

**SHINGON TEXTS**

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**BDK English Tripiṭaka 98-I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII**

**SHINGON TEXTS**

**On the Differences between the Exoteric  
and Esoteric Teachings**

**The Meaning of Becoming a Buddha  
in This Very Body**

**The Meanings of Sound, Sign, and Reality**

**The Meanings of the Word Hūṃ**

**The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury**

by

Kūkai

Translated from the Japanese

(Taishō Volume 77, Numbers 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2426)

by

Rolf W. Giebel

**The Mitsugonin Confession**

**The Illuminating Secret Commentary on the  
Five Cakras and the Nine Syllables**

by

Kakuban

Translated from the Japanese

(Taishō Volume 79, Numbers 2527, 2514)

by

Dale A. Todaro

**Numata Center  
for Buddhist Translation and Research  
2004**

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## A Message on the Publication of the English Tripiṭaka

The Buddhist canon is said to contain eighty-four thousand different teachings. I believe that this is because the Buddha's basic approach was to prescribe a different treatment for every spiritual ailment, much as a doctor prescribes a different medicine for every medical ailment. Thus his teachings were always appropriate for the particular suffering individual and for the time at which the teaching was given, and over the ages not one of his prescriptions has failed to relieve the suffering to which it was addressed.

Ever since the Buddha's Great Demise over twenty-five hundred years ago, his message of wisdom and compassion has spread throughout the world. Yet no one has ever attempted to translate the entire Buddhist canon into English throughout the history of Japan. It is my greatest wish to see this done and to make the translations available to the many English-speaking people who have never had the opportunity to learn about the Buddha's teachings.

Of course, it would be impossible to translate all of the Buddha's eighty-four thousand teachings in a few years. I have, therefore, had one hundred thirty-nine of the scriptural texts in the prodigious Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon selected for inclusion in the First Series of this translation project.

It is in the nature of this undertaking that the results are bound to be criticized. Nonetheless, I am convinced that unless someone takes it upon himself or herself to initiate this project, it will never be done. At the same time, I hope that an improved, revised edition will appear in the future.

It is most gratifying that, thanks to the efforts of more than a hundred Buddhist scholars from the East and the West, this monumental project has finally gotten off the ground. May the rays of the Wisdom of the Compassionate One reach each and every person in the world.

NUMATA Yehan  
Founder of the English  
Tripiṭaka Project

August 7, 1991



## Editorial Foreword

In January 1982, Dr. NUMATA Yehan, the founder of the Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai (Society for the Promotion of Buddhism), decided to begin the monumental task of translating the complete Taishō edition of the Chinese Tripiṭaka (Buddhist canon) into the English language. Under his leadership, a special preparatory committee was organized in April 1982. By July of the same year, the Translation Committee of the English Tripiṭaka was officially convened.

The initial Committee consisted of the following members: (late) HANAYAMA Shōyū (Chairperson), BANDŌ Shōjun, ISHIGAMI Zennō, (late) KAMATA Shigeo, KANAOKA Shūyū, MAYEDA Sengaku, NARA Yasuaki, (late) SAYEKI Shinkō, (late) SHIOIRI Ryōtatsu, TAMARU Noriyoshi, (late) TAMURA Kwansei, URYŪZU Ryūshin, and YUYAMA Akira. Assistant members of the Committee were as follows: KANAZAWA Atsushi, WATANABE Shōgo, Rolf Giebel of New Zealand, and Rudy Smet of Belgium.

After holding planning meetings on a monthly basis, the Committee selected one hundred thirty-nine texts for the First Series of translations, an estimated one hundred printed volumes in all. The texts selected are not necessarily limited to those originally written in India but also include works written or composed in China and Japan. While the publication of the First Series proceeds, the texts for the Second Series will be selected from among the remaining works; this process will continue until all the texts, in Japanese as well as in Chinese, have been published.

Frankly speaking, it will take perhaps one hundred years or more to accomplish the English translation of the complete Chinese and Japanese texts, for they consist of thousands of works. Nevertheless, as Dr. NUMATA wished, it is the sincere hope of the Committee that this project will continue unto completion, even after all its present members have passed away.

It must be mentioned here that the final object of this project is not academic fulfillment but the transmission of the teaching of the

Buddha to the whole world in order to create harmony and peace among humankind. To that end, the translators have been asked to minimize the use of explanatory notes of the kind that are indispensable in academic texts, so that the attention of general readers will not be unduly distracted from the primary text. Also, a glossary of selected terms is appended to aid in understanding the text.

To my great regret, however, Dr. NUMATA passed away on May 5, 1994, at the age of ninety-seven, entrusting his son, Mr. NUMATA Toshihide, with the continuation and completion of the Translation Project. The Committee also lost its able and devoted Chairperson, Professor HANAYAMA Shōyū, on June 16, 1995, at the age of sixty-three. After these severe blows, the Committee elected me, then Vice President of Musashino Women's College, to be the Chair in October 1995. The Committee has renewed its determination to carry out the noble intention of Dr. NUMATA, under the leadership of Mr. NUMATA Toshihide.

The present members of the Committee are MAYEDA Sengaku (Chairperson), BANDŌ Shōjun, ISHIGAMI Zennō, ICHISHIMA Shōshin, KANAOKA Shūyū, NARA Yasuaki, TAMARU Noriyoshi, URYŪZU Ryūshin, YUYAMA Akira, Kenneth K. Tanaka, WATANABE Shōgo, and assistant member YONEZAWA Yoshiyasu.

The Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research was established in November 1984, in Berkeley, California, U.S.A., to assist in the publication of the BDK English Tripiṭaka First Series. In December 1991, the Publication Committee was organized at the Numata Center, with Professor Philip Yampolsky as the Chairperson. To our sorrow, Professor Yampolsky passed away in July 1996. In February 1997, Dr. Kenneth K. Inada became Chair and served in that capacity until August 1999. The current Chair, Dr. Francis H. Cook, has been continuing the work since October 1999. All of the remaining texts will be published under the supervision of this Committee, in close cooperation with the Editorial Committee in Tokyo.

MAYEDA Sengaku  
Chairperson  
Editorial Committee of  
the BDK English Tripiṭaka

## Publisher's Foreword

The Publication Committee shares with the Editorial Committee the responsibility of realizing the vision of Dr. Yehan Numata, founder of Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai, the Society for the Promotion of Buddhism. This vision is no less than to make the Buddha's teaching better known throughout the world, through the translation and publication in English of the entire collection of Buddhist texts compiled in the *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, published in Tokyo in the early part of the twentieth century. This huge task is expected to be carried out by several generations of translators and may take as long as a hundred years to complete. Ultimately, the entire canon will be available to anyone who can read English and who wishes to learn more about the teaching of the Buddha.

The present generation of staff members of the Publication Committee includes Marianne Dresser; Brian Nagata, president of the Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, Berkeley, California; Eisho Nasu; and Reverend Kiyoshi Yamashita. The Publication Committee is headquartered at the Numata Center and, working in close cooperation with the Editorial Committee, is responsible for the usual tasks associated with preparing translations for publication.

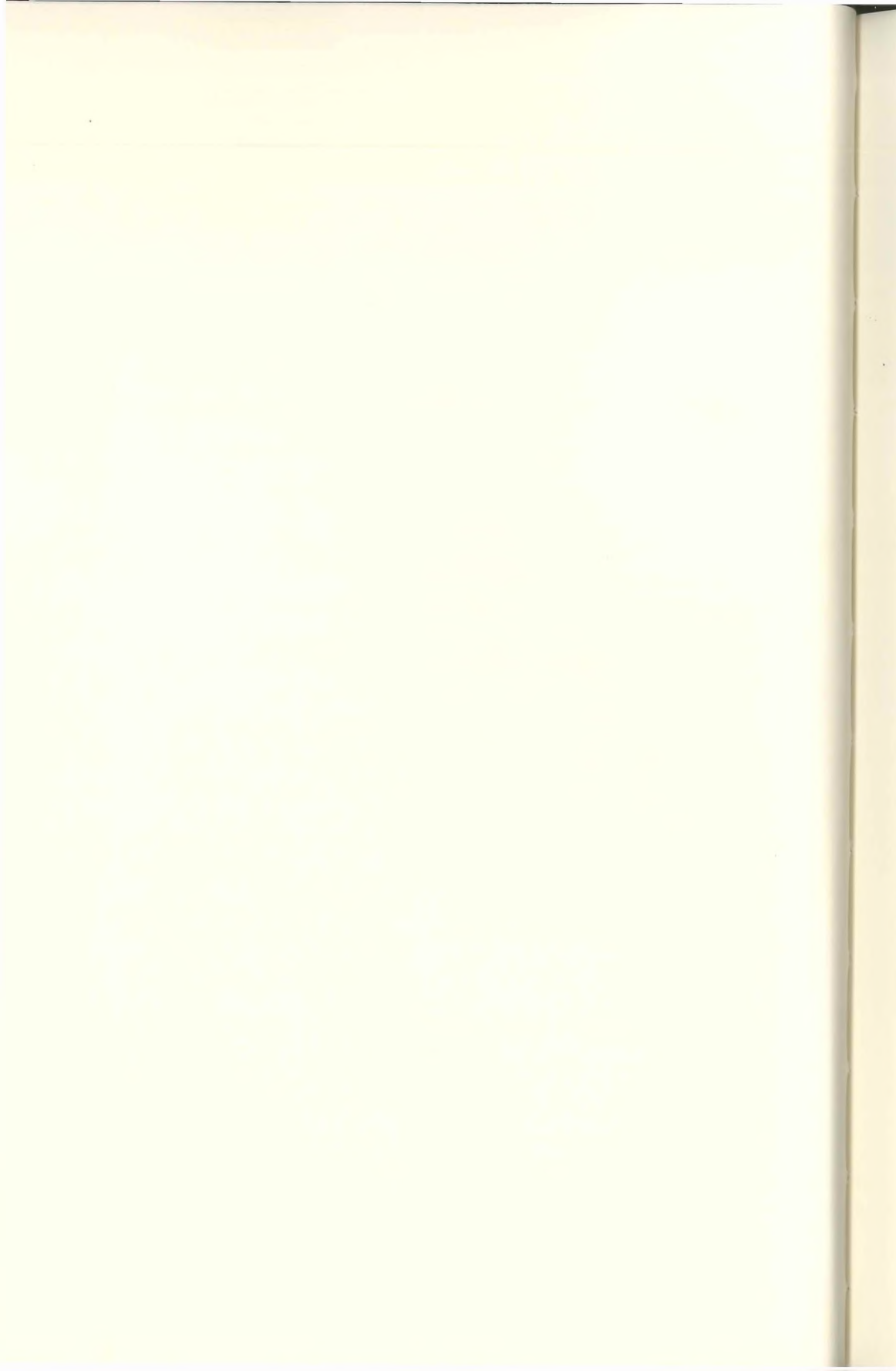
In October 1999, I became the third chairperson of the Publication Committee, on the retirement of its very capable former chair, Dr. Kenneth K. Inada. The Committee is devoted to the advancement of the Buddha's teaching through the publication of excellent translations of the thousands of texts that make up the Buddhist canon.

Francis H. Cook  
Chairperson  
Publication Committee



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**ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EXOTERIC  
AND ESOTERIC TEACHINGS**

**THE MEANING OF BECOMING A BUDDHA  
IN THIS VERY BODY**

**THE MEANINGS OF SOUND, SIGN, AND REALITY**

**THE MEANINGS OF THE WORD HŪM**

**THE PRECIOUS KEY TO THE SECRET TREASURY**



## Translator's Introduction

Kūkai (774–835), founder of the Japanese Shingon school of Esoteric Buddhism and popularly known by his posthumous title of Kōbō Daishi, was one of the most important figures in Japan's religious and cultural history. Born into a declining aristocratic family in Sanuki province on the island of Shikoku, he entered the government college in the capital at the age of eighteen with the intention of studying to become a bureaucrat. But for reasons that are by no means clear, he abandoned his studies after only a few years and turned to Buddhism, probably becoming an itinerant, privately ordained monk and devoting himself to meditative and ascetic practices.

In 804 Kūkai sailed with an official Japanese embassy to T'ang China as a government-sponsored student. In the T'ang capital of Ch'ang-an he met Hui-kuo (746–805), a prelate versed in esoteric ritual, and within three short months he had become an ordained master and, according to the traditional sectarian view, eighth patriarch of Esoteric Buddhism. He had initially intended staying in China for twenty years but he now decided, probably in part because of Hui-kuo's death, to return to Japan, and he arrived back in Kyūshū toward the end of 806.

Kūkai was kept waiting for three years in Kyūshū before receiving permission to proceed to the capital, Kyoto, in 809. But once he took up residence at Jingoji, a temple on the outskirts of Kyoto, he soon rose to eminence as a religious and cultural leader of early Heian society. In 819 he initiated construction of a monastic center on Mount Kōya, some distance to the southeast of Kyoto, and along with the systematization of the teachings and practices of the Shingon school, the completion of this monastery became Kūkai's main concern during the remainder of his life. In 823 he was presented with Tōji, the

most important temple at the southern entrance to Kyoto, and it became the official headquarters of the Shingon school, which also finally received official recognition at this time. In 831 Kūkai was forced to resign from his official duties because of ill health, and when his resignation was eventually accepted he retired to Mount Kōya, where he spent most of his remaining days.

Kūkai was an acknowledged master of classical Chinese prose and poetry, but the works translated here, although showing ample evidence of his skills as a writer, are (perhaps with the exception of the last) expository rather than literary in their style, and they represent five of what are traditionally regarded as his six most important doctrinal and philosophical works. The first, setting out the differences between Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism, could be described as a religious manifesto, proclaiming the independence of Shingon Buddhism and its superiority over all other forms of Buddhism prevalent in China and Japan at the time, while the next three form a trilogy traditionally considered to deal with the “three mysteries” of the body, speech, and mind respectively. The fifth and last work translated here was perhaps Kūkai’s last major opus, and it presents what might be described as a phenomenology of the religious mind.

### ***1. On the Differences between the Exoteric and Esoteric Teachings (Benkenmitsunikyōron)***

*On the Differences between the Exoteric and Esoteric Teachings* (hereafter: *The Differences*), the title of which might be more literally translated as *A Treatise on Distinguishing the Two Teachings of the Exoteric and the Esoteric*, is generally thought to have been composed some time between 813 and 815. In late 812 Kūkai had performed two initiation ceremonies at Takaosanji, the first for Saichō (the founder of the Tendai school, who had traveled to China with the same embassy as Kūkai) and three laymen, and the second for Saichō and more than one hundred and ninety other people, who included the leading priests of important temples and many members of the nobility. The following spring seventeen disciples of Saichō received a further initiation from

Kūkai, and as a result of these ceremonies Kūkai established himself as the master of esoteric ritual in Japan. At the same time, he may also be assumed to have gained the confidence necessary to engage more actively in the propagation of the ideas underpinning these practices, and the first literary product of this activity was *The Differences*.

Although in later years Kūkai was to espouse a more synthetic view of Buddhism, considering Esoteric Buddhism to embrace all other varieties of Buddhism, in *The Differences* his aim is to highlight the differences between Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism and explain why the latter is superior to the former. One reason that he adopted this contrastive approach was that he felt that most people still had a poor understanding of Esoteric Buddhism, and to rectify this state of affairs he set forth his views on the essential features of Esoteric Buddhism.

*The Differences* consists largely of quotations from Buddhist scriptures and treatises, both exoteric and esoteric, and by showing that some of the basic tenets of Esoteric Buddhism as understood by Kūkai could already be detected in exoteric works, he hoped to demonstrate the legitimacy of Esoteric Buddhism. According to Kūkai, the fundamental differences between Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism are to be found in the expositors of their respective teachings and in the nature of the content of their teachings: Exoteric Buddhism was taught by the historical Buddha Śākyamuni in accordance with the religious capacities of his listeners, while Esoteric Buddhism was revealed by the Dharma-Buddha, or Dharma body (*dharmakāya*), and gives direct expression to the ultimate state of enlightenment.

These were radical assertions, for at the time it was axiomatic that the Dharma body did not expound the Dharma and that the state of enlightenment, embodied by the Dharma body, transcended language and was ineffable. But not only did Kūkai find evidence in exoteric literature of the exposition of the Dharma by the Dharma body, but he also maintained that it was Esoteric Buddhism that corresponded to the teachings revealed by the Dharma body as direct expressions of the ultimate state of enlightenment.

It may be readily surmised that these fundamental differences between Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism as delineated by Kūkai reflected inherently divergent views of “language,” and this subject is taken up in greater depth in *The Meanings of Sound, Sign, and Reality* and, from a somewhat different angle, in *The Meanings of the Word Hūm*. In addition, Kūkai also touches on other differences between Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism—the great disparity in the time required to attain enlightenment, differences in methods of practice, and the different benefits to be derived from each—and these are dealt with more fully in *The Meaning of Becoming a Buddha in This Very Body*, while the whole issue of the relationship between Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism is readdressed from a quite different vantage point in *The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*.

## **2. *The Meaning of Becoming a Buddha in This Very Body (Sokushinjōbutsugi)***

It is not known when Kūkai wrote *The Meaning of Becoming a Buddha in This Very Body* (hereafter: *Becoming a Buddha*), but it is thought to have been composed sometime around 820. The word *gi* in the title, which also appears in the titles of the other two works of Kūkai’s trilogy and is rendered here as “meaning,” could in this case be equally well translated as “thesis” or “principle,” but for the sake of consistency it has been translated as “meaning” in each case.

The idea of “becoming a Buddha in this very body” (*sokushinjōbutsu*), or attaining Buddhahood in one’s present lifetime, was not original with Kūkai. Although the prevailing view was that a period of three incalculable eons was required to attain enlightenment, Kūkai’s contemporary Saichō, for example, propounded the notion of the swift realization of Buddhahood on the basis of the *Lotus Sutra*, while Amoghavajra (705–774), the great translator of Esoteric Buddhist texts into Chinese, had stressed the speed with which enlightenment could be attained through esoteric methods. In both of these cases, however, the emphasis was on the rapidity of the attainment of Buddhahood and/or the somaticity suggested by a purely literal understanding of the phrase “in this very body”

(*sokushin*). If this had been all that Kūkai meant by the expression “becoming a Buddha in this very body,” then the scriptural evidence cited at the start of *Becoming a Buddha*, together with some brief annotations, would have been sufficient for his purposes, and it would be unclear what objective the remainder of the treatise, consisting of a two-stanza verse and its line-by-line exposition, was meant to serve. But it is in fact this verse that encapsulates the essence of Kūkai's conception of “becoming a Buddha in this very body” and the subsequent exposition that demonstrates the originality of his thought in this regard.

According to Kūkai, the first stanza explains the meaning of “in this very body” (*sokushin*) and the second that of “becoming a Buddha” (*jōbutsu*). The fact that Kūkai goes on to discuss the thesis of “becoming a Buddha in this very body” only in terms of these two component concepts would seem to be of some significance, for it suggests that what might, in simple terms, be described as a principle of universal interpenetration underpinning all existents, set forth in the first stanza, does not in itself guarantee the actualization of “becoming a Buddha in this very body,” which, according to the second stanza, invariably entails “wisdom.” Moreover, the link between the two—principle and wisdom—is provided by the practice of meditation defined in terms of the “three mysteries” of the body (*mudrās* or hand gestures), speech (mantras), and mind (visualization). In other words, the three mysteries could be said to act as a conduit whereby the vision of reality presented in the first stanza is converted into the wisdom, now actualized, of the second stanza, and it is presumably only then that the underlying themes of the two stanzas, discussed only separately by Kūkai, are brought together in the unitary realization of “becoming a Buddha in this very body.”

### **3. The Meanings of Sound, Sign, and Reality** (*Shōjijissōgi*)

*The Meanings of Sound, Sign, and Reality* (hereafter: *Sound, Sign, and Reality*) clearly postdates *Becoming a Buddha*, for it contains two references to the latter work, and it was probably composed in

the first half of the 820s. It was noted earlier that Kūkai's differentiation of Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism implied an understanding of "language" on Kūkai's part that differed considerably from conventional views, and it is in *Sound, Sign, and Reality* that Kūkai sets forth the view of language underpinning his assertion that the Dharma body can and does expound the Dharma.

The main elements of Kūkai's ideas concerning the "language" used in the exposition of the Dharma by the Dharma body are to be found in the opening section of *Sound, Sign, and Reality*, according to which the Tathāgata invariably makes use of patterned signs (*monji*) when expounding the Dharma, the essence of patterned signs lies in the six sense objects, and the six sense objects have their basis in the three mysteries of the Dharma-Buddha. In other words, Kūkai has extended the notion of "language" to encompass all objects of the senses and the mind, that is, all phenomena, and these phenomena are, moreover, said to be grounded in the Dharma-Buddha, or ultimate reality. It is made clear in the following section, where Kūkai uses the six types of compound words in Sanskrit to analyze the various possible relationships between the three terms "sound," "sign," and "reality," that not only are all phenomena expressions of reality, they *are* reality, and the ability to perceive them as such—as instantiations of the exposition of the Dharma by the Dharma body—is what distinguishes the enlightened from the ignorant.

