinear Notations
(1) <i>Wufotan lianhuazang shijie</i> 五佛壇蓮花藏世界 (P3920.8, folio 1, column 2; cf. T18.873.299b7-8), which corresponds to Section 16 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.15)
(2) <i>Wufo bapusa chanbui zhi tan</i> 五佛八菩薩懺悔之壇 (P3920.8, folio 6, column 4; cf. T18.873.300a21), which corresponds to Section 18 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.17 and B7667.17)
(3) <i>Ersbi fo yu Qieweinaguo fu yu Puxian pusa sanmei tanfa chu</i> 尔時佛於伽維那國付与菩薩三昧壇法處 (P3920.8, folio 11, column 2; cf. T18.873.300c14), which corresponds to Section 20 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.19 and B7667.19; note that this same notation appears as an interlinear note between columns 1 and 2 on the recto of Sheet 1 of sketchbook P4009 (P4009.1))
(4) <i>Ersbi fo yu Wangshecheng jin'gangzuo fu yu Puxian pusa zuochan tan</i> 尔時佛於王舍城金剛座付与賢菩薩座禪壇 (P3920.8, folio 14, column 3; cf. T18.873.301a25), which corresponds to Section 21 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.20; like the previous notation, this notation also appears as an interlinear note on sketchbook P4009.1, between columns 3 and 4)
(5) <i>Ersbi fo yu Wangshecheng fu yu Puxian pusa kaichantan zhi chu</i> 尔時佛於王舍城付与賢菩薩開禪壇之處 (P3920.8, folio 19, column 1; cf. T18.873.302a10), which corresponds to Section 22 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.21, B7667.22)
(6) <i>Ersbi fo yu Wangshecheng jin'gangzuo shuo wufo jiachishen chengfo shishen zhi tan chu</i> 尔時佛於王舍城金剛座說五佛加持身成佛十身之壇處 (cf. P3920.8, folio 23, column 2; cf. T18.873.302c10), which corresponds to Section 23 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.22 and B7667.23)
(7) <i>Ersbi fo yu Wangshecheng Qidujueshan zhong shuo buguo jin'gang saduo ti zhi tan wufo bajin'gang bagongyang</i> 尔時佛於王舍城耆闍崛山中說護國金剛薩埵體之壇五佛八金剛八供養 (P3920.8, folio 24, column 5; cf. T18.873.303a2), which corresponds to Section 24 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.23 and B7667.24)

⁸⁴ The text on P3920.8 corresponds to T18.873. The relationship of the Dunhuang text and the printed Taishō edition, along with the relationship of both Dunhuang texts are discussed in the next section.

(8) <i>Ersbi fo zhu Shunmilu shanding shuo xiang sanshi bagongde chengjiu sibao hecheng shunmishantan benzun bajingang sipusa bagongyang bing sishe</i> 尔時佛住須彌盧山頂說降三世八功德成就四寶合成須彌山壇本尊八金剛四菩薩八供養并四攝 (P3920.8, folio 26, column 4; cf. T18.873.303b3), which corresponds to Section 25 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.24 and B7667.25)
(9) <i>Ersbi fo yu Wangshecheng Qidujueshan zhong shuo bapusa bagongyang bing sishe qiqing tan</i> 尔時佛於王舍城耆闍崛山中說八菩薩八供養并四攝啓請壇 (P3920.8, folio 28, column 4; cf. T18.873.303c9), which corresponds to Section 26 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.25 and B7667.26)
(10) <i>Ersbi fo zhu Wangshecheng gonghui zbutian pusa wanerqian renju shuo shiliu dashi shidi manzu zhi tan</i> 尔時佛住王舍城共會諸天菩薩萬二千任(人)俱說十六大士十地滿足之壇 (cf. P3920.8, folio 30, column 5; T18.873.304a9), which corresponds to Section 27 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.26)
(11) <i>Da Pilu sanshiqizun tan</i> 大毗盧三十七尊壇 (P3920.8, folio 37, column 2; cf. T18.873.304c17), which corresponds to Section 28 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.27)
(12) <i>Da Pilu sanshiqizun tan</i> 大毗盧三十七尊壇 (P3920.8, folio 44, col. 1; cf. T18.873.306a5), which corresponds to Section 29 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.28)
(13) <i>Ersbi fo zhu Wangshecheng yu zhu dapusa guanding jiemo shoujiefu zhi tan wufu bapusa</i> 尔時佛住王舍城與諸大菩薩灌頂羯磨受戒法之壇五佛八菩薩 (P3920.8, folio 47, line 2; cf. T18.873.306b21), which corresponds to Section 31 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.30)
(14) <i>Ersbi fo zai Wangshecheng Qidujueshan zhong yu dapusazong wanerqian renju shuo shiliu dashi guanding tan</i> 尔時佛在王舍城耆闍崛山中與大菩薩衆萬二千任(人)俱說十六大士灌頂壇 (P3920.8, folio 50, col. 2; cf. T18.873.307a3), which corresponds to Section 32 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.31)
(15) <i>Ersbi fo zai Wangshecheng Qidujueshan zhong zuosbi gongyang shifang shiliu dashi zuofu tan</i> 尔時佛住王舍城耆闍崛山中作事業供養十方十六大士作福壇 (P3920.8, folio 53, col. 3; cf. T18.873307b15), which corresponds to Section 33 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.32)
(16) <i>Ersbi fo zhu Wangshecheng jin'gangzuo shuo zhenshen liupoluomi zhengfa mingwang dajiao tan</i> 尔時佛住王舍城金剛座說甚深六波羅密正法明王大教壇 (P3920.8, folio 59, col. 1; cf. T18.873.308b10), which corresponds to Section 34 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.33)
(17) <i>Ersbi fo zongchi baizi mingwang huashen zuo shijin'gang zhengmingwang wuzhangai tan</i> 尔時佛總持百字明王化身作十金剛正明王無障礙壇 (P3920.8, folio 63, col. 3; cf. T18.873.309a10), which corresponds to Section 35 of the critical text of the <i>Altar Methods</i> (cf. P3913.34)

Dating the Physical Manuscripts

The physical manuscript evidence gleaned from the extant copies from Dunhuang support a tenth-century circulation date for the received text of the *Altar Methods*, and as we will see, there is good reasons to push that date back even further to the late-tenth century. Based on content analysis previous scholars have suggested a late-Tang or Five dynasties period date for the work. This could be true, but the physical manuscript evidence makes clear that the three extant copies of the work were in circulation as late as the final quarter of the tenth century.

The Pothī Booklets

In combination with the internal evidence for dating the *Altar Methods*, Copy A (P3913) hold several clues with respect to the circulation date of the extant *Altar Methods* based on its physical format. Copy A is found on one of only thirty-two Chinese-language *pothī* booklets recovered from Dunhuang, making it a relatively rare sample.⁸⁵ The Chinese *pothī* is one of several book types among the approximately 400 recovered booklets recovered from site, and as such must be considered within the broader context of the development of the book format in China. Scholars have traced the provenance of the Chinese *pothī* to the Indian *pothī* format, which is constructed from sheets of dried palm leaf cut into rectangular shaped pages stacked one on top of the other.⁸⁶ At some point, Chinese Buddhists at Dunhuang began producing *pothī* of their own on what appears to be locally produced paper, albeit a wider version than their Indian counterparts. In the Chinese case, oblong sheets were bound together with string that passed through holes pierced at the center of individual sheets, which were then “sandwiched together” between wooden boards. Certain Chinese *pothī* booklets, including P3913, incorporate multiple binding techniques, including pierced holes for string and stitching along the spine.

Few Chinese *pothī* booklets are dated, leaving scholars to rely on paper analysis, in combination with internal textual evidence, to date the extant samples. Most Chinese *pothī*

⁸⁵ The recovered Chinese *pothī* booklets from Dunhuang include: S5503, S5532, S5533, S5537, S5603 (*pothī* concertina), S5606-S5608, S5661, S5663, S5668 (pierced *pothī* “butterfly” booklet), S5703, P3510, P3513, P3822, the series P3913-P3923, P4565, P4573, P4646, P4739, P4882, and DH077. Drège 1979 remains the most comprehensive treatment of the Dunhuang *pothī*.

⁸⁶ In addition to the shift in technology ushered in by the *pothī* format, scholars have further noted that the format itself may have marked a conceptual shift as well, allowing for, or perhaps creating the need for, a distinction between the physical booklet itself and the text contained therein. In fact, some have argued that the introduction of the *pothī* specifically led to the Chinese conception of the “page” in China, suggesting that the Chinese word *ye* 葉, used for “page,” was derived from the term for the palm “leaf” of Indian *pothī*. See Chinnery 2006 for a summary of these arguments. On this topic see also Teiser 1994: 47; Van Schaik and Galambos 2012: 17, 49.

booklets from Dunhuang have now been dated to the ninth and tenth centuries. In his comprehensive survey of the recovered Dunhuang booklets, Drège (1979: 16-18) cites P3913 as the earliest dated booklet from Dunhuang, again based on the date 899 found within the text, while the latest is dated 982 (P3912). If Drège’s assessment is correct, then all of the extant Chinese *pothī* texts from Dunhuang date to the tenth century, assuming that our text was written at least one year after the internal date, an argument this study makes. Again, Drège’s dating of P3913 to 899 must be understood as a *terminus post quem* for the text, as it would appear that this copy of the *Altar Methods*, like other copies of the text from the site, circulated during the tenth century.

Recycled Manuscripts and Miscellaneous Compendia

Another piece of physical manuscript evidence that aids in our dating of the *Altar Methods* comes in the form of several recycled manuscripts, including Copy C of the text itself. All five fragments comprising Copy C were executed on the verso of previously copied works, and like many such recycled manuscripts from the Dunhuang site have been dated by catalogers to the late tenth century, and also call attention to the numerous “writing exercises” or copy books and sketches from the site.⁸⁷ Among those recycled manuscripts we find several messy compilations executed in a crude hand suggesting that at least some of those samples might have served as the “working papers” of a single individual engaged in private note taking or study.

All four are recycled manuscripts that appear to have circulated in the late tenth century and raise a number of questions about the way in which the *Altar Methods* may have circulated, by whom, and for what purpose. Typically, the practice of recycling manuscripts

⁸⁷ In addition, Hirai Yūkei identified two additional Dunhuang manuscripts containing extracts from the *Altar Methods*, namely B7666, and S2272. To these we can add two more, namely B7677 and P3835. S2272 is a scroll of yellow paper measuring 11ft. The recto contains two texts: (1) *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經, in one *juan* (cf. T19.967) and (2) the *Jin’gangjie dapilushenafo zuishang dasheng bimi zhenshen xindi famen chuanshou mifajie dasanmeiye xiuxing yuqie xinyin yi* 金剛界. 大毗盧遮那佛. 攝最上大乘秘蜜甚深心地法門傳受蜜法界. 大三昧耶修行瑜伽. 心印儀 (colophon states: 持進試鴻臚大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空奉詔譯蕃譯蜜法界一卷) (cf. P3913), which is divided with punctuation in the manner presented here. The second text contains a distinctive red highlighter mark. S2272 shares several sections with P3913.36.1, *Fu fazang pin*, including a quote from the *Fanwang jing*.

The verso contains two sections: (1) several notations, including the title *Dapilushenafo fu fazang pin* 大毗盧遮那佛付法藏品, which is also found at the head of the final section of the *Jin’gangjun jing* (cf. P3913), as well as a list of mudrās for several bodhisattvas, including one *Jin’gangzang pusa* 金剛藏菩薩, or Vajragarbha Bodhisattva. Vajragarbha Bodhisattva is one of the main interlocutors in the *Altar Methods*, and the central deity of the contemplation text or *sādhana* found at the end of the Fascicle 4 of the *Altar Methods*. Both of these bodhisattvas appear in Chpt. 18 of the *Jin’gangjun jing*. The verso also contains: (1) the list of deities found on the prayer formulary S2144V; (2) another excerpt from fascicle two of the *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (beginning only), which is also found verbatim in separate locations within the *Altar Methods*.

is attributed to a paper shortage at the site that is said to have reached an apex during the tenth century. Local paper production was known to go on even after the collapse of the Tang, however, so one wonders if there isn't another explanation, namely that paper was recycled only at specific monasteries or by specific scribes, or perhaps even by lay individuals in possession of private manuscripts, as van Schaik and Galambos note that paper was a "rare commodity" during the late-medieval period.⁸⁸

The Linked Sūtras

One final manuscript format to mention in relation to the dating of the Altar Methods is the linked sutra format. During the tenth century it is common at Dunhuang to find books containing several texts or textual excerpts copied in a series, presumably representing liturgical sequences in a manner Makita Tairyō (1976: 39) has employed the term "linked sutras" (C. *lianxie jing*, J. *rensha kyō* 連寫經) to refer to "this sort of aggregate manuscript production," numerous examples of which are found in the present inventory.⁸⁹ Many of the Chinese *pothi* booklets utilize this format, as does manuscript P3920 discussed above.

Examples of these linked *sūtras* are common at Dunhuang during the tenth century, and many of the Chinese *pothi* booklets utilize this format. As Mollier notes, we find texts, often dating to different period, transmitted together in this fashion, suggesting the possibility that they "might well have been transmitted together during the Tang dynasty as parts of ritual communities" (Mollier 2008: 17). Mollier also points to several Chinese apocrypha transmitted side-by-side in the Dunhuang manuscripts that demonstrate an "editorial contiguity in their Taoist versions. We find, for example, the apocryphal *Anzhai jing* 安宅神咒經 (T21.1394) and the *Bayang shenzhou jing* 八陽神咒經 (T14.428), successively written, together with other Buddhist sutras, in a tenth-century *pothi* booklet of fifty numbered leaves discovered at Dunhuang (P3915), while the Taoist versions of these *sūtras* figure contiguously in the *Daozang*" (Mollier 2008: 16). This holds true of the *Recitation Manuals* as well, which appear as a pair in both medieval and modern Japanese Shingon compendia. See P3920.7-8.

Although it falls beyond the scope of the present study, I would argue that an analysis of the different formats in which those two texts circulated has the potential to reveal a good deal about how those texts were understood – in both conceptual and practical terms at the site. In fact, the manuscript evidence provides some of the only real evidence anywhere for examining the way in which this material circulated in the medieval Chinese context. So at Dunhuang at least, we see clearly how those texts are set alongside others, selected out as excerpts, as well as how they circulated as independent texts offering, this study argues, some of the only evidence from the medieval cultural sphere for how this material actually circulated within Chinese Buddhist circles, which may, in fact, provide

⁸⁸ See van Schaik and Galambos 2012: 31.

⁸⁹ These include, but are not limited to, S5506, S5532, S5533, S5537, S5607, S5608, P3915, P3920, etc. Drège 1996 discusses the various formats of such compilations, and Kuo 2000: 694-95 situates these compilations within the larger context of apocryphal texts and their various usages at Dunhuang.

evidence for how this material was understood as being consonant with a number of other texts and ritual traditions, as well as crucial evidence for its possible function – in the wake of what has been described as a lack of formal systematization by medieval Chinese bibliographers.

Scribal Conventions and other Notational Evidence

Ownership Inscriptions

An additional piece of evidence linking the *Altar Methods* to the tenth century is found on the back cover of Copy A (P3913), where we find what appears to be an ownership inscription.⁹⁰ A brief notation on the back cover, much of which is illegible, seems to include the name Yuanshou 願受. Mair (1981) notes that while it was more common for the owners of manuscripts to inscribe their names on manuscripts, copyists, too, were known to write their names on manuscripts in their possession, as well as individuals who simply borrowed manuscripts to read. The phrase *xueshilang* 學仕郎, perhaps best translated as “scholar-gentleman” or simply “scholar,” but often glossed as “student” or “young scholar,” appears in at least two of Yang Yuanshou’s colophons.⁹¹ These “scholars” seem to have played an important role in education at Dunhuang and across China during the late medieval period, and were a common feature at local monasteries in the region. Based on a study of the colophons related to the *xueshilang* from Dunhuang, Erik Zürcher, citing Chikusa Masaaki (1974), notes that they were “the people who wrote, often by way of writing exercises, the many casual notes and documents (like club circulars) and other secular texts,” and that more than half the colophons from Dunhuang featuring the *xueshilang* “are associated with specific monasteries in the Dunhuang region,” both points supported by the manuscript evidence related to Yang Yuanshou.⁹² In addition, it seems that most of the dated or datable colophons related to the *xueshilang* are concentrated between the years 850-990, which includes those years during which Yang was active at the site.⁹³ Like Zürcher, who notes that these “young scholars” refer to those outside of the official Tang school system, but who

⁹⁰ The inscription on the back cover of P3913, which is partially illegible, reads 此是願(?)受榮(?)子 [X]得[X]人犯者. An inscription on the back cover of the booklet P3835 reads 此是經榮(?) followed by the phrase *zunsbeng* 尊勝. It should further be noted that P3835 includes a specialized reading mark that further links that manuscript to at least nine additional manuscripts at the site that appear to date to the late tenth century. Both the front and back covers of P3913 contain what appear to be practice characters or scribbles.

⁹¹ The term “junior scholar” (*xueshi tonger* 學士童兒) is also found on several Dunhuang manuscripts.

⁹² Zürcher 1989: 46, n. 72.

⁹³ Zürcher 1989: 47.

“obviously belong to the sphere of study, education and scholarship,⁹⁴ Mair suggests that the copying of texts was the primary means by which the *xueshilang* “acquired literacy.”⁹⁵

The name Yang Yuanshou appears on a number of tenth-century Dunhuang documents that aid in the identification and dating of the manuscripts from the tenth century. These documents fall into two basic groups: (a) early tenth-century temple records associated with Qianyuan si 乾元寺 and (b) late tenth-century texts copied by Yang Yuanshou himself. Given the time span separating these two sets of documents – some six decades – it is unlikely, although not impossible, that they refer to the same person.⁹⁶

A short inscription containing what appears to be the same name is found on the back cover of another Dunhuang booklet, namely P3835 (fig. 6). While there is no suggestion that the names appearing on these two separate manuscripts refer to one and the same person, it does demonstrate that the practice of writing such inscriptions was common at Dunhuang during the fourth quarter of the tenth century.

Red Ink Highlighter

One final codicological clue that is helpful for dating a number of manuscripts related to the *Altar Methods* comes in the form of a distinctive red ink marker that appears on some ten unique Dunhuang manuscripts dated to the late tenth century, including P3920, P3835, and S2272 discussed above.⁹⁷ Although the marker is not found on any extant copies of the *Altar*

⁹⁴ Zürcher 1989: 46. Interestingly, Zürcher suggests that it might be possible to conclude “that the role played by Buddhist monasteries in secular elementary education clearly was a late development that took place in the transitional period covering the last decades of the Tang, the Five Dynasties, and the beginning of the Song. Such a development would, indeed, fit into the general picture of Buddhism in that period, characterized by strong secularizing tendencies,” that might also help explain the relatively large number of *xueshilang* at the Duhuang (Zürcher 1989: 47).

⁹⁵ Mair (1981: 90) notes that the *xueshilang* copied mostly primers, such as the *Thousand Character Primer*, the *Important Instructions for Beginning Learners*, and *The Family Teaching of the Grand Duke*.

⁹⁶ More puzzling than his actual age, however, would be how to account for Yang’s apparent career as monk, club official, and lay scholar. In addition, Yang is found mentioned in documents related to two separate temples, the Qianyuan si and the Xiande si. See Section X above.

⁹⁷ Another manuscript containing these marks is S3288, a recycled roll measuring 22 ft. on a roller. The recto contains excerpts from the *Banruopoluomi guangzan jing* 般若波羅蜜光讚經 (S. *Pañcaviṃśati sābasrikā prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, T6.222), and appears to date to the seventh century. The verso contains a copy a text by the title *Jin’gangding yuqie niansong guiyi* 金剛頂瑜伽念誦軌儀, which corresponds to sections of both the *Jin’gangding lianbuabu niansong yigui* 金剛頂蓮華部心念誦儀軌 (T873.303b13-310a13) and the *Jin’gangding jing yiqie rulai zhenshi she dasheng xinzheng dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂經一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經 (T874.315a21-322b7), two liturgical texts attributed to Amoghavajra in the Vajraśekhara lineage. Includes several excellent examples of a stylized “highlighter” in red that punctuates the text, as well as numerous practice marks written in the margins.

Methods, identification of this mark is useful “circumstantial” evidence for dating manuscripts related to that text. In addition, the uniformity of the highlighter seems to suggest an established community of copyists or ritualists (or at least a single reader or ritualist) active in the Dunhuang region during the late-medieval period that took a special interest in those texts.

Preliminary Conclusions

The combined internal textual and physical manuscript evidence based on the extant copies of the *Altar Methods* and related Dunhuang documents suggests overwhelmingly that the text was in circulation at the site during the tenth century, and the final two decades of the tenth century more specifically.⁹⁸ On the basis of the combined thematic as well as codicological evidence, we agree with Hou Chong that that the extant version of the *Altar Methods* was fixed no earlier than the Five Dynasties period (907-960), locating it in circulation during the Guiyijun period (9th-11 centuries).⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Sam van Schaik and Imre Galambos (2012: 25) have noted the significant number of tenth-century manuscripts found in cave 17, suggesting that “some of them apparently having been made only a few years before their interment and sealing in the cave. Thus the presence of paintings and manuscripts in the cave that were complete and relatively new at the time of its sealing suggests that the storage of commissioned and donated items was another of the cave’s functions, right up until its closure.”

⁹⁹ Hou 2008: 20.

4. Part One of the *Altar Methods*

The complete title of the *Altar Methods* identifies it as belonging to not one but two corpora of texts, the *Jin'gangjun jing* 金剛峻經, or *Vajra Peak Scripture* – an otherwise unknown title¹⁰⁰ – and the *Jin'gangding jing* 金剛頂經, or *Vajra Pinnacle Sūtra*, that key text associated in China with Amoghavajra and a seminal scripture of the Yoga tantra class of scriptures.¹⁰¹ The reference to two separate textual corpora in the title is unusual, but perhaps not without explanation.

The Chinese title of Amoghavajra's translation of the *Jin'gangding jing* itself is a composite title. In the introduction to his translation of that text into English, Rolf Giebel suggests that that title, like many tantric titles in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese, is a composite title, comprised of several distinct units that, when combined, serve as coordinates for locating the text within a specific corpus of texts, whereby the individual units move from the wider textual corpus to which the text belongs to the title of a specific section of a specific text. Giebel analyzes the complete title of Amoghavajra's *Jin'gangding jing* //into four discrete units that make clear the internal mechanics of that composite title. Following Giebel's analysis, the first unit reads (1) "Adamantine (or Vajra) Pinnacle" (*Jin'gangding* 金剛頂 = generic title referring to general corpus), which Giebel and others take to be a reference to that early canon or corpus of eighteen tantric scriptures that circulated under the title *Vajroṣṇīṣa* that included the STTS outlined in Section 2 of this study.¹⁰² The second unit of the corresponds to the Sanskrit title of the STTS, and reads (2) "Compendium of the Truth of All the Tathāgatas" (*yiqie rulai zhenzhi she* 一切如來真攝, = specific text title). The third unit, (3) "Realization of the Great Vehicle" (*dasheng xianzheng* 大乘現證, S. *mahāyānābhisamaya* = abridged section title), is a translation of the title of the first section of the STTS, while the final unit, which reads (4) the "Great King of Teachings" (*dajiaowang* 大教王), corresponds to the Sanskrit phrase *mahākālpārāja* appended to each of the first four sections of the extant Sanskrit text of the STTS. Giebel provides the complete title as "The Adamantine (Vajra) Pinnacle: The Compendium of the Truth of all the Tathāgatas and the Realization of the Great Vehicle, Being the Scripture of the Great King of Teachings" (*Jin'gangding yiqie rulai zhenzhishe dasheng xianzheng dajiao wang jing* 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經)¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ The phrase "Vajra Peak" (*jin'gangjun* 金剛峻) appears several times in the *Altar Methods*, including in the "esoteric" revision presented in the *Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository*.

¹⁰¹ Cf. T18.865.

¹⁰² In his *Jingangding jing yuqie shibabui zbigui* 金剛頂經瑜伽十八會指歸 (T18.869; see Giebel 1995), Amoghavajra identifies the first of the eighteen assemblies of the *Vajrasekhara* as the *Yiqie rulai zhenzhi she* 一切如來真實攝, a clear reference to the STTS.

¹⁰³ See Giebel 2001: 5. It should be noted that this is the very same title found on T18.874, a liturgical manual related to the *Jin'gangding jing* discussed in detail below. Again, Amoghavajra's translation corresponds to only the first chapter of the STTS, the *Vajradhātumahāmaṇḍalavidhivistara*, or

In a similar manner, the title of our Dunhuang text appears to be comprised of four distinct units that locate the text within a wider corpus. The (1) first unit reads the “Altar Methods” or *jin’gangjun jing* 金剛峻經 (=generic title), again an unattested title. The (2) second unit appears to be a short-hand reference to the *jin’gangding* (*Vajroṣṇiṣa) corpus itself, combined with an abridged text title of one specific text within that corpus, namely the STTS, which reads (2a) Vajroṣṇiṣa (2b) “All the Tathāgathas of the Vajraśekhara”, or, together, All the Tathāgathas of the Vajroṣṇiṣa” (*jin’gangding yiqie rulai* 金剛頂一切如來), what appears to be a shorthand reference to the full title of the *jin’gangding jing*.

It should be noted that only one character separates the two titles, suggesting that the first is an indigenous Chinese “play” on the *Vajra Pinnacle* title itself. In fact, only one character separates the two titles, and there is considerable semantic overlap between the term *jun* 峻, translated here as “peak,” and the term *ding* 頂, translated here as “pinnacle,” in Middle Chinese.¹⁰⁴ If this reading is correct, then it would appear that the author-compiler(s) of our text were introducing a their own Chinese corpus under the title *Vajra Peak*, an apparent attempt, it would seem, to insert their own brand of teachings into (or perhaps in an attempt to the co-opt or even supplant, or at least incorporate) the *Vajra Pinnacle* title –

Extended Rules for the Great Maṇḍala “Adamantine Realm,” more commonly known as the *Vajradhātu khaṇḍa or ‘Adamantine Realm Section.’

¹⁰⁴ According to the *Hanyu dacidian*, the Chinese term *jun* 峻 covers a range of meanings, including tall, high, precipitous, lofty, steep, severe, or harsh. It is this last sense of the term, severe or harsh, that we find it used in the only canonical occurrence of the phrase *jin’gangjun*. This appears in a subsection to the “Initiation Rites” section of Amoghavajra’s translation of the *jin’gangding jing*, entitled the “Eulogy of One Hundred and Eight Names” (S. *Nāmāṣṭasata*). These names refer to the Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas of the STTS, and one in particular is addressed using the epithet *jin’gangjun*: “Destroyer of Mā[ra] (Mārapramardin)! Vajra Severe One! We pay homage to Vajra Anger (Vajracāṇḍa!)” 摧魔金剛峻, 我禮金剛忿 (T18.865.216.10; translation based on Giebel 2001: 67). Interestingly, Dānapāla renders this same line in his 1015 translation of the STTS as “Destroyer of Māra, Victorious Vajra! We make obeisance before Vajra Anger” 摧伏魔力勝金剛, 金剛暴怒我頂禮 (T18.882.352a18).

According to Hirakawa (1997: 407, entry 968), the Chinese term *jun* is most often used to translate the Sanskrit terms *agra*, which includes the following semantic range: foremost, anterior, first, prominent, projecting, chief, best; foremost point or part; tip; front; uppermost part, top, summit, surface; point and hence, figuratively, sharpness; the nearest end; the beginning; the climax or best part (see Williams 1960).

By contrast, the Chinese term *ding* 頂 connotes the following meanings: the crown of the head, the topmost part, or extreme. It can also be used to refer to the act of carrying something on one’s head (see *Hanyu dacidian*). According to Hirakawa (1997: 1260, entry 4114), *ding* is used most often in Chinese Buddhist translations to render the following Sanskrit terms: *mūrdhan* (forehead, head, highest point, summit, place on the head), *śiras* (connected to the head), *śirṣa*, *śikhara* (pointed, spiked, peak), *uṣṇiṣa* (anything wound round the head; diadem, crown, kind of excrescence on the head of Buddha); *agra*, from the root *āṅg*, meaning foremost, anterior, first, prominent, projecting, chief, best; foremost point or part; tip; front; uppermost part, top, summit, surface; point and hence, figuratively, sharpness; the nearest end; the beginning; the climax or best part (see Williams 1960).

and by extension the authority of that text and its translator, along with the reference to the wider corpus of texts it is said to comprise – into its own.

The third unit of the title, which reads (3) *Altar Methods of the Wonderful Secret Vajradhātu Great Samaya Yoga Practice, Being the Altar Methods for these Majestic Rites* 深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二種壇法經作用威儀法則. Importantly, this third unit supports our reading of the second, and further connects the *Altar Methods* to two liturgical manuals associated with the *Jin'gangding jing*. We find a similar subtitle in////This is because this phrase is virtually identical to the title of Section One of Fascicle One of the *Jin'gangding yiqie rulai zhenshishe dasheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經 (T18.874), which reads *Shenmiao bimi jin'gangjie dasanmeiye xiuxi zuoyong weiyi faze* 深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修習瑜伽儀作用威儀法則; T18.874), a liturgical text/manual attributed to Amoghavajra preserved at Dunhuang and transmitted in canon [fn second text].¹⁰⁵ Importantly, this title is the very same title to be transmitted in the course of the majority of altar methods (see Appendix J). The final unit in the title of our text reads (4) *Dapiluzhenafu jin'gang xindi famen bimijie tanfa yize* 大毘盧遮那佛金剛心地法門秘法戒壇法儀則. This final unit of the complete title of the *Altar Methods* makes clear that the core teaching promoted by our text provides the instructions for constructing the altar methods for receiving the secret dharma precepts (*mifa jie* 密法戒).

Based on the above analysis we might hazard a translation of the complete title of our text as *The Vajra Peak, The Vajra Pinnacle: The Wondrous Secret of all the Tathāgatas and the Great Samaya of the Vajradhātu, the Scripture on the Practice of the Forty-Two Types of Altar Methods, Being Instructions for Conducting these Majestic Rites, Mahāvairocana's Vajra Mind-Ground Dharma Gate, the Ritual Instructions for the Altar Methods of the Secret Dharma Precepts (Jin'gangjun jing, jingangding jing yiqie rulai shenmiao bimi jingangjie dasanmaye xiuxing sishierzhong tanfa jing yong weiyi faze, Da Piluzhenafu jingang xindi famen mifa jietanfa yize* 金剛峻經, 金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二種壇法經作用威儀法則, 大毘盧遮那佛金剛心地法門秘法戒壇法儀則).¹⁰⁶

If this is an approximate English gloss of our elephantine Chinese title, we are still confronted with a number of options when referring to our text, depending on how we

¹⁰⁵ Those two texts outline the basic ritual steps necessary for the practitioner's identification with the body of the Buddha – the core practice of the *Recitation Manuals* and of the Vajradhātu Rites of the Japanese Shingon tradition - “Discernment of the Attainment of the Buddha Body in Five Phases” (*wuxiang chengshenguan*, J. *gosō jōjinkan* 五相成身觀), a ritual component in the Japanese Vajradhātu ritual practice that is based on the *Recitation Manuals*, which is also referred to by the Sanskrit *pañcābbhisambodhi*, a term, it should be noted, that does not appear in the Sanskrit text of the STTS.

¹⁰⁶ Sørensen offers two separate translations of the title: (1) “Vajra Lord Sūtra Vajra Uṣṇīṣa All Tathāgathas Body, the Secret Vajradhātu Great Samaya Cultivation Forty-Two Types of Altar Methods Sūtra to be Used for Making the Ritual of the Great Vairocana Buddha Vajra Mind-Ground Followers Secret Method All Altar Methods” (2011b: 60), and (2) “Scripture of the Vajra Pinnacle, Vajraśekhara, All Tathāgatas' Deep and Wonderful, Secret Vajradhātu, Great Samaya, Scripture for Cultivating the Forty-Two Kinds of Altar Methods, Employing the Awesome Methods of Ritual Proceedings, the Mahāvairocana Vajra Mind Ground Dharma Door, Esoteric Dharma Precepts Altar Methods of Ritual Proceedings” (2011c: 300-301).

choose to parse the text or lay emphasis. Although this study adopts the traditional convention (used by Tanaka Ryōsho) of referring to our text by its final four characters as the *Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods* (*Tanfa yize* 壇法儀則), we might equally well refer to our text as the *Vajra Peak Scripture* (*Jin'gangjun jing*), an apparent allusion to, or at least play on, the Chinese title *Jin'gangding jing* (*Vajra Pinnacle Scripture*) that was almost certainly intended by the author-compiler(s) of the *Altar Methods*.

Again, the critical text of the *Altar Methods* is divided into thirty-six sections spread across some four fascicles. The text can be further divided into two main parts: Part One contains thirty-four individual ritual texts, while Part Two contains four short transmission narratives, followed by the two short *sādhana* texts, along with a final prayer formulary. The complete title of the *Altar Methods* is analyzed below, but for now it is important to note that that title, along with the colophon bearing Amoghavajra’s name, is repeated at the start of each of the four fascicles comprising the voluminous *Altar Methods*. This same title, without the colophon, is further repeated at the end of each fascicle. The repeated use of the title and colophon throughout the work suggests that the author-compiler(s) of the *Altar Methods* intended it, in its present form at least, to be understood as a coherent collection – an anthology of sorts. That said, the various items compiled in the received text suggests multiple textual layers, and we must at least concede the point that certain sections of the present collection pre-date certain others.

If I were to speculate, it does seem possible that the ritual texts contained in Part One of the compilation were compiled first – and possibly even date as far back as Amoghavajra’s time (as we will see, the basic ritual system promoted in those texts is in keeping with the basic ritual system promoted in dozens of other works bearing Amoghavajra’s name). Part One, then, might conceivably constitute an “original” composition or textual layer. Next, we might imagine the addition of the transmission accounts presented in Part Two of the received text. At least one of those (Section 36.2) mentions dates well-past Amoghavajra’s lifetime, and Sections 36.1-4 all appear to be copies of, or at least based on, well-know lineage accounts that circulated elsewhere (again, most notably in a number of early Chan works). I would further speculate that the two *sādhana* texts (Sections 36.5-6), like the prayer formulary (Section 36.7) might well represent local Dunhuang add-ons, the final textual layers leading up to the “complete” *Altar Methods* as it now stands. Again, whether these individual items were compiled at a single time and by a single compiler is unknown, but at the very least we should be cautious of thinking of the *Altar Methods* as a singular “text” in any conventional sense of the term.

Part One (Sections 1-35): The Ritual Texts

Having presented the extant manuscript copies underlying the critical text of the *Altar Methods*, let us now turn to an overview of its contents. Stated simply, the compendium as a whole is divided into two parts. Part One (Sections 1-35) contains thirty-four individually named and numbered ritual texts that provide instructions for specific altar rites (*tanfa* 壇法). The title of each text or section (the individual altar rite texts are labeled *bu* 部 or sections, while the collection as a whole is identified as ritual manual or *yize* 儀則 in its title) identifies, and sometimes describes, the altar rites themselves. These individual ritual texts or sections are short – some run no more than twenty lines (approximately 1-2 printed pages) in Hou’s critical edition.

Narrative Structure

The individual sections comprising Sections 1-35 of the *Altar Methods* each begin with a prologue that includes the setting (S. *nidāna*) of the individual teaching??? that includes reference to the buddha, typically left unnamed, at a specified location, expounding a unique “altar method” before an assembly of bodhisattvas and sundry gods. Two main interlocutors appear in the text. The first Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, a key figure in the tantric tradition. The second is the less well known figure of Jin’gangzang pusa 金剛藏菩薩, or Vajragarbha Bodhisattva.¹⁰⁷ [appears as name in SKT?]

Again, supplementary details, including the names and *mudrās* of the deity assemblies associated with each altar or *maṇḍala*, are provided in the *Supplementary Manual*. Next comes an abbreviated ritual sequence that includes detailed specifications for the construction of the altars themselves, followed by the rite itself.

The Ritual Program

The main ritual action of the thirty-four altar methods in Sections 1-35 of our text is ???. A secondary action??? the transmission of a single teaching or text that is identified by more than a dozen different names (see Appendix J). It is possible that these different names refer to unique texts, but given their overall similarity, I argue that they refer to one and the same

¹⁰⁷ The earliest reference to a bodhisattva by the name of Jin’gangzang (*Vajragarbha) appears in the *Daśabbumika sūtra*, or *Chapter on the Ten Stages* (*Shidi pin* 十地品), section of the *Huayan jing*, where he is listed as one of the sixteen esoteric deities of the *bhadrakalpa* (*xianjie* 賢劫), or “good age.” Vajragarbha also appears in the *Ghanavyūha sūtra Dasbeng miyan jing* 大乘密嚴經. This text was retranslated by Amoghavajra under Tang patronage.

Within the STTS tradition, he is classified as one of the sixteen Badhrakalpa (*xianjie shiliu zun* 賢劫十六尊) deities. In the *Jin’gangding jing* Cycle (S. STTS; on this issue see Section 2, note x above), Vajragarbha is one of the Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas of the STTS cycle, and the consecration name of Ākāśagarbha as described in the *Jin’gangding jing* T18.865.209c16-210a6-17; see esp. T18.865.210a12-15 who is associated with Vajraratna, one (the fifth) of the Sixteen Bodhisattvas of the assembly (Giebel 2001: 33-34, under section summoning/manifesting Vajraratna, Vajra Jewel); he’s also of course included in the list of 108 (112 in actuality, 7 for each of 16 bodhisattvas). See Giebel 2001: 66; T.18.865.216b19.¹⁰⁷ Vajragarbha also appears in the *Recitation Manuals* (eg. T18.873.299c7, T18.874.311b17, and T18.874.318a24) in those sections concerning the generation of the ratna-class of deities.