In the remainder of this work, Kūkai elaborates on these themes, first by citing scriptural evidence and then by commenting at length on two verses, constantly reinforcing the message that all phenomena are direct expressions of ultimate reality. It could thus be said that while Kūkai shared mainstream views on the limitations of everyday discursive language and on the impossibility of giving direct expression to ultimate reality by means of such language, he overcame this problem by developing a totally different conception of "language," or communication, on the basis of which he then asserted that, contrary to exoteric claims, the Dharma body did indeed directly expound the Dharma and reality could be apprehended through the medium of "language" as defined by Kūkai.

*Sound, Sign, and Reality* comes to what would appear to be a premature close, for it ends after having treated of only the first of the six sense objects (matter), the discussion of which falls under the explication of only the third line of the four-line stanza constituting the basis of the main discourse, and it has long been debated whether or not the work is complete. As regards its formal structure, it is clearly incomplete, but it could be argued that little more of substance could have been added to Kūkai's thesis by a detailed discussion of the remaining five sense objects, and in terms of philosophical content it can be considered complete.

#### 4. *The Meanings of the Word Hūṃ (Unjigi)*

In *Sound, Sign, and Reality* Kūkai extended the connotations of "language" to embrace all phenomena, but in *The Meanings of the Word Hūṃ* he moves to the other extreme, as it were, demonstrating how the entire teachings of Buddhism can be encapsulated in a single word or syllable, in this case *Hūṃ*. This notion had already been hinted at in the discussion of mantras in *Sound, Sign, and Reality*, and it finds its most comprehensive treatment in *The Meanings of the Word Hūṃ*, generally assumed to have been written not long after *Sound, Sign, and Reality*. Stated in another way, whereas *Sound, Sign, and Reality* deals with the ontological aspects of language in its broadest ramifications, *The Meanings of the Word Hūṃ* explores the potential veridicality of language in a narrower sense by focusing on a single, concrete example.

Many reasons have been suggested why Kūkai should have particularly chosen the word *Hūṃ* to illustrate his ideas on the expressive potential of words, albeit words of a special type. *Hūṃ* is a so-called seed-syllable (*bīja*), used as the linguistic symbol of many different deities, but in the present context the fact that it is said to symbolize the "bodhi-mind" (*bodhicitta*), or aspiration for enlightenment, is probably significant, for one of the underlying themes of *The Meanings of the Word Hūṃ* is praxis, dealt with in particular in the "Synthetic Interpretation" in Section III. Furthermore, it is also worth

bearing in mind that for Kūkai the Sanskrit alphabet and Sanskrit in general had a special significance and were believed by him to be a product of the truth-principle, corresponding to the natural state of things as they really are, and therefore to be fundamentally different from all other scripts and languages (including, of course, classical Chinese, in which he wrote).

Kūkai's discussion of the meanings of the word *Hūṃ* is based on a distinction between "superficial meaning" (*jisō*), which may be equated with the conventional or exoteric meaning of a word, and "connotative meaning" (*jigi*), which corresponds to its esoteric interpretation. Having resolved the word *Hūṃ* into its constituent elements of *h(a)*, *a*, *ū*, and *ma (ṃ)*, Kūkai proceeds to give first the superficial or literal meanings of each of these four letters or syllables, then their connotative or real meanings, and lastly their synthetic or combined meaning as represented by the word *Hūṃ*. Kūkai's aim in thus analyzing the different levels of meaning contained in the word *Hūṃ* was, of course, not merely academic. In his view, language as used in Exoteric Buddhism merely defines and interprets the world, but in Esoteric Buddhism language can directly reveal reality, and it is only by comprehending the true meanings of linguistic expression that reality is apprehended and true wisdom attained. *The Meanings of the Word Hūṃ* could be said to provide a practical illustration of how this process takes place.

It was noted above that one of the underlying themes of *The Meanings of the Word Hūṃ* is praxis, and another salient feature, especially pronounced in the long explication of the "real meaning" of the letter *ū*, is a world view of absolute affirmation, to which Kūkai gives repeated expression. Although this sense of absolute affirmation was but a natural outcome of his overall religious philosophy, one of its most explicit articulations is to be found in this section of *The Meanings of the Word Hūṃ*.

### **5. The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury (*Hizōhōyaku*)**

During the Tenchō era (824–34) Emperor Junna ordered each of the Buddhist schools then established in Japan to submit an exposition of

its teachings, and in response to this imperial request Kūkai, representing the Shingon school, wrote the *Treatise on the Ten Stages of the Mind as a Secret Maṇḍala* (*Himitsu mandara jūjūshin ron*; hereafter: *The Ten Stages*). This was a voluminous work in ten fascicles, consisting largely of quotations from an enormous number of sutras, treatises, and commentaries, and perhaps because of its length Kūkai subsequently wrote a simplified version, called *The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* (hereafter: *The Precious Key*), in three fascicles. The exact dates of composition of *The Ten Stages* and *The Precious Key* are not known, but they are generally thought to have been written sometime around 830.

Both *The Ten Stages* and *The Precious Key* are similar in their basic structure. That is to say, they both describe the development of the religious mind as a process which, although entailing innumerable stages, can provisionally be divided into ten stages, ranging from those whose behavior is governed by instinctive impulse to those who have unlocked the "secret treasury" and realized the ultimate truth as represented by Esoteric Buddhism. These ten stages may be further divided into three pre-Buddhist and seven Buddhist stages. The three pre-Buddhist stages are: 1) the stage of the ordinary person driven by uncontrolled desire; 2) the stage of those who observe basic individual and social ethics, equated with Confucianism and also Buddhist precepts for the laity; and 3) the stage of those, such as Taoists and Hindus, who worship various gods in the hope of being reborn in heaven. These three mundane states of mind are followed by seven stages corresponding to different levels of Buddhist understanding: 4) the stage of the *śrāvaka*, 5) the stage of the *pratyekabuddha*, 6) the stage of the Yogācāra (Hossō) school, 7) the stage of the Mādhyamika (Sanron) school, 8) the stage of the T'ien-t'ai (Tendai) school, 9) the stage of the Hua-yen (Kegon) school, and 10) the stage of Esoteric Buddhism. These seven Buddhist stages can again be subdivided into Hinayana (4 and 5), Mahayana (6–9), and Vajrayana (10).

The inspiration for this hierarchical schema came from Chapter One of the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*. But although the basic schema presented in *The Ten Stages* and *The Precious Key* is identical, the

two works differ somewhat in their treatment of the relationship between Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism. In *The Ten Stages*, the sections on the third through ninth stages are each accompanied by an esoteric interpretation, implying that the teachings corresponding to these different stages of spiritual growth can in essence, when viewed with the understanding gained in the tenth stage, be all regarded as manifestations of the Shingon teachings. They are, in other words, both subsumed and surpassed by Esoteric Buddhism. In *The Precious Key*, on the other hand, these esoteric interpretations of the pre-Shingon stages are missing, and instead the emphasis is on the way in which successive stages overcome the limitations of the previous stages, culminating in the attainment of true enlightenment in the final, tenth stage. In this sense, Kūkai could be said to have returned to the stance initially evidenced in *The Differences*, with his prime focus being on demonstrating the ultimate superiority of Esoteric Buddhism.

Another distinctive feature of *The Precious Key* is the lengthy dialogue between a young Confucian and a Buddhist monk that has been inserted in the section on the fourth stage. It covers various aspects of the relationship between Buddhism on the one hand and the state and society on the other, a topic about which there had already been much debate in China, and we find here an early Japanese variation on this perennial theme.

### A Note on the Translation

The English translations presented here are based on the Taishō edition, but reference has also been made to the new critical edition of Kūkai's writings (*Teihon Kōbō Daishi zenshū*, Vol. 3 [1994]), and a number of variant readings are given in the notes. There is, of course, a long history and large corpus of commentarial literature on the five works translated here, but there would seem to be little point in providing a list of the many commentaries; references for previous translations of these works into Western languages (including some excerpts and abridged translations) may be found in the Bibliography. All head-

ings have been added by the translator, and parentheses and square brackets enclose further additions by the translator, while passages in italics within angle brackets < > are explanatory interpolations in the original (where they appear as half-sized, two-column text), either by Kūkai or in works quoted by Kūkai.



ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EXOTERIC  
AND ESOTERIC TEACHINGS

by

Kūkai



## Fascicle One

### Preamble

The Buddha has three bodies, and the teachings are of two kinds. The sermons of the response and transformation [bodies]<sup>1</sup> are called the exoteric teaching; their language is plain, cursory, and accommodated to the religious capacity [of the listener]. The discourses of the Dharma-Buddha are called the esoteric treasury; their language is secret, recondite, and veridical.

The divisions of the scriptures in the exoteric teachings have millions [of scriptures]. When dividing them into collections (*piṭakas*), they differentiate one to ten or fifty-one [collections], and when speaking of vehicles (*yānas*), they distinguish one, two, three, four, or five [vehicles]. When discussing practice, they make the six perfections (*pāramitās*) their standard, and when describing the attainment [of Buddhahood], they make three great [*asaṃkhyeya* eons (*kalpas*)] the requisite term. The Great Sage has explained these matters quite clearly.

According to the explanation in the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* of the secret treasury (T. 18: 288a), the transformation body of the Tathāgata expounds the doctrines of the three vehicles for bodhisattvas yet to enter the [ten] stages, for those of the two vehicles, and for ordinary people, while the other-enjoyment body expounds the exoteric One Vehicle for bodhisattvas of the ten stages—these are both exoteric teachings; the Own-nature and [Self]-enjoyment Buddhas each together with their attendants expound a gateway to the three mysteries for their own enjoyment of Dharma bliss—this is called the esoteric teaching. These gateways to the three mysteries represent the sphere of the wisdom innerly realized by the Tathāgata. Even [bodhisattvas of] equal enlightenment and

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the ten stages cannot enter its inner sanctum, let alone those of the two vehicles and ordinary people, none of whom can even reach its threshold. Therefore, the *Treatise on the [Ten] Stages* (T. 26: 133c–134a) and *Commentary on the [Mahayana] Treatise* (T. 32: 601c) declare that it is removed from individual religious capacity, and the [*Treatise on the Establishment of*] *Consciousness-only* (T. 31: 55b) and *Middle [Treatise]* (T. 30: 24a) lament that speech is cut off and the mind extinguished. Such absolute remove is, however, spoken of in terms of the causal stage [of those not yet enlightened], and it does not refer to those who have attained the result [of enlightenment]. How can this be known? Because there are clear examples in the sutras and treatises. Clear evidence of this is given in detail below, and I hope that those who seek the Buddha will clearly understand its purport.

People caught in the net of exoteric [teachings] are like rams butting against a hedge [in which they have ensnared their horns]; blocked by the barriers of the expedient [teachings of the Mahayana], they unharness their horses [and go no further]. How can travelers resting in a phantom city[, believing it to be their final goal,]<sup>2</sup> or children enamored with [yellow] willow leaves[, thinking them to be genuine gold,]<sup>3</sup> hope to preserve the inexhaustible adornments of which they are possessed, [numberless] like the sands of the Ganges River? As for the likes of those who discard ghee and look for milk, or those who throw away a *mani* (gem) and pick up a fish eye, these people have extinguished their [Buddha-]seed and have an incurable disease before which even the King of Physicians would fold his hands and a sweet shower of rain would be of no avail.

If men and women of good [birth] once inhale the fragrance of this [esoteric teaching], their minds will be illumined as if by the [flawless] mirror of the [First Emperor of the] Ch'in and their confusion of the expedient [teaching] with the real [teaching] will melt like ice. Clear evidence to this effect is most abundant in the sutras and treatises, but I will for the moment reveal only a part of it in the hope that it will be of assistance to beginners.

*Question:* Those who transmitted the Dharma in ancient times widely composed treatises in which they set forth the Six Schools and explained the Tripiṭaka. The scrolls [of these treatises] are too numerous to store even in a large building, and people collapse from unrolling them and rolling them up again. Why then do you go to the trouble of writing this work? Of what benefit is it?

*Answer:* There is much that I want to say, and therefore I have to write it. Everything transmitted by earlier masters was the exoteric teachings, whereas this represents the esoteric treasury, about which people do not yet have much understanding. For this reason I have culled [pertinent passages from] the sutras and treatises and put them together to serve as a guide.

### I. Questions and Answers

*Question:* What are the differences between the exoteric and esoteric teachings?

*Answer:* The expositions adapted by the response and transformation bodies of other-enjoyment<sup>4</sup> to the religious capacity [of the listener] are called exoteric. The expositions of the sphere of innerly realized wisdom by the Self-enjoyment and Dharma-nature Buddhas are called esoteric.

*Question:* That the response and transformation bodies expound the Dharma is acknowledged by all schools. As for the Dharma body, however, it is formless and imageless, the path of speech is cut off and the workings of the mind are extinguished, and it neither expounds nor reveals [the Dharma]. The sutras all explain this principle, and it is likewise discussed in treatises. Why do you now say that the Dharma body expounds the Dharma? Where is your evidence for this?

*Answer:* This proposition is frequently found in the sutras and treatises, but these passages remain hidden because of biased views, and their meaning is revealed only in accordance with the religious capacity [of the reader]. It is, for example, like the differing

perceptions of heavenly beings and [hungry] ghosts (*pretas*) [who, looking at the same water, see either a bejeweled pond or pus and blood] or like light and darkness for men and [nocturnal] birds [who on a pitch-dark night see either only the color of darkness or bright light].

375b *Question:* If it is indeed as you say, then this proposition would be found in various teachings. If that is so, why have previous transmitters of the Dharma not discussed this proposition?

*Answer:* When expounding the Dharma, the Tathāgata administered medicine according to the diseases [in the minds of his listeners]. Just as there are myriad differences in the conditions of patients, so too are there a thousand variations in acupuncture and moxibustion. Expositions adapted to religious capacities are often expedient and seldom real. When composing treatises, bodhisattvas followed the sutras in elaborating on the meaning and did not presume to violate [their purport]. For this reason Vasubandhu, in his [*Treatise on the*] *Ten Stages*, presents a discussion to the effect that the causal stage [of practice] can be expounded (T. 26: 133c–134a), and Nāgārjuna, in his *Commentary on the [Mahayana] Treatise*, mentions the thesis that the perfect ocean [of inherent virtues of the resultant stage] cannot be discussed (T. 32: 601c). In these cases they have followed the sutras in setting forth their arguments, and these are not their ultimate assertions.

However, although the Dharma generals who transmitted the exoteric [teachings] understood their profound meaning, they followed shallow [interpretations] and neglected their esoteric import, giving no thought to it. The masters kept [the esoteric meaning] to themselves and, conforming to the oral teachings, concealed [the real teaching] in their minds, while their disciples pursued their studies and conducted discussions in accordance with the tenets of their schools—they vied in drawing on arms favorable to themselves, but had no time to seek out swords detrimental to them. In addition, Śākyamuni's teachings spread eastward to China, and from being insignificant grew in prominence. From the

time of [Emperor] Ming of the [Later] Han (r. 57–75 C.E.) to the time of Empress [Wu] of the Chou (r. 684–705) everything that was transmitted and translated was exoteric teachings. During the reigns of Hsüan-tsung (r. 712–756) and Tai-tsung (r. 762–779), at the time of Vajrabodhi (671–741) and Amoghavajra (705–774), the esoteric teachings flourished and their secret import was widely discussed. But the new medicine had not been long in use and the old disease was not yet cured, and with regard, for example, to the passage on the exposition of the Dharma by the Dharma-Buddha in the *Lañka* [Sutra] and the statement about the wondrous form of the [Dharma-]nature body in the [Great] *Perfection of Wisdom* [Treatise]<sup>5</sup> people were governed by their own sympathies in interpreting the words and driven by the tenets of their own schools in taking the meaning. It is indeed regrettable that the worthies of yore should have failed to savor the ghee [of the esoteric teachings].

*Question:* If that is the case, which sutras and treatises explain the differences between the exoteric and esoteric [teachings]?

*Answer:* They are differentiated and explained in sutras and treatises such as the [Adamantine Pinnacle] *Five Mysteries* [Sutra], *Adamantine Pinnacle* [Sutra of All Yogins], [Adamantine Pinnacle] *Sutra on [Differentiating] the Positions of the Deities*, [Mahāvairocana] *Sutra*, *Lañka* [Sutra], [Sutra of the Great] *King of Teachings*, [Treatise on the] *Bodhi[-mind]*, [Great] *Perfection of Wisdom* [Treatise], and [Commentary on the] *Mahayana* [Treatise].

*Question:* I beg to hear their evidence.

*Answer:* So be it. I shall send flying a solar disc to dispel your darkness and brandish a *vajra* to smash your delusion.

*Question:* Yes, please do so, for I want to hear what you have to say.

## II. Scriptural Evidence with Explanatory Remarks

In the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna's *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise* it says (T. 32: 637bc):

All sentient beings have all possessed original enlightenment since the beginningless past, and at no time have they ever abandoned it. Why, then, are there some sentient beings who become Buddhas sooner, some who become Buddhas later, and some who become Buddhas now? Why are there some who practice diligently and others who do not practice at all, and some who are bright and others who are dull?—Why are there such innumerable differences? If they possessed one and the same [original] enlightenment, they ought all to generate the aspiration [for enlightenment], cultivate the [requisite] practices, and reach the unsurpassed goal at one time. Is it because of disparities in the strength or weakness of their originally enlightened Buddha-nature that there are such differences? Or is it because of disparities in the denseness or slightness of their mental affliction of ignorance that there are such differences? If one were to say that it is the former, then that could not be so. Why? Because originally enlightened Buddha-nature has perfected virtues more numerous than the sands of the Ganges River and is without increase or decrease. If one were to say that it is the latter, that too could not be so. Why? Because the proposition that [the mental affliction of ignorance] is cut off in one particular stage [of religious cultivation] would no longer hold true. These diverse and innumerable differences all have their existence on account of ignorance, and they are completely unrelated to the ultimate [truth-]principle.

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If that is so, do all such practitioners who cut off all evil, cultivate all good, transcend the ten stages, reach the unsurpassed stage [of Buddhahood], perfect the three bodies [of the Buddha], and are endowed with the four attributes [of nirvana] represent knowledge or ignorance? Such practitioners belong to the station of ignorance and not to the station of knowledge.

In that case, since the beginningless past, pure original enlightenment has not looked to the cultivation of practice,

nor has it been subject to some other power; its inherent virtues are completely perfect, and it is endowed with original wisdom; it both goes beyond the four propositions and is also removed from the five extremes; the word "naturalness" cannot express its naturalness, and the idea of "purity" cannot conceive of its purity; it is absolutely removed [from verbalization] and absolutely removed [from conceptualization]—does an original locus such as this represent knowledge or ignorance? An original locus such as this belongs to the extremity of ignorance and not to the station of knowledge.

In that case, the one Dharma-realm mind is not found in a hundred negations, it defies a thousand affirmations, and it does not correspond to the middle; not corresponding to the middle, it defies heaven (i.e., supreme truth), and since it defies heaven, discourses of flowing eloquence are stopped in their tracks and speculations of careful deliberation are left with no recourse—does the one mind such as this represent knowledge or ignorance? The one mind such as this belongs to the extremity of ignorance and not to the station of knowledge.

In the Dharma of the Mahayana with the one mind and its own three [attributes of essence, aspect, and function], the "one" [mind] cannot be one [since it is one yet all], but it is provisionally called "one" from the standpoint of entry [to the Mahayana]; [likewise] the [one] "mind" cannot be the mind [since it is one mind yet all minds], but it is provisionally called "mind" from the standpoint of entry [to the Mahayana]; although it is not really [the referent of] the term "self," it is [provisionally] called "self," and although it is not [the referent of] the designation "own," it [provisionally] corresponds to "own"; it is termed ["self"] as if it were the self, but this is not the real self, and it is called ["own"] as if it were the own, but this is not the real own; it is more mysterious than the mysteriously mysterious and more remote than the remotely remote—does a superior state such as this represent knowledge or ignorance? A superior state such as

this belongs to the extremity of ignorance and not to the station of knowledge.

It is only the Dharma of the nondual Mahayana that is the Dharma of the nondual Mahayana—does the Dharma of the nondual Mahayana such as this represent knowledge or ignorance?

*Explanatory Remarks:* The above fivefold questions and answers are extremely profound in meaning.<sup>6</sup> If you examine them closely, then you will be able to reach the ultimate [goal]. Every single profound meaning cannot be expressed on paper—think carefully about this.