In addition, Vajragarbha serves as the main deity of Fascicle Seven of the *Tuoluoni jing* (Dharnaisamgraha; The Collected Dhāraṇī Scripture, T18.901). Fascicle seven of the text 佛說金剛藏大威神力三昧法印咒品 (T18.901.841a3ff. interlinear note under this heading refers to 57 *mudrās* and 32 spells; fascicle 7 divided into 57 sections. This same figure of Vajragarbha plays prominent role in the opening narrative of the same texts (cf. See also T.901.803b25). Shinohara notes the importance of this section in relation to the gradual introduction of the vajra (and other classes) of deities into an “esoteric” pantheon. “at a crucial but relatively late stage in the evolution” of this rite” (400) – note, these Vajra deities become standard, and Vairocana becomes central deity.

text – and that likely they refer to either *Altar Methods* itself, or one or both of the *Recitation Manuals*. That said, additional or secondary goals are often named in the course of nearly every rite.¹⁰⁸

An analysis of the ritual sequence of the *Altar Methods* situates it within expansive multi-limbed ritual program comprised of several key steps, including (a) repentance, (b) seated meditation, (3) conferral of the bodhisattva precepts, and (4) consecration. The text employs a standard seven-day seven-night ritual program that includes several notable steps or sequences, including references to repentance rites, short meditative sequences, and the conferral of precepts. Although it is beyond the scope of the present study, the basic seven-limbed rite ritual sequence is central to Mahāyāna Buddhist practice, including the esoteric teachings. In those *Jin'gangding jing*-cycle texts, we find frequent reference to a seven-night ceremony.¹⁰⁹

Each chapter contains instructions for siting and constructing an elaborate altar, a list of deities and implements to be installed on the altar, as well as an abbreviated ritual sequence that names the ritual participants. These include, but are not limited to, a presiding *ācārya*, brahmins, the king, ranking ministers, śramaṇas, laymen and laywomen. The issue of ritual purification is also addressed. Certain sections go on to prescribe the taking of precepts (forty-eight for bodhisattvas, two hundred and fifty for śramaṇas, fifty for bhikṣus, twenty-five for upāsakas and upāsikās, forty-eight for the king and ministers),¹¹⁰ as well as somewhat theatrical movement atop the altars during ritual consecration (*guanding* 灌頂, S. *abhiṣeka*) (see the analysis of Section 1 of the *Altar Methods* below).

While there is significant variation among the thirty-four chapters, more than half go on to prescribe the following ritual sequence. The practitioner(s) is first instructed to “enter the altar” (*rutan* 入壇), after which they are instructed to invite the host of deities down to the altar. This is followed by instructions for “coursing the way six times” (*liushi xingdao* 六時行道), burning incense, making obeisance before the buddhas, repenting, making a vow, and, finally, receiving and upholding the key text to be transmitted in the *Altar Methods*, the *Shenmiao bimi xindi famen jingangjie dasanmeiye zongchi dajiaowang jing* 受持深妙秘密心地法門金剛界大三昧耶惣持大教王經 (Wondrous and Secret Mind-Ground Dharma Gate, the Dhāraṇī of the Great Samaya of the Vajradhātu, Being the Scripture of the Great King of Teachings), along with the corresponding dhāraṇīs 陀羅尼 and mudrās 印契.¹¹¹ Each section concludes with a reiteration of the efficacy of the ritual and the name of

¹⁰⁸ Shinohara 2010 discusses this issue.

¹⁰⁹ Typically, the first six days are for construction of mandala, with the main rite unfolding on the seventh. For an outline of this multi-limbed ritual sequence in the *Jin'gangding*-cycle text, see Togano 1958: 23-27). On this topic, see also Shinohara 201: 398ff.

¹¹⁰ See esp. Section 4.

¹¹¹ This sequence occurs in twenty-two chapters. Curiously, the title of the text mentioned in this sequence undergoes subtle changes in several chapters, and it is unclear if those changes represent separate texts or simple scribal errors. It is possible that this title, in all of its variations, is a reference to the *Altar Methods* itself. Interestingly, this title is similar to a section heading found in the

the altar method.¹¹² In the short sections that follow, I identify some of the common figures, themes, and elements of the ritual texts comprising Part One of the *Altar Methods*.

The Ritual Specialists

In the vast majority of Sections 1-35, the rites are administered by a Tripiṭaka Dharma Preceptor (*sanzang fazhu* 三藏法主).¹¹³ In certain see the addition of the figure of the “humane king royal preceptor” (*renwang dizhu* 仁王帝主), who appears in twenty-two of the thirty-four ritual chapters.¹¹⁴ Importantly, this figure appears to refer to the “humane king” himself (read: emperor or ruler), and not a ritualist specialist or attendant (see Section 6.5 below). While there is not explicit reference to the *Renwang jing* (*Humane King Sūtra*), the name of this preceptor would seem to indicate the *Altar Methods*’ reliance on that text for its basic orientation.

The Ritual Participants

In contrast to the divine assembly (which, it should be noted, must also take into account the venerable patriarchate outlined in the *Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository* going back to Rocana-Mahāvairocana), we find a number of monastic and lay ordinands explicitly named, including the “laymen” (*junshi* 居士).¹¹⁵ In essence, the altar rites contained in the

Jingangding yiqie rulai zhenshi she dasheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證教王經 translated by Amoghavajra. Again, see Appendix J

¹¹² In many cases the name of the altar method given at the start of the chapter is different than that given at the end. Here, again, it is unclear if the different titles are references to separate teachings or if they simply represent scribal errors.

¹¹³ The figure of the *sanzang fazhu* 三藏法主 appears in 32 of the 35 sections of part one of the Altar Methods (she is not found in sections 8, 10, 12. This same figure is also referred to as an *acārya* (*azheli* 阿闍梨) (Section 14), and as the *jiaozhu sanzang azheli* 教主三藏阿闍梨, (Sections 17, 18) – all apparent references to the main ritualist of each altar rite.

¹¹⁴ The figure of the “humane king royal preceptor” appears in twenty-two of the thirty-four ritual texts in Part One of the Altar Methods, including: Sections 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 13, 16, 18-20, 22, 24-30, 32-34.

In addition to the deity assembly of the central altar-maṇḍala a central icon 像 is mentioned in several sections of the *Altar Methods*, most often in those sections related to imperial consecrations that would have the benevolent king wearing purple vestments and sitting astride a white elephants on the consecration altar itself. These include Sections 1, 28, and 29.

¹¹⁵ The figure of the *junshi*, or layman, appears in Sections 4, 5, 7, 17, 18, 20-29, and 33.

Altar Methods are open to a “universal” Mahāyāna community. That said, the target audience for many of the rites appears to be a royal audience. For instance, Section 4 makes reference to establishing an ordination altar-platform for bestowing the bodhisattva precepts on the king, crown prince, and major officials, as well as lay Buddhists.

The Ritual System

More importantly, however, all thirty-four rites seem to work on the same ritual system. This ritual system is the main topic of section XX below, but suffice it to say the individual altar rites assembled in Part One of the *Altar Methods* (and again we should note that the text alternates between the term “altar” (*tan*) and the transliterated term for “*maṇḍala*” *mannaluo* 曼拏羅; see Section 14) are organized according to a highly systematized five-buddha *maṇḍala* scheme, the basic ritual sequences and outcomes of which are outlined in the individual sections of the *Altar Methods*, and the visual details of which (that is, the *maṇḍala* assemblies themselves) are given expression in both in the text of the *Supplementary Manual* and in the drawings contained on at least two sketches from Dunhuang. Together, I argue, the texts and the images provide a complete “system.” The unique list of rites and *maṇḍala* assemblies presented in these sources represents what might best be described as a “sinified” version of the five-buddha *maṇḍala* system promoted in the *Jin’gangding jing* and the constellation of liturgical works associated with Amoghavajra in China – the very same author ascribed to our texts. In other words, the altar rites contained Part One of the *Altar Methods* appear to represent an indigenous Chinese attempt to harness the power of the five-buddha *maṇḍala* rite known from other sources (and especially those associated in China with Amoghavajra) to address the most pressing Chinese Buddhist ritual concerns of the day.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Judging from the list of ritual participants provided (including the king and his officials), as well as the size of the altars (some measure more than a hundred feet across and stand three stories tall) it seems likely that the rituals outlined in the *Altar Methods* represent large-scale rites directed at the ruling classes. This issue will be addressed later in the thesis.

5. Part Two of the *Altar-Methods*

Part Two of the *Altar Methods* comprises the fourth and final fascicle of the compilation, and bears the general heading *Fufazang pin* 付法藏品, or *Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository*. This final chapter is itself comprised of six separate unnumbered texts or scriptural *excerpta*, the first four of which provide an account of the transmission of text that draws heavily on several well-known lineage texts and historical chronicles that came to be associated in the later tradition with the early phase of the Chan school (the *Platform Sūtra*, the *Baolin zhuan*, the *Shengzhou ji*, *Lidai fabao ji*, and so on). There is no way to know with certainty whether these four sections were culled separately from independent known works, or whether they were lifted *in toto* from a single source to be placed here at the end of the ritual anthology, but there is no doubt that much contained in this section date to the eighth and ninth centuries. Interestingly, these scriptural citations or source texts are recast in an “esoteric” light, such that the transmission sequence found at the start of the *Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository* is set not in India or China, but in the Vajradhātu, the realm of Mahāvairocana Buddha, who is himself named head patriarch of the successive lineage holders chronicled in the transmission account. Appended to this extended transmission account are two additional ritual texts unlike those found in Part One of the *Altar Methods* that contain abbreviated contemplation sequences (*guanfa* 觀法) or *sādhana* texts.¹¹⁷ One of the three extant copies of the *Altar Methods* includes an additional prayer formulary, bringing the total number of items comprising the critical edition of the *Altar Methods* published by the Chinese scholar Hou Chong (2008) to forty-two. Again, it is likely that the composite nature of the text indicates successive stages in its developments, but for now we can say little more than this. Let us now turn to a more detailed examination of certain sections of this composite chapter.

The “Esoteric” Transmission

As was discussed in the Introduction to this study, the first section of the *Altar Methods* to be studied was its last, owing to that section's correspondence to several well-known texts of the early Chan tradition. The final section of the *Altar Methods*, entitled the *Fu fuzang pin* 付法藏品 (Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository), in fact contains four separate historical accounts, three of which appear related to those promoted in

¹¹⁷ Both of which circulated independent of this main text multiple copies of which appear to have circulated outside of this text.

three of which correspond in large part to those promoted in the *Liuzu tan jing* 六祖壇經 (Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch, ca. 760)¹¹⁸ and two early Chan histories, namely the *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳 (Transmission of the Baolin [Monastery], ca. 801),¹¹⁹ and the related *Shengzhou ji* 聖胄記 (Record of the Sagely Descendants, ca. 899).¹²⁰ The fourth account, which comes third in the order of the chapter, bears a striking similarity to the composite chronicle appearing at the start of the *Lidai fabao ji* 曆代法寶記 (Record of the Dharma-Jewel through the Generations, ca. 774-780).¹²¹

the *Liuzu tan jing* 六祖壇經 (Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch, ca. 760) and the two early Chan histories, the *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳 (Transmission of the Baolin [Monastery], ca. 801) and the related *Shengzhou ji* 聖胄記 (Record of the Sagely Descendants, ca. 899); the fourth account bears a striking similarity to the composite chronicle appearing at the start of the *Lidai fabao ji* 曆代法寶記 (Record of the Dharma-Jewel through the Generations, ca. 774-780).

Tanaka 1981 (translated by Kenneth Eastman) provides an English summary of the lineage accounts found in the *Fu fazang pin*, as does Faure (1997: 127) and Adamek (2007: 104-105). Sharf (2002: 268-269) provides a critical re-reading of the *Fu fazang pin* transmission account in light of the recent debate over the status of an independent esoteric Buddhist “school” or “lineage” in Tang China. For more on this chapter of the *Altar Methods* and its role in the study of the early Chan school, see Section 7 below.

This lineage account is actually part of a composite narrative that includes a lengthy quotation from the *Fanwang jing*, wherein Rocana Buddha (Lushenafo 盧舍那佛), and not Mahāvairocana Buddha, is identified as the head patriarch of the ninety-nine billion buddhas of the past 過去九十九億諸佛祖師. This Rocana Buddha should be contrasted to

¹¹⁸ Here I am referring specifically to the Dunhuang version of the *Liuzu tan jing*. See Yampolsky 1967 for an in-depth study of this text.

¹¹⁹ The *Baolin zhuan* was written in 801 by Zhiju 智炬, also known as Huiju 慧炬, and is said to have marked a turning point in the formation of the transmission lineage that would later be adopted by the Chan tradition, including several interesting innovations said to have improved upon the transmission lineage as it was formulated in the *Platform Sūtra*. See Yampolsky 1967: 47-52.

¹²⁰ See Tanaka 2002.

¹²¹ Tanaka 1981 (translated by Kenneth Eastman) provides a comprehensive account of the lineage found in the *Fu fazang pin*. See also Faure 1997 and Adamek 2007: 104-105. Sharf (2002: 268-269) provides critical re-reading of the *Fu fazang pin* transmission account in light of the recent debate over the status of an independent esoteric Buddhist “school” or “lineage” in Tang China.

It should be noted that while Tanaka identifies a number of “Northern Chan” texts bearing on the Chan-Tantra connection in his 1975 article referenced in the Introduction to this study, by the time of his 1983 monograph on the Chan Dunhuang documents he had identified dozens of “Southern school” texts demonstrating similar types of syncretism.

Mahāvairocana Buddha who, just two lines previous in the text, is cited as the ultimate source of the *Altar Methods* (Appendix X contains an annotated translation of this lineage account). On the relationship between Rocana Buddha, who figures prominently in the *Fanwang jing*, and Mahāvairocana Buddha, who appears as the chief deity in the *Huayan jing* (again, a source text of the *Fanwang jing*), as well as the tantric scriptures of the Yoga tantra class.

The transmission account presented in the *Chapter* makes several “esoteric” revisions to the standard lineages contained in the independent source texts listed above. Specifically, the lineage in our text begins not with the seven buddhas of the past (as it does in the *Liuzu tanjing*, the *Baolin zhuan*, and later texts),¹²² but with Mahāvairocana Buddha 大毘盧遮那佛. In addition, each successive generation, having received the “eye of the true dharma” (*zhengfayan* 正法眼), is said to have “ascended Mahāvairo[cana]’s Vajradhātu, been fully entrusted with the dharma, and obtained unexcelled bodhi” 登大毘盧金剛界, 成受付囑, 得無上菩提.¹²³ This “esoteric” formula is repeated down through the twenty-eight Indian patriarchs ending with Bodhidharma (d. 536 CE?), who in turn transmits the teachings in this same manner to China, where it continues through Huike 慧可 (487-593 CE), Sengcan 僧璨 (d. 606 CE), Daoxin 道信 (580-651 CE), Hongren 弘忍 (601-674 CE), and finally Huineng 惠能 (638-713 CE).

Scholars have interpreted the *Chapter* as the product of the interaction of two distinct schools, namely the Chan and Esoteric schools based on their identification of this lineage with the Chan school.¹²⁴ I would agree that the transmission narrative contained in the *Chapter* is striking, but not because it represents a conflation of separate traditions. Rather, it is startling because it throws into question the very notion of independent or competing “Chan” and “Esoteric” schools.¹²⁵

In its construction of a “new” narrative of transmission, the *Chapter* does not in fact subsume one “school” under the other. Here we need only consider the fact that Amoghavajra himself, reputed author-translator of our text, is conspicuously absent from the list of lineage holders.¹²⁶ Instead, the *Chapter* simply recasts one popular transmission narrative in an

¹²² These later texts include the *Zutang ji* 祖堂集 (Yanagida 1990) and *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (T51.2076). Sections 1 and 4 of the Chapter begin with the seven buddhas of the past. The trope of the seven buddhas of the past was incorporated into the *Platform Sūtra*, but also farther afield, including in the Batchelor 2004 notes that the *Fanwang jing* also makes reference to seven previous buddhas.

¹²³ Tanaka 1983: 138-46. My translation is based on Sharf 2002: 269.

¹²⁴ See especially Tanaka 1980, 1983. In the face of such challenges, Tanaka Ryōsho has presented the *Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository* as a synthesis of several different schools of medieval Chinese Buddhism, identifying elements from the Chan, Faxiang, and so-called “esoteric” schools, owing to the list of lineage holders and the unique framing narrative of those transmission accounts.

¹²⁵ Sharf 2002: 263-78 has made this argument on the basis of a number of medieval sources, including the *Tanfa yize*.

¹²⁶ Sharf 2002 makes this point.

esoteric idiom.¹²⁷ The fact that we have here a “Chan” lineage in an “Esoteric” text only seems to confirm the suspicion first raised by Foulk and forwarded by Sharf that in the Tang lineage does not equal school.¹²⁸

A more fruitful approach for interpreting the esoteric “revisions” apparent in the *Fu fazang pin* is to understand the inclusion of an established lineage of patriarchs by the author-compiler(s) of our text as a “strategy for adjudicating status, authority, power, and patronage” during the Tang that relied on patriarchal succession.¹²⁹ Rather than align the text with a specific school or sect (the historicity of which are in question during the Tang, it should be noted), it might make more sense to think of this innovative narrative as one alongside literally dozens of such works that appear to have participated in a widespread literary and historiographical project that had been underway since at least the early eighth century – a project that cut across sectarian lines.¹³⁰ In much the same way that the attribution to Amoghavajra in the colophon to the *Altar Methods* adds to the prestige and authority to the text, so too does the list of Indian and Chinese patriarchs (headed by Mahāvairocana) appended to its end.¹³¹ To get a sense of the unique transmission account presented in the *Chapter*, let us turn to its individual sections. The

But just where does the relocation to Vajradhātu put us, historically, doctrinally, textually – in other words, why did CC and the other patriarchs ascend the Vajradhātu?

¹²⁷ The reference to Mahāvairocana and the Vajradhātu would appear, in fact, to situate the *Chapter* within the mythical-cosmological realm of the STTS. On the creative “reworking” of the Śākyamuni’s enlightenment story in that text, see Weinberger.

¹²⁸ Foulk 1987, 2007; Sharf 2002: 263-78. Orzech n.d. has attempted to trace the emergence of a distinct Esoteric lineage associated with Amoghavajra in the Tang. As evidence, he cites sections from the *DaTang gudade zengsi kong dabian zhengguangshi Bukong sanzang xingzhuang* 大唐故大德贈司空大辯正廣智不空三藏行狀 (T50.2056.292b19-25), the *Daizongchao zengsikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang beshang biaozi ji* 代宗朝贈司空大辯正廣智三藏和上表制集 (T52.2120.860b4-10), and the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (T55.2157.875b9-14).

¹²⁹ Orzech 2006: 55.

¹³⁰ Domestic Chinese attempts to construct a lineage going back to the historical Buddha began, it seems, not in Chan but in Tiantai circles. McRae makes the somewhat remarkable suggestion that connects the incoming esoteric masters and the ongoing lineage construction in Tang China: “This sense of filiation with the Buddha must have been further enforced with the arrival of Śubhakarasiṃha and Vajrabodhi, who introduced esoteric rituals involving visualized identification with the Buddha” (McRae 2005: 90).

¹³¹ It bears repeating that Amoghavajra is not listed among those said to transmit the *Altar Methods* in the transmission account found in the *Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository*. It is also curious that the transmission formula here does not include an esoteric initiation or consecration (*S. abhiṣeka*) sequence.

Stepping away from the issue of syncretism that has so-far guided the study of the text, let us now turn to the opening lines of the Fu fazang pin set the scene for the extended transmission account to follow:

At that time the Tathāgatha finished transmitting the Forty-two Types of Altar Methods of Mahāvairocana Buddha. This [next section] is called the *Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository*.

余時如來付大毗盧遮那佛四十二種壇法已畢。此說《付法藏品》。

The ninety-nine hundred million buddhas of the past, [as numerous as] the sands of the Ganges, transmitted the *True Dharma Secret Mind-Seal Dhāraṇī, the Scripture of the Great King of Teachings*.¹³²

過去九十九億恒河沙諸佛，傳授正法《秘密心印總持大教王經》，不得等閑，忘爲傳授。

Without interruption they sought to transmit [the teaching] from one generation to the next. [As such] the *Buddha Mahāvairocana's Supreme Mahāyāna Vajra Pinnacle, the Wondrous Secret of All the Tathāgatas and the Great Samaya Dhāraṇī of the Vajradhātu, the Scripture of the Great King of Teachings [Regarding] the Full Transmission of the Teaching and Attainment of Buddhahood* was transmitted successively through the ninety-nine hundred million buddhas of the past, [as numerous as] the sands of the Ganges.

一代傳於一代，從過去九十九億恒河沙諸佛，遞代相傳

《大毗盧遮那佛最上大乘金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶總持大教王承受付囑成佛經》。

We will look more carefully at these titles in the next chapter, but suffice it to say that this same text, or texts, depending on how we interpret the titles, is also said to be transmitted in the course of the various altar rites compiled in Part One. The confusion over whether this title refers to the *Altar Methods* anthology itself (the next chapter also analyzes the complete title of the *Altar Methods*, making clear that it identifies it as a major ritual corpus referred to as the *Vajra Peak Scripture* or *Jin'gangjun jing* 金剛峻經). The many correspondences between the two title appearing in the quote above from Section 1 of the Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository, like the complete title of the Altar Methods itself, to the complete title of the *Jin'gangding jing* 金剛頂 or *Vajra Pinnacle Scripture* are striking. Aside from the obvious play on titles at work here (again, Jin'gangjun 金剛峻 or Vajra Peak as compared to Jin'gangding 金剛頂 or Vajra Pinnacle), both text are attributed to Amoghavajra, both are understood in some sense as ritual compilations, and more specifically compilations of maṇḍala rites, and both are rooted in the five-buddha maṇḍala scheme, save with what some have argued are local Chinese Buddhist innovations on that maṇḍala itself (Kuo 1998 – both deities, colors, issue of altars).

¹³² *Wang jing* 王經 found as interlinear notes on both P3913 and G015.

Returning to the transmission account, the text goes on to provide an account of the special transmission that begins with the innumerable buddhas, down through the seven buddhas of the past, ending with Śākyamuni, down through the twenty-eight Indian patriarchs, beginning with Mahākāśyapa and ending with Bodhidharma, then down through the six Chinese patriarchs beginning with Huike, Sengcan, Xinxing, Hongren, and finally Huineng.¹³³ Here I present the start of that account.

The correct teaching was fully transmitted from the countless buddhas of the past and [ultimately] from the Buddha Mahāvairocana. As [each of] the countless buddhas of the past were about to enter *parinirvāṇa*, they transmitted the eye of the true dharma,¹³⁴ passing on the teaching from one generation to the next [until] the dharma repository was entrusted to the benevolent sage, the Buddha Vipāśyin.¹³⁵

從河沙諸佛盡，從大毗盧遮那佛承受正法。河沙諸佛臨般涅槃，付正眼已，法付囑一代士，付法藏仁聖者毗婆尸佛。

When [the Buddha Vipāśyin] was an bodhisattva, following the countless buddhas of the past, he ascended Vairo[cana]’s Vajradhātu, was fully entrusted with the teaching, and attained unsurpassed bodhi. As the Buddha Vipāśyin was about to enter *parinirvāṇa*, he transmitted the eye of the true dharma by passing on the teaching to the next generation, entrusting the dharma repository to the benevolent sage, the Buddha Śikhin.

毗婆尸佛在菩薩位時，從河沙諸佛登毗盧金剛界，承受付囑，得證無上菩提。毗婆尸佛臨般涅槃，付正法眼已，法付囑一代士，付法藏人聖者尸棄佛。

Christoph Anderl (2011) has noted two striking features of this narrative. The first is that successive line of patriarchs are referred to not as “patriarchs” (*zushi* 祖師), but as but as “benevolent sages” (*rensheng zhe* 仁聖者). Another of the distinctive features of this

¹³³ Tanaka 1981 presents a comprehensive examination/comparison of the XX, and while Tanaka and 1983 XXX.

¹³⁴ The phrase *zhengfa yanzang* 正法眼藏 (J. *shōbō genzō*), or “treasury of the eye of the true dharma” appears frequently in the Chan/Zen tradition to denote the timeless truth realized by all buddhas and patriarchs. In addition, the term also denotes “the esoteric knowledge historically transmitted only among the Buddhas and patriarchs” (Bielefeldt 1988: 47), and it is this sense of the term that appears to be invoked here.

¹³⁵ The careers of the seven buddhas of the past are outlined in a number of texts, including the *Chang aban diyi daben jing* 長阿含經 (T1.1), Section 45 of the *Zeng yi aban jing* 增一阿含經 (T2.125), Section 34 of the *Za aban jing* 雜阿含經 (T2.99), Section 7 of the *Xianjie jing* 賢劫經 (T14.425), the *Qifo fumu xingzi jing* 七佛父母姓字經 (T1.14), and the *Qifo jing* 七佛經 (T1.2). Really found all over. They also appear in the *Guanding jing* 灌頂經 (T21.1331).

transmission narrative is the reference to each of the patriarchs as “benevolent sages” as having achieved the eighth bodhisattva stage (*badi pusa wei* 八地菩薩位), presumably because it is was the eighth stage from which the bodhisattva could no longer regress on the path.¹³⁶

The *Fanwang jing* and the *Altar Methods*

It should be noted that near the middle of the transmission account we find a previously unidentified passage from the *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (Brahma’s Net Sūtra; T24.1484), in which Rocana Buddha (Lushenafo 盧遮那佛) expounds his teaching of the “mind-ground dharma gate” (*xindi famen* 心地法門).¹³⁷ This inserted excerpt corresponds to sect the Fascicle Two of the *Fanwang jing* 梵王經, namely the “Chapter on the Bodhisattva Mind-Ground Precepts as preached by Rocana Buddha” (*Lushenafo shuo pusa xindijie pin* 盧舍那佛說菩薩心地戒品).¹³⁸ Directly preceding the citation we read:

When the former buddha Kāśyapa was a bodhisattva, following the Buddha Kanakamuni, he ascended Mahāvairo[cana]’s Vajradhātu, was fully entrusted with the teaching, and obtained unsurpassed bodhi. As he was about to enter *parinirvāṇa*, he transmitted the eye of the true dharma by passing on the teaching to the Buddha Śākyamuni.

前迦葉佛在菩薩位時，從俱那含牟尼佛登大毗盧金剛界，得證無上菩提。前迦葉佛臨般涅槃，付正法眼已，法付囑釋迦牟尼佛。

As the Bodhisattva Protecting Clarity 護明菩薩,¹³⁹ the Buddha Śākyamuni, following the Buddha Kāśyapa, ascended Mahāvairo[cana]’s Vajradhātu and obtained unsurpassed bodhi. The Bodhisattva Protecting Clarity is the transformation body of Rocana 盧舍那佛化身. The Bodhisattva Protecting Clarity, and the countless Śākyamunis 千百億釋迦, are the original body 本身 of Rocana.

釋迦牟尼佛在護明菩薩時，從前迦葉佛登大毗盧金剛界，得證無上菩提。護明菩薩是盧舍那佛化身，為護明菩薩，為千百億釋迦，是盧舍那佛本身。

¹³⁶ See Dayal 1932 for an in-depth examination of the bodhisattva doctrine based on Indic sources.

¹³⁷ The passage contained in the *Fu fazang pin* corresponds for the most part to the transmitted text found in T24.1484.1003b10-c25. I have cited the transmitted Taishō edition below in those cases when the two texts diverge significantly. Tanaka 1983 does not identify this passage.

¹³⁸ T24.1484.1003b10-c25. Tanaka does not appear to have identified this scriptural excerpt. Smaller excerpts of the larger quotation found in Section 1 of the *Chapter* are also scattered throughout Sections 14, 15, and 16 of part one of the *Altar Methods*.

¹³⁹ Tradition holds that Śākyamuni Buddha was reborn in the Tuṣita heaven as the bodhisattva Protecting Clarity. For a full account of the story, see Fascicle 6 of the *Fo benxing ji jing* 佛本行集經 (T3.190.680c26 ff.). In that text, “Huming” is the name of Śākyamuni in Tuṣita Heaven, who appears on a lion throne and preaches the “108 Dharma Clarity Gates” (一百八法明門).

The section that follows corresponds to a long passage from the *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (T1484.1003b10-c25). It begins:

The Buddha Rocana, for the benefit of the great assembly, revealed in abbreviated terms the mind-ground 心地 within the ineffable dharma gates. What he said represents but an infinitesimal part, like the tip of a hair, of his innumerable teachings, teachings as numerous as the sands of the Ganges. "The mind-ground has been explained, is being explained, and will be explained by all buddhas – past, present, and future. It is also the dharma gate that all bodhisattvas of the past, present, and future have studied, are studying, and will study. I have cultivated this mind-ground dharma gate for hundreds of eons. My name is Rocana. I request that all buddhas transmit my words to all living beings, so as to open this path of the mind-ground to all."¹⁴⁰

盧舍那佛爲此大衆、略開百千恒河沙、不可說法門中心地、如毛頭許。是過去一切佛已說，未來佛當說，現在佛今說，三世菩薩已學、當學、今學。我已百劫修行是心地，號吾爲盧舍那佛。汝諸佛轉我所說，與一切衆生開心地道。

At that time, from his lion throne in the Lotus Pedestal Matrix World 蓮花臺藏世界, Rocana Buddha emitted rays of light. He [spoke] to the buddhas seated on thousands of lotus flowers: "You should uphold my "Chapter on the Mind-ground [Dharma] Gate" 心地[法]門品¹⁴¹ and successively transmit that teaching to the countless Śākyamunis and all living beings. Everyone should uphold, read, recite, and single-mindedly put its teachings into practice."

時蓮花臺藏世界赫赫天光，師子座上盧舍那佛放光，千花上佛持我《心地法門品》而去。復轉爲千百億釋迦及一切衆生，次第說我上《心地法門品》。汝等受持讀誦，一心而行。¹⁴²

At that time, the buddhas seated atop the thousands of lotus flowers, along with the countless Śākyamunis, got up from their glorious lion seats in the Lotus Matrix World 蓮華藏世界, each one departing. Their bodies emitted unimaginable rays of light. In each of these rays appeared innumerable

¹⁴⁰ Compare with T24.1484.1003b10-15, which reads: 爾時盧舍那佛。爲此大衆。略開百千恒河沙不可說法門中心地。如毛頭許。是過去一切佛已說。未來佛當說。現在佛今說。三世菩薩已學當學今學。我已百劫修行是心地。號吾爲盧舍那。汝諸佛轉我所說。與一切衆生開心地道。

¹⁴¹ T1484.997b15.

¹⁴² Compare with the parallel section from T24.1484.1003b15-19, which reads: 時蓮花臺藏世界赫赫天光師子座上盧舍那佛放光光。告千花上佛。持我心地法門品。而去復轉爲千百億釋迦及一切衆生。次第說我上心地法門品。汝等受持讀誦一心而行。

buddhas who simultaneously made offerings of green, yellow, red and white flowers to the Buddha Rocana, and who received the above mentioned “Chapter on the Mind-ground Dharma Gate.” Each of the buddhas then disappeared from the Lotus Matrix World.

尔時千蓮花上佛千百億釋迦，從蓮花藏世界赫師子座起，各各辭退，舉身放不可思議光。光皆化無量佛，一佛以無量青黃赤白花供養盧舍那佛，受持上說《心地法門品》竟，各各從此蓮花藏世界而沒。

After they had [all] departed, [they] entered the Empty of Essential Nature Lotus Radiance Samādhi 體性虛空蓮花光三昧, returning to their original places under the bodhi tree on Jambudvīpa. They then emerged from their Empty of Essential Nature Lotus Radiance Samādhi and ascended their thousand lotus *vajra* thrones in the Subtle Radiance Hall 妙光堂, and preached to the oceans of the ten worlds 十世界海.¹⁴³

沒後已，入體性虛空蓮花光三昧，還本源世界閻浮提菩提樹下，從體性虛空蓮花光三昧出已，方坐金剛千花王座及妙光堂，說十世界海。

Thereupon, rising from their Thousand Vajra Lotus King seats, they proceeded to Indra’s 帝釋 palace and expounded the Ten Abodes 十地.¹⁴⁴ They then went to the Suyāma heaven 炎摩天¹⁴⁵ and preached the Ten Practices 十行.¹⁴⁶ Arising from their seats, they arrived at the palace of the

¹⁴³ Here the Taishō edition reads 從體性虛空華光三昧出。出已方坐金剛千光王座。及妙光堂說十世界海。

¹⁴⁴ Here the Taishō edition of the *Fanwang jing* lists “ten abodes” (*shizhu* 十住), for which *shidi*, or “ten stages” (*shidi* 十地) appears to be a synonym; this is confusing, however, as the *shidi* 十地 is part of list that follows, so this could simply be a scribal error. According to the *Huayan jing*, a key text on which the *Fanwang jing* draws heavily, the “ten abodes” (*shizhu*) are: (1) the “abode of initial aspiration” (*chu faxin zhu* 初發心住); (2) the “abode of preparing the ground” (*zhidi zhu* 治地住); (3) the “abode of cultivation and practice” (*xiuxing zhu* 修行住); (4) the “abode of noble birth” (*shenggui zhu* 生貴住); (5) the “abode of fulfillment of expedient means” (*fangbian juzu zhu* 方便具足住); (6) the “abode of the correct state of mind” (*zhengxin zhu* 正心住); (7) the “abode of non-regression” (*bu tui zhu* 不退住); (8) the “abode of youthful nature” (*tongzhen zhu* 童真住); (9) the “abode of the prince of the dharma” 法王子住; (10) and the “abode of consecration” (*guanding zhu* 灌頂住).

¹⁴⁵ That is, the third of the six heavens of the Desire Realm.

¹⁴⁶ The ten practices are: (1) the “practice of giving joy” (*xibuan xing* 喜歡行); (2) “beneficial practice” (*raoyi xing* 饒益行); (3) the “practice of nonopposition” (*wuchenben xing* 無瞋恨行); (4) the “practice of inexhaustibility” (*wujin xing* 無盡行); (5) the “practice of nonconfusion” (*lichu xing* 離癡行); (6) the “practice of good manifestation” (*shanxian xing* 善現行); (7) the “practice of nonattachment” (*wuzhuo xing* 無著行); (8) the “practice of that which is difficult to attain” (*zunzhong xing* 尊重行); (9) the “practice of good things” (*shafa xing* 善法行); (10) and the “practice of truth” (*zhenshi xing* 真實行).

Four Heavenly Kings 四天王 and taught the Ten Dedications 十迴向.¹⁴⁷ They then arose from their seats and arrived at the Nirmāṇarati heaven 化樂天¹⁴⁸ and taught the Ten Concentrations 十[地]禪定.¹⁴⁹ Thereafter, rising from their seats, they went to the Paranirmitavaśavartin heaven 他化天¹⁵⁰ and taught the Seven Stages 七地.¹⁵¹ They then arrived at the first *dhyāna* 一禪, from within which they taught the Ten Vajra [Stages] 十金剛.¹⁵² They next arrived at the second *dhyāna* 二禪 and taught the Ten Wisdoms 十惠.¹⁵³ They then arrived at the third *dhyāna* 三禪, from within which they taught the Ten Vows 十願. Finally, in the fourth *dhyāna* 四禪, at the palace of Maheśvara 摩醯首羅天王, they taught the *Chapter on the Mind-ground Dharma Gate*, which

¹⁴⁷ The ten dedications are: (1) “dedication to save all sentient beings without any mental image of sentient beings” (*jiubu yiqie zhongsheng li zhongsheng xiang buxiang* 救護一切眾生離眾生相迴向); (2) “indestructible dedication” (*bubuai buxiang* 不壞迴向); (3) “dedication equal to all buddhas” (*deng yiqiefo buxiang* 等一切佛迴向); (4) “dedication reaching all places” (*zhi yiqiechu buxiang* 至一切處迴向); (5) “dedication of inexhaustible treasuries of virtue” (*wujin gongde zang buxiang* 無盡功德藏迴向); (6) “dedication causing all roots of goodness to endure” (*suishun pingdeng shangen buxiang* 隨順平等善根迴向); (7) “dedication equally adapting to all sentient beings” (*suishun dengguan yiqie zhongsheng buxiang* 隨順等觀一切眾生迴向); (8) “dedication with the character of true thusness” (*ruxiang buxiang* 如相迴向); (9) “unattached, unbound, liberated dedication” (*wufu wuzhuo jietuo buxiang* 無縛無著解脫迴向); (10) “boundless dedication equal to the cosmos” (*fajie wuliang buxiang* 法界無量迴向).

¹⁴⁸ That is, the fifth of the six Desire Realm heavens.

¹⁴⁹ According to the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, the ten concentrations are: (1) the great concentration of light; (2) the great concentration of subtle light; (3) the great concentration of successive journeying to the buddha-lands; (4) the great concentration of the action of the pure profound mind; (5) the great concentration of knowledge of the stores of adornments of the past; (6) the great concentration of the treasury of light of knowledge; (7) the great concentration of knowledge of the adornments of the buddhas of all worlds; (8) the great concentration of the differentiated bodies of sentient beings; (9) the great concentration of freedom in the elemental cosmos; (10) the great concentration of the unimpeded wheel.

¹⁵⁰ This refers to the sixth heaven of the Desire Realm.

¹⁵¹ Fascicle ten of the *Pusa dichi jing* 菩薩地持經 (T30.1581) lists the following seven stages: (1) the “seed-nature stage” (*zhongxing di* 種性地); (2) the “stage of comprehending practice” (*jiexing di* 解行地); (3) the “stage of the pure mind” (*jingxin di* 淨心地); (4) “traces of practice stage” (*xingji di* 行跡地); (5) the “stage of resolve” (*jueding di* 決定地); (6) the “stage of resolving to practice” (*jueding xing di* 決定行地); (7) the “stage of completion” (*bijing di* 畢竟地). Interestingly, the *Fanwang jing* lists ten, not seven, stages. These ten stages are: (1) Extreme Joy; (2) Purity; (3) Refulgence; (4) Blazing; (5) Difficult to Conquer; (6) Presence; (7) Far-Going; (8) Immovable; (9) Good Mind; and (10) Cloud of Teaching.

¹⁵² I was unable to identify this reference.