[In the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*] it also says (T. 32: 601c):

Why is the Dharma of the nondual Mahayana without causes and conditions? Because this Dharma is most sublime and very profound, it alone is to be revered, and it is removed from religious capacity [which constitutes the causes and conditions of other teachings]. Why is it removed from religious capacity? Because there is no religious capacity [for which it is expounded]. Why then was it posited [earlier in the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise* as one of the thirty-three teachings]? Because it was not posited [for a particular type of religious capacity as were the other thirty-two teachings].

Is this Dharma of the [nondual] Mahayana obtained by the Buddhas [of the realm of thusness]? [No, but the Buddhas of the realm of the nondual Mahayana] can obtain [the state of] the Buddhas [of the realm of thusness]. Can the Buddhas [of the phenomenal realm] obtain [the state of the Buddhas of the realm of the nondual Mahayana]? No. It is also the same for bodhisattvas, the two vehicles, and all ordinary beings [who can realize only those teachings that correspond to their religious capacity]. Such is the completely perfect ocean of inherent virtues [of the resultant stage]. Why is it so? Because it is removed from religious capacity and because

it is removed from doctrines [that cater for different types of religious capacity].

[Why do] the eight kinds of fundamental teachings arise from causes and conditions? Because they accord with religious capacity and conform with doctrines. Why do they accord with religious capacity? Because there are [different types of] religious capacity [for which they are expounded]. Are these eight kinds of [fundamental] teachings obtained by the Buddhas [of the eight kinds of secondary teachings]? [No, but the state of the Buddhas of the eight kinds of secondary teachings] is obtained by the Buddhas [of the eight kinds of fundamental teachings]. Do [the Buddhas of the eight kinds of secondary teachings] obtain [the state of] the Buddhas [of the nondual Mahayana]? No. It is also the same for bodhi-sattvas, the two vehicles, and all ordinary beings. Such is the ocean of causes planted through cultivated practice [in the causal stage]. Why is it so? Because there are [different types of] religious capacity and because there are doctrines [that cater for different types of religious capacity].

[In the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*] it also says (T. 32: 668a):

“The profound and vast meanings of the Buddhas”<sup>7</sup> corresponds to the gateway that comprehensively encompasses all that was previously expounded [in the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*], for it fully encompasses the fundamental number of thirty-three kinds of teachings [set forth in the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*]. What is the meaning of this [line]? “The Buddhas” corresponds to the Dharma of the nondual Mahayana. Why is this so? Because, when compared with the Buddhas [of the other thirty-two teachings of the causal stage], this nondual Dharma [of the resultant stage] is superior in its virtues. In the [original] larger version of the *Flower Ornament Sutra* the following explanation is given: The Buddhas with the virtues

of the perfectly perfect ocean [of the resultant stage] are superior to all [other] Buddhas, for [the latter] are unable to accomplish the perfectly perfect ocean since they are inferior.

If that is so, why then is the following explanation given in the currently circulating *Flower Ornament Sutra*? The Buddha [Vai]rocana [who is the expositor of the *Flower Ornament Sutra* and corresponds to the enjoyment body] has made the threefold world his body and mind. The threefold world encompasses [all] *dharmas* without exception, and [therefore] there is nothing that the body and mind of that Buddha (i.e., Vairocana) do not encompass. — Although the Buddha [Vai]rocana encompasses the three worlds, he encompasses [only the causal stage] and does not encompass [the resultant stage]. Therefore, there is no fault [regarding any apparent contradiction between the two versions of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*].

*Explanatory Remarks:* The nondual Mahayana and the Buddhas with the virtues of the perfectly perfect ocean mentioned [above] correspond to the own-nature Dharma body. This is called the secret treasury, and it is also called the *Adamantine Pinnacle Great King of Teachings*. Even [bodhisattvas of] equal enlightenment and the ten stages cannot see or hear it. Therefore, it gets the designation “secret.” It is explained in detail in the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra*.

In Fascicle One of the [*Essay on the*] *Five Teachings of the Hua-yen* it says (T. 45: 477a):

I shall now reveal the teaching and meaning of the One Vehicle [expounded by] the Buddha Śākyamuni while in the ocean-seal *samādhi*. It consists in brief of ten sections. . . . First, I shall explain the establishment of the One Vehicle. The scope of the teaching and meaning of this One Vehicle is, moreover, divided into two sections: 1) the distinct teaching and 2) the identical teaching. The first (i.e., distinct teaching) is again [divided into] two. The first is the resultant stage of the ocean

of inherent nature, and this represents the meaning of that which cannot be expounded. Why [can it not be expounded]? Because it does not correspond to any teaching. It is, namely, the state of [Vairocana] himself endowed with the Ten Buddhas. Therefore, this is what is meant when it says in the *Treatise on the [Ten] Stages* that the causal stage can be expounded, but the resultant stage cannot be expounded. The second [of the two divisions of the distinct teaching] is the causal stage of dependent arising, and this is, namely, the state of Samantabhadra.

Again, in Fascicle Two [of the *Essay on the Five Teachings of the Hua-yen*],<sup>8</sup> in [the section on] the meaning of the “Teaching of the Nonobstruction of the Dependent Arising of the Ten Mysteries,” it says (T. 45: 503a):

The dependent arising of the Dharma realm is absolutely free and without end, but for the present its essentials may be summarized in two [parts]: the first clarifies the meaning of ultimate resultant realization, which is, namely, the state of [Vairocana] himself endowed with the Ten Buddhas, while the second discusses the teaching and meaning in accordance with conditions and with reference to causes, and it is, namely, the state of Samantabhadra. The meaning of the first is that [everything is] perfectly merged and absolutely free, one is identical with all and all is identical with one, and its appearance can simply not be described. For example, the ocean of [Buddha] lands, the meaning of the self-merging of the Ten Buddhas, and so on of the ultimate resultant stage in the *Flower Ornament Sutra* correspond to this, not to mention [the Mystery of the Dharma Realm of ] Indra[’s Net] and [the Mystery of the Mutual Containment and Establishment of ] Minute Entities.<sup>9</sup> This represents the meaning of that which cannot be expounded. Why [can it not be expounded]? Because it does not correspond to any teaching. Therefore, this is what is meant when it says in the *Treatise on the [Ten] Stages* that

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the causal stage can be expounded, but the resultant stage cannot be expounded.

*Question:* If this is the meaning, why then does the [*Flower Ornament*] *Sutra* expound the result in the “Chapter on the Inconceivable [Dharmas] of the Buddha” and elsewhere?

*Answer:* As for the meaning of this result, this result was expounded with reference to the conditions [of the practitioner] and by way of contrast so as to establish the causes [of practice], and it is not based on the ultimate result of absolute freedom. The reason for this is that the “Chapter on the Inconceivable Dharmas [of the Buddha]” and so on were expounded at the same assembly as [the chapters dealing with] the causal stage, and it is thus evident that they merely contrast [in relative terms the resultant stage with the causal stage].

It also says [in the *Essay on the Five Teachings of the Hwayen*] (T. 45: 505c):

*Question:* Above it was said that the resultant stage is removed from conditions and is of inexorable aspect and that only the causal stage is to be treated. Why then is the teaching for becoming a Buddha and obtaining the result discussed in [the stage of] the final mind of the ten [levels of] faith?

*Answer:* In the present instance “becoming a Buddha” means that after having first seen and heard [the teachings of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*], one then accomplishes understanding and practice in a second lifetime, completing the causal stage in [the stage of] the final mind of [the stage of] understanding and practice, and in a third lifetime one then obtains the ultimate result of absolute freedom and perfect merging,<sup>10</sup> for the essence of this cause is accomplished in dependence on the result (i.e., it functions as a cause only in relation to the result). Only those who have fulfilled the causal stage progressively advance until they disappear into the

ocean of the result. Since this represents the state of realization, it simply cannot be expounded.

*Explanatory Remarks:* The passages in the *Treatise on the Ten Stages* and [*Essay on the*] *Five Teachings [of the Hua-yen]* about the inexponibility of the ocean of inherent nature concur with the words of the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna [in the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*] about the inexponibility of the perfectly perfect ocean of inherent nature of the nondual Mahayana. That the causal stage can be expounded is the province of the exoteric teachings, while the inexponibility of the inherent nature of the result corresponds to the proper domain of the esoteric treasury. How is this known to be so? Because it is clearly explained in the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra*. Those who are wise should carefully think about this.

In Fascicle Three of the [*Great*] *Calming and Contemplation* by [the Great Master of] T'ien-t'ai it says (T. 46: 26c-27a):<sup>11</sup>

The principle of these three truths (i.e., emptiness, provisionality, and the middle) is inconceivable; having no determinate nature, they really cannot be expounded. If they are expounded as a lead, there are no more than three senses in which this is done: one is expounding them in accordance with [others'] feelings <that is, speaking in accordance with others' minds>; the second is expounding them in accordance with [others'] feelings and [the Buddha's] wisdom <that is, speaking in accordance with his own and others' minds>; and the third is expounding them in accordance with [the Buddha's] wisdom <that is, speaking in accordance with his own mind>.

What are the three truths expounded in accordance with [others'] feelings? It is like the case of blind people who do not know [the color of] milk—when the four analogies of the seashell, rice flour, snow, and crane are explained to them, the four blind people will each form their own understanding, clinging to which they will give rise to four arguments

[with each maintaining that the color of milk is like either seashells, rice flour, snow, or cranes]. Those blinded by the ignorance of ordinary feelings are also like this. They do not know the three truths, and so when the teaching of existence, the teaching of emptiness, the teaching of both emptiness and existence, and the teaching of neither emptiness nor existence are explained to them with the expedient means of great compassion, these ordinary people can never see permanence, bliss, self, and purity, the characteristics of true reality; with each of them clinging to either emptiness or existence, they criticize one another just like the four blind people. Thus there are normally twenty-three schools of interpretation of the two truths; none are the same, each has a different view, and they cling to their own and reject those of others. Although they drink the nectar [of immortality], they harm their life and die early. . . .

As for the three truths expounded in accordance with [the Buddha's] wisdom, from the first abode onward it is not only [the truth of] the middle that is beyond looking and listening; the true (i.e., absolute truth) and the mundane (i.e., conventional truth) are also the same. The three truths are mysterious and subtle, illuminated only by wisdom, impossible to point out and impossible to think about; those who hear them are startled. They are not within and not without, not difficult and not easy, not with [discernible] characteristics and not without [discernible] characteristics, not worldly phenomena, and without any external appearance. The hundred negations vanish, the four propositions all disappear, and only the Buddhas are able to fully comprehend them among themselves; the path of speech is cut off, the workings of the mind are extinguished, and they cannot be conceived of by means of ordinary feelings. Whether it is the one [truth of the middle] or the three [truths of emptiness, provisionality, and the middle], they are all beyond the range of [ordinary] feelings. Not even those of the two vehicles can fathom

them, much less ordinary people. It is like the true color of milk—if one's eyes are open one will see it, but however many words one may expend, the blind will never know it. Expounding it thus is called the characteristics of the three truths expounded in accordance with [the Buddha's] wisdom, and this corresponds to speaking in accordance with his own mind.

*Explanatory Remarks:* The views of this school do not go beyond the three truths. In a single moment of thought the mind is endowed with the three truths, and this is regarded as “wondrous.” As for the statement that “the hundred negations vanish, the four propositions all disappear, and only the Buddhas are able to fully comprehend them among themselves,” this school and other schools regard this as the ultimate. This is the linchpin of the exoteric teachings, but exponents of the mantra treasury regard this as the first gateway for entering the path. It is not secret or recondite, and *sattvas* (“beings”) who yearn for enlightenment should not fail to think about this.

In the *Laṅkā* [*Sutra*] it says (T. 16: 560c):

The Buddha addressed Mahāmati: “I give predictions [of their future attainment of Buddhahood] to *śrāvakas* who have formerly practiced bodhisattva practices but adhere to nirvana without residue (*anupadhiśeṣa-nirvāṇa*). Mahāmati, the reason that I give predictions to *śrāvakas* is to make timorous sentient beings engender thoughts of courage. Mahāmati, in this world and in other Buddha lands there are sentient beings practicing bodhisattva practices who are, however, desirous of the practices of the *śrāvaka* teachings, and in order to turn their minds [away from the *śrāvaka* teachings] and make them opt for great *bodhi*, the Buddha with a responsive-transformation body makes predictions for *śrāvakas* in responsive transformation; it is not the Buddha of Recompense or the Dharma-body Buddha who bestows the predictions.”

*Explanatory Remarks:* According to this passage, the *Lotus Sutra* [in which the Buddha predicts the future attainment of

377a Buddhahood by leading *śrāvakas*] was expounded by the Responsive-Transformation Buddha. Why? Because the Buddha bestowed predictions on *śrāvakas* in responsive transformation. Some people say that it was expounded by the Dharma body, but this is quite spurious.

The Dharma master Tz'u-en (K'uei-chi) says in "The Meaning of the Two Truths" [in his *Essays on the Garden of Dharma and the Grove of Meaning in the Mahayana*] (T. 45: 287bc):

In the *Yoga* [*Treatise*] and [*Treatise on the Establishment of Consciousness-only* [...] the two truths each have four levels.[...] The four names of conventional truth are (cf. T. 30: 653c): 1) worldly conventional truth <also called "truth with name and no reality">, 2) rational conventional truth <also called "truth that discriminates in accordance with phenomena">, 3) realized conventional truth <also called "truth established by expedient means">, and 4) conventional truth of the supreme principle <also called "truth not established by provisional names">.[...] The four names of supreme truth are (cf. T. 31: 48a): 1) worldly supreme truth <also called "truth that manifests essence and function">, 2) rational supreme truth <also called "truth that discriminates cause and result">, 3) realized supreme truth <also called "truth that reveals reality by means of the teaching [of the emptiness of persons and things]">, and 4) supreme truth of the supreme principle <also called "truth that tells of the [ultimate] purport by abandoning explication">. The first three kinds [of supreme truth] are called "established supreme truth," and the fourth kind is "nonestablished supreme truth."

It also says [in the same section of *Essays on the Garden of Dharma and the Grove of Meaning in the Mahayana*] (T. 45: 288a):

The supreme [truth] of the supreme principle is subtle in essence, removed from language, and far beyond all things, and so it is called "supreme principle"; it is the inner realization of those

with sacred wisdom and transcends the previous four conventional [truths], and so it is again called “supreme.”

It also says [in the same section of *Essays on the Garden of Dharma and the Grove of Meaning in the Mahayana*] (T. 45: 288b):

The fourth supreme truth of the supreme principle [...] is said to be nonestablished, to tell of the [ultimate] purport by abandoning explication, and to be the one true Dharma realm.

*Explanatory Remarks:* In this section [of *Essays on the Garden of Dharma and the Grove of Meaning in the Mahayana* it says] “supreme [truth] of the supreme principle,” “to tell of the [ultimate] purport by abandoning explication,” “inner realization of those with sacred wisdom,” “one true Dharma realm,” “subtle in essence and removed from language,” and so on, and absolute remove such as this corresponds to the domain of the exoteric teachings. That is to say, it is beyond the reach of all four kinds of speech of people in the causal stage, and there is only the own-nature Dharma body that is able to expound this sphere of absolute remove by means of true speech accordant with the [true] meaning. This is called the secret teachings of mantras, and the *Adamantine Pinnacle [Sutra]* and other sutras correspond to this.

In Fascicle Five of the [*Great*] *Perfection of Wisdom Treatise* it says (T. 25: 97bc):

Not born, not extinguished, not annihilated, not eternal,  
Not identical, not different, not gone, not come —

*Dharmas* born of causes and conditions are devoid of all  
frivolous argument (*prapañca*).

The Buddha has explained this, and I now pay homage to  
him...

*Dharmas* are neither born nor extinguished,  
Neither not born nor not extinguished,  
Not neither not born [n]or extinguished,  
Nor not neither not born [n]or extinguished.

Once one has obtained liberation, it is neither empty nor not empty. [Statements] such as these put an end to all frivolous argument, the path of speech is cut off, and one enters deeply into the Buddhist Dharma; one's mind is perspicacious and unobstructed, and one is unmoving and nonregressing. This is called acceptance of the non-birth [of *dharmas*] (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*), and it is the first gateway to assist one on the path of the Buddha.

Again, in [Fascicle] Thirty-one [of the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise*] it says (T. 25: 289a):

Then again, apart from the conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) there is no unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*). The reason for this is that the real characteristic of conditioned *dharmas* is that they are unconditioned, and the characteristic of the unconditioned is that it is not conditioned. It is only because of the perverseness of sentient beings that it is explained differentiatingly that the characteristics of the conditioned are birth, extinction, duration, and change and the characteristics of the unconditioned are non-birth, nonextinction, non-duration, and non-change. This represents the first gateway for entering the Buddhist Dharma.

In the verses of the chapter "Examination of Nirvana" in the 377b bodhisattva Nāgārjuna's *Lamp of Prajñā Treatise*<sup>12</sup> it says (T. 30: 130c):

Within that first principle (i.e., supreme truth) the Buddha  
does not from the very outset expound the Dharma;  
The Buddha is without discrimination, nor does he  
expound the Mahayana;  
That the Buddha of Transformation should expound the  
Dharma—this is simply not so.  
The Buddha has no thoughts of expounding the Dharma,  
and he who converts [by expounding the Dharma] is not  
a Buddha;

Within the first principle he too does not expound the  
Dharma.

Nondiscrimination is by nature empty and does not have  
any thoughts of compassion.

Since sentient beings have no essence, there is also no  
Buddha-essence;

Since the Buddha has no essence, he also has no thoughts  
of pity.

In the commentary by the bodhisattva Bhāviveka it says (T.  
30: 130c–131a):

Let us [now] explain the “first principle” (*paramārtha*)  
[alluded to] here. Since it has one characteristic [without any  
distinctions], it is said to have no characteristic, and there is  
neither the Buddha nor the Mahayana [within the first prin-  
ciple]; the first principle is the sphere of nondual wisdom. The  
verses that you have spoken precisely explain the reasoning  
of our Buddhist Dharma. I shall now explain about the Tathā-  
gata’s body for you.

Although the Tathāgata’s body is without discrimina-  
tion, by means of the power of the vow to benefit others made  
earlier [when he was still a bodhisattva] and because of the  
habitual cultivation of the adornments of his great vow, he  
is able to encompass all sentient beings and give rise to the  
bodies of Buddhas of Transformation at all times. On account  
of these transformation bodies there are letters and sentences,  
and they progressively give voice [to the teachings], which is  
not shared with any non-Buddhists, *śrāvakas*, or *pratyeka-  
buddhas*. Moreover, they explain the two kinds of no-self (i.e.,  
no-self of people and no-self of things) because they want to  
establish the *pāramitā* (perfection) of the first principle and  
because they want to establish those who travel by the best  
vehicle. This is called the “Great Vehicle” (Mahayana).  
Because there is a Buddha of the first principle, transforma-  
tion bodies are caused to arise on the basis of that Buddha,

and through these transformation bodies he gives rise to the exposition of the Dharma. Since the Buddha of the first principle is the cause of the exposition of the Dharma, it does not contradict the thesis proposed by me, nor does it contradict the inclinations of the world at large.

It also says (T. 30: 130b):

Within the first principle it like an illusion, like a [magical] creation. Who preaches and who listens? Therefore, “The Tathāgata expounds nowhere not a single Dharma for [anyone].”<sup>13</sup>

It also says in the chapter “Examination of False Views” [in the *Lamp of Prajñā Treatise*] (T. 30: 135bc):<sup>14</sup>

In the *Prajñā[pāramitā Sutra]* it says (cf. T. 7: 1081c–1082a): “The Buddha addressed the bodhisattva Suvikrāntavikrāmin: ‘If one knows that matter is not that which gives rise to [false] views, nor that which cuts off [false] views, and that likewise sensation, ideation, volition, and consciousness are not that which gives rise to [false] views, nor are they that which cuts off [false] views, this is called *prajñā-pāramitā* (perfection of wisdom).’” Now, bringing about understanding through the absence of the dependent arising of distinctions of arising and so on puts, namely, a stop to all frivolous arguments and various [false] views regarding identity, difference, and so on, and everything is quiescent. This is the teaching of self-enlightenment, this is the teaching [untainted] like empty space, this is the teaching of nondiscrimination, and this is the teaching of the sphere of the first principle. To bring about understanding by means of the nectar of truths such as these is the gist of the arguments of the entire [*Middle*] *Treatise*.