¹⁵³ The *Fanwang jing* lists the “ten patiences” (*shiren* 十忍) instead.

the Buddha Vairocana, in eons past, expounded in the Lotus Matrix World. All the other countless Śākyamuni buddhas did likewise in their respective worlds, as is explained in the “Chapter on the Good Eon”

(*S. Bhadrakalpa*) 賢劫.¹⁵⁴

復從座起，至帝釋宮□十地。復至炎摩天中□十行。從座起，至四天王宮□十迴向。復從座起，至化樂天□十地禪定。復從座起，至他化天中□七地。復至一禪中□十金剛。復至二禪中□十惠。復至三禪中□十願。復至四禪中□摩醯首羅天王宮□我本源蓮花藏世界盧舍那佛所□《心地法門品》。其餘千百億釋迦，亦復如是。無二無別，如《賢劫品》中□。

At that time, the Buddha Śākyamuni, after first appearing in the Lotus Matrix World, proceeded eastward, entered the palace of the Heavenly Kings, and expounded the *Scripture on Converting Māra* (*Mo shoubua jing* 摩受經).¹⁵⁵ He then descended to Jambudvīpa to be born in Kapilavastu 迦維那國.¹⁵⁶ His mother's name was Maya 摩耶. His father's name was Śuddhodana 淨飯,¹⁵⁷ and my own name was Siddhartha 悉達.¹⁵⁸ At seven [I] left home; by age nineteen [I] had left the palace. [I] had accomplished the way at thirty. Call me Śākyamuni.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ This would appear to be a reference to the *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra* 賢劫經 (T14.425). The parallel text in T24n1484.1003b27-c7 reads: 復從座起至帝釋宮說十住。復從座起至炎天中說十行。復從座起至第四天中說十迴向。復從座起至化樂天說十禪定。復從座起至他化天說十地。復至一禪中說十金剛。復至二禪中說十忍。復至三禪中說十願。復至四禪中摩醯首羅天王宮。說我本源蓮花藏世界盧舍那佛所說心地法門品。其餘千百億釋迦亦復如是無二無別。如賢劫品中說。

¹⁵⁵ This text is also referred to in Section 15 of the *Altar Methods*. In fact, large parts of Sections 15 and 16 of Part One of the *Altar Methods* appear to draw on this extended quote from the *Fanwang jing*.

¹⁵⁶ Where the present text reads 閻浮提迦維那國, T24n1484.1003c10 reads 南閻浮提迦夷羅國. This is an unusual transliteration for Kapilavastu. This same place name appears in Section . The incipit of Section XX also appears as one of two interlinear notes appearing on Sheet 2 of the loose leaf “sketchbook” P4009 discussed below, and in Chapter Four.

¹⁵⁷ Where the present text reads 父名淨飯, T24n1484.1003c10 reads: 父字白淨吾

¹⁵⁸ At this point in the text appears to switch from third person to first person. This passage does not accord with the standard chronology of the Buddha's life:

¹⁵⁹ This passage does not accord with the standard chronology of the Buddha's life:

Our text reads 七歲出家，十九逾城，三十成道，號吾為釋迦牟尼。while T24n1484_p1003c11-12 reads: 七歲出家三十成道。號吾為釋迦牟尼佛。

T24.1484.1003c12-25: 於寂滅道場坐金剛花光王座。乃至摩醯首羅天王宮。其中次第十住處所說。時佛觀諸大梵天王網羅幢因為說。無量世界猶如網孔。一一世界各各不同別異無量。佛教門亦復如是。吾今來此世界八千返。為此娑婆世界坐金剛花光王座。乃至摩醯首羅天王宮。為是中一切大眾略開心地法門品竟。復從天王宮下至閻浮提菩提樹下。為此地上一切眾生凡夫癡闇之人。說我本盧

尔時釋迦從初現蓮花藏世界東方來入天王宮，□《摩受化經》已，下生浮提迦維那國。母名摩耶，父名淨飯，吾名悉達。七□出家，十九逾城，三十成道，號吾為釋迦牟尼。

Skipping ahead, Rocana states:

"I have arrived here eight thousand times for the sake of this *saha* world. Seated on the Vajra Lotus Radiance Throne, up to and including the palace of Maheśvara, I have spoken in general about the chapter on the mind-[ground] dharma gate for the benefit of the great assembly.¹⁶⁰ I have descended again from the palace of the Heavenly Kings to sit beneath the bodhi tree on Jambudvīpa. It is from this spot that I preach for the sake of all living beings, irrespective of their limited capacities, the one radiant precept¹⁶¹ that's constantly being recited within the mind[-ground] of the original Buddha [Vai]rocana. The *vajra* treasure precept is the original vow of all buddhas and bodhisattvas. "All living beings possess the seed of buddha nature."¹⁶² As with all consciousnesses, the form-mind is this mind. As such, they are all encompassed by the buddha nature precepts. Precisely because of this, the cause is ever-present and the *dharmakāya* is forever abiding.¹⁶³

This marks the end of the parallel section in the transmitted edition of the *Fanwang jing*, but our text continues:

Emptiness and existence are free of all dharmas and the myriad forms are free of all dharmas. The thousand dharmas are only mind 唯心 (S. *cittamātra*), the ten thousand dharmas are only consciousness 唯識 (S. *ālaya vijñāna*).
一切衆生皆有佛性，一切意識色心是心，如是皆入佛性戒中。當當常

舍那佛心地中初發心中常所誦一戒光明。金剛寶戒是一切佛本源。一切菩薩本源。佛性種子。一切眾生皆有佛性。一切意識色心是情是心皆入佛性戒中。當當常有因故。有當當常住法身。

¹⁶⁰ Our text omits 為, whereas is in Taishō. Our text: 吾今求此世界八千反為爲此娑婆世界坐金剛花光王座，乃至摩醯首羅天王宮是中一切大眾，略開心地竟，復從天王宮下至閻浮提菩提樹下，爲此地上一切衆生，凡夫癡闇之人，說本盧舍那佛心中常誦一戒光明金光寶戒。; Taishō (T24n1484_p1003c16-25) until end of cited excerpt reads:

吾今來此世界八千返。為此娑婆世界坐金剛花光王座。乃至摩醯首羅天王宮。為是中一切大眾略開心地法門品竟。復從天王宮下至閻浮提菩提樹下。爲此地上一切眾生凡夫癡闇之人。說我本盧舍那佛心地中初發心中常所誦一戒光明。金剛寶戒是一切佛本源。一切菩薩本源。佛性種子。一切眾生皆有佛性。一切意識色心是情是心皆入佛性戒中。當當常有因故。有當當常住法身。

¹⁶¹ This passage is unclear.

¹⁶² This passage is unclear.

¹⁶³ This marks the end of the quotation from the *Fanwang jing*.

有，因有故當當常住法身。一切諸法，不著空有，不著諸色。千法唯心，萬法唯識。心法不生不迷，即清淨法身。

In this way, the Buddha Śākyamuni, having turned the great dharma wheel for forty-nine years, and having saved myriad living beings, exhausted the [karmic] conditions for his teaching.¹⁶⁴
如是釋迦牟尼佛四九年轉大法輪，度化有情，化緣將畢。

It then return to the direct transmission from Śākyamuni down through the twenty-eight Indian patriarchs, beginning with Mahākāśyapa:

When our great teacher, Śākya[muni], was about to enter *parinirvāṇa*, he transmitted the eye of the true dharma and passed on the teaching to the first generation, entrusting the dharma repository to the benevolent sage Mahākāśyapa.¹⁶⁵

我釋迦大師臨般涅槃，付正法眼已，法付囑第一代士，付法藏人聖者摩訶大迦葉。

When our Tathāgatha, Śākyamuni, appeared in the world, he attained perfect awakening. Having exhausted the [karmic] conditions for his teaching and about to enter *parinirvāṇa*, he addressed Mahākāśyapa, saying: “You should all know. For countless eons I have saved innumerable sentient beings and cultivated assiduous ascetic practices; I have single-mindedly devoted myself to seeking the unsurpassed, supreme dharma. The vow I made in the past is now fulfilled.

彼我釋迦如來出現於世，成登正覺，化緣既畢，臨當涅槃，告摩訶迦葉：汝等當知，我於無量劫來，度諸有情，勤修苦行，一心專求無上勝法。如我昔願，今已滿足。

I include this extended citation from the text not only because large sections of the citation from the *Fanwang jing* appear in Part One of the Altar Methods (Sections 15, 16, and 17, but because the work as a whole draws heavily on the language of the *Fanwang jing*, and draws on many of the figures and places, (the text alternates between “Rocana” and “Mahāvairocana”), place names (the Lotus Matrix Realm is a frequent setting for many of the altar method teachings in Part One), as well as key phrases (mind-ground) and develops them in an innovative, but not wholly unique, ways as we will see.

With respect to the figure of Rocana, Rocana Buddha (Lushenafo 盧舍那佛), and not Mahāvairocana Buddha, is identified as the head patriarch of the ninety-nine billion buddhas of the past (*guoqu jiushijiuyi zhubo zushi* 過去九十九億諸佛祖師), appears in Section

¹⁶⁴ “畢”，底本作“必”，據甲本改。下同。甲本下文亦常作“必”，據上下文行文改，不再一一出注。

¹⁶⁵ “摩訶”，底本作“麼訶”，甲本作“麼何”，據文意改。下同。

14 of the *Altar Methods*. This Rocana Buddha should be contrasted to Mahāvairocana Buddha who is identified as the head of all past buddhas in Section 1 of the *Chapter*, but the matter is still more complicated considering that the scriptural citation found in that Section 1 contains the name of Rocana (the central figure of the *Fanwang jing*). The conflation of Rocana Buddha, who figures prominently in the *Fanwang jing*, and Mahāvairocana Buddha, who appears as the chief deity in the *Huayan jing* (again, a source text of the *Fanwang jing*), as well as the scriptures of the Yoga tantra class in our text raises a number of tantalizing questions concerning the career of Mahāvairocana in Mahāyāna literature, and the possible overlap (or influence) of the Yogācāra scriptures and tantric texts.¹⁶⁶

Important to note, also, is the repeated use of the phrase “mind-ground” which not only runs through several sections of the text but appears in the very title of the Altar Methods. Despite my own preconceived notions about this term, it appears that the locus classicus for the phrase *xindi* appears to be Fascicle Two of the *Fanwang jing*, the very same section of the text quoted in the *Chapter*. Although the mind-ground doctrine, as a doctrine, is not explicitly expounded in the *Fanwang jing*, it is assumed as the basis of the bodhisattva precepts with which the work is largely concerned. There is a tendency to treat this term as a Chan term, but the mind-ground doctrine underwent extended development in another work, perhaps spurious, the *Dasheng benxing xindi guan jing* 大乘本性心地觀經 (Mahāyāna Sutra on Contemplation of the mind-ground of essential nature).¹⁶⁷ The *Baolin zhuan* is known to have had a wide circulation during the Chan communities of the late, and some have suggested that the doctrine of “mind-ground” entered the Chan tradition through this work.¹⁶⁸ The phrase *xindi* (or *xindi famen*) also appears in the title of the *Instructions on the Gate to the Teaching of the Secret Heart of the Great Yoga of the Vajrasekhara sūtra* (*Jin’gangding jing dayuqie bimi xindi famen yijue* 金剛頂經大瑜伽祕密心地法門儀訣, T39.1798), which is a commentary dated 723 on Vajrabodhi’s T18.866 purportedly dictated by Vajrabodhi and recorded by Amoghavajra. Suffice it to say, the term *xindi* had a wide circulation outside of an exclusively Chan context.

The *Fanwang jing* is perhaps most famous, however, for its teachings on the bodhisattva precepts. The precepts promoted in the *Fanwang jing*, unlike the 250 of the *Sifenlu* (Vinaya in Four Parts, or *Dharmaguptaka vinaya*; T.1428), consists of 58/10!! major

¹⁶⁶ Simply put, Rocana appears to be an innovation in the *Fanwang jing*, itself said to be the “capping text” of the *Huayan jing*, the main action of which is the progressive stages of Mahāvairocana’s enlightenment.

¹⁶⁷ This text is attributed to Prajñā (Bore? 般若), and Kashmiri monk said to have worked in Chang’an circa 785-810.

¹⁶⁸ Speculation that the earliest codified lists of those rules themselves served as liturgical texts. And likewise, many Mahāyāna scriptures include sections on the conduct of the bodhisattva, so these “genres” are fluid in a sense. We must bear in mind, though, that these rules mostly governed mental attitudes rather than the physical behavior, so here karmic punishment rather than institutional sanction is key. The apocryphal Chinese bodhisattva precepts texts were one mechanism of “altering” the rules for Chinese context. On this topic see Groner 2012.

and 48 minor vows. This system was adopted by the Tendai monks of Japan. Groner argues that the “compilers of the *Fanwang jing* never intended that it be used as the primary source for monastic discipline for monks and nuns.” Its precepts based on passages from a number of other texts.

Much like the eighth-century Chan texts that serve as the likely source for the lineages presented in the *Altar Methods* (*Platform Sūtra*, and so on), the *Altar Methods* presents its own brand of “secret dharma precepts” (*mifa jie* 密法戒), an apparent attempt at yet another “esoteric” revision by the author-compiler(s) of the *Altar Methods*.¹⁶⁹

Unfortunately, the text does not provide any description or analysis of these precepts, so we can little more about them at this point. Significantly, the “secret dharma precepts” appear only four times in the text: (1) in the title of the text, (2) in the ritual sequence outlined in Section 1 (see below; on reason I take this to be a framing story for the whole of Part One). We do find references to other (sets of) precepts in the text, however, including the generically labeled “dharma precepts” (*fajie* 法戒) and the “buddha dharma precepts” (*fofa jie* 佛法戒), which I take to be shorthand references to the secret dharma precepts. To these we must add the numerous references to the 48 precepts – an apparent reference to the forty-eight precepts of the *Fanwang jing* (the connection is never made explicit in the text, but given the citations from the *Fanwang jing* in the text, this seems like a reasonable assumption).¹⁷⁰ The text also makes explicit reference to the 250 precepts of full monastic ordination.¹⁷¹ It is important to note that roughly half of the sections make reference to the

¹⁶⁹ There has been little discussion on the topic of esoteric or tantric precepts in China, the one notable exception being Śubhakarasiṃha’s *Wuwei sanzang chanyao* 無畏三藏禪要 (T18.917; Tripiṭaka Master Śubhākarasiṃha’s Essential [Instructions] for Meditation), a “debate text” between the Indian master Śubhakarasiṃha (C. Shanwuwei 善無畏, 637-735) and the Northern Chan figure Jingxian 景賢 (660-723) that contains, among other things, a description of a tantric bodhisattva precepts conferral rite 受菩提羯磨儀. On this text see McRae 1987.

Regarding Amoghavajra’s own initiation or ordination, the *Account of Conduct* highlights his initiation “later on Amoghavajra received the mind of bodhi precepts and Vajrabodhi led him into the Vajradhātu great maṇḍala,” after which he cast his flower. At that point Vajrabodhi knew he would be his successor (T50.2056.292b26-29?). The *Stele Inscription* only records that Amoghavajra “entered the [ordination] platform and received the bodhisattva precepts 授發菩提心戒. At the age of 15 he was allowed to leave home and at the capping age following the Sarvāstivāda [Vinaya] he became a bhikṣu” (T52.2120.848b26-27). The text goes on to state that only later did he receive the “three mysteries and the five wisdoms” from Vajrabodhi (T52.2120.848.28c2). On the issue of Amoghavajra’s initiation into the esoteric teachings, see Gobel 2012: 67-69.

¹⁷⁰ The 48 precepts are mentioned explicitly in ten separate sections of the *Altar Methods*. There is no mention of the 48 precepts in the *Supplementary Manual*.

¹⁷¹ Section 26 references three separate sets of precepts: the 48 bodhisattva precepts, the 250 monastic precepts, and the Mahāyāna mind-ground precepts. Specific mention of the 48 precepts made in 10 of the 35 chapters, including: Sections 1 (only kings and ministers), 6 (includes full assembly and multiple lists of precepts, including the three refuges and the five precepts 三歸五戒), 7 (detailed assembly), 21 (no assembly), 23 (detailed assembly), 26 (detailed assembly), 28 (full assembly; 37 deities mentioned), 29 (full assembly; 37 deities mentioned), 31 (full assembly), and 32 (full assembly, but does not enumerate the precepts).

taking of forty-eight precepts, an apparent reference to the lay bodhisattva precepts promoted in the *Fanwang jing*, a text that is explicitly referenced in several sections of the *Altar Methods*.¹⁷²

The sage [Huineng's] surname was Lu 盧 and he was from Fanyang 范陽. When the sage *dhyāna* master Huineng was at the eighth stage of the bodhisattva path, he received the teachings and the robe of the previous generation from the sage *dhyāna* master Hongren. He ascended Mahāvairo[cana]'s Vajradhātu, was fully entrusted with the teaching, and obtained unsurpassed perfect bodhi.

俗姓盧氏，范陽¹⁷³人也。惠能禪師聖者在八地菩薩位時，從弘忍禪師聖者承受一代士教法并傳袈裟，登大毗盧金剛界，承受付囑，得證無上菩提。

As the sage *dhyāna* master Huineng was about to enter *parinirvāṇa*, he entrusted the teaching to the succeeding generation of practicing bodhisattvas 修行菩薩. He secretly transmitted the buddha mind-seal 密傳佛心印 and secretly conveyed the teaching, not allowing for any interruption [in its transmission]. He submitted to assiduous ascetic practices and never gave rise to torpor 解大放逸;¹⁷⁴ he never fell into the three lower paths 三塗.¹⁷⁵

惠能禪師聖者臨般涅槃，付囑後代修行菩薩密傳佛心印，秘密宣傳，不令虛妄，直¹⁷⁶須苦行，苦節修行，莫生懈怠¹⁷⁷，放逸，墮落三塗。

¹⁷² Sections 14, 15, 16, and 36.1.

¹⁷³ “陽”，底、甲本作“楊”，據文意改。

¹⁷⁴ The term *fangyi* is the Chinese equivalent of the Sanskrit term *pramāda*, itself a synonym of the term *xinsuo* 心所, or *caitta*. I am uncertain as to the intended meaning of this passage.

¹⁷⁵ The three paths are the *buotu* 火塗, the *dao tu* 刀塗, and the *xuetu* 血塗, and are equivalent to three stations of hell beings (*diyusheng* 地獄生), hungry ghosts (*egui* 餓鬼), and animals (*xusheng* 畜生). Foguang dacidian?

¹⁷⁶ “直”，底、甲本作“真”，據文意改。

¹⁷⁷ “懈怠”，底、甲本作“解大”，據文意改。下同。

Directly following the transmission account of the six Chinese patriarchs, the section comes to a close:

Since the time of various past buddhas of the past who practiced assiduous asceticism for [incalculable] eons, who successively accomplished the six perfections and perfected the myriad practices, [they] secretly transmitted the mind-seal, successively perfected the teachings, [and thereby] caused the dharma to abide eternally.

從上過去諸佛苦行修行，盡經三無數劫，六度萬行，具修諸度，遞代相承，密傳心印，遞相付囑，令法久住。

Following this:

There are three types of śrāmaṇas in the world.¹⁷⁸ What are they? The first comprehends the great teaching and is called “*śrāmaṇa* of the way” 道沙門.¹⁷⁹

The second [type] transmits and upholds the “living path *śrāmaṇa*” 活道沙門.¹⁸⁰ The third [type] does not study the *sūtras* and *śāstras* [and is called] the “living path *śrāmaṇa*” 活道沙門.¹⁸⁰ The third [type] does not study the *sūtras* and *śāstras*, behaves without regard for cause and effect, and gives way to torpor. [This is] the “*śrāmaṇa* of the evil path” 壞道沙門.¹⁸¹

世有三種沙門，如何是三種沙門[X]第一是持明大教，是口道沙門；第二是傳持經論，是活道沙門；第三是不習經論，撥無因果，懈怠放逸，是壞道沙門。¹⁸²

Addressing the great assembly and the later great practicing bodhisattvas, [the Buddha instructed that they] must cultivate the unsurpassed bodhi of sudden realization 無上速證菩提. With the utmost mind [they must]

¹⁷⁸ Standard classifications of *śrāmaṇas* include four, not three, types. See the following note for a possible explanation. Fascicle 3 of the *Chang aban jing* 長阿含經 (T1.1) contains one such traditional list of monastic types.

¹⁷⁹ The term “*dao shamen*” 道沙門 might represent a conflation of the (a) *shengdao shamen* 勝道沙門, or *mārgajinaḥ*, and the (b) *shuodao shamen* 說道沙門, or *mārgadeśikāḥ*. The first is said to represent exceptional followers of the path, including buddhas, *bodhisattvas*, *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *arhats*. The second type is exemplified by the great disciples of the Buddha, who helped propagate the teachings. Foguang dacidian?

¹⁸⁰ The *huodao shamen* 活道沙門, or *mārgajīva*, refers to those (ordinary monks and nuns) who rely on the Buddhist path for their livelihood. Foguang dacidian?

¹⁸¹ In Sanskrit, the *mārgadūṣī*. This includes monks who violate the *vinaya* precepts.

¹⁸² “壞”，底、甲本作“懷”，據文意改。

assiduously cultivate the *Supreme Mahāyana Vajra Pinnacle: The Wondrous Secret of All the Tathāgatas and the Great Samaya Dhāraṇī of the Vajradhātu, Being the Great King of Teachings [Regarding] the Full Transmission of the Teachings and the Attainment of Buddhahood* 最上大乘金剛頂一切如來深妙密金剛界大三昧耶總持大教王成授付囑成佛經 and the [Scripture on the] Forty-Two Types of Altar Methods 四十二種壇法[經]. If one maintains the ascetic practices at the six time of the day [and night], and does not allow the teaching to be cut off, one will directly attain unsurpassed bodhi. 告諸大衆，後代修行菩薩，要修無上速證菩提，直須至心修持《最上大乘深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶總持大教王成佛經》并四十二種壇法，晝夜六時，苦行修持不令間斷，直趣無上菩提。

Section 36.2: Rewriting the *Shengzhou ji*

Section 2 of the *Chapter* contains an account of the introduction of Buddhism into China that Tanaka Ryōsho has identified as a recension of Fascicle 1 of the *Shengzhou ji* 聖胄集 (Record of the Sagely Descendants), one of the “lost” chronicles of the early Chan tradition.¹⁸³ Tanaka Ryōshō has published extensively on this section of the text, and its relationship to the *Shengzhou ji*, and I will simply point out that contained in this section

At that time our great teacher, the Tathāgatha Śākyamuni, as he was about to enter *parinirvāṇa*, transmitted the eye of the true dharma to Mahākāśyapa, [whereby] successive generations transmitted it, entrusting it again and again so that it persisted without being cut off, causing the dharma to abide eternally. Since the time of the Tathāgatha’s *nirvāṇa*, on the fifteenth day of the second month of the year *renshen* 壬申, the fifty-second year [of the reign of] Zhou Mu Wang of this land (i.e., China), up to the current year *yiwei* 己未, has been 1,848 years.

時我大師釋迦如來臨般涅槃，付正法眼與大迦葉，遞代相傳，展轉付囑，登登不□，令法久住。乃至如來涅槃時，當此土周穆王五十二年壬申□二月十五日。至今己未□，得一千八百四十八年矣。

The *Shengzhou ji* has not been the subject of much scholarly inquiry, but it is thought to date between 898-901 CE. This section makes reference to some of the earliest recorded Buddhist works in China, including the famous *Sishierzhang jing* 四十二章經 (Scripture in Forty-Two Sections).¹⁸⁴ Like the *Shengzhou ji*, Section 2 of the *Chapter* maintains that these texts were carried on the back of a white horse to a temple in Luoyang. The name of the temple given in the *Shengzhou ji* is the Honglu si 鴻臚寺; the *Chapter*, however, gives the name of the temple as the Honglu Daxingshan si 鴻臚大興善寺, an obvious reference to the Chang’an 長安 temple (Daxingshan si) at which Amoghavajra himself is said to have translated numerous texts. This “revisionist” history, if you will, appears to be an obvious attempt to insert the *Altar Methods* into the first wave of Buddhist transmission from India to China during the Han dynasty, and might possibly help account for the enumeration found in the title of our text, namely the “forty-two types of altar methods” might in fact be a simple play on the *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections* referenced here.

¹⁸³ On this text see Tanaka 1983: 121-134, 2002. A fragment of the *Shengzhou ji* (S4478) was also recovered from Dunhuang. The text is thought to date between 898-901 CE. The title is apparently a reference to Bodhidharma. For a side-by-side comparison of P3913 and S4478, see Tanaka 1983: 147-50. This section of the text contains an account of the introduction of Buddhism into China, which begins:

¹⁸⁴ For an introduction to and translation of this text, see Sharf 1996: 360-71.

Section 36.3: The Introduction of Buddhism to China in Three Sections

- contains three separate texts/historical chronicles
- the three are not numbered, but bear distinct titles
- seem to have parallels in P2791, P3212, S5981 (see end titles here – match section heads in P3913)

This section of the text goes on to provide a brief history of Buddhism in India under three titles: the *Fo chuxing shishi ji* 佛初興世時 (When the Buddha First Rose to Prominence in the World),¹⁸⁵ the *Fuzhu fazang-zhuan luechao* 付囑法藏傳略抄 (Brief Notes on the Chronicle of the Transmission of the Dharma Repository),¹⁸⁶ and the *Fazhu ji luechao* 法住記略抄 (Brief Notes on the Record of the Dharma's Persistence).¹⁸⁷

Again, Tanaka Ryōshō (1983) has worked out the relationship between these three brief narratives and those found in some major works like the FFZYYZ.

Here the text cites from an unknown scripture by the title *Jingangjun lisheng jing luechao* 金剛峻利聖經略抄 (*Brief Notes on the Scripture of the Vajra Peak Benefiting the Sage*) when describing the Buddha's extended family, his date of birth, his physical features, and so on, that too incorporates the phrase Jin'gangjun, or *Vajra Peak*, the first three characters of the full title of the *Altar Methods*.¹⁸⁸

The first text is a brief biography of the buddha embedded within an outline of the dissemination of the teachings into China. It is presented from a Chinese perspective/timeline (gives # of years since the dharma first arose, etc.).

¹⁸⁵ Tanaka 1981:163 identifies this line as the title of a text, but it could simply be a section heading.

¹⁸⁶ Tanaka 1981: 168-69 identifies this text with the *Fu fazang yiyuan zhuan* 付法藏因緣傳 (Chronicle of the Transmission of the Dharma Repository, T50.2058).

¹⁸⁷ S5981, P2791, and P3212 all appear to be versions of this text.

¹⁸⁸ This section appears to be related to sections, not yet identified, in the *Chang Ahan jing* 長阿含經 (T1.1).

The second text FFZZ (brak is rather artificial!), like FFZYYZ, ends with the 23rd patriarch, Simha Bhikṣu. The lineage here is interspersed with narratives/episodes. See Tanaka 1983: 103 ff.

The third text if the Record of the Dharma. Contains a “pre-Buddhist” history of Jambudvīpa. Mentions some “secret rituals” (not in parallel texts?). History of the Buddha’s clan, extended, family members, mother, etc. Mentions the Vajra Peak! See parallel mss for thtitles and their end/head of P3913.

At end of the third text we find the following passage:

The *Jingangjun li sheng jing luechao* 金剛峻利聖經略抄 (*Brief Notes on the Vajrasekhara Benefit Sage Scripture*), provides extensive information regarding the country of the Buddha, his great-grandfather, father, mother, relatives, siblings, his physical dimensions, his birth date, and so on. More detailed [information] is expounded in the [*Fo*]benxing ji [*jing*] 佛本行集經 and the *Yinguo jing* 因果經.¹⁸⁹

36.4: The Transmission Verses

Section 4 of the *Fu fazang pin* bears two headings, the *Fendeng zhi lu jing, cong shang xitian [nian]bazu shouji* 分燈之陸經從上西天[廿]八祖受記 (The Scripture on the Division of the Lamp throughout the Land, the Prediction of the Twenty-[Eight] Indian Patriarchs) and *Tanglai liudai zusbi michuan xinyin* 唐來六代祖師密傳心印 (Secret Mind-Seal of the Six Generations of Chinese Patriarchs). This section contains the transmission verses of the twenty-eight Indian and six Chinese Chan patriarchs. The verses found here are virtually identical to those found in the *Baolin zhuan*, which came before it (we assume), and again we are left to speculate as to the possible relationship between the two texts.¹⁹⁰ Interestingly, some peculiarities of our lineage also appear to draw on common conventions in evidence in *Baolin zhuan*, including the reference to Bodhidharma as a bodhisattva.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ An abbreviated title for the *Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing* 過去現在因果經 (T.3.187).

¹⁹⁰ See Tanaka 1983: 160-64. The origins of these verses are uncertain. That said, the *Baolin zhuan*, which is the earliest of the traditional Chan “histories,” and compiled in 801, contained not only the six transmission verses already mentioned, but also an additional twenty-eight verses that were attributed to Śākyamuni and the twenty-seven succeeding “Indian patriarchs” of Chan, from Śākyamuni’s disciple Mahākāśyapa to the final Indian patriarch (and first Chinese patriarch) Bodhidharma. See Yampolsky 1967: 182.

¹⁹¹ Bodhidharma as bodhisattva: Faure 1997: 122 (“stela inscription composed by Li Hua for the fifth Tiantai patriarch, Xuanlang (673-754) [in which] Bodhidharma is presented as a “Bodhisattva monk” [QTW 320, 7:4101a. This passage is quoted in the Tendai monk Kōjō’s (779-858) *Keiran shūyōshū* (T74.2379.652c) and also appears in Qisong’s *Zhuanfu zhenzong lun* (T51.2078.783a).

In total, Section 36.1 through 36.4 provide several different versions of the transmission of Buddhist to China, and more specifically, the transmission of the Altar Methods (which is referred to in these accounts as the Vajra Peak Scripture or Jin'gangjun jing) from Mahāvairocana himself down through a venerable lines of Indian sages into China.

Section 36.5 and 35.6: Two Chinese Sādhana Texts?

Appended to these four historical sections are two short texts that can best be described as contemplation or *sādhana* texts, if by *sādhana* we mean a “progressive sequence of meditative and ritual procedures that focus upon a particular deity or set of deities.”¹⁹² While it is unclear when or why these contemplation texts became part of the *Altar Methods*, their inclusion in the anthology raises more questions than answers. It is reasonable to assume that these final two items were later additions, but the bigger question is why they might have been included (again, they appear on all three extant copies of the *Altar Methods* anthology).

While a full exploration of these practices fall outside the limits of the present study, let us This latter group includes a number of related practices, including *guan* 觀, *xiang* 想, *guanxiang* 觀想, *guannian* 觀念, *niansong* 念誦, and so on.¹⁹³

The first text is an abbreviated or prescribes a visualization practice to eliminate suffering in the hells and deliver all creatures from the heaven and hell realms into better rebirth. The language and general sequence of this first text is reminiscent of the in line with

On this same topic, see Jorgensen 2005: 218. Jorgensen: “Bodhidharma identified with the saint Guanyin by Baoji? (425-514) to Emperor Wu of Liang in a story that first appeared in the Baolin zhuan of ca. 796, and was repeated in the Zutang ji of 952. See Sekiguchi 1967: 120, 124; Baolin zhuan 133a. Note: Baolin zhuan 147c2-3 (8.32a2-3) states, “Master Bodhidharma is the saint Guanyin, who manifests many bodies in statues.” Jorgensen states “the Baolin zhuan took a cue from the slightly earlier LDFBJ,” which includes a quote from a stele written for Huike, the second Chan patriarch, by a court chael offerent Falin (572- 640) that reads: “Alas! The Master Bodhidharma was the saint Guanyin, who manifested many bodies in images.”

¹⁹² I have taken this definition from English 2002: 24. These texts are translated in full in appendices H and I, respectively.

¹⁹³ The notion of esoteric methods for contemplation as a general rubric for a host of ritual-meditative practices (some said to be more technically complicated than others, and to carry certain soteriological weight over others) is a complicated issue, as these terms actually refer to a variety of forms, techniques, and doctrines involved with *guanfa* make it difficult to locate in one Buddhist tradition or another. I'm thinking here specifically of the types of practices outlined in Yamabe 1999, none of which, properly speaking are “tantric” rites.

the practices of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*, although no explicit reference to that text is made here, and it does not explicitly make mention of *maṇḍala* practice.

Item five of the six-item *Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository* (which itself comprises the fourth and final fascicle of the *Altar Methods*) is an unnamed contemplation text that appears to be an abbreviated contemplation sequence designed to eliminate suffering in the lower realms and deliver all beings to a better rebirth. Aside from the three copies of the text transmitted in the *Altar Methods*, I have found no additional copies of the text at Dunhuang, and no canonical parallels.

The most immediate context for thinking about the text and its techniques is within the context of the *Altar Methods* itself, although it is tempting to surmise a wider ritual and soteriological overlay underlying the work. The first such context is within the wider set of practices subsumed under the rubric of “esoteric” or “tantric” methods for contemplation – often referred to as visualizations practices.¹⁹⁴ Key to understanding this text rests consist of a number of questions that attempt to work out the relationship between Indian meditative practices (*bhāvanā*) and those practices that are typically referred to as “esoteric” or “tantric” methods for contemplation, including *guan* 觀, *xiang* 想, *guanxiang* 觀想, *guannian* 觀念, *niansong* 念誦, and so on. The notion of esoteric methods for contemplation: general rubric for a host of ritual-meditative practices (some said to be more technically complicated than others, and to carry certain soteriological weight over others). These terms actually refer to a variety of forms, techniques, and doctrines involved with *guanfa* make it difficult to locate in one Buddhist tradition or another.

The text itself appears to be an abbreviated or prescribes a visualization practice to eliminate suffering in the hells and deliver all creatures from the heaven and hell realms into better rebirth. In this sense, it is in line with the practices of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*, although no explicit reference to that text is made here. The rite itself opens with what appears to be an abbreviated or short-hand checklist for undertaking the preliminaries of the practice, followed by what appear to be a series of short-hand phrases and/or instructions that represent the preliminary stages required to undertake the rite proper. The rite itself describes the generation of single streams of “light rays” (lit. “milk rays” 一道乳光) emitted from various points on both the right and left side of the body, namely the shoulders (肩), the side (脇), and the knees (脇), with language particular to the direction of the rays that shooting both up (上放) and down 下放 depending on their target. It makes references to hell-beings and hungry ghosts, all of whom are described as undergoing suffering and in need of better births.

¹⁹⁴ On this topic, see Sharf 2001 and Greene 2012. We must guard against applying “normative notion implied in the western term ‘meditation’.” debate over the nature of these practices, namely the extent to which they were discursive versus being of meditative or visual significance

[Having realized the unity of the] completion body, together with the form (rupa) body, bind the realm. Then rouse the body and calm the mind, and assume the proper seated position.¹⁹⁵

成身合色身，結界，然後擡禪身心，端身正坐。

Imagine this body a emitting great ray of light, which illuminates the ten directions, eliminating the suffering of the three lower paths, and stopping the bitterness of the hells.

想此身放大光明，遍照十方，三途息苦，地獄停酸。

The right shoulder sends up a single stream of white light (lit. a ‘milk ray’),¹⁹⁶ illuminating all the heavens and causing the [beings therein] to escape suffering and obtain release. The left shoulder sends up a single stream of white light, illuminating all the heavens and [causing the beings therein] to escape suffering. All the heavenly beings and human beings of the world systems of the ten directions [thereby] attain the fruits of the path.

右肩上放一道乳光，照一切諸天，悉皆離苦解□。左肩上放一道乳光，照一切諸天，悉皆離苦。十方世界一切天人總證道果。

From the right side [of the body] a single stream of white light is sent down, illuminating the animal realm so that all therein may obtain birth in heaven.

From the left side [of the body] a single stream of white light is sent down, illuminating all hungry ghosts so that they may all obtain rebirth in heaven.

右脇下放一道乳光，照一切畜生，盡得生天。左脇下放一道乳光，照一切餓鬼，總得生天。

The right knee sends down a single stream of pure cold white light, illuminating and penetrating each of the eight hot hells, and [causing] all living beings who endure hardships [there] to be reborn in the heavens. The left knee sends down a single stream of warm white light, illuminating the

¹⁹⁵ Individual components are identifiable, but the overall sense of this first sentence remains cryptic. This might be because it is presented in a type of “shorthand” typical of ritual manuals, which often assume many details of a ritual sequence. Reference to the *chengshen* 成身 (J. *jōjin*; see Sharf 2003: 65) or “attainment” or “consummation body.” The next step is normally to purify and protect the practitioner. The reference to the *sesben* 色身, which is a standard rendering of *rupakāya*, or physical body of the buddha. In short, the first line appears to lay out the preliminary steps for the contemplative practice that follows. This line is followed by two four-character phrases that appear to give instructions for preparing the body, the first of which has not canonical parallel (*taix shenxin* 擡禪身心), followed by a standard phrase (*duanshen zhengzuo* 端身正坐) for the proper position for undertaking seated meditation.

¹⁹⁶ This is a fairly standard motif. See for eg. T17.809 *Foshuo Xguangfo jing* 佛□乳光佛經. See Yamabe 1999.

eight cold hells and [causing] all those beings who endure hardship there to escape suffering and obtain rebirth in the heavens.

右膝下放一道乳光，清淨涼冷，照破一切八熱地獄，受苦衆生，悉皆生天。左膝下放一道溫暖乳光，照八寒地獄，受苦衆生，總得離苦，皆得生天。

As a result, not a single living being in all the world systems of the ten directions will undergo suffering. Imagine: My body-seal is precisely that of all the buddhas; all the buddhas are precisely my body. Beyond this there is nothing else.

然後盡十方界一切衆生，無有一个受苦之者。想我身印即是諸佛，諸佛即是我身，餘外更無別物。

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva's Three-Syllable Contemplation

The second text provides instructions for an unidentified rite called “Vajragarbha Bodhisattva's Three-Syllabus Contemplation” (*Jin'gangzang pusa sanzhi guan* 金剛藏菩薩三字觀). This contemplation practice centers on the generation of the three syllables *om* 唵, *būm* 吽, and *au* 押, and contains a reference to the term *wunian* 無念, often translated as “no-thought” or “no-mind,” and almost always associated with

the *Liuzu tanjing* and the writings of Shenhui 神會 (684-758 CE), and is also associated with the thought of Baotang Wuzhu 保唐無住 (714-774 CE).¹⁹⁷ Whether this is a direct allusion to any of these sources remains unclear.