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*Explanatory Remarks:* On the basis of these passages it will now be evident that the exponents of the Middle View put a stop to frivolous arguments and regard quiescence and absolute remove as the school’s ultimate [standpoint]. The implications of such a thesis all represent the approach of [negatively] inhibiting the

passions [of ordinary people] and do not represent the sense of [positively] expressing the attributes [of ultimate truth]. The author of the [*Great Perfection of Wisdom*] *Treatise* himself declares that it is the first gateway for entering the path. The mindful man of wisdom should take heed and think about this ninefold.

In [Fascicle] Thirty-eight of the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna's *Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise* it says (T. 25: 336bc):

In the Buddhist Dharma there are two truths: one is conventional truth, and the second is the truth of the first principle (i.e., supreme truth). In accordance with conventional truth it is taught that sentient beings exist, and in accordance with the truth of the first principle it is taught that sentient beings do not exist.

Again, there are two kinds [of people]: there are those who know the characteristics of names, and there are those who do not know the characteristics of names. For example, it is just like when an army raises secret signs, there are those who know them and there are those who do not know them.

Again, there are [another] two kinds [of people]: there are those who are practicing for the first time, and there are those who have been practicing for a long time; there are those who are attached, and there are those who are not attached; and there are those who know the minds of others, and there are those who do not know the minds of others. *<Although there are those familiar with language, they proclaim the [truth-]principle in terms of [the superficial meanings of] words.>*

For those who do not know the characteristics of names, who are practicing for the first time, who are attached, and who do not know the minds of others it is taught that sentient beings do not exist, and for those who know the characteristics of names, who have been practicing for a long time, who are not attached, and who know the minds of others it is taught that sentient beings do exist.

*Explanatory Remarks:* The two truths of the first type are the same as in usual discourse. In the next two truths there are eight kinds of people. For the four [kinds of] people who do not know the characteristics of names and so on it is taught that in real truth there are neither Buddhas nor sentient beings, but for the latter four [kinds of] people it is taught that in real truth there are both Buddhas and sentient beings. Think about this carefully. The meanings of “secret signs,” “characteristics of names,” and so on are clearly explained in the mantra teachings. Therefore, it says in the *Bodhi-site Sutra* (T. 19: 207b–208a):<sup>15</sup>

Mañjuśrī said to the Buddha, “World-honored One, with how many designations are you active in the world?”

The Buddha said, “I am called ‘Śakra,’ I am called ‘Brahmarāja,’ I am called ‘Maheśvara,’ I am called ‘naturalness,’ I am called ‘earth,’ I am called ‘tranquility,’ I am called ‘nirvana,’ I am called ‘heaven’ (or ‘god’), I am called ‘*asura*,’ I am called ‘sky,’ I am called ‘supreme,’ I am called ‘meaning,’ I am called ‘unreal,’ I am called ‘*samādhi*,’ I am called ‘compassionate one,’ I am called ‘benevolence,’ I am called ‘Water-God’ (Varuṇa), I am called ‘dragon’ (*nāga*), I am called ‘*yakṣa*,’ I am called ‘seer,’ I am called ‘lord of the three realms,’ I am called ‘light,’ I am called ‘fire,’ I am called ‘lord of demons,’ I am called ‘existence,’ I am called ‘nonexistence,’ I am called ‘discrimination,’ I am called ‘nondiscrimination,’ I am called ‘Sumeru,’ I am called ‘*vajra*,’ I am called ‘permanence,’ I am called ‘impermanence,’ I am called ‘mantra,’ I am called ‘great mantra,’ I am called ‘ocean,’ I am called ‘great ocean,’ I am called ‘sun,’ I am called ‘moon,’ I am called ‘cloud,’ I am called ‘great cloud,’ I am called ‘lord of men,’ I am called ‘great lord of men,’ I am called ‘dragonlike elephant’ (*hastināga*), I am called ‘arhat,’ or ‘one who harms mental afflictions,’ I am called ‘not different,’ I am called ‘not non-different,’ I am called ‘life,’ I am called ‘non-life,’ I am called ‘mountain,’ I am called ‘great mountain,’ I am called ‘unextinguished,’ I am called ‘unborn,’

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I am called 'thusness,' I am called 'nature of thusness,' I am called 'apex of reality,' I am called 'nature of the apex of reality,' I am called 'Dharma realm,' I am called 'real,' I am called 'nondual,' and I am called 'having characteristics.' Mañjuśrī, I have established in this world five *asamkhyeyas* of hundreds of thousands of designations with which I tame and direct sentient beings. Although the Tathāgata makes no effort, he turns [the Dharma wheel] with innumerable kinds of mantras, physical strength, and phenomonic characteristics."

In Nāgārjuna's *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise* it says (T. 32: 605c–606b):

There are five kinds of speech, there are two kinds of names,  
And there are ten kinds of mental activity—this is on account of differing explanations in the scriptures.

*Discussion:* "There are five [kinds of] speech"—What are the five [kinds of speech]? They are 1) speech [indicative] of [individual] characteristics, 2) dream speech, 3) speech [born] of deluded attachments, 4) beginningless speech, and 5) speech accordant with the [true] meaning. In the *Lañka Sutra* the following explanation [of four kinds of speech] is given (T. 16: 530c–531a):

Mahāmati, "speech [indicative] of [individual] characteristics" arises through attachment to form and other characteristics. Mahāmati, "dream speech" arises when one recalls delusionary objects that one has previously experienced, has a dream on the basis of those objects, and upon waking realizes that it was based on delusionary objects and was not real. Mahāmati, "speech [born] of [deluded] attachments" arises when one recalls what one has previously heard or done. Mahāmati, "beginningless speech" arises through the habitual impressing [upon the storehouse-consciousness] of the seeds of the

mental affliction of attachment to frivolous argument since the beginningless past.

In the [*Adamantine*] *Samādhi Sutra* the following explanation is given (T. 9: 371a):

Śāriputra said, “All the myriad teachings all consist of speech and writing. But the [superficial] aspects of speech and writing are not to be identified with the [true] meaning, for the true meaning cannot be verbalized. Now, how does the Tathāgata expound the Dharma?”

The Buddha said, “As for my expounding the Dharma, because you sentient beings are speaking while in [the cycle of] birth[-and-death], you say that [ultimate truth] cannot be expounded. [But I expound the Dharma from a different position.] Therefore I do expound it. What is expounded by me is meaningful speech and not superficial [speech], and what sentient beings expound is superficial speech and not meaningful speech. That which is not meaningful speech is all vacuous, vacuous speech does not express the [true] meaning, and that which does not express the [true] meaning is all deluded speech. Speech accordant with the [true] meaning is really empty and not empty [in a relative sense], and emptiness is real but not real [in a substantive sense]. It is removed from the two aspects [of existence and emptiness], and it does not correspond to the middle [between them]. The Dharma that does not correspond to the middle is removed from the three aspects [of existence, emptiness, and the middle], and it is found to have no [fixed] locus, for it is explained to be thus [removed from existence], thus [removed from emptiness], and thus [removed from the middle].”

Among these five [kinds of speech], the former four [kinds of] speech are delusionary speech and therefore cannot discuss the truth, while the latter one [kind of] speech is speech

accordant with reality and can therefore discuss the truth-principle. Because the bodhisattva Aśvaghōṣa based himself on the former four [kinds of speech], he makes this statement [in the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* (T. 32: 576a)] that “[all *dharmas* are from the very beginning] removed from the characteristics of speech.”[ . . . ]

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“There are ten [kinds of ] mental activity” — What are the ten [kinds of mental activity]? They are 1) the mind of eye-consciousness, 2) the mind of ear-consciousness, 3) the mind of nose-consciousness, 4) the mind of tongue-consciousness, 5) the mind of body-consciousness, 6) the mind of mind-consciousness, 7) the mind of *manas*-consciousness, 8) the mind of *ālaya*-consciousness, 9) the mind of many-and-one-consciousness, and 10) the mind of one-oneness-consciousness.<sup>16</sup> Among these ten [kinds of mental activity], the first nine kinds of minds cannot cognize the truth-principle, while the final one kind of mind is able to cognize the truth-principle and make it its object. In this instance, basing himself on the former nine [kinds of minds], [the bodhisattva Aśvaghōṣa] makes this statement [in the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* (T. 32: 576a)] that “[all *dharmas* are from the very beginning . . . ] removed from the characteristic of mental cognition.”

*Explanatory Remarks:* The meaning of remove and non-remove with regard to speech, mental activity, and so on is clearly explained in this treatise. Those wise in the exoteric teachings should consider it carefully and dispel their confusion.

In the *Adamantine Pinnacle Treatise on the Generation of the Bodhi-mind* it says (T. 32: 572c):

Formerly, when they were in the causal stage and had generated this mind [of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*)], Buddhas and bodhisattvas made the supreme truth, the vow to practice, and *samādhi* their precepts, and they did not forget them even briefly right up until they became Buddhas. Only in the

mantra teachings does one become a Buddha in this very body, and therefore they explain the methods of *samādhi*; in other teachings these are missing and have not been recorded.

*Explanatory Remarks:* Among the thousand treatises composed by the great sage Nāgārjuna, this treatise is an essential treatise of the esoteric treasury. Therefore, the differences between the exoteric and esoteric teachings, their [relative] shallowness and depth, as well as the tardiness and speediness and the superiority and inferiority of their attainment of Buddhahood, are all explained therein. “Other teachings” are the exoteric teachings expounded by the other-enjoyment bodies and transformation bodies. “They explain the methods of *samādhi*” refers to the *samādhi* gateway of secret mantras expounded by the own-nature Dharma body, and it corresponds to the one-hundred-thousand-verse sutra of the *Adamantine Pinnacle [Sutra]* and so on.

*On the Differences between the Exoteric and  
Esoteric Teachings, Fascicle One*

## Fascicle Two

In the *Six Pāramitās Sutra* it says (T. 8: 868bc):<sup>17</sup>

The Dharma jewel is by nature forever pure—thus have  
the World-honored Buddhas taught;

It is covered with adventitious mental afflictions just as  
clouds may obscure the sun's rays.

The untainted Dharma jewel is endowed with all virtues,  
and [its attributes of ] permanence, bliss, self, and purity  
have all been completely perfected;

How does one seek the purity of Dharma-nature?—It is  
nondiscriminating wisdom that is able to realize it.[ . . . ]

The first Dharma jewel corresponds to the Dharma body 378c  
[characterized by] *mahāprajñā* (great wisdom) and libera-  
tion.[ . . . ]

The second Dharma jewel is, namely, the wondrous mer-  
its of [the three disciplines of ] morality (*śīla*), meditation  
(*dhyaṇa*), and wisdom (*prajñā*), that is to say, the thirty-seven  
factors of enlightenment. . . . By cultivating these factors one  
is able to realize that pure Dharma body.

The third Dharma jewel is, namely, the true Dharma  
expounded by innumerable Buddhas in the past and that  
being expounded by me (i.e., Śākyamuni) now, that is to say,  
the aggregate of the eighty-four thousand wondrous teach-  
ings, which discipline and bring to complete maturity sen-  
tient beings with the right conditions and cause Ānanda and  
the other great disciples to memorize them all upon hearing  
them only once, and they may be reduced to five divisions: 1)  
sutras, 2) Vinaya, 3) Abhidharma, 4) Prajñāpāramitā, and  
5) *dhāraṇī* gateway. These five kinds of treasuries (*piṭakas*)  
educate and convert sentient beings, and they are expounded  
in accordance with [the requirements of ] those to be saved.

If those sentient beings wish to dwell in mountains or forests, always live in tranquility, and cultivate quiet contemplation, then for them the sutra treasury is expounded. If those sentient beings wish to practice proper conduct, preserve the true Dharma, and enable it to endure through unanimous harmony [within the sangha], then for them the Vinaya treasury is expounded. If those sentient beings wish to expound the true Dharma, discriminate between [inherent] nature and [external] characteristics, study methodically, and plumb the depths [of the Dharma], then for them the Abhidharma treasury is expounded. If those sentient beings wish to practice the true wisdom of the Mahayana and become free of [false] discrimination due to attachment to self and things, then for them the Prajñāpāramitā treasury is expounded. If those sentient beings are unable to uphold the scriptures (i.e., sutras), discipline (i.e., Vinaya), Abhidharma, or Prajñā[pāramitā], or if sentient beings have committed evil acts and various grievous sins, such as the four grave [offenses of a monk], the eight grave [offenses of a nun], the five [rebellious] offenses that bring immediate [retribution], slandering of the Vaipulya (i.e., Mahayana) sutras, and [the offenses of] an *icchāntika* [who has no hope of attaining Buddhahood], then for them the *dhāraṇī* treasuries are expounded to extinguish [their sins] so that they may be swiftly liberated and suddenly enlightened and [attain] nirvana.

These five Dharma treasuries may be compared to milk, cream, curds, butter, and wondrous ghee. The scriptures are like milk, the [Vinaya] is like cream, the Abhidharma teachings are like curds, the Mahayana Prajñā[pāramitā] is just like butter, and the *dhāraṇī* gateway is comparable to ghee. The taste of ghee is first in delicacy among milk, cream, curds[, and so on], and it is able to remove illnesses and make sentient beings happy in body and mind. [Likewise] the *dhāraṇī* gateway is foremost among the scriptures and so on, and it is able to remove grievous sins and make sentient

beings liberated from birth-and-death (samsara) and quickly realize the Dharma body in the happiness of nirvana.

Then again, Maitreya, after my death Ānanda will be charged with upholding the sutra treasury that has been expounded, Upāli will be charged with upholding the Vinaya treasury that has been expounded, Kātyāyana will be charged with upholding the Abhidharma treasury that has been expounded, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī will be charged with upholding the Mahayana Prajñāpāramitā that has been expounded, and the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi will be charged with upholding the profound and subtle *dhāraṇī* gateways that have been expounded. 379a

*Explanatory Remarks:* Now, according to this scriptural passage, the Buddha assigned the five flavors to the five treasuries, calling the *dhāraṇī* [treasury] “ghee” and likening the [other] four flavors to the [other] four treasuries. The teachers of China have vied in stealing the [designation] “ghee” and applying it to their own schools,<sup>18</sup> but if considered in the light of this sutra, it should not need to be explained that theirs is the [self-deceiving] wisdom of those who cover their ears [while stealing a bell, and their deception will inevitably be exposed].

In the *Lañka Sutra* it says (T. 16: 569a):

The innerly realized wisdom of my vehicle is not a sphere  
[accessible to those] of deluded awareness.

After the Tathāgata has passed from the world, tell me  
who will uphold it.

After the Tathāgata has passed away, there will in the  
future be a certain person.

Mahāmati, listen carefully: there will be a person who  
upholds my Dharma.

In a great kingdom in the south there will be a *bhikṣu*  
(monk) of great virtue.

He will be called the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna,<sup>19</sup> and he will  
refute the [false] views of being and nonbeing

And expound for others my vehicle, the unsurpassed  
Dharma of the Great Vehicle.

*Explanatory Remarks:* When it says “the innerly realized wisdom of my vehicle,” this refers to the secret treasury of mantras. The Tathāgata has clearly predicted the mastery of the teachings by such a person (i.e., Nāgārjuna). People who are wise should not have any doubts about this, like the suspicious fox.

In [Fascicle] Two of the *Lañka* [Sutra] it also says (T. 16: 525bc):<sup>20</sup>

Then again, Mahāmati, the Recompense-Buddha [emanating from] the Dharma-Buddha explains all *dharma*s in terms of individual characteristics and common characteristics[ . . . ] It is because, attached to false essence and characteristics, the discriminating mind receives habitual impressions that, Mahāmati, these are called “discriminated false essence and characteristics.” Mahāmati, this is called the characteristic of the expounding of the Dharma by the Recompense-Buddha.

Mahāmati, the expounding of the Dharma by the Dharma-Buddha is removed from any essence correspondent to the minds [of ordinary people] and represents the sphere of sacred conduct based on inner realization. Therefore, Mahāmati, this is called the characteristic of the expounding of the Dharma by the Dharma-Buddha.

Mahāmati, the Response-Buddha created by the Responsive-Transformation Buddha expounds [the six perfections of] giving (*dāna*), morality (*sīla*), forbearance (*kṣānti*), effort (*vīrya*), meditation (*dhyāna*), and wisdom (*prajñā*) and the [five] aggregates, [eighteen] realms, [twelve] sense fields, and [eight] liberations, establishes the differences and workings of consciousness and thought, and expounds the characteristics of the successive stages of non-Buddhists’ *samāpatti* (mental attainment) in [the realm of] non-form. Mahāmati, this is called the characteristic of the expounding of the Dharma by the Response-Buddha created by the Responsive[-Transformation] Buddha.

Then again, Mahāmati, the expounding of the Dharma by the Dharma-Buddha is free of the cognizing of objects, free of the seer and the seen, free of the characteristics of action and the characteristics of cognition, and is not the sphere of *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and non-Buddhists.

Again, in Fascicle Eight [of the *Lañka Sutra*] it says (T. 16: 560c–561a):

Mahāmati, [ . . . ] the Responsive-Transformation Buddha performs deeds for converting sentient beings, but this differs from the exposition of the characteristics of true reality, and he does not expound the innerly realized Dharma, the sphere of sacred wisdom.

*Explanatory Remarks:* Now, according to this sutra, when expounding the Dharma, the three bodies each have their own bourne. It is clear that the Responsive-Transformation Buddha<sup>21</sup> does not expound the sphere of innerly realized wisdom, and it is only the Dharma-body Buddha who expounds this innerly realized wisdom. If one peruses the passages [quoted] below, the truth of this will be determined. 379b

In the *Adamantine Pinnacle Five Mysteries Sutra* it is taught (T. 20: 535bc):<sup>22</sup>

If one practices in the exoteric teachings, only after a long time and the lapse of three great incalculable eons will one realize unsurpassed *bodhi*. During this time, among ten who advance nine fall back, or else they may realize the seventh stage [of the ten stages] and direct the merit and wisdom that they have collected to [the attainment of] the fruit of the *śrāvaka*'s or *pratyekabuddha*'s path, thereby being unable to realize unsurpassed *bodhi*.

If [a practitioner] has recourse to the Dharma of the innerly realized and self-awakened sacred wisdom expounded by the self-enjoyment body of the Buddha Vairocana and to the wisdom of the other-enjoyment body of Great Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva,

then he will in his present lifetime encounter a *maṇḍala ācārya* (teacher) and be able to enter a *maṇḍala*. Having completed the *karman* (ordination rite), [the *ācārya*] will induct Vajrasattva into his body by means of the *samādhi* of Samantabhadra. On account of the majestic power of empowerment he will instantly realize innumerable *samayas* (pledges) and innumerable *dhāraṇī* gateways. By inconceivable methods [the *ācārya*] will transmute the disciple's seeds of innate self-attachment, at which time he will accumulate in his person the merit and wisdom [normally] collected in one great *asaṃkhyeya* eon, whereupon he will be deemed to have been born into the Buddha's family.[...] By just seeing the *maṇḍala* [...] he plants the seeds of the Adamantine Realm[...]. He receives in full an adamant name of initiation to the position [of an initiate], and hereafter he will obtain vast, profound, and inconceivable teachings and transcend the two vehicles and ten stages.

*Explanatory Remarks:* The sphere in which speech is cut off and the mind extinguished that is spoken of in the exoteric teachings is, namely, the sphere of the innerly realized wisdom of the Dharma-body Vairocana. According to the *Necklace Sutra* (cf. T. 24: 1015c, 1019c–1020a), Vairocana is the Dharma body as [truth-]principle, Rocana corresponds to the Dharma body as wisdom, and Śākya[muni] is called the transformation body. However, the Dharma of the innerly realized and self-awakened sacred wisdom expounded by the self-enjoyment body of the Buddha Vairocana that is spoken of in this *Adamantine Pinnacle [Five Mysteries] Sutra* corresponds to the sphere of the Dharma body as both [truth-]principle and wisdom.

Again, in the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra of [All] Yogins* it says (T. 18: 253c–254a):<sup>23</sup>

The Tathāgata Vairocana of the Adamantine Realm, with his fourfold Dharma body composed of the five wisdoms, was in the palace of the adamant mind of the originally existent

Adamantine Realm together with his attendants composed of his own-nature . . . , *vajras* of body, speech, and mind who [with] the secret mind-ground of the subtle Dharma body have transcended the ten stages . . .

It also says [in the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra of All Yogins*] (T. 18: 254a):

There are no bodhisattvas of the [ten] stages able to see them, nor do any of them perceive them . . . .

Again, in the [*Adamantine Pinnacle*] *Sutra on Differentiating the Positions of the Deities* it says (T. 18: 288a):<sup>24</sup>

The Self-enjoyment Buddha brings forth from his heart innumerable bodhisattvas, all of identical nature, namely, adamantine nature, and for their own enjoyment of Dharma bliss these Buddhas and bodhisattvas each expound a gateway to the three mysteries that they themselves have realized. . . .

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[*Explanatory Remarks:*] These passages all [describe] the sphere of the Dharma body of self-nature and self-enjoyment *qua* [truth-]principle and wisdom, and these Dharma bodies expound this sphere of innerly realized wisdom for their own enjoyment of Dharma bliss. This coincides perfectly with the passages in the *Lañka* [*Sutra*] saying that the Dharma body expounds the sphere of innerly realized wisdom and the responsive-transformation [body] does not expound it. This is a place at absolute remove from the exoteric teachings.

As soon as a person who is wise sees these passages, the clouds and haze [of his delusion] will immediately clear and the bolt and lock [of the gate to the truth] will open of their own accord. [It will be as if] a fish trapped at the bottom of a well [now] swims freely in the wide ocean, or a bird caught in a hedge [now] flies up into the open sky; [as if] someone blind from birth for a hundred years is unexpectedly able to recognize the color of milk, or the dark night of a myriad eons is suddenly flooded with sunlight.

In the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra on Differentiating the Positions of the Deities* it says (T.18: 287c–288a):<sup>25</sup>

The mantra-*dhāraṇī* school is the most secret teaching of All the Tathāgatas, the Dharma gateway for the cultivation and realization of self-awakened sacred wisdom. It is also the *samādhi* gateway for entering the altar (i.e., *maṇḍala*) of the oceanlike assembly of All the Tathāgatas, receiving the duties and position of a bodhisattva, transcending the three realms, and receiving the Buddha's instructions. Fully possessed of these causes and conditions, one promptly collects merit and vast wisdom, and none falls back from unsurpassed *bodhi*; one is freed of heavenly demons, all mental afflictions, and hindrances caused by [past] sins, which dissolve moment by moment; one realizes the fourfold body of the Buddha, namely, the own-nature body, enjoyment body, transformation body, and homogeneous body; and one fulfills the requirements for the unshared qualities of a Buddha such as the five wisdoms and thirty-seven [deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala]. <*This indicates the main gist of [this] school.*>

Moreover, the Tathāgata's transformation body (i.e., Śākyamuni) attained perfect enlightenment at the place of *bodhi* (*bodhimaṇḍa*) in the land of Magadha in Jambudvīpa, and he expounded the doctrines of the three vehicles for bodhisattvas yet to enter the [ten] stages, *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and ordinary people, either teaching in accordance with the inclinations of others or teaching in accordance with his own inclinations. If people of various religious capacities practice as taught with various expedient means, they will obtain the reward of [rebirth among] men or gods, or else they will obtain the fruit of liberation in the three vehicles; they will repeatedly advance toward unsurpassed *bodhi* and then fall back, and after having practiced and exerted themselves for three great incalculable eons, they will finally attain Buddhahood. [Śākyamuni] was born in a palace, died under

two [śāla] trees, and left his physical śarī[ra] (relics), and if one erects a pagoda (stupa) and worships it, one will experience the supremely wondrous rewards of men and gods and the cause of nirvana. <This describes in brief the teaching of the Tathāgata Śākya[muni] and the benefits to be obtained from it.>

This is not the same as the recompense body of Vairocana who, while in the palace of the Akaniṣṭha Heaven in the fourth [stage of] meditation at the summit of the realm of form, and with all the Buddhas who had gathered as if in a cloud, filling empty space and pervading the Dharma realm, and the great bodhisattvas who had completed the ten stages as his witnesses, aroused his body and mind and suddenly realized unsurpassed bodhi.<sup>26</sup> <This describes the expounding of the Dharma by the other-enjoyment body and the benefits to be obtained from it.>

The Self-enjoyment Buddha brings forth from his heart innumerable bodhisattvas, all of identical nature, namely, adamant nature. They receive initiation to their duties and positions from the Tathāgata Vairocana, and these bodhisattvas each expound a gateway to the three mysteries, which they offer to Vairocana and All the Tathāgatas and then request empowerment and instructions. The Buddha Vairocana says, "In the future and in innumerable world-realms you are to cause those of the best vehicle to obtain the accomplishment of mundane and supramundane *siddhi* in their present lifetimes." After having received the Tathāgata's instructions, these bodhisattvas make obeisance to the Buddha's feet, and having circumambulated the Buddha, they each return to their own position in their own quarter, forming five circles and holding their own insignia.<sup>27</sup> If one sees this, hears of it, or enters the circular altar (i.e., *maṇḍala*), one will cut off the karmic hindrances that cause birth-and-death in transmigration through the five destinies, and if one worships and serves one Buddha after another in the

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five circles of liberation, they will all cause one to obtain unsurpassed *bodhi* and attain a determinate nature indestructible like a *vajra*. This is the assembly of Vairocana's sacred hosts, and it represents the stupa-pagoda of actual realization. Every bodhisattva, every *vajra*-[like being], each dwells in his own *samādhi* and dwells in his own liberation, and all dwell in the power of the vow of great compassion and widely benefit sentient beings. All those who either see them or hear of them will realize *samādhi*, merit and wisdom will promptly accumulate, and they will be successful. <This explains the expounding of the Dharma by the own-nature body and self-enjoyment body and the benefits to be obtained from it.>

*Explanatory Remarks:* This sutra clearly explains the differences in the expounding of the Dharma by the three bodies and their [relative] shallowness and depth, as well as the tardiness and speediness and the superiority and inferiority of their attainment of Buddhahood, and it agrees in meaning with the characteristics of the expounding of the Dharma by the three bodies in the *Lañka* [Sutra]. Wise men of exoteric learning all say that the Dharma body does not expound the Dharma, but this is not so. Such are the differences between the exoteric and esoteric teachings. Examine them most carefully!

### III. Scriptural Evidence with Annotations

In the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra of All Yogins* it says (T. 18: 253c–254a):<sup>28</sup>

At one time Bhagavān, the Tathāgata Vairocana of the Adamantine Realm <—this extols the deities' virtues with a general statement>, with the fourfold Dharma body composed of the five wisdoms <—the “five wisdoms” are 1) great perfect mirrorlike wisdom, 2) the wisdom of equality, 3) the wisdom of wondrous observation, 4) the wisdom of accomplishing what is to be done, and 5) the wisdom of the essential

*nature of the Dharma realm, and they correspond to the Buddhas of the five directions: know that they are arranged in the order east, south, west, north, and center; the fourfold Dharma body is 1) own-nature body, 2) enjoyment body, 3) transformation body, and 4) homogeneous body; this fourfold body has two meanings, vertical and horizontal: the horizontal corresponds to self-benefit and the vertical corresponds to benefiting others; ask further about their deeper meaning>, was in the originally existent Adamantine Realm <—this indicates the wisdom of the essential nature of the Dharma realm as his inherent virtue> sovereign great samaya <—this represents the wisdom of wondrous observation> self-awakened original beginning <—wisdom of equality> full moon (i.e., lunar disc) of Samantabhadra [representing] the great bodhi-mind <—[this] is the wisdom of great perfect mirrorlike wisdom> palace of the indestructibly adamant radiant mind <—“indestructibly adamant” extols as a whole the eternally abiding bodies of the deities, “radiant mind” extols the mind’s virtue of awakening, “palace” shows how the body and mind act as abider and abode for each other, and “in” (lit., “middle”) is the mystery of speech and also has the meaning “free of extremes”; this represents the three mysteries, which are removed from the five extremes and one hundred negations and alone abide in the middle that is not the middle; even [bodhisattvas of] equal enlightenment and the ten stages cannot see or hear it, for it is, namely, the sphere of the Dharma body’s self-realization; it also represents the wisdom of accomplishing what is to be done, and the activities of the three mysteries all arise from this; the above five phrases<sup>29</sup> together clarify the abode [of Vairocana], and the name of his abode represents the secret designations and wondrous virtues of the Five Buddhas; one should realize its esoteric meaning> together with attendants composed of his own-nature, [namely,] Vajrapāṇi and the other Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas as well as the heavenly female messengers of*

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the four acts of conversion<sup>30</sup> and the adamantine heavenly female messengers of the adamantine inner and outer eight offerings,<sup>31</sup> each through the empowerment of their own vow dwelling in a lunar disc on a *vajra* and holding an insignia of their own *samādhi* and all [representing] *vajras* of body, speech, and mind who with the secret mind-ground of the subtle Dharma body have transcended the ten stages <—*this clarifies the basis of the thirty-seven [deities], the wisdoms of the inner attendants of the own-nature Dharma body*>. From a [five-]pronged pestle (i.e., *vajra*) [emitting] the light rays of the five wisdoms, each manifested five million *koṭi* subtle *vajras* that pervaded the Dharma realm, [which is like] empty space. There are no bodhisattvas of the [ten] stages able to see them, nor do any of them perceive them, and their blazing light rays have free-playing majestic power. <*This shows that the basic five wisdoms of the thirty-seven deities are each endowed with inherent virtues [numberless] like the sands of the Ganges River; if considered in terms of progression, there are passages [describing] their [progressive] manifestation, but if considered in accordance with original existence, they have completely perfected these virtues all at one time.*> Indestructible transformation bodies constantly benefit sentient beings throughout the three ages without stopping even briefly <—“three ages” is the three mysteries, “indestructible” denotes “adamantine,” and “transformation” is activity; that is to say, by means of the activities of the adamantine three mysteries they constantly cause sentient beings, both themselves and others, to receive the bliss of the wondrous Dharma throughout the three ages>. By means of adamantine own-nature <—*the seal of the Buddha Akṣobhya*>, univocal illumination by light rays <—*the seal of the Buddha Ratnaprabha*>, pure untaintedness <—*the seal of the pure Dharma-realm body*>, various activities <—*the seal of the karma wisdom body*>, and the empowerment of expedient means <—*the seal of the enjoyment body as expedient means*>

they save sentient beings <—*the virtue of great compassion*> and expound the Adamantine Vehicle (Vajrayana) <—*the virtue of the wisdom of the expounding of the Dharma*>, and the sole vajra <—*the wisdom of the virtue of the completely perfect altar (i.e., maṇḍala)*><sup>32</sup> is able to cut off mental afflictions <—*the virtue of sharp wisdom; the above nine phrases correspond to the five seals [of the Five Buddhas] and the four virtues [of their four attendant bodhisattvas]; every Buddha-seal is endowed with the four virtues, and for self-enjoyment they constantly expound the one vehicle of adamantine wisdom*>.<sup>33</sup> The bodhisattvas are encompassed by the eternally abiding Dharma body, the own-nature of Samantabhadra, of this profound secret mind-ground <—*this shows that the own-nature Dharma body encompasses his own attendants; he also encompasses [the attendants of] all others, for the reference to his own includes others*>. Only this Buddha land is the [Land of] Secretly Adorned Flower Ornaments, completely formed of the purity of its adamantine own-nature <—*“Secret” is the adamantine three mysteries, “Flower” is the open flower of enlightenment, and “Ornaments” is the possession of various virtues; that is to say, [it refers to] the adornment of the [Buddha’s] body and land with Buddha virtues [numberless] like the sands of the Ganges River and with the three mysteries like dust motes in number, and this is called a maṇḍala; again, “adamantine” denotes “wisdom,” “purity” denotes “[truth-]principle,” and “own-nature” applies to both; that is to say, the deities are each endowed with the natural [truth-]principle and wisdom*>. It has been established through the perfect completion of the stock of merit and knowledge of sentient beings by means of the practices and vows of great compassion <—*that is to say, the deities [numberless] like the sands of the Ganges River mentioned above are each endowed with the expedient means of Samantabhadra’s vow to practice*>, and it is the wisdom body of equality that shines with the radiance of the five wisdoms and eternally abides

throughout the three ages without stopping even briefly <— the “five wisdoms” are the wisdoms composed of the five elements, and every element is endowed with a wisdom-seal; the “three ages” are the three mysteries and three bodies; “without stopping even briefly” [means that] the activities of these deities are uninterrupted, and by means of these Buddha actions they benefit self and others; as for “wisdom body of equality,” “wisdom” is a function of the mind, “body” is the essence of the mind, and “equality” is universality—that is to say, the wisdom-seals of the three mysteries composed of the five elements are immeasurable in number, and body and mind’s wisdom completely pervade the threefold world, engaged in Buddha deeds without resting for a *kṣaṇa* (moment); in passages such as these every sentence and every phrase is a secret designation of the *Tathāgata*; those of the two vehicles and ordinary people merely understand the [superficial] meaning of the phrases and are unable to comprehend the connotative meaning; they merely understand the superficial meaning and cannot know the secret designations of the words; wise people who read these [passages] must not distort the secret meaning with the exoteric [superficial] meaning of the phrases; if one looks at the explanatory *sūtra* of [Vajra]sattva,<sup>34</sup> one will understand the meaning of this; be not suspicious! be not dubious!>.

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In the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* it says (T. 18: 1ab):<sup>35</sup>

At one time Bhagavān was dwelling in the vast Adamantine Palace of the Dharma realm empowered by the *Tathāgatas*, in which all the *vajradharas* (lit., “*vajra*-holders”) had all assembled. These *vajra[dhara]*s were called the *vajradhara* Gaganā-mala . . . and Vajrapāṇi, Lord of Mysteries. Accompanied by a host of *vajradharas* equal in number to the dust motes of ten Buddha lands with these at their head, and surrounded on all sides by great bodhisattvas such as the bodhisattva Samantabhadra, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, . . . [Bhagavān] expounded

the Dharma through the empowerment of the Tathāgata's sun which transcends the three periods [of past, present, and future], namely, the Dharma gateway of the state of the equality of body, speech, and mind. <—*This shows the expounding of the Dharma by the own-nature body.*>

Then, with the bodhisattvas headed by Samantabhadra and the *vajradharas* headed by the Lord of Mysteries, through the empowerment of the Tathāgata Vairocana, there was swiftly made manifest the treasury of the inexhaustible adornments [of the equality] of the body; likewise, there were swiftly made manifest the treasuries of the inexhaustible adornments of the equality of speech and mind. <—*This shows the expounding of the Dharma by the enjoyment body.*>

These were not produced by the body or speech or mind of the Buddha Vairocana, and yet the limits of their arising and disappearing in all places cannot be apprehended. Yet all of Vairocana's physical actions, all of his verbal actions, and all of his mental actions proclaim everywhere and always in the realms of sentient beings the Dharma of the words of the mantra path. <—*This shows the expounding of the Dharma by the transformation body.*>

In addition, he manifested the forms of the bodhisattvas Vajradhara (i.e., Vajrapāṇi), Samantabhadra, Padmapāṇi, and so on and proclaimed everywhere throughout the ten directions the Dharma of the pure words of the mantra path. <—*This shows the expounding of the Dharma by the homogeneous body; as for "and so on," by mentioning Vajra[pāṇi] and Padmapāṇi, it equally includes the deities of the Outer Vajra Division [on the periphery of the maṇḍala]; the fourfold Dharma body of this sutra also has both vertical and horizontal meanings, and these should be understood from the context.*>

It also says [in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*] (T. 18: 40b):

Thereupon the World-honored One Vairocana addressed the *vajradhara* Lord of Mysteries: "If one enters the stage of

initiation into the great wisdom of the Great Awakened World-honored One, one will see oneself dwelling in the state of the three *samayas* (i.e., equality of body, speech, and mind). Lord of Mysteries, if one enters initiation into Bhagavān's great wisdom, then one displays Buddha deeds in the form of *dhāraṇīs*. Then the Great Awakened World-honored One dwells conformingly in front of all sentient beings, performing Buddha deeds and expounding the state of the three *samayas*." The Buddha said, "Lord of Mysteries, observe the sphere of my circle of speech, which is a gateway to purity that is vast and extends throughout innumerable world-systems, a gateway that in accordance with their own nature expresses the Dharma realm for various kinds of beings, and causes all sentient beings to all obtain joy. Again, it is like the present World-honored One Śākyamuni, who pervades inexhaustible realms of empty space and diligently performs Buddha deeds in [many] lands. <—*This passage shows that the manner in which the three bodies of the Honored One Vairocana pervade world-systems and perform Buddha deeds is just like the three bodies of Śākyamuni. [But] it should be realized that the three bodies of Śākyamuni and the three bodies of Vairocana are not the same.*>

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In the *Sutra of the Dhāraṇī for Protecting State [Rulers]* it says (T. 19: 565c):<sup>36</sup>

The Buddha addressed the Lord of Mysteries, saying, "Good sir, the World-honored One Vairocana has already widely proclaimed this *dhāraṇī* in the Akaniṣṭha Heaven for the heavenly lord Śakra and the heavenly hosts. I shall now briefly expound this *dhāraṇī* gateway in this Adamantine Site under the *bodhi* tree for kings and for you all."

In [Fascicle] Nine of the [Great] *Perfection of Wisdom Treatise* it says (T. 25: 121c–122a):

The Buddha has two kinds of bodies: one is the Dharma-nature

body, and the second is the body born of parents. This Dharma-nature body fills empty space in the ten directions, is immeasurable and infinite, handsome in physical form, and adorned with the [thirty-two] major characteristics and [eighty] minor marks [of a Buddha], has innumerable light rays and innumerable voices, and the multitudes who listen to the Dharma also fill empty space <—*this shows that the multitudes are also the Dharma-nature body and not visible to people in [the cycle of] birth-and-death*>. It forever manifests various bodies, various designations, various birthplaces, and various expedient means to save sentient beings, forever saving all without stopping even for a moment. Such is the Buddha of the Dharma-nature body. He who saves sentient beings in the ten directions and receives retribution for sins [on the other hand] is the Buddha with a body born [of parents].<sup>37</sup> The Buddha with a body born [of parents] progressively expounds the Dharma in the way that people [in this world teach] the Dharma.

It also says [in the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise*] (T. 25: 126b):

The Dharma-body Buddha is forever emitting rays of light and forever expounding the Dharma, but on account of their sins [people] neither see nor hear this. They are, for example, like the blind who, when the sun rises, do not see it and the deaf who, when thunder reverberates across the earth, do not hear it. In this manner the Dharma body is forever emitting rays of light and forever expounding the Dharma, but sentient beings are thickly layered with the soil of sins of innumerable eons and neither see nor hear this. Just as one will see one's face when it is reflected in a bright mirror or clear water, but will see nothing if [the mirror is] soiled or [the water] murky, in the same way sentient beings will see the Buddha when their minds are pure, but will not see the Buddha if their minds are impure.

It also says [in the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise*] (T. 25: 127c):

As is explained in the *Sutra of the Adamantine [Guardian of] Secrets* (cf. T. 11: 53b), the Buddha has three mysteries—the mystery of the body, the mystery of speech, and the mystery of the mind—and no gods or men can either understand or know them.

*<The above passages from sutras and treatises are all evidence of the differences between the exoteric and esoteric [teachings] and of the expounding of the Dharma by the Dharma body. The wise who peruse them should consider them carefully and dispel their confusion.>*

#### IV. The Differences between the Exoteric and the Esoteric

*Question:* If it is as you say, the expounding of the sphere of the Dharma body's innerly realized wisdom is termed "esoteric" and the rest is called "exoteric." [In that case] why do sutras expounded by Śākyamuni have the designation "secret treasury"? And in which treasury should the *dhāraṇī* gateway expounded by him be included?

*Answer:* The meanings of "exoteric" and "esoteric" are multi-layered and innumerable. If one views the profound from the shallow, then the profound is secret and the superficial is exoteric. Therefore, the canonical works of non-Buddhists also contain the term "secret treasury." Within what has been taught by the Tathāgata there are many layers of exoteric and esoteric. If one views the teachings of non-Buddhists from the vantage point of the small teachings (i.e., Hinayana), then [the latter] may be called profound and esoteric; if the Small [Vehicle] is compared with the Great [Vehicle], there will also be [a contrast between] exoteric and esoteric; the One Vehicle takes the name "secret" in contrast to the three [vehicles]; *dhāraṇīs* gain the designation "esoteric" to distinguish them from wordy discourses; and since the expositions by

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the Dharma body are profound and recondite while the teachings of the response and transformation [bodies]<sup>38</sup> are shallow and cursory, [the former] are termed “secret.”

Now, “secret” has two meanings, one being the secret of sentient beings and the second being the secret of the Tathāgata. Because sentient beings have concealed their own proper nature of true enlightenment on account of ignorance and deluded thoughts, this is called the sentient beings’ own secret. The expounding of the Dharma by the response and transformation [bodies] is [like] the dispensing of medicine in accordance with religious capacities, for their words are not in vain. Therefore, the other-enjoyment body hides his inner realization and does not speak of his sphere [of being]. [Bodhisattvas of] equal enlightenment can neither hear nor see it, and [bodhisattvas of] the ten stages are absolutely removed from it. This is termed the Tathāgata’s secret. Thus [the meanings of] the term “secret” are multi-layered and innumerable. What is called “secret” here is the Dharma body’s own ultimate and uttermost sphere [of being], and it is to this that the esoteric treasury corresponds.