Item 6 of the *Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository*, which comprises the final fascicle of the four-fascicle *Altar Methods*, contains an extra-canonical contemplation or *sādhana* text centered on the deity Vajragarbha Bodhisattva. In addition to appearing in all the three extant copies contained in the *Altar Methods* (P3913, G015, S2144V), the text appears to have circulated as an independent text, for we find at least one (P3835v9) additional copies among the Dunhuang manuscripts. What is more, we find a number of related texts at the site dedicated to the same Vajragarbha figure.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Gregory 1991: 43-44 discusses briefly the use of the concept of in the teachings of Wuxiang and Zongmi. See also Hanson-Barber 1986.

¹⁹⁸ Several other texts or text fragments scattered among the Dunhuang collections appear to shed light on our text. All appear to be extra-canonical. The first is placed directly after our text, and might well be an extension of it. This includes: (1) P3835V9.2 (xxx); (2) S5621 (incipi: *Jin'gangzang pusa sanshen zhenyan* 金剛藏菩薩三身真言; containing nineteen *mantras* that appear to represent a ritual sequence (*sādhana*) centered on the figure Vajragarbha Bodhisattva); (3) S4567 Incipit: “visualize Vajragarbha Bodhisattva” (*guan Jin'gangzang pusa* 觀金剛藏菩薩) A short *sādhana* for purifying one's body speech and mind by means of mantras corresponding to the three points of the head, throat and heart. Contains detailed instructions for a contemplation/visualization practice centering on

Rather than rooted in the ritual sequence outlined in the first section of the STTS, the generation of the five realizations found in the opening section of that seminal Yoga Tantra scripture, and elaborated on in a number of liturgical manuals based on the STTS, the system here appears to be the trisamādhi of the Tibetan Mahāyoga system.

The opening stage of the “three samādhis” of Mahāyoga practice, which is equivalent to the opening stage of the five abhisambodhis.

>>Regarding the entering this “nonconceptual meditation via the three syllables giving off light then regathering, we see the same process in IOL Tib J 716 R1.1-12, Pelliot tibétain 626 1a, Pelliot tibétain 634 1r, and IOL Tib J 331/1, all of which are (again) the three samādhis of Mahāyoga rather than the five stages of the Yoga tantras.” Note, however, that the order of the three syllables, Om, am, hum, are presented in a different order in our text than in those Mahāyoga texts.

>>>These mantras are meant, in some way, to relate to those seen in Giebel’s translation of the STTS, p. 23-24.

>>NOT five stages of the Vajroṣṇīṣa system, but rather the three samādhis of Mahāyoga, which consist of meditation on emptiness, meditation on light/moon disc, and finally generation of the seed-syllable. Then you are instructed to perform various mudrās to close/bind the ritual space. This would explain the text here (albeit slightly off). So, trisamādhi, not the pañcābhisambodhikrama.

>>other VG texts will be necessary to see if there are additional details provided that follow the opening sequence that appears to be presented in this text.

Several additional features add to the unique composition of this text. First, it begins with an obscure reference to the “first patriarch” (*chushi* 初祖, or *bizu* 祕祖?), which is followed by instructions to take the correct seated position. The *Altar Methods* itself names Rocana/Mahāvairocana the patriarch of all past buddhas (Sections 14, Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository, Section 1). Second, it refers to the meditation on ‘no-mind,’ a term closely associated with the early Chan tradition.

Critical edition based on a comparison of the four extant copies of the text found on the Dunhuang manuscripts P3913, G015, S2144V, and P3835V:

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva’s Three-Syllable Contemplation

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva; (4) Fragment B8737 and (5) P2014, P2105 all contain miscellaneous mudrās for this figure. I am preparing an article in preparation that lays out these texts and their ritual components entitled, “Vajragarbha’s Three-Syllable Contemplation Practice at Dunhuang.”

金剛藏菩薩三字觀

When imagining the first patriarch (central deity?), face west. Assume the proper seated position, and arrange these three syllables [in your mind]: the syllable Om 唵 is visualized on the crown of the head, emitting a golden ray of light; the syllable Hūm 吽 is visualized on the heart, emitting a white light ray; [and] the syllable Au 押 is visualized on the tongue, emitting a ray of red light.

想初祖時面取向西，端身正坐，安此三字。唵字，觀在頂上[放]黃光；吽字，觀在心上，放白光；押字，觀在舌上，放赤光。

Next, visualize the three rays [illuminating] the three thousand, great thousand world-systems. All the buddhas in the ten directions will see these brilliant light rays, returning increased blessings back on to the practitioner.

After that, call to mind [the following] “light mantra”: *sanibeluona hūm* 薩泥呵羅那吽 (S. Saṃharaṇā hūm).¹⁹⁹

然後三光遍[照]三千大千世界，十方諸佛見此光明，迴加恩於作觀人。然後念聚光真言：薩泥呵羅那吽。

Having called [this mantra] to mind, the three rays of light return to their original position [on the body]. Suspended in mid-air, the syllable Au 押 [sits] on top, Hūm 吽 [rests] at the center, and Om 唵 [hangs] below.

念了，三光還來，各入本位。三字[懸]在虛空，押字上，吽字中，唵字下排著。

Having lined them up in this way, the syllable Om 唵 produces a single stream of light that enters the center of the syllable Hūm 吽. Likewise, the syllable Au 押 produces a single stream of light that likewise enters the center of the syllable Hūm 吽. Then the syllable Hūm 吽 produces a single stream of light that dissolves the light rays [produced by] the two [other] syllables. [Then] the light ray of the syllable Hūm 吽 is also dissolved.

後唵字生一道光，入吽字中，又押字生一道光，亦入吽字中了，後吽字却生一道光，滅前兩字光了。其吽字光亦滅。

Thereafter, enter the [dhyāna] meditation of “no-thought” (*ru wunian chanding* 入無念禪定). For an extended period [engage in] “pure sitting” (*jingzuo* 淨坐). If you become drowsy, then you should contemplate emptiness.

後便入無念禪定。良久淨坐，若氏眼來者，便須觀空。

¹⁹⁹ Literally, “gathering.” Todaro 1985: 341-352.

Afterwards, call to mind the mantra: xi-bo-luo-na-ba-[hūm]
悉鉢囉那叭[吽].²⁰⁰ Having done that, call to mind this “light mantra”:
薩泥呵囉那吽.²⁰¹ Having called to mind [both these mantras], the
three lights rays are thus transformed and reabsorbed, forming a half
moon.

後念真言：悉鉢囉那叭[吽]。然後念[取]此光真言：薩泥呵囉那吽。念了，
三光便即化來，其光作一半月。

The syllable A 阿 forms a half moon, so that together they combine to make
a moon altar. [Next, make] the “binding-realm seal” (結界印) [and] the “pure
seal.” [XX] without all seals.²⁰²

阿字作一半月，合爲一个月壇。結界印，淨印，李無一切印。

Mahāvairocana Buddha transmitted the dharma repository, XXXX
大毗盧遮那佛付法藏心地法門秘密甚深密法戒四十二種壇法傳授心印，
遞代相傳，承受付囑，不令斷口。

Preliminary Conclusions

So how should we account for all this in relation to the ritual texts comprising the first three volumes of the anthology? I would argue that there is nothing very unusual at work here – the interest in lineage was never restricted to Chan circles, and there is significant evidence that tantric practitioners has as much stake in carving out their lines of secret transmission as anyone else. What is most interesting, then, about the four accounts comprising the Fu fazang pin, then, are the specific revisions we see therein, including not only the insertion of Mahāvairocana at the head of the lineage account (and hence responsible for the transmission of the rites throughout the Buddhist world), but the highly sinified “take” on that esoteric transmission. Here we see Mahāvairocana being conflated with Rocana, the key figure in the *Fanwang jing*. References to Rocana appear in the ritual texts in Sections 15, 16, and 17 in Part One of the anthology, thus demonstrating that that Buddha, and the esteemed line of esoteric teachings he preached from the Vajradhātu or the Lotus Matrix World or where XXX.

The emphasis on the secret transmission of the mind ground is again a theme that is often understood as circulating in Chan concepts, but here we see it in the title of the Altar Methods (and other works attributed to Amoghavajra), in the citation from the FWJ, and so on. All of which is to simply say that XXX.

²⁰⁰ I was unable to identify this mantra.

²⁰¹ Saniheluona hūm 薩泥呵囉那吽.

²⁰² This line is unclear.

6. In Lieu of a Conclusion

This study has endeavored to do two main things. The first is to describe the contents of the *Altar Methods* as a unique compilation of ritual and historiographical materials in a unique configuration. The second is to begin to lay the foundation for further consideration of the location of the *Altar Methods* within the trajectory of development both at the Dunhuang site during the tenth century specifically, and across the wider Chinese Buddhist landscape of the late-medieval period more generally.

With respect to the first point, I have tried to situate the *Altar Methods* compilation within a number of late-medieval literary, ritual, and historical trends that demonstrate just how “in tune” that compilation was with developments across China during the eighth through the tenth centuries. These trends include not only the generation of new textual histories chronicling the transmission of the Buddhist teachings (the *Altar Methods* included) into China, but the major Buddhist rites of the late-medieval period that centered on built altars. These altars were ambiguous sorts of structures with a clear Chinese provenance, and were deployed by the Buddhist community for military, therapeutic, and salvific purposes actuated by imperial consecrations, lay bodhisattva initiations, state-protection rites, renewal rites for the living and the dead – all of which are represented in the various sections of the *Altar Methods*.

These accumulated altar rites began to coalesce in the eighth century, perhaps due to the seismic socio-historical shifts of that century that would irrevocably change the relationship between the Chinese state and the sangha – as well as the relationship between the lay Buddhist community and the Buddhist institution. This is demonstrated perhaps most clearly with the ordination platform “movement” outlined above, and which was part of a gradual, but radical, transformation of the ritual means by which the ever-expanding Mahāyāna community was granted access to the most supreme Buddhist teachings through the power of the ordination-initiation platform cum altar. It was during this same long century that China saw the influx of a number of esoteric or tantric teachings that also emphasized the salvific power of the Buddhist altar, refashioned in an esoteric context as an altar cum *maṇḍala*. These esoteric or tantric altar-*maṇḍala* rites are said to have been introduced by Amoghavajra, among others, with the transmission to China of the Great Yoga teachings – teachings that had an obvious influence on the author-compiler(s) of the *Altar Methods*.

One of the central questions guiding this study is what, if anything, the ritual, literary, and iconographical appropriations from those Great Yoga (read: Yoga Tantra) teachings that are traceable in the *Altar Methods* tell us about the underlying ritual logic of our text.²⁰³ As I have endeavored to show, the *Altar Methods* “supercharges” previous rites (repentance rites,

²⁰³ In other words, to what extent does the baseline technology undergirding the *Altar Methods* reflect or correspond to the technical ritual methods promoted in these tantric texts. This of course gets to a much bigger question over what, if anything, separates those tantric techniques with other advanced Mahāyāna methods for attaining the goal of awakening.

consecration rites, state-protection rites, rites for the dead and so on) in much the same way that Amoghavajra's retranslation of the *Humane Kings Sūtra* "esotericized" imperial consecrations to empower the king to protect the nation. In a similar manner, the author-compiler(s) of the *Altar Methods* used a similar technological upgrade (through the power of the five-buddha altar-*maṇḍala* rite) to accomplish a variety of ritual outcomes. The innovation of the *Altar Methods* is in the way it organized and compiled those "upgraded" rites in a single, unified compilation.

With respect to my second goal of situating the *Altar Methods* within the context of late-medieval Dunhuang and the recovered Dunhuang documents (as opposed to viewing the text exclusively against the transmitted canons of the urban Chinese centers), I began by noting how evidence of the Chan-Tantra connection in the central Chinese capitals during the eighth century had led to the original reading of the *Altar Methods* as an inter-sectarian work – and then suggested that it was evidence of the multilingual and multiethnic community at Dunhuang that appears to have influenced the second wave of scholars to tackle the text. To review, the first section of the *Altar Methods* to be studied was its last, owing to the unique combination of Chan and esoteric elements in that section first noted by Tanaka Ryōsho with whom this study began.²⁰⁴

In addition to a number of previously unknown or lost Chinese Chan titles discovered at Dunhuang – discoveries that led to a virtual revolution within the field of Chan studies,²⁰⁵ scholars unearthed a significant body of what has been identified as tenth-century Tibetan Buddhist texts that combine elements of the Chan and tantric systems (specifically, the Chan and Mahāyoga tantric traditions), resulting in a story of a local "syncretism," or at least rapprochement, between what were previously understood as two separate, self-contained Buddhist traditions.²⁰⁶ By extension, this narrative of a local Chan-Tantra connection at Dunhuang brought two seemingly autonomous Buddhist communities at the site into direct

²⁰⁴ There have been a number of books dedicated to the formation of the early Chan school, nearly all of which refer, in one way or another, to the Chan-Tantra connection during the eighth century. See esp. Yanagida 1967, 1971 and 1976; McRae 1986; and Faure 1997. This reading of the *Altar Methods* as a local "hybrid" continues to guide interpretations of the texts. See for example Kuo 1998, 2004; Tanaka 1992, 2000; Sørensen 2011.

²⁰⁵ There have now been several generations of scholars to focus on the recovered Chan texts from Dunhuang, beginning with Hu Shih, Suzuki Daisetsu, Ui Hakuji, Yanagida Seizan, Tanaka Ryōsho, John McRae, Bernard Faure, Wendi Adamek to name just a few. It is interesting to note that the study of the Chan Dunhuang manuscripts has typically been divorced from the issue of their circulation at the site (though the Sichuan-Dunhuang is often noted in passing), but this trend is changing. See for example the recent work of Christoph Anderl (2011, forthcoming) who devotes considerable space to the form and function of the locally-circulated copies of the *Platform Sūtra*.

²⁰⁶ See Dalton and van Schaik 2004 for the most recent survey of those texts and issues. That these Tibetan manuscripts are also thought to date to the tenth century is important. In part, their dating is based on an analysis of a distinctive handwriting indicating a single scribe, common decorative elements and punctuation, executed in all five manuscripts with red ink, four of which appear to be the same shade (Dalton and van Schaik 2004: 65), suggesting that they constitute a thematically and physically related set of texts.

conversation, one Chinese, the other Tibetan. At some point the *Altar Methods* was incorporated as an element in that story, leading some to conclude that while there was “no independent Chinese tantric tradition at Dunhuang, there was an active interest in Tibetan Tantra on the part of some local Chinese, as well as an active interest on the part of some Tibetans in the Chan tradition at the site.”²⁰⁷

This thesis has argued that a careful study of the *Altar Methods* complicates both claims – both the explicit claim that there was no Chinese Buddhist engagement with the constellation of texts that circulated in China around the *Jin’gangding jing*, as well as the implicit claim that the indigenous Chinese esoteric or tantric Buddhist scriptures recovered from the site, including the *Altar Methods*, were written under a direct Tibetan influence.²⁰⁸ While there is no question that our text drew on a long-standing textual and historiographical strategy that relied on the prestige of a patriarchal line (read: Chan) to authorize its teachings, the text was clearly informed by the Chinese basic ritual system presented in the *Jin’gangding jing* and other Yoga Tantra scriptures. To these it added a number of indigenous Chinese traditions (doctrinal, ritual) that circulated widely in medieval Sinitic circles, including the *Renwang jing*, the *Fanwang jing*, and the other texts that the *Altar Methods* draws on. What the combination of these trends in our text reflects, I argue, is the development of an expansive new ritual repertoire designed to address Chinese practical and spiritual concerns that were increasingly being worked out on the Buddhist altar, an institution of its own that was undergoing tremendous expansion owing to multiple forces from multiple directions.

So while we know that there were specialists working at the site who were fluent in more than one system of Buddhist thought (that is, the Chan and tantric systems), and while we have evidence of a number of local scribes who were fluent in both Chinese and Tibetan (we know, in fact, that Tibetan continued to be the lingua franca in the region through the tenth century), the question of how to make sense of those readers and scribes at Dunhuang under the rubric of the “Chan-Tantra connection” keeps those readers and scribes (and us readers and our source texts) mired in a narrative of hybridity that leaves both groups somewhere “out there,” or perhaps more accurately “nowhere,” in the story of medieval Chinese Buddhism.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Eastman 1983: 49. Sorensen (1989, 2011#13: 189-190) discusses the syncretic features of the *Altar Methods*, which he assesses as an “intersectarian apocrypha and hybrid text.” He further states: “This esoteric Buddhist work was originally used by Chan Buddhists affiliated with the Baotang school to combine their own teachings, and the history of their patriarchal lineage in particular, with the doctrines of the Zhenyan tradition” (Sørensen 2011#: 301). In footnote 50 of p. 301, Sørensen further states: “The sectarian affiliation of the [Chapter on Entrusting the Dharma Repository] is not immediately clear, however, although it clearly reflects an attempt to integrate southern chan with Esoteric Buddhism of the Zhenyan variety.”

²⁰⁸ This is also the position taken by Kuo Liying in her work on the *Altar Methods*, which I follow throughout this study.

²⁰⁹ On enduring legacy of European traditions of thought reductive of such “provincializing” historiographical practices, see Chakrabarty 2000. On the issue of religious syncretism see Klassen 2005; Roof, 1998; Van der Veer 1994; Droogers 1989; Stewart and Shaw, 1994; Rutherford 2002;

A better, if tentative, assessment of the combined Chinese and Tibetan “syncretic” works from Dunhuang, including the *Altar Methods*, might simply be recognition of a pan-Dunhuang regional Buddhist interest in several key Yoga and Mahāyoga tantric scriptures during what appears to be the second-half of the tenth century – in addition to their interest in a number of other doctrinal, ritual, and literary trends. This reading of the extant sources accounts for both the possible interaction of those two communities at the site (that is, the local Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist communities), but also the relative autonomy both communities seemed to have wielded when it came to the generation of indigenous compositions on both sides of the Tibet-China divide – again, all without recourse to the provincializing and reductive narrative of a “hybrid” Dunhuang Buddhist community.

Several scholarly generations since the discovery of the Dunhuang manuscripts, then, the normative story of medieval Chinese Buddhism (and Tibetan Buddhism, as well, it seems) has given way to a more nuanced picture of the Buddhist past. Central to the rewriting of that scholarly narrative, I argue, are texts like the *Altar Methods*, which make clear just how fluid and innovative the late-medieval period was in institutional, textual, and ritual terms.²¹⁰ Indeed, a careful reading of the combined Chinese sources bearing on the study of the *Altar Methods* requires us to consider both capital-based (center) and locally-based (periphery) Buddhist developments, canonical as well as extra-canonical sources – and over a relatively long period of history that encompasses what I refer to here as the late-medieval period, namely the eighth through the tenth centuries. In this way, I understand the Chan-Tantra connection to reflect broad shifts over several decades (if not centuries) that would eventually give rise not only to powerful sectarian traditions (like the Chan tradition), but amorphous (esoteric) ritual traditions that would continue to develop and expand through the early-modern and modern periods.