In addition, although the *dhāraṇī* gateways expounded by the response and transformation [bodies] are similarly termed “secret treasury,” when compared with that expounded by the Dharma body, they are expedient and not real. Among what is secret there are the expedient and the real, and they should be categorized according to the circumstances.

*On the Differences between the Exoteric and  
Esoteric Teachings, Fascicle Two*



THE MEANING OF BECOMING A BUDDHA  
IN THIS VERY BODY

by

Kūkai



## I. Scriptural Evidence

*Question:* Various sutras and treatises all explain that it takes three eons to become a Buddha. What evidence is there for now positing the principle of becoming a Buddha in this very body?

*Answer:* The Tathāgata has explained it in the secret treasury [of Esoteric Buddhist scriptures].

*Question:* How is it explained in those sutras?

*Answer:* In the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* it is stated (T. 19: 320c):

He who practices this *samādhi* will actually realize the  
Buddha's *bodhi*.

<[Remarks:] “*This samādhi*” is the *samādhi* of the Honored One Vairocana as *Ekākṣaroṣṇīśacakravartin*.>

It also says (T. 18: 331b):

If a sentient being should encounter this teaching  
And practice it diligently during the four watches of the  
day and night (i.e., early morning, midday, evening,  
and midnight),  
He will realize the stage of joy in his present lifetime  
And accomplish perfect enlightenment in his subsequent  
sixteen lives.

<[Remarks:] “*This teaching*” refers to the great king of teachings of the *samādhi* innerly realized by the Dharma-Buddha himself. The “*stage of joy*” is not the first stage [of the ten stages] explained in the exoteric teachings, but is the first stage in our own Buddha vehicle, as fully explained in the chapter on stages.<sup>1</sup> “*Sixteen lives*” refers to the generation of the Sixteen Great Bodhi-sattvas, as fully explained in the chapter on stages.<sup>2</sup>>

It also says (T. 19: 594a):

If one is able to practice according to this supreme principle,  
One will succeed in accomplishing unsurpassed enlighten-  
ment in one's present lifetime.

381c It also says (T.18: 329a):

Know that your own body becomes the Adamantine  
Realm.[ . . . ]

When your own body becomes a *vajra*, it is firm, solid, and  
indestructible.[ . . . ]

I have become an adamantine body.<sup>3</sup>

In the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* it says (T. 18: 21a):

Without abandoning this body, one obtains supernatural  
powers over the objective world,  
Roams about the station of great space, and accomplishes  
the mystery of the body.

It also says (T. 18: 45c):

If you wish to enter *siddhi* in this life,

Follow an appropriate [practice] and contemplate on it.

If you personally receive [initiation into] a *vidyā* rite from  
a venerable [teacher],

Observe it, and intercorrespond [with the deity], you will  
be successful.

[Remarks:] “*Siddhi*” mentioned in this sutra refers to [mun-  
dane] *siddhi* obtained by reciting *vidyās* and the [supramundane]  
*siddhi* of the Dharma-Buddha. “Station of great space” means that  
the Dharma body is, like the great void, unobstructed, contains all  
phenomena, and is eternal—therefore it says “great space”; and  
because all things dwell in dependence on it, it is termed “station.”  
“Mystery of the body”: the three mysteries of the Dharma-Buddha  
are difficult to see even for [bodhisattvas of] equal enlightenment,  
and so how can they be glimpsed by [bodhisattvas of] the ten  
stages?—therefore it is called “mystery of the body.”

Again, in the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind* it is stated (T. 32: 572c):

[Only] in the mantra teachings does one become a Buddha in this very body, and therefore they explain the methods of *samādhi*; in other teachings these are missing and have not been recorded.

<[Remarks:] "They explain the methods of *samādhi*" refers to the *samādhi* realized by the Dharma body itself. "Other teachings" are the exoteric teachings expounded by the other-enjoyment body.>

It also says (T. 32: 574c):

If someone seeking the Buddha's wisdom should penetrate  
the *bodhi*-mind,

He will quickly realize the stage of great enlightenment  
with the body born of his parents.

It is in accordance with these corroborative passages based on doctrine and reason that this principle [of becoming a Buddha in this very body] is established.

## II. The Verse on Becoming a Buddha in This Very Body

[*Question.*] What are the different meanings of the words ["becoming a Buddha in this very body" as expounded] in these sutras and treatise?

[*Answer.*] Here are [two] stanzas:

The six elements are unobstructed and eternally in a state  
of *yoga*; <—*Essence*>

The four kinds of *maṇḍa*[*la*]s are not separate from one  
another; <—*Aspect*>

When empowered by the three mysteries, [Buddhahood] is  
quickly manifested. <—*Function*>

The manifold interconnectedness of Indra's net is called  
"this very body." <—*Nonobstruction*>

Naturally endowed with *sarvajñāna*;  
Mental functions and mind-kings are more numerous than  
the dust motes of [countless] lands,  
Each possessed of the five wisdoms, of infinite wisdom;  
And because of the power [to function] as a perfect mirror  
there is the real wisdom of enlightenment. <—*Becoming  
a Buddha*><sup>4</sup>

*Interpretative Remarks:* These two stanzas in eight lines extol the four words "becoming a Buddha in this very body" (*soku-shin-jō-butsu*). That is to say, these four words contain infinite meaning, and none of the Buddha's teachings goes beyond this single phrase. Therefore, these two stanzas were composed in brief so as to reveal its infinite virtues.

The content of the stanzas is divided into two: the first stanza extols the two words "in this *very body*" (*soku-shin*), and the next stanza extols the two words "becoming a Buddha" (*jō-butsu*). In the first [stanza] there are again four [sections]: the first line [expresses] essence, the second aspect, the third function, and the fourth nonobstruction. In the following stanza there are [also] four [sections]: the first [line] gives the Buddhahood of the Dharma-Buddha, the next expresses innumerableness, the third reveals perfection, and the last presents the reason.

### 1. The Six Elements Are Unobstructed and Eternally in a State of Yoga

*Remarks:* The "six elements" are the five elements plus consciousness. In the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* it says (T. 18: 9b):

I (Vairocana) awoke to original non-birth, transcended the  
path of speech,  
Obtained liberation from all faults, dissociated myself from  
causes and conditions,

And knew emptiness, which is like empty space.

This represents the meaning [of the six elements]. His (Vairocana's) seed-mantra is: *A vi ra hūṃ khaṃ hūṃ*.<sup>5</sup> That the letter *A* signifies the original non-birth (*ādyanutpāda*) of all *dharmas* corresponds to the earth element; that the letter *Va* stands for dissociation from speech (*vāc*) signifies the water element; that which is pure and without defilement (*rajas*) corresponds to the letter *Ra* and the fire element; the inapprehensibility of causes (*hetu*) and karma (i.e., conditions) represents the gateway of the letter *Ha* and the wind element; and "like empty space (*kha*)" is the superficial meaning of the letter *Khaṃ*, and it corresponds to the space element. "I awoke" represents the consciousness element—in the causal stage [of practice] it is called "consciousness," and in the resultant stage [of awakening] it is called "wisdom," for wisdom is equivalent to awakening. The Sanskrit words *buddha* and *bodhi* are derived from the same word (i.e., *budh*: "to awaken"), and *buddha* denotes "awaken[ed one]," while *bodhi* means "wisdom." Therefore, [the term] *samyaksaṃbodhi* (perfect awakening) mentioned in various sutras was formerly rendered [in Chinese] as "universal knowledge" and later translated as "equal awakening," since the meanings of "awakening" and "knowledge" are interconnected. The reason that this sutra refers to consciousness as awakening [in the phrase "I awoke"] is that it takes the dominant [sense in the resultant stage]. It is only a distinction between cause and result and a difference between the fundamental and the derivative. The verse from this sutra makes this statement with reference to the *samādhis* of the Five Buddhas.<sup>6</sup>

Again, in the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* it says (T. 18: 331a):

All *dharmas* are originally unborn; their [inherent] nature  
is dissociated from verbal discourse;  
They are pure and untainted; they consist of causes and  
karma, and are like empty space.

This is again the same as [the above quotation from] the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*. "All *dharmas*" means all mental *dharmas*. The

mind-kings and mental functions are immeasurable in number; therefore it says “all.” “Mind” and “consciousness” are different words with similar meaning. Therefore, Vasubandhu and others established the principle of consciousness-only<sup>7</sup> with [the thesis that] the three realms are mind-only. The rest [of the above quotation] is the same as explained above [in connection with the quotation from the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*].

Again, in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* it says (T. 18: 38bc):

I am identical with the station of the mind, sovereign  
everywhere,  
And universally pervade various sentient and non-sentient  
beings.  
The letter *A* stands for primary life, the letter *Va* refers to  
water,  
The letter *Ra* refers to fire, the letter *Hūṃ* refers to wind,<sup>8</sup>  
And the letter *Kha* is the same as empty space.

In the first [half-]line of this scriptural passage—“I am identical with the station of the mind”—“mind” refers to consciousness-wisdom. The last five [half-]lines refer to the five elements. The middle three [half-]lines express the function of sovereignty and attribute of nonobstruction of the six elements. The *Prajñā[pāramitā] Sutra* (e.g., T. 5: 704b, 979c, 990b), the *Necklace Sutra* (cf. T. 16: 19c; T. 24: 1013a), and so on also explain the principle of the six elements.

These six elements create all Buddhas, all sentient beings, and the physical world, [that is,] the fourfold Dharma body and three-fold world. Therefore, the Honored One Vairocana expounded the following verses on generation of the Tathāgata (T. 18: 31a):

[The six elements] produce in forms according to their kind  
*dharmas* and *dharma* marks,  
Buddhas, *śrāvakas*, world-saving *pratyekabuddhas*,  
Hosts of valiant bodhisattvas, and likewise the honored  
among men;

Sentient beings and the physical world are established in succession,  
 And *dharmas* that are born, abide, and so on are perpetually produced in this manner.<sup>9</sup>

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[*Question:*] What meaning do these verses express?

[*Answer:*] They show that the six elements produce the four-fold Dharma body, the [four kinds of] *maṇḍalas*, and the threefold world. “*Dharmas*” is mental *dharmas* and “*dharma marks*” is material *dharmas*. Then again, “*dharmas*” gives the general term and “*dharma marks*” indicates their distinctions. Therefore, in the following lines it says that Buddhas, *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, bodhisattvas, sentient beings, and the physical world are established in succession. Then again, “*dharmas*” is the *dharma-maṇḍala*, “*dharma marks*” is the *samaya* bodies (i.e., symbolic figures) [represented in the *samaya-maṇḍala*], and “Buddhas . . . sentient beings” is the bodies (i.e., figures) [represented] in the great *maṇḍala* (*mahā-maṇḍala*). The “physical world” represents the ground by which they are supported, and this “physical world” is a generic term for the *samaya-maṇḍala*.<sup>10</sup> Then again, “Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and the two vehicles” represents the world of the wise and enlightened, “sentient beings” is the world of sentient beings, and “physical world” is, namely, the physical world. Then again, [the subject of] “produce” is the six elements and “in forms according to their kind” is the *dharmas* that are produced, and these are, namely, the four-fold Dharma body and the threefold world.

Therefore, next it also says (T. 18: 31a):

Lord of Mysteries, there are instances in which the positions, seed[-syllables], and insignia of the sacred deities of the *maṇḍala* are set up [on the person of the practitioner]. You should listen attentively [ . . . ] as I now explain it.

He (Vairocana) then spoke the following verses (T. 18: 31a):

The mantra practitioner first situates a circular altar (*maṇḍala*) in his own body:

From the feet to the navel constitutes a great adamantine circle;

From here to the heart he should imagine a water circle;  
Above the water circle is a fire circle, and above the fire circle is a wind circle.

*Remarks:* The “adamantine circle” is the letter A, and the letter A corresponds to the earth [element]. The water, fire, and wind [elements] are to be known in accordance with the [quoted] passage. The “circular altar” is the space [element], and “mantra practitioner” is the mind element. The “sacred deities” mentioned in the prose section are the great body [corresponding to the figures represented in the great *maṇḍala*], the “seed[-syllables]” are the *dharma* body [corresponding to the letters represented in the *dharma-maṇḍala*], and the “insignia” are the *samaya* body [corresponding to the insignia represented in the *samaya-maṇḍala*]; the *karma* body is possessed by each of the [above] three bodies. As for a more detailed explanation, it is explained extensively in the text of the sutra and should be known by referring to the text.

[In the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*] it also says (T. 18: 19c):

The Honored One Vairocana [...] said: “Vajrapāṇi, there are born of the minds of Tathāgatas the play of activity and dance of practice which display a wide variety of forms, encompass the four realms, abide in the mind-king, are like empty space, accomplish vast fruits visible and invisible, and give birth to the stages of all *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and bodhisattvas.”

[*Question:*] What meaning does this passage express?

[*Answer:*] It shows that the six elements produce everything.

[*Question:*] How can this be known?

[*Answer:*] “Mind-king” is the consciousness element, “encompass the four realms” is the four elements, and “equivalent to empty space” is the space element. These six elements are the producer. “Visible and invisible” is the realms of desire and form and the

realm of non-form. The rest is as [stated] in the text, and it corresponds to the *dharmas* that are produced.

Scriptural passages such as these all regard the six elements as the producer and regard the four Dharma bodies and three worlds as the produced. These *dharmas* that are produced range from the Dharma body above to the six paths below, and although there are divisions between gross and fine and differences between large and small, they still do not go beyond the six elements. Therefore, the Buddha taught that the six elements constitute the essential nature of the Dharma realm.

In the exoteric teachings the four elements are regarded as non-sentient, but the esoteric teaching explains that they are the *samaya* bodies of the Tathāgata. The four elements are not separate from the mind element. Although mind and matter are different, their nature is the same. Matter is mind, and mind is matter, and they are [mutually] unhindered and unobstructed. The knower (lit., “wisdom”) is the known (lit., “object”), and the known is the knower; the knower is the [truth-]principle [that is known], and the [truth-]principle is the knower—they are [mutually] unobstructed and absolutely free. Although there are both producer and produced, they completely transcend [distinctions between] active and passive. In the truth-principle as it naturally is, what kind of creative action can there be? Terms such as active and passive are all secret designations, and, clinging to their conventional and superficial meanings, one should not engage in various frivolous arguments.

Bodies composed of these six elements, the essential nature of the Dharma realm, are unhindered and unobstructed, they interpenetrate and intercorrespond, they are everlasting and immutable, and they abide in the same way in ultimate reality. Therefore it says in the stanza, “The six elements are unobstructed and eternally in a state of *yoga*.” “Unobstructed” means “[inter]penetrating freely”; “eternally” means “immovable,” “indestructible,” and so on; “*yoga*” is translated as “intercorrespondence,” and intercorrespondent [inter]penetration is, namely, the meaning of “very” (*soku*) [in the phrase “becoming a Buddha in this very body”].

## 2. The Four Kinds of *Maṇḍa[la]*s Are Not Separate from One Another

As for “The four kinds of *maṇḍa[la]*s are not separate from one another,” the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (T. 18: 44a) states that all Tathāgatas have three kinds of secret bodies, namely, letter, seal, and image. “Letter” is the *dharma-maṇḍala*; “seal” means various insignia, that is, the *samaya-maṇḍala*; and “image” is the physical body endowed with the [thirty-two] major characteristics and [eighty] minor marks [of a Buddha], that is, the great *maṇḍala*. These three kinds of bodies are each possessed of deportment and activity, and this is called the *karma-maṇḍala*. These are called the four kinds of *maṇḍalas*.

According to the explanation in the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* (e.g., T. 18: 898c–899a; T.19: 609b), the four kinds of *maṇḍalas* are:

1. Great *maṇḍala* (*mahā-maṇḍala*): it refers to each Buddha’s and bodhisattva’s [physical] body [endowed with] the major characteristics and minor marks. Painting their images is also called a great *maṇḍala*. Again, accomplishing deity *yoga* by means of the five phases<sup>11</sup> is also called “great wisdom-seal” [and this too corresponds to the great *maṇḍala*].

2. *Samaya-maṇḍala*: it is, namely, the insignia held [by the deities], such as the sword, wheel-treasure,<sup>12</sup> *vajra*, lotus, and the like. If one draws their images, this is also [a *samaya-maṇḍala*]. Again, joining one’s two hands together [with the fingers interlocked] in the adamantine bind and generating the formation of seals (*mudrās*)<sup>13</sup> is also called “*samaya* wisdom-seal” [and this too corresponds to the *samaya-maṇḍala*].

3. *Dharma-maṇḍala*: it is the seed[-syllable] and mantra of one’s deity. If one writes the seed-syllables [of various deities], each in its proper position, this is [also a *dharma-maṇḍala*]. Again, the *samādhis* of the Dharma body and the words and meanings of all scriptures are all also called “*dharma* wisdom-seals” [and these too correspond to the *dharma-maṇḍala*].

4. *Karma-maṇḍala*: it is, namely, the various departments and activities of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and so on. [Images] either cast in metal or molded in clay too are also called “*karma* wisdom-seals” [and these too correspond to the *karma-maṇḍala*].

These four kinds of *maṇḍalas* or four kinds of wisdom-seals (*jñāna-mudrā*) are immeasurable in their number, and the measure of each is equal to empty space. That is not separate from this, and this is not separate from that, just as space and light are unobstructed [by each other] and do not resist [each other]. Therefore it says, “The four kinds of *maṇḍala*[s] are not separate from one another.” “Not separate” is, namely, the meaning of “very” (*soku*) [in the phrase “becoming a Buddha in this very body”].

### 3. When Empowered by the Three Mysteries, [Buddhahood] Is Quickly Manifested

As for “When empowered by the three mysteries, [Buddhahood] is quickly manifested,” the “three mysteries” are 1) the mystery of the body, 2) the mystery of speech, and 3) the mystery of the mind. The three mysteries of the Dharma-Buddha are so profound and subtle that even [bodhisattvas of] equal enlightenment and the ten stages are unable to see or hear them, and therefore they are called “mysteries.”

Each deity is possessed of three mysteries [as innumerable as] the dust motes of [countless] lands, and they mutually empower each other and encompass one another. The three mysteries of sentient beings are also like this. Therefore, it is called empowerment by the three mysteries. If a mantra practitioner should examine the meaning of this, make seal-pledges (i.e., *mudrās*) with his hands, recite mantras with his mouth, and dwell in *samādhi* with his mind, he will quickly obtain great *siddhi* on account of the intercorrespondence and empowerment of the three mysteries [of his deity and himself]. Therefore, it says in a sutra (T. 19: 322c):

Each syllable of this three-syllable mantra of the Buddha

Vairocana (*om bhūh kham*) is immeasurable [in its efficacy].

If [a practitioner] should seal his heart with [Vairocana's] seal and [this] mantra, he will accomplish mirrorlike wisdom

And quickly obtain the adamantine firm essence of the *bodhi*-mind;

If he seals his forehead, one should know that he will accomplish the wisdom of equality

And quickly obtain a body adorned with the aggregate of merit of the stage of consecration;

When he seals his mouth with the mantra, he will accomplish the wisdom of wondrous observation,

Whereupon he will turn the Dharma wheel and obtain the Buddha's wisdom body;

If he recites the mantra and seals the crown [of his head], he will accomplish the wisdom of accomplishing what is to be done,

Realize the Buddha's transformation bodies, and subdue those difficult to control;

And if he empowers his [whole] person with this seal and mantra,

He will accomplish the wisdom of the essential nature of the Dharma realm and the Buddha Vairocana's body of the Dharma realm, [which is like] empty space.

It also says (T. 19: 602a):

[The practitioner] enters the meditation on the thusness (*tathatā*) of the Dharma body, in which the agent of cognition and object of cognition are one, undifferentiated like empty space. If he is able to concentrate [on this meditation] and practice uninterruptedly, then he will in his present lifetime enter the first stage and quickly collect the stock of merit and wisdom [normally collected] in one great *asaṃkhyeya* eon; on account of being empowered by many Tathāgatas, he

will reach the tenth stage and [the stages of] equal enlightenment and wondrous enlightenment and be endowed with [the wisdom of a] *sarvajña* (omniscient one); self and other will be undifferentiated, he will be identical with the Dharma body of all Tathāgatas, and he will always benefit infinite sentient beings with unconditional great compassion and perform great Buddha deeds.

It also says (T. 20: 535bc):

If [a practitioner] has recourse to the Dharma of the innerly realized and self-awakened sacred wisdom expounded by the self-enjoyment body of the Buddha Vairocana and to the wisdom of the other-enjoyment body of Great Samantabhadra-Vajrasattva, then he will in his present lifetime encounter a *maṇḍala ācārya* (teacher) and be able to enter a *maṇḍala*. Having completed the *karman* (ordination rite), [the *ācārya*] will induct Vajrasattva into his body by means of the *samādhi* of Samantabhadra. On account of the majestic power of empowerment he will instantly realize innumerable *samayas* and innumerable *dhāraṇī* gateways. By inconceivable methods [the *ācārya*] will transmute the disciple's seeds of innate self-attachment, at which time he will accumulate in his person the merit and wisdom [normally] collected in one great *asaṃkhyeya* eon, whereupon he will be deemed to have been born into the Buddha's family. That person, born from the minds of all Tathāgatas, born from the mouth of the Buddha, born from the Dharma of the Buddha, and born of conversion by the Dharma, will obtain the Buddha's Dharma wealth. "Dharma wealth" means the teachings of the *bodhi*-mind [based on] the three mysteries. <This indicates the benefits obtained through the *ācārya*'s expedient means of empowerment when one is first conferred the precepts of the *bodhi*-mind.>

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By just seeing the *maṇḍala* he instantly has pure faith, and because he gazes at it reverently with a joyful mind, he

plants the seeds of the Adamantine Realm in his *ālaya*-consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*: “storehouse-consciousness”). *<This passage indicates the benefits obtained upon first seeing the deities of the [vast] oceanlike assembly of the maṇḍala.>*

He receives in full an adamantine name of initiation to the position [of an initiate], and hereafter he will obtain vast, profound, and inconceivable teachings and transcend the two vehicles and ten stages. If he mentally applies himself and practices this Dharma gateway of the *yoga* of the Five Mysteries of Great Vajrasattva uninterruptedly during the four watches and throughout the four activities of walking, standing, sitting, and lying down, then in the objective realm of what is seen, heard, sensed, and perceived his attachment to the emptiness of both persons and things [will disappear and] everything will all be equal, and he will realize the first stage in his present life and gradually advance [to higher stages]. By cultivating the Five Mysteries he will be neither tainted by nor attached to nirvana or birth-and-death. In the boundless [cycle of] birth-and-death in the five destinies he will widely act to benefit [others], and he will divide his person into a hundred million [incarnations] and roam through the various destinies, bringing sentient beings to fulfillment and enabling them to realize the stage of Vajrasattva. *<This indicates the inconceivable benefits of the Dharma when one practices in accordance with the rules of [this] rite.>*

It also says (T. 20: 539a):

With the *vajra* of the three mysteries as a dominant condition one is able to realize the resultant stage of the three bodies of Vairocana.<sup>14</sup>

Sutras such as these all explain the methods of this *samādhi* of swift effect and inconceivable supernatural power. If someone should exert himself day and night without neglecting the [ritual] rules, he will obtain the five supernatural faculties with his present body, and if he gradually trains himself, he will advance to

enter the stage of the Buddha without abandoning this body. It is as is explained in detail in the sutras.

On the basis of this meaning it says, "When empowered by the three mysteries, [Buddhahood] is quickly manifested." "Empower" (lit., "add and hold") expresses the great compassion of the Tathāgata and the faithful minds of sentient beings: the reflection of the Buddha-sun appearing on the mind-water of sentient beings is called "adding" and the mind-water of the practitioner sensing the Buddha-sun is called "holding."<sup>15</sup> If the practitioner contemplates well on this guiding principle, through the intercorrespondence of his three mysteries [with those of the Tathāgata] he will quickly manifest and realize in his present body the originally existent three bodies. Therefore it is said, "[Buddhahood] is quickly manifested." The meaning of "in this very body" (*sokushin*) is just like that of the ordinary [terms] "at that very moment" (*sokuji*; i.e., immediately) or "on that very day" (*sokujitsu*; i.e., on the same day).

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#### 4. The Manifold Interconnectedness of Indra's Net Is Called "This Very Body"

As for "The manifold interconnectedness of Indra's net is called 'this very body,'" this gives a simile to explain the perfect interfusion and nonobstruction of the deities' three mysteries [as innumerable as] the dust motes of [countless] lands. "Indra's net" is Indra's jeweled net. "Body" means my body, the Buddha's body, and the bodies of sentient beings—these are called "body." There are also four kinds of bodies, namely, the own-nature [body], the enjoyment [body], the transformation [body], and the homogeneous [body]—these are called "body." There are also three kinds: they are letter, seal, and form. Bodies such as these are manifoldly interconnected vertically and horizontally like the reflections [of a single object] in [many] mirrors or the interpenetration of the light of [many] lamps. That body is this body, and this body is that body; the Buddha's body is the bodies of sentient beings, and the bodies of sentient beings are the Buddha's body. They are not the same, and yet they are the same; they are not different, and yet

they are different. Therefore, the mantra of the nonobstruction of the three equals says: "Salutation <as always>, *asame trisame samaye svāhā*."<sup>16</sup> The meaning of the first word (*asame*) is "unequaled," the next (*trisame*) is "three equals," and that of the last word (*samaye*) is "equality of three." The "three" are Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha; body, speech, and mind are also three; and the mind, the Buddha, and sentient beings are three. These three *dharmas* are completely equal and one; they are one and yet immeasurable [in number], immeasurable [in number] and yet one, and they never become confused. Therefore it says, "The manifold interconnectedness of Indra's net is called 'this very body.'"

### 5. Naturally Endowed with *Sarvajñāna*

As for "Naturally endowed with *sarvajñāna*," in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* it says (T. 18: 22bc):

I am the original beginning of everything and am called  
the support of the world;  
My expounding of the Dharma is peerless, originally  
quiescent, and unsurpassed.

*Remarks:* "I" is the self-designation of the Honored One Vairocana. "Everything" refers to innumerable [entities]. "Original beginning" is the original patriarch who from the very beginning has naturally realized all *dharmas* [characterized by] this great freedom. The Tathāgata's Dharma body and the original nature of sentient beings both possess this principle of original quiescence, but sentient beings are unaware and ignorant of it. Therefore, the Buddha expounds this guiding principle to awaken sentient beings.

[In the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*] it also says (T. 18: 19b):

Those who hanker after cause and result, [...] those foolish people are unable to understand mantras and the characteristics of mantras. Why?

It is taught that the cause is not the agent, and its result is not produced.

Even as a cause this cause is empty, and so how can  
there be any result?

Know then that the results of mantras are completely  
removed from cause and result.<sup>17</sup>

The verse “I (Vairocana) awoke to original non-birth, . . . dissociated myself from causes and conditions” and [the verse] “All *dharmas* are originally unborn; . . . they consist of causes and karma, and are like empty space” quoted above—verses such as these all express the meaning of “naturally endowed.”

Again, in the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* it says (T. 18: 254a):<sup>18</sup>

[Vairocana’s] attendants composed of his own-nature, [namely,] Vajrapāṇi and the other Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas . . . , each [ . . . ] bring forth five million *koṭi* subtle *vajras* of the Dharma body. 384a

Passages such as this also have this meaning [of “naturally endowed”]. “Naturally” shows the way in which *dharmas* naturally are. “Endowed” means “accomplished” and means “having no deficiencies.”

“*Sarvajñāna*” (Jp.: *sahannya*) is Sanskrit. The older [transcription] *satsu’un* is a corruption; in full it is *saraba-shijanō* (*sarvajñānam*), which translates as “all-knowing wisdom.”<sup>19</sup> As regards “all-knowing wisdom,” “wisdom” means “judgment” and “discernment.” All Buddhas are each possessed of the five wisdoms, the thirty-seven wisdoms, and wisdoms [as innumerable as] the dust motes of [countless] lands.

**6. Mental Functions and Mind-kings  
Are More Numerous Than the Dust Motes  
of [Countless] Lands / Each Possessed of the  
Five Wisdoms, of Infinite Wisdom**

The next two lines (“Mental functions and mind-kings are more numerous than the dust motes of [countless] lands / Each possessed of the five wisdoms, of infinite wisdom”) express this meaning [of

all-knowing wisdom]. When indicating the quality of judgment, it is known as “wisdom” (*jñāna*); for showing [the sense of] “accumulative arising,” it is termed “mind” (*citta*); and for showing [the sense of] “norm-support,” it is termed “Dharma gateway” (*dharma*).<sup>20</sup> Each of these designations is not separate from a person, and the number of such persons exceeds the dust motes of [countless] lands. It is therefore called “all-knowing wisdom” [because it is possessed by all beings], and [its meaning] is not the same as in the case of the exotericists, who use this term to set one wisdom over against everything. “Mind-kings” is the wisdom of the essential nature of the Dharma realm and so on, and “mental functions” is the many-and-one-consciousness.<sup>21</sup>

“Each possessed of the five wisdoms” indicates that every mind-king and mental function each has these [five wisdoms]. “Infinite wisdom” means [that this wisdom is] lofty, extensive, and innumerable.

### **7. And Because of the Power [to Function] as a Perfect Mirror There Is the Real Wisdom of Enlightenment**

As for “And because of the power [to function] as a perfect mirror there is the real wisdom of enlightenment,” this gives the reason. On what account are all Buddhas described as [having] the wisdom of enlightenment? Namely, just as all forms are reflected in a bright mirror on a high stand, so too is it with the mirror of the mind of the Tathāgata: the perfectly bright mirror of his mind hangs high on the pinnacle of the Dharma realm and quietly illuminates everything without distortion and without error. What Buddha does not possess such a perfect mirror? Therefore it says, “And because of the power [to function] as a perfect mirror there is the real wisdom of enlightenment.”

THE MEANINGS OF SOUND, SIGN, AND REALITY

by

Kūkai



1) Statement of the Gist, 2) Interpretation of Terms and Their Essential Meaning, 3) Questions and Answers.

## I. Introduction

First, the statement of the gist: The Tathāgata invariably makes use of patterned signs when expounding the Dharma. The essence of patterned signs lies in the six sense objects, and the six sense objects have their basis in the three mysteries of the Dharma-Buddha. The undifferentiated three mysteries pervade the Dharma realm and are perpetual; the five wisdoms and the four bodies [of the Dharma-Buddha] are found in all ten realms without exception.

Those who have understood this are termed "Great Enlightened Ones," while those who are confused are called "sentient beings." Sentient beings are foolish and ignorant and have no way of becoming enlightened on their own, and so the Tathāgata empowers them and shows them the goal. The basis of the goal cannot be established without excellent teachings, and the rise of excellent teachings cannot occur without sounds and signs. When the sounds and signs are distinct and clear, then reality becomes manifest.

What are called "sound," "sign," and "reality" correspond to the undifferentiated three mysteries of the Dharma-Buddha and the originally existent *maṇḍa* (essence) of sentient beings. Therefore, the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana expounds the meanings of this sound, sign, and reality to startle the ears of long-slumbering sentient beings. With all doctrines, be they exoteric or esoteric, Buddhist or non-Buddhist, who does not have recourse to this approach? Now, relying on the guidance of the Great Teacher, I shall extract these meanings. It is only to be hoped that students of later times will study and consider them with particular attention. Here ends the statement of the main gist.

## II. Interpretation of Terms and Their Essential Meaning

Next, the interpretation of terms and their essential meaning: This is divided into two—1) Interpretation of Terms, and 2) Presenting Their Essential Meaning.

### 1. Interpretation of Terms

First, the interpretation of terms [used in the title]: No sooner do the inner and the outer breath issue forth than there is invariably a vibration, and this is called “sound.”<sup>1</sup> A vibration is invariably due to sound, and so sound is the basis of the vibration. When a sound is uttered, it is not in vain: it invariably expresses the name of something, and this is termed “sign.” A name invariably evokes the essence [of an object], and this is called “reality.” The distinctions among the threesome of sound, sign, and reality are called their “meanings.”

Again, when the four elements come in contact with one another, there is invariably an acoustic vibration in response, and this is [also] called “sound.” The five notes [of the Chinese pentatonic scale], the eight sounds [of the eight categories of Chinese musical instruments], and the seven cases and eight case-endings [in Sanskrit] all arise in dependence on sound. That a sound represents a name is invariably due to its being a patterned sign, and the arising of patterned signs has its basis in the six sense objects. An interpretation of the six sense objects as patterned signs will be given below.

[If sound, sign, and reality are understood] in terms of the six methods of interpreting Sanskrit compounds [“sound-sign” and “sound-sign-reality” can be analyzed in the following ways:]

1. Because of sound, there is sign, and so sign is the sign of sound. [When understood in this way, “sound-sign”] is being taken as a dependent compound. If one says that reality becomes manifest because of sound-sign, and so it

is the reality of sound-sign, ["sound-sign-reality"] is also being taken as a dependent compound.<sup>2</sup>

2. If one says that sound invariably has sign, that is, sound is the possessor and sign is the possessed, and [sound] possesses the property of sign, then ["sound-sign"] is being taken as a possessive compound. [If one says that] sound-sign invariably has reality, reality invariably has sound-sign, and they are mutually possessor and possessed, then ["sound-sign-reality"] is being taken likewise [as a possessive compound].<sup>3</sup> 402a
3. If one says that other than sound there is no sign, and so sign is sound, ["sound-sign" is being taken as] an appositional compound. If one says that other than sound-sign there is no reality, and so sound-sign is reality, [then "sound-sign-reality"] is also being taken likewise [as an appositional compound].<sup>4</sup> This meaning is explained in detail in the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sutra*. Refer directly to the relevant passages (T. 39: 650c, 657ab, 658a).
4. If one says that sound, sign, and reality are extremely close to each other [in meaning] and cannot be kept apart, both ["sound-sign" and "sound-sign-reality"] are being taken as adverbial compounds.<sup>5</sup>
5. If one says that sound-sign is provisional and falls short of the [truth-]principle, reality is recondite, quiescent, and transcends names, and sound-sign differs from reality, or that sound reverberates in vain without representing anything, signs form patterns of up and down and long and short, and sound differs from sign, both ["sound-sign-reality" and "sound-sign"] are being taken as copulative compounds.<sup>6</sup>
6. The numeral compound does not apply.<sup>7</sup>

Among the above five kinds of compounds, the copulative is a superficial interpretation, the appositional and the adverbial are based on a profound interpretation, and the remaining two can be taken in terms of either interpretation.

## 2. Main Discourse

Secondly, the interpretation of the essential meaning [of the terms used in the title] is also divided into two: first evidence will be cited, and then it will be interpreted.

### 2.1. Citation of Evidence

*Question:* Now, on the basis of which sutra do you establish this meaning [of sound, sign, and reality]?

*Answer:* I base myself on the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*, which has clear examples.

*Question:* How is it explained in that sutra?

[*Answer:*] In that sutra the Dharma-body Tathāgata expounds the following verses (T. 18: 9c):

The Perfectly Enlightened One's mantras are characterized by syllables, names, and clauses;  
As in the school of Indra, all their meanings are established.

Sometimes Dharma phrases are added so that the original intent [of the mantra] and the practice [for which it is used] will correspond.

*Question:* What meaning do these verses express?

*Answer:* There are two meanings—exoteric and esoteric. The exoteric meanings are as found in the interpretation given by the author of the *Commentary [on the Mahāvairocana Sutra]* (T. 39: 649c–650a). In the esoteric meanings there are profound connotations that are manifoldly interconnected both horizontally and vertically. Therefore, the verse cites an analogy, saying, “As in the

school of Indra, all their meanings are established.” “Indra” too has both exoteric and esoteric meanings. According to the exoteric meaning, [Indra] is another name for Śakra. As for “all their meanings are established,” [in the *Commentary* it says (T. 39: 649c):] “Devendra (i.e., Śakra) himself composed a grammatical treatise in which he was able to fully incorporate many meanings in a single syllable. Therefore, he is cited by way of evidence. Even worldly wisdom is like this; how much more so in the case of the Tathāgata, who has mastery of the Dharma!” If one were to give the esoteric interpretation, every single syllable, every single name, and every single clause [of a mantra] each possess infinite meanings, and Buddhas and bodhisattvas, producing innumerable clouds of bodies that expound every single meaning forever throughout the three ages, would still be unable to exhaust [their meanings], let alone an ordinary person. For the present I shall now reveal just one part.

“Perfectly Enlightened One” at the beginning of the verse is the mystery of the body of the undifferentiated Dharma-Buddha. These mysteries of the body are immeasurable in number, as interpreted in *The Meaning of [Becoming a Buddha in] This Very Body*. This mystery of the body corresponds to reality. Next, “mantras” corresponds to sound, and sound corresponds to the mystery of speech. Next, “syllables” and “names” correspond to signs, for it is through syllables that names become manifest, and names correspond to signs. This is only sound, sign, and reality in a single verse. 402b

If one were to reveal their meaning in terms of an entire sutra, they could be interpreted [as follows] with reference to the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*. The mantras of various deities expounded in this sutra correspond to sound.<sup>8</sup> The various letter gateways such as the gateway of the letter A<sup>9</sup> and “Chapter [Ten] on the Wheel of Letters” and so on<sup>10</sup> correspond to signs. “Chapter [Twenty-nine] on [the *Samādhi* of] Characteristiclessness” and the passages explaining the characteristics of various deities<sup>11</sup> all correspond to reality.

Next, if one were to interpret their meaning in terms of a single letter, in the case of the letter A at the beginning of the Sanskrit alphabet, whenever one opens one’s mouth and exhales, the sound

A is produced, and this corresponds to sound. To the name of what does the sound A refer? It represents the name-sign of the Dharma body, and this corresponds to sound-sign. What is the meaning of "Dharma body"? "Dharma body" means that all *dharmas* are originally unborn, and this corresponds to reality.

## 2.2. Interpretation

[*Question:*] We have heard the scriptural evidence. Please interpret their essential meaning.

[*Answer:*] Here is a verse:

The five elements all have vibrations;  
The ten realms possess language;  
The six sense objects are all patterned signs;  
The Dharma body is reality.

*Interpretative Remarks:* The content of the verse is divided into four: the first line exhausts the essence of sound; the second line penetrates true and false patterned signs; the third fully describes internal and external patterned signs; and the fourth plumbs reality.

### 2.2.1. The Five Elements All Have Vibrations

First, the "five elements" are: 1) the earth element, 2) the water element, 3) the fire element, 4) the wind element, and 5) the space element. These five elements have both exoteric and esoteric meanings. The exoteric five elements are as normally interpreted (i.e., material elements). The esoteric five elements correspond to the five syllables, the Five Buddhas,<sup>12</sup> and the deities of the oceanlike assembly [of a *maṇḍala*]. The [esoteric] meaning of the five elements is as interpreted in *The Meaning of [Becoming a Buddha in] This Very Body*. These internal and external five elements all have vocal vibrations, and no sounds are separate from the five elements. The five elements are, namely, the original essence of sound, and acoustic vibrations are their function. Therefore it says, "The five elements all have vibrations."

### 2.2.2. The Ten Realms Possess Language

Next, as for “The ten realms possess language,” the “ten realms” are: 1) the realm of all Buddhas, 2) the realm of all bodhisattvas, 3) the realm of all *pratyekabuddhas*, 4) the realm of all *śrāvakas*, 5) the realm of all gods, 6) the realm of all humans, 7) the realm of all *asuras* (demigods), 8) the realm of all animals, 9) the realm of all hungry ghosts, and 10) the realm of all *narakas* (hells). Various realms apart from these (e.g., realms of semidivine beings such as *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, *garuḍas*, *kiṃnaras*, and *mahoragas*) are all included in the realms of gods, [hungry] ghosts, and animals. The *Flower Ornament [Sutra]* (T. 10: 205bc) and the *Adamantine Pinnacle Explanatory Sutra on the Guiding Principle* (T. 19: 607a) have passages on the ten realms.

The languages in these ten realms all arise from sound. Sounds have long and short [vowels], high and low [pitch], tones, and intonations. These are called [articulatory] patterns. [Articulatory] patterns are dependent on name-signs, and name-signs require [articulatory] patterns. Therefore, when commentators say that the [articulatory] pattern is the sign, they have only taken into account their inseparability and interdependence.<sup>13</sup> These represent the patterned signs of internal sounds (i.e., sounds of sentient beings), and these patterned signs have ten distinctions, corresponding to the differences between the ten realms mentioned above.

[*Question:*] Among these ten kinds of patterned signs, which are true and which are false? 402c

[*Answer:*] If interpreted in terms of a vertically ranked distinction between the shallow and the profound, then [the patterned signs of] the nine realms are false, and the patterned signs of the realm of the Buddhas are true. Therefore, it says in a sutra (T. 8: 750b):

[The Tathāgata is] one who speaks what is true, one who speaks what is real, one who speaks as things are, one who does not speak deceitfully, and one who does not speak contrarily.

These five kinds of speech are called “mantra” in Sanskrit. This single word has [these] five kinds of different [meanings], and therefore Nāgārjuna calls it “secret speech.”<sup>14</sup> This secret speech corresponds to what is called “true speech” (mantra), for the [Chinese] translators only took one [meaning] among the five when translating [mantra].<sup>15</sup>

[*Question:*] What do these mantras denote?