While I have attempted to identify key sections of the *Altar Methods* with known works, I have presented those identifications as preliminary steps on the way towards a displacement, or at least rethinking, of the numerous top-heavy constructs (Chan, Tantra, Esoteric Buddhism, and so on) that have so far guided its study. This move opens up a conceptual space for thinking beyond not only the preliminary conclusions that have so far been drawn with respect to the text, but the very questions that have been asked of it – just as Hirai urged us to do in his survey of the *Altar Methods* nearly four decades ago. The wager of this study is on the possibility and necessity of situating the *Altar Methods* within its rightful contexts in an effort to dislodge the anachronistic hold of a “normative” scholarly paradigm that would reduce the text to a local instantiation of a reified pan-Asian Buddhist “tantra,” a product of anachronistic Chinese Buddhist “schools,” or worse yet, a local Dunhuang “anomaly,” situating it instead within a highly contextualized narrative that tracks Buddhist doctrinal and ritual developments across late-medieval China. It is with these issues in mind, then, that this dissertation comes to a close, and future research begins

Taylor, 1997: 201; Young, 1995; and Dhavamony 2002: 168.

²¹⁰ Chan scholars have long advocating for suspend our reading of Chan (with a capital “C”) back to the eighth century. On this issue see esp. Foulk 2007.

Bibliography

I. Primary Sources: Manuscripts

Stein Collection

S1397

Mediocre scroll containing a partial copy of the *Jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* 救拔焰口餓鬼陀羅尼經 (cf. T21.1313.464b14-465b27) attributed to Amoghavajra, as identified by Li 2003. Additional copies found on S1896, S4119, S6323, P3022, P3920.9, B7374, and B8685. The verso contains extracts of the *Tian qingwen jing* 天請問經 (T15.592).

S1896

Damaged scroll of the tenth century measuring 1ft. containing a partial copy (executed on both the recto and verso) of the *Foshuo jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* 佛口救拔焰口餓鬼陀羅尼經, attributed to Amoghavajra, and which Li 2003 identifies with the text found on T21.1313.464b14-465b27. See S1397, S4119, S6323, P3022, P3920.9, B7374, and B8685 for additional copies.

S2139

Scroll fragment measuring roughly 2 ft. containing (1) an incomplete schematic drawing of an unidentified geometric *maṇḍala* executed in black ink, followed by what appears to be an unrelated item containing (2) a eulogy for a deceased monk to be read aloud at a funeral. The *maṇḍala* assembly comprising Item 1 is indicated by written names only; figures of individual deities are not included. Most, but not all, of these names also appear on sketch P2012, as well as several Sections of the *Altar Methods* (cf. P3913).

S2144

Recycled scroll measuring 11 1/2 ft., the recto of which contains the story of the monk Fahua 法華 of the Huichang period (841-47) featuring Wen Di, founder of the Sui dynasty, and his general Han Qinhu 韓擒虎. The verso contains Sections 36.5-6 of the *Altar Methods* (cf. P3913.36.5-6), along with an appended prayer formulary that makes reference to a local altar ceremony conducted in the northwest quadrant of the greater Dunhuang region. Hou 2008 identifies this manuscript as one of five recycled manuscripts (B1388, S2316V, B3699, B3554V) that together represent a partial copy comprised of nineteen of the thirty-six sections of the received *Altar Methods*.

S2272

Recycled scroll of 11ft. containing several items (scriptural excerpts, notations), including one section repeated on the recto and verso that corresponds to the final chapter, or *Fu fazang pin* 付法藏品, of the *Altar Methods* (cf. P3913.36). In terms of overall content and style (unrefined hand), this manuscript bears a close resemblance to S2144V and especially B7677, which are likewise notable for their messy compositions and irregular layouts. This manuscript also includes several examples of a stylized red-ink marker used to highlight sections of text.

S2316

Recycled scroll of brittle yellow oiled paper measuring 5 ft. Ends missing. The recto contains Fascicle 6 of the *Jin'guangming jing* 金光明經 (cf. T16.663) and dates to an earlier period than the item on the verso, which is comprised of a single text bearing the abbreviated title *Jin'gang xindi famen bifa jietanfa yize* 金剛心地法門必法戒壇法儀則. This text corresponds to Section 27 of the *Altar Methods* 壇法儀則 (cf. P3913.26), and has been identified by Hou 2008 as one of five recycled manuscripts (B1388, B3699, B3554V, S2144V) that together comprise a partial copy of nineteen of the thirty-six complete sections of the *Altar Methods*.

S2702

Recycled scroll of 38 ft., the recto of which contains an excerpt from the *Jingming jing ji shiguan zhongshu* 淨名經集釋關中疏 (cf. 5508) in fine cursive writing. A red “square” is used to highlight sections of the text. The verso contains three items, including (Item 3) a copy of the *Foshuo daxixiang tiannu shierqie yibaibaming wugou dasheng jing* 佛□大吉祥天女十二契一百八名無垢大乘經 attributed to Amoghavajra that corresponds roughly to that found in the *Daxixiang tiannu shierqie yibaibaming wugou dasheng jing* 大吉祥天女十二契一百八名無垢大乘經 (T21.1253). The text includes several *dhāraṇīs* found only in the recension of the text found on T.21.1252, the *Foshuo daxixiang tiannu minghao jing* 佛□大吉祥天女名號經 (T21.1252a-b), and includes a colophon that reads “Translated under imperial command by the Tripiṭaka and śramaṇa Amoghavajra of Ceylon, who was granted the title ‘Repository of Wisdom’” 師子國三藏沙門阿目伽跋折羅譯奉[?]賜名智藏. Additional copies of this text are found on B7373 and S2702V.

S3018

Good manuscript on stiff yellow paper measuring 1 ft. containing a copy of the *Jin'gangding yuqie liqu banruo jing* 金剛頂瑜伽理趣般若經 (J. *Risbukyō*, cf. T8.241) attributed to Vajrabodhi. Marked “examined” □ several times. S5703 contains another copy of this text. See Astley-Kristensen 1991 for a summary of the different recensions of this text.

S3288

Recycled manuscript measuring 22 ft. on a roller. The recto contains excerpts from the *Banruopoluomi guangzan jing* 般若波羅蜜光讚經 (T6.222), and has been dated to the seventh century. The verso contains a copy a text by the title *Jin'gangding yuqie niansong guiyi* 金剛頂瑜伽念誦軌儀, which corresponds to sections of both the *Jin'gangding lianbuabu niansong yigui* 金剛頂蓮華部心念誦儀軌 (T18.873.303b13-310a13) and the *Jin'gangding jing yiqie rulai zhenshi she dasheng xinzheng dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂經一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經 (T18.874.315a21-322b7), two liturgical manuals attributed to Amoghavajra. Contains several examples of a stylized red-ink marker used to highlight sections of the text, as well as numerous practice marks written in the margins.

S4119

Indifferent scroll measuring 6ft., beginning missing. The recto contains two items: (1) the *Foshuo tian qingwen jing* 佛□天請問經 (T15.592) and (2) the *Foshuo jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* 佛□救拔焰口俄鬼陀羅尼經, attributed to Amoghavajra. This second text corresponds roughly to the transmitted text found on T21.1313, as identified by Li 2003. Additional copies of this text are found on S1896, S1397, S6323, P3022, P3920.9, B7374, and B8685.

S4510

Recycled scroll of yellow paper measuring 11 ft. The recto contains an incomplete copy of Fascicle 377 of the *Da banruopoluomiduo jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經 (T4.220). The verso contains one of three Dunhuang copies of the *Jin'gangding jing yiqie rulai zhenshi she dasheng xinzheng dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂經一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經 (cf. T18.874.18.310a-317a10) attributed to Amoghavajra, appearing here under the title *Jin'gangding yiqie rulai shenmiao bimi jingangjie dasanmeiye xiuxi yuqie huanqing yi* 金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修習瑜伽迎請儀 (cf. P3920.7, B7666.1). Messy, this copy contains numerous corrections, along with several distinctive section markers, including a stylized red-ink highlighter and several red-ink “swirls” that are virtually identical (in form, in location) to marks found throughout B7666.1, suggesting that the intervention of a single scribe or reader on both manuscripts.

S4567

Fragment dating to the tenth century that contains the titles of various *mudrās* and *mantras* on the recto and verso (five columns). Includes a short visualization text centered on Vajragarbha Bodhisattva (*Guan Jin'gangzang pusa* 觀金剛藏菩薩) intended to purify one's “body, speech, and mind” by reciting three mantras corresponding to three points on the crown, throat, and heart. Towards the end of the fragment, and set off by a space, is a section entitled, “mantra for venerating the Buddha” (*lifo zhenyan* 礼仏真言). Cf. S5621, P3835.9

S5621

Mediocre scroll measuring 14.5 x 2 ft. containing nineteen *mantras* that appear to represent a ritual sequence (*sādhana*) centered on the figure Vajragarbha Bodhisattva. The first *mantra* (1) invokes Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, followed by five *mantras* for the (2) generation and (3) re-absorption of light rays used to purify the (4) body, (5) speech, and (6) mind of the practitioner. These are followed by three sets of four *mantras* that invoke the names of the (7-10) “vajra bodhisattvas,” the (11-14) four offering bodhisattvas, identified here as “incense,” “flowers,” “lamp,” and “sweet dew,” and the (15-18) “guardian vajras” of the four directions. The sequence concludes with the (19) “heart mantra” of Vajragarbha Bodhisattva. The list of deities follows the color/directional scheme (east/white, south/blue, west/red, and north/green) corresponding to that promoted in the *Altar Methods* (cf. P3913), the *Supplementary Manual* (B7667), and several sketches from the site (S2139, P2012).

S5703

Seven loose strips of a *pothī* booklet, each pierced for string and measuring 26.5 x 7 cm., containing sections of the *Jin'gangding yuqie liqu banruo jing* 金剛頂瑜伽理趣般若經 (J.

Rishukyō, T8.241) attributed to Vajrabodhi. Another (partial?) copy of this text is found on S3018.

S6323

Identified in Li 2003 as a containing includes a title and two columns of text from the *Foshuo jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* 佛口救拔焰口俄鬼陀羅尼經 (cf. T21.1313) attributed to Amoghavajra. Several copies of this text appear at Dunhuang, including on S1896, S1397, S4119.2, P3022, P3920.9, B7374, and B8685.

Pelliot Collection

P2012

Long scroll measuring 30 x 514 cm., covered on both front and back with sketches in black ink. The recto contains a series of four separate *maṇḍala* arrangements, including individual deity assemblies (bodhisattva, guardian) depicted in a variety of postures making specific *mudrās* and/or holding individual attributes. In addition, several notations written in Chinese appear throughout the drawing, indicating the proper placement of implements, as well as color (see Fraser 2004). Also included are inscriptions identifying the deity assemblies by name and number. These names likewise appear in Section 16-20 of the *Altar Methods* (cf. P3913.15-19), and throughout the various sections of the *Supplementary Manual* (B7667). The verso contains several distinct items, including three separate sketches and portions of a Chinese rhyming dictionary. With the exception of one section on the verso, the two sides appear unrelated. Includes numerous erasures, corrections, and misnumbered sections.

P2105

Recycled scroll comprised of twenty-one sheets glued together. Shares many sections in common with P2104. Recto is divided into three major sections, comprised of eleven individual items, each of which appear to be written in a unique hand. The verso contains a partial copy (beginning damaged) of the *Jin'gangding lianhuabu xin niansong yigui* 金剛頂蓮華部心念誦儀軌 (cf. T18.873.301a16-310a) attributed to Amoghavajra, but related to the recension found in the *Jingangding yiqie rulai shishe dasheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂一切如來實攝大乘現證大教王經 (cf. T18.874.18.312c19-322b), also attributed to Amoghavajra. Contains punctuation, as well as several examples of a stylized red-ink marker used to highlight the text.

P2197

Small roll of 16 ft. measuring 14 to 42 x 43.4 cm on a bamboo roller with attached multicolored cord used to fasten the manuscript. On the back of the first sheet, which is constructed of a different (more durable?) type of paper than the rest of the roll, is a geometric design or grid in red. The recto contains ten individual *dhāraṇī* or mantra texts, representing what appears to be a liturgical compendium. The presence of several red-ink markers used to highlight select texts further suggests the liturgical function of the manuscript.

P2368

Single, damaged folio of thick beige paper measuring 27-27.1 × 26.1-28.4 cm. The recto contains an excerpt from the *Fomu dakongque mingwang jing* 佛母大孔雀明王經 (cf. T19.982.437b10-19) attributed to Amoghavajra, while the verso includes various writing exercises.

P3022

Damaged scroll comprised of eight sheets measuring 30.1 x 47 cm, with a total of four texts on the front and back, including (recto, Item 1) a complete copy of the *Foshuo jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* 佛□救拔焰口餓鬼陀羅尼經 attributed to Amoghavajra (cf. T1313.21.464b-465b-27). Contains some unique transcription of the *dhāraṇīs*. See S1896, S1397, S4119, S6323, P3920.9, B7374, B8685 for additional copies of this text.

P3835

Tenth-century concertina booklet assembled from twenty-two sheets of fibrous, beige paper dating to the late tenth-century. Layout is exceptionally messy, and portions of the manuscript incorporate recycled sheets from other manuscripts (P2837). Contains some sixteen items on the front and back, including numerous seals, illustrations, scriptural excerpts, ritual texts, and so on. Item 8 on the verso includes a colophon dated 978, and includes the name of the figure Yang Yuanshou (cf. P3913, P3423, P3431). Dark writing, additions, and corrections throughout. Also contains several examples of a stylized red-ink marker used to highlight select texts, including Item 9 on the verso, which itself is a copy of a short *sādhana* texts found on Section 36.6 of the *Altar Methods*.

P3913

Stitched *pothī* booklet measuring 28.5 x 10.1 cm comprised of 87 folios of thick, irregular paper folded in half and bundled into small gatherings that were sewn together to form the spine. Rounded edges. One folio serves as a cover, which contains notations on the front and back. A note on the back cover, in a different hand than that of the text, includes what appears to be the name [Yang] Yuanshou [楊]願受 (cf. P3423, P3431, P3835). Each folio is pierced for string, but there is little evidence of wear. Dark, semi-cursive writing. Several additions, corrections, and erasures, as well as section markers. Contains a copy of the *Altar Methods* in thirty-six sections.

P3916

Loose-leaf *pothī* booklet measuring 23.8 x 8.8 cm comprised of 131 numbered folios with rounded corners. Each folio is pierced for string. Wooden cover intact, decorated with a painted *vajra*. The booklet contains ten separate texts or excerpts, including what has been identified on Item 1 as a copy of the *Niansong famen* 念誦法門 section of the *Foshuo qijuzhibifomu Zhunni(ti) daming tuoluoni jing* 佛□七俱胝佛母准尼(提)大明陀羅尼經 (cf. T20.1075.175a4.1-178c) attributed to Vajrabodhi.

P3920

Stitched pothī booklet measuring 28.8 x 8.4 cm comprised of 219 oblong folios pierced for string and gathered by a loose tie. The folios are numbered on the upper right hand, from 4 to 221; folios 1-3 are missing, and two 2 folios are numbered 32. Dark ink. Some corrections and erasures. Contains 12 individual items, including back-to-back copies of (Item 7) the *Jin'gangding yiqie rulai shenmiao bimi jingangjie dasanmeiye xiuxi yuqie huanqing yi* 金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修習瑜伽迎請儀 (cf. T18.874.18.312c19-322b) and (Item 8) the *Jin'gangding lianbuabu niansong yigui* 金剛頂蓮華部心念誦儀軌 (T18.873.303b13-310a13), two related liturgical manuals attributed to Amoghavajra. Both Items 7 and 8 (and only those two items) contain numerous examples of a stylized red-ink marker used to highlight the text, as well as a decorative “double vajra” design executed in red ink.

P4009

Three large sheets of heavy paper measuring 31cm x 42 cm and covered on the front and back with drawings in black ink, for a total of six separate, but related, sketches. The sheets have been folded, accordion-style, and then flattened again, to create uniform columns, with between nine and twelve columns per page. In total the six sketches contain some three hundred individual figures (human, divine) depicted in a variety of seated and standing positions arranged into vertical columns. Among the more recognizable figures is a set of five buddhas, four offering deities, four wrathful guardian figures, as well as several other figures that are repeated on multiple sketches. In addition, several ritual sequences appear to be graphically depicted in the form of figures drawn in multiple poses consecutively. Hirai (cited in Eastman 1983) has identified the two inscriptions appearing on Sheet 1 (P4009.1) as the titles of Sections 21 and 22 of the *Altar Methods* (cf. P3913.20-21, B7667.21-22).

Beijing Collection

B1388 (BD02301; *yu* 餘 001)

Scroll measuring 21 x 25.5 cm comprised of 14 sheets. Hou 2008 identifies this manuscript as one of five recycled manuscripts (S2316V, B3699, B3554V, S2144V) that comprise a partial copy of the *Altar Methods* containing nineteen of the thirty-six complete sections of the received text (cf. P3913). The verso of this manuscript corresponds to Section 13-21 of that text .

B3554

Hou 2008 identifies this manuscript as one of five recycled manuscripts (B1388, S2316V, B3699, S2144V) that comprise a partial copy of the *Altar Methods* containing nineteen of the thirty-six complete sections of the received text (cf. P3913). The verso of this manuscript corresponds to Sections 36.1-4 of that text.

B3699

Hou 2008 identifies this manuscript as one of five recycled manuscripts (B1388, S2316V, B3554V, S2144V) that comprise nineteen of the thirty-six sections of the *Altar Methods* (cf. P3913). The verso of this manuscript contains Sections 28-35 of that text.

B7666

Tenth century scroll, end missing, containing four texts on the recto and verso, including a copy of the *jin'gangding jing yiqie rulai zhenshi she dasheng xinzheng dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂經一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經 (cf. T18.874.315a21-322b7), a liturgical manual attributed to Amoghavajra. See also P3920.7. Included on this text are several examples of a stylized red-ink marker used to highlight the text.

B7667

Recycled tenth-century scroll measuring 30.5 x 924.4 cm. Hirai 1974, Kuo 1998 and Hou 2008 have identified this as a partial copy of an alternate recension of the *Altar Methods* containing nineteen individual sections on the recto and verso. The recto includes Sections 1-8 (end missing), while the verso contains Sections 15 (head missing), 16-19, and 21-26 (end missing). Sections 1, 6, 15, 16, 22, 24, 25, 26 all have visibly missing characters.

B7677 (夜 98)

Tenth century manuscript containing fourteen separate items on the front and back in an irregular layout. Some sections inverted, multiple hands evident. Contains numerous ink markers, including a stylized red-ink marker used to highlight sections of the text. Contains several excerpts from the *Altar Methods*, including a copy of the prayer text (Item 5) found on Section 36.7 of that text (see S2144V), and Item 7, which appears to be an excerpt from Section 9 of the *Altar Methods*.

BD15147

Fragment identified by Hou 2008 as containing Sections 10 through 17 of the *Altar Methods* (cf. P3913.9-16). Hou further identifies this fragment as belonging to the same original scroll as G015. When joined, the two fragments contain nearly two-thirds of the received *Altar Methods*.

Gansu Provincial Museum Collection**G015**

Fine manuscript fragment containing Sections 28-36.6 of the critical text of the *Altar Methods* (cf. P3913.27-35). Hou 2008 connects this manuscript to the fragment found on BD15147, which together comprise a partial copy of that text in nineteen sections.

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