[*Answer:*] They are able to express the reality of all *dharmas* without error and without falsehood, and therefore they are called “true speech” (mantra).

[*Question:*] How do these mantras express the names of all *dharmas*?

[*Answer:*] Although there are said to be innumerable differences among mantras, when traced right back to their root-source, they do not go beyond the mantra of the Honored One Vairocana while in the ocean-seal king of *samādhis*.

[*Question:*] What is this king of mantras?

[*Answer:*] It corresponds to the wheels of letters and syllabaries expounded in the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* (T. 18: 338c–339a) and the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (T. 18: 10ab, 30bc, 41bc). The syllabaries correspond to the Sanskrit alphabet from the letter *A*, etc., to the letter *Ha*, etc. These letters *A* and so on are the individual name-signs or secret designations of the Dharma-body Tathāgata, and gods, dragons, demons, and so on also have these names. As for the root-basis of [these] names, they have their root-source in the Dharma body, from which they simply issue forth and are gradually transformed to become the languages circulating in the world. That by which one knows the real meaning is called “true speech,” and that by which one does not know the root-source is called “false speech.” With false speech one experiences suffering during the long night [of spiritual darkness], while true speech eradicates suffering and bestows happiness. It is, for example, just

like medicine and poison, or delusion and enlightenment, which are not the same in their harm and benefit.

*Question:* How are the five kinds of speech explained by Nāgārjuna<sup>16</sup> related to the two kinds of speech explained just now?

*Answer:* [Speech indicative of individual] characteristics, dream [speech], [speech born of] deluded [attachments], and beginningless [speech] belong to the category of false [speech], while [speech] accordant with the [true] meaning belongs to the category of true [speech]. I have now finished explaining true and false patterned signs.

### 2.2.3. The Six Sense Objects Are All Patterned Signs

Next, I shall comment on the characteristics of internal and external patterned signs. In the line “The six sense objects are all patterned signs,” the “six sense objects” are: 1) the sense object of matter, 2) the sense object of sound, 3) the sense object of smell, 4) the sense object of taste, 5) the sense object of tangibles, and 6) the sense object of mental objects (*dharmas*). These six sense objects each have the characteristics of patterned signs.

[*Question.:*] First, what are the different meanings of the sense object of matter?

[*Answer.:*] Here is a verse:

[Visible] matter consists of color, shape, and movement;  
The internal and external dependent and proper [recompenses] are possessed of it.

There is that which is natural and that which is  
conditioned;

One may be deluded by it, or else one may be enlightened  
through it.

*Interpretative Remarks:* The content of the verse is divided into four: the first line gives the distinctions of [visible] matter; the second line indicates how internal and external matter mutually act as dependent [recompense] and [recompense] proper; the

third [line] reveals the two kinds of produced [matter], natural and conditioned; and the fourth [line] explains how these various kinds of matter act as poison for the foolish and act as medicine for the wise.

### 2.2.3.1. [Visible] Matter Consists of Color, Shape, and Movement

In the first line “[Visible] matter consists of color, shape, and movement,” there are three categories: 1) color, 2) shape, and 3) movement.<sup>17</sup>

403a First, “color” is the colors of the five elements. Hossō scholars mention four kinds of colors, but do not posit the color black. In the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (T. 18: 9a, 22c–23a) colors for the five elements are posited. The colors of the five elements are: 1) the color yellow, 2) the color white, 3) the color red, 4) the color black, and 5) the color blue. These colors of the five elements are known as [primary] colors. These five colors correspond to the colors of the five elements: know them in their allocated order (i.e., yellow—earth, white—water, red—fire, black—wind, and blue—space). Shade, light, brightness, darkness, cloud, smoke, dust, mist, and the single color of the sky are also called “colors.” In addition, anything that is clear and within the range of eye-consciousness is called “color.” These colors have distinctions of pleasant, loathsome, and neutral. In the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (T. 18: 1c) it says that the mind is not blue, yellow, red, white, crimson, purple, or the color of crystal, nor bright, nor dark, and this denies the identity of the mind with any color.

Next, “shape” corresponds to long and short, gross and fine, even and uneven, and high and low; it also corresponds to square, circular, triangular, semilunar, and so on. In addition, it also corresponds to accumulations of matter that can be differentiated in terms of long, short, and so on. In the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*<sup>18</sup> (T. 18: 1c) it says that the mind is neither long, nor short, nor round, nor square, and this denies the identity of the mind with shape.

Third, "movement" corresponds to taking and abandoning, bending and stretching, and walking, standing, sitting, and lying down. That this accumulated matter, moreover, arises and perishes in a continuum is due to causes of transformation. It will not re-arise again in the same place where it was previously born, but moves to another place and arises in different ways, either contiguously or noncontiguously and either nearby or far away. Alternatively, it may be transformed and arise in the same place. In addition, distinctions of motion in the performance of actions are called "movement." In the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (T. 18: 1c) it says that the mind is neither male nor female, and this again denies the identity of the mind with movement. This also applies to color and shape.

It also says [in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*] (T. 18: 1c):<sup>19</sup>

How is one to know one's own mind? It cannot, namely, be apprehended by seeking it either in color or in shape or in matter, sensation, ideation, volition, or consciousness or in "I" or in "mine" or in the grasper (i.e., subject) or in the grasped (i.e., object).

This clarifies the terms "color," "shape," and "movement": "color" and "shape" are self-evident, and the remainder [of the passage] corresponds to "movement," for [it refers to] taking and abandoning, action, performance, and so on.

All these colors, shapes, and movements are within the range of the eyes and are the sphere of the eyes; they are within the range of eye-consciousness and are the sphere of eye-consciousness and the objects of eye-consciousness; and they are within the range of mind-consciousness and are the sphere of mind-consciousness and the objects of mind-consciousness. They are called the distinctions [of matter], and distinctions such as these correspond to patterned signs, for the characteristics of each [differentiating one from another] are patterns. Each pattern has its own name-sign (i.e., designation), and they are therefore called patterned signs.

This threesome [of color, shape, and movement] corresponds to the patterned signs of matter. Alternatively, [matter] may be divided into twenty different kinds on account of differences between the matter of dependent [recompense] and [recompense] proper in the aforementioned ten realms.

In the *Yoga Treatise* it says (T. 30: 290ab):

Now I shall first explain the *dharmas* of the aggregation of matter.

403b *Question:* The arising of all *dharmas* occurs from their own seeds [of latent potentiality]. Why is it said that the [four] primary (lit., “great”) elements produce created matter? Why does created matter depend on them? Why is it established by them? Why is it supported by them? And why is it nurtured by them?

*Answer:* It is because the seeds of all internal and external primary elements and created matter are all dependent on the inner mental continuum, and as long as the seeds of the primary [elements] have not produced the primary [elements], the seeds of created matter are unable to produce created matter, it being invariably on the basis of [the elements’] having arisen that created matter arises from its own seeds. Therefore, it is said that [the primary elements] produce created matter, since their birth [invariably] acts as a precondition. On account of this reasoning it is said that the primary elements act as the cause of the birth [of created matter].

[*Question:*] Why does created matter depend on them?

[*Answer:*] Because once created matter has arisen, it does not occur anywhere apart from the primary elements.

[*Question:*] Why is it established by them?

[*Answer:*] Because if the primary elements diminish or increase, it will have a similar fate.

[*Question:*] Why is it supported by them?

[*Answer:*] Because it is commensurate with the primary elements and does not perish.

[*Question:*] Why is it nurtured by them?

[*Answer:*] Because through food and drink, sleep, the cultivation of pure conduct, *samādhī*, and so on [the primary elements are nurtured, and] created matter, which is dependent on them, also increases manyfold, wherefore it is said that the primary elements act as the cause of its nurturing. Know then that in this manner the primary elements have five kinds of effect on created matter.

Next, there has never been any arising of atoms in the aggregation of matter. When [matter] arises from its own seeds, it simply agglomerates and arises, and it is either minute, medium, or large. It is not that atoms assemble to form the aggregation of matter; one merely analyzes matter with the intellect, divides it to the utmost limits of infinitesimal quantities, and provisionally posits these as atoms.

[*Question:*] If the aggregation of matter has divisible parts, then atoms should also have divisible parts. However, the aggregation of matter has parts, but atoms do not. Why not?

[*Answer:*] Because atoms are themselves parts. They belong to the aggregation of matter, and atoms do not have other [smaller] atoms. Therefore, atoms do not have the characteristic of divisibility.

Again, there are two kinds of nonseparation [of primary elements and created matter]. The first is nonseparation in the same place. That is to say, the atoms of the primary elements, together with matter, smell, taste, tangibles, and so on, will be without sense organs (i.e., inanimate) in instances where there are no sense organs and will be with sense organs (i.e., animate) in instances where there are sense organs. This is called "nonseparation in the same place." The second is nonseparation by commingling. That is to say, the creating

and the created consisting of these atoms of the primary elements and other agglomerations [of smell, taste, and tangibles] are together in the same place as matter. This is called “nonseparation by commingling.” Know also that this aggregate matter pervaded [by the atoms of the four primary elements, etc.] is like when various things are ground with a stone to make powder and mixed together with water so that they become mutually inseparable, and it is not like a collection of sesame seeds, mung beans, millet, and so on.

Again, all created matter is dependent on the locus of the primary elements and does not exceed the size of the locus of the primary elements, and wherever the primary elements have their basis, created matter too has its basis there. For this reason it is said that created matter is dependent on the primary elements. It is, namely, in this sense that the primary elements are referred to as “primary elements” (lit., “great seeds”), for these primary elements are great by nature and act as seeds that produce [created matter].

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Again, within the aggregation of matter there are, in brief, fourteen kinds of substances: namely, earth, water, fire, wind, matter, sound, smell, taste, tangibles, and the five sense organs comprising the eyes and so on; only matter within the range of the mind is excluded [because it is not materially existent]. . . .

In addition, ten kinds of matter are posited, and they are fully explained in the same work (T. 30: 290a).

Various distinctions of matter such as these correspond to patterned signs. In addition, writing the letter *A* and so on with the five colors is also called a patterned sign of matter, and painting pictures of various sentient beings and non-sentient beings is also called a patterned sign of matter; brocade, embroidery, damask, and thin silk are also patterned signs of matter. The *Lotus [Sutra]* (T. 9: 50a), the *Flower Ornament [Sutra]* (T. 10: 231ab, 397c–398b), the [*Great*] *Perfection of Wisdom [Treatise]* (T. 25: 324bc), and so on also explain in detail various distinctions of matter. They do

not, however, go beyond the internal and external ten realms. Distinctions of matter and so on such as these are called patterned signs of matter.

In the case of the foolish, they become attached to and crave after these patterned signs, generating various mental afflictions such as greed, anger, and ignorance and committing all ten evil [deeds] and five rebellious [offenses]. Therefore it says in the verse, "One may be deluded by it."

In the case of the wise, they observe their causes and conditions, neither grasping at them nor rejecting them; they establish various *maṇḍalas* of the Dharma realm and perform extensive Buddha deeds, worshiping the Buddhas above and benefiting sentient beings below, and by this means self-benefit and benefiting others are completely perfected. Therefore it says, "One may be enlightened through it."

### **2.2.3.2. The Internal and External Dependent and Proper [Recompenses] Are Possessed of It**

Next, as for "The internal and external dependent and proper [recompenses] are possessed of it," this also has three [meanings]: firstly, it indicates that internal matter possesses the three [kinds of matter consisting of] color, shape, and [movement]; secondly, it indicates that external matter also possesses the three [kinds of] matter; and, thirdly, it indicates that internal matter is not invariably internal matter, nor is external matter invariably external matter, and they mutually act as dependent [recompense] and [recompense] proper. "Internal matter" refers to sentient beings, and "external matter" refers to the physical world.

In the [*Flower Ornament*] *Sutra* it says (T. 10: 32a):

The Buddha's body is inconceivable: all lands exist therein.

Again (T. 10: 30a):

In one hair [the Buddha] displays oceans of many lands,  
And every single hair appears in the same way.

In this manner [the Buddha] pervades the Dharma realm.

Again (T. 10: 36b):

Inside a single hair pore [of the Buddha] there are lands  
difficult to conceive,  
Equal in number to minute dust motes and abiding in  
various ways.  
In each of them there is an Honored One, Vairocana,  
Expounding the wondrous Dharma in the midst of an  
assembly.  
In a single dust mote are lands great and small,  
Variously differentiated, like dust motes in number.[ . . . ]  
Into all dust motes of all lands  
The Buddha enters, into each and every dust mote.

Now, on the basis of these passages it is evident that the body of the Buddha and the bodies of sentient beings are manifoldly great and small. The body [of the Buddha] may be the size of the Dharma realm, [which is like] empty space, or his body may be the size of indescribably indescribably [numerous] Buddha lands, or his body may be the size of ten Buddha lands or one Buddha land or one minute dust mote. Bodies and lands such as these, great and small, mutually act as internal and external [matter] and mutually act as dependent [recompense] and [recompense] proper. These internal and external dependent and proper [recompenses] invariably possess matter consisting of colors, shapes, and movements. Therefore it says, "The internal and external dependent and proper [recompenses] are possessed of it."

### 2.2.3.3. There Is That Which Is Natural and That Which Is Conditioned

404a As for "There is that which is natural and that which is conditioned," matter consisting of color, shape, and [movement] as [discussed] above may be composed of the natural, and the dependent [recompense] and [recompense] proper of the Dharma-Buddha correspond to this. In the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* it says (T. 18: 36b):

Then the World-honored Mahāvairocana (lit., “Great Sun”) entered into a *samādhi* of mental attainment (*samāpatti*) [...], whereupon the Buddha lands became flat like the palm of a hand, studded with the five precious objects [...; pools] were brimming with water that possessed eight special qualities and was fragrant; innumerable birds such as mandarin ducks, geese, and swans emitted elegant sounds [...;] seasonal flowers and sundry trees flourished and stood at intervals in rows [...;] innumerable musical instruments played naturally in harmony, their sounds delicate and such that people would want to listen; and there were palaces, halls, and mentally produced seats created in response to the merits of innumerable bodhisattvas. There appeared a great king of lotuses, the insignia of the Dharma realm, born by virtue of the Tathāgata’s vow of faith-and-understanding (*adhimukti*), and the Tathāgata’s body, having the nature of the Dharma realm, was resting in the middle of it.

[*Question:*] What meaning does this passage express?

[*Answer:*] It has two meanings. First, it indicates the body and land of the Dharma-Buddha as they naturally are, for it says “the [Tathāgata’s] body, having the nature of the Dharma realm,” and “the insignia of the Dharma realm.” Second, it indicates the manifestation of the conditioned, for it says “created in response to the merits of [innumerable] bodhisattvas” and “born by virtue of the Tathāgata’s vow of faith-and-understanding.” “[World-]honored Great Sun” is “Mahāvairocana Buddha” in Sanskrit, and the Buddha Mahāvairocana corresponds to the Dharma-body Tathāgata. The dependent [recompense] and [recompense] proper of the Dharma body are composed naturally, and therefore it says, “There is that which is natural.”

The Recompense-Buddha is also called “[World-]honored Great Sun,” and therefore it says “born by virtue of the [Tathāgata’s] vow of faith-and-understanding.” It also says (T. 18: 36b):

Then, from all the Tathāgata's limbs, whose strength cannot be impeded, [there emerged] signs of adornment with innumerable shapes and colors born of faith-and-understanding in the ten powers of wisdom.

This passage indicates the body and land of the Recompense-Buddha.

Alternatively, the Responsive-Transformation Buddha is also called "[World-]honored Great Sun," for the radiance of the Responsive-Transformation [Buddha] universally illuminates the Dharma realm. Therefore he has gained this name, and therefore in the [*Flower Ornament*] *Sutra* (T. 10: 58c) he is either called "Śākya[muni]" or called "Vairocana." In the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* it says (T. 18: 36b):

Bodies nurtured by the merits of the six perfections over incalculable hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of eons.

This indicates the body and land [born of] the vow to practice of the Responsive-Transformation Buddha.

The homogeneous body is also called "[World-]honored Great Sun" because it partially has this meaning. In the [*Mahāvairocana*] *Sutra* it says (T. 18: 36b), "[bodies] immediately emerged,"<sup>20</sup> and this sentence indicates that the homogeneous body briefly appears and quickly disappears. There is already a body, and so how can there be no land? [Therefore] this indicates the body and land of the homogeneous body.

The lands of dependent [recompense] and [bodies of recompense] proper described above are both common to [all] four kinds of [Buddha] bodies. If taken in terms of the vertical (i.e., relative) sense, there are [distinctions of] large and small, gross and fine, but if taken in accordance with the horizontal (i.e., absolute) sense, they are completely equal and one. Bodies and lands such as these both have the two meanings of the natural and the conditioned. Therefore it says, "There is that which is natural and that which is conditioned." These forms of matter all possess the three kinds

of matter (i.e., color, shape, and movement) and mutually act as dependent [recompense] and [recompense] proper.

This is an interpretation provisionally made from the standpoint of the Buddha, but if interpreted from the standpoint of sentient beings, it is the same again. If one says that sentient beings also have the originally enlightened Dharma body and are undifferentiated from the Buddha, then this body and this land simply exist naturally. The bodies and lands of the three realms and six paths exist in accordance with karmic conditions, and this is called the conditioned [aspect] of sentient beings. Again, it says in the [*Mahāvairocana*] *Sutra* (T. 18: 9a): “To dye the realm of sentient beings with the flavor of the Dharma realm.” [Here] “flavor” means “color,” as in “*kāṣā[ya]* flavor” [referring to the yellowish-red color of a monk’s robe].<sup>21</sup> This too indicates the color of the natural.

#### 2.2.3.4. One May Be Deluded by It, or Else One May Be Enlightened through It

In the case of the foolish internal and external forms of matter such as these act as poison, and in the case of the wise they act as medicine. Therefore it says, “One may be deluded by it, or else one may be enlightened through it.”

[*Question:*] Of these various forms of natural and conditioned matter, which are the creating and which are the created?

[*Answer:*] The producer is the five elements and the five colors, the produced is the threefold world. This threefold world has infinite distinctions, and these are called the patterned signs of the natural and the conditioned.

I have finished interpreting the section on [the patterned signs of] the sense object of matter.

THE MEANINGS OF THE WORD HŪM

by

Kūkai



The [meanings of the] single word *Hūṃ* are divided into two: superficial and connotative. First the superficial meaning will be analyzed, and second the connotative meaning will be explained.

## I. Superficial Meaning

First, the analysis of the superficial meaning is again divided into four since [the graphic form of the word *Hūṃ*] can be divided into four letters. When interpreting this single word in the *Adamantine Pinnacle [Sutra]* (T. 19: 609c), [it says that] it possesses the meanings of four letters: 1) the meaning of the letter *Ha*, 2) the meaning of the letter *A*, 3) the meaning of the letter *Ū*, and 4) the meaning of the letter *Ma*.

### 1. The Letter *Ha*

First, as for the meaning of the letter *Ha*, the main body in the center [of the graphic form of the word *Hūṃ*] corresponds to this letter.<sup>1</sup> The letter *Ha* means "cause." "In Sanskrit it is *hetu*, which means 'causal condition.' There are six types of causes, and [among these] there are five causes subsumed under the meaning of 'causal condition.'<sup>2</sup> This has been explained extensively in the *Abhidharma*. If one sees the gateway of the letter *Ha*, then one realizes that among all things (*dharmas*) there are none that are not born of causes and conditions. This is the superficial meaning of the letter *Ha*.<sup>3</sup>

### 2. The Letter *A*

Second, as for the meaning of the letter *A*, the sound *A* is contained in the letter *Ha*; it is, namely, the mother of all letters, the essence of all sounds, and the source of all reality. "Any sound [uttered] when one first opens the mouth is accompanied by the sound *A*, and without the sound *A* there would be no speech at all. Therefore, it is deemed to be the mother of all sounds."<sup>4</sup> If one sees the letter *A*,

then one realizes that all things are empty and nonexistent. This is the superficial meaning of the letter *A*.

### 3. The Letter *Ū*

404c Third, the letter *Ū* signifies the diminution (Skt.: *ūna*, “deficiency”) of all things. If one sees the letter *Ū*, then one realizes that all things are impermanent, entail suffering, are empty and without self, and so on. This represents diminution, and it corresponds to the superficial meaning [of the letter *Ū*].

### 4. The Letter *Ma*

Fourth, as for the meaning of the letter *Ma*, in Sanskrit one says [*ā*] *tma*[*n*], which is translated as “self.” There are two kinds of self: 1) the self of people, and 2) the self of things. If one sees the gateway of the letter *Ma*, then one realizes that all things have [subjective designations such as] self, person, sentient being, and so on [imputed to them]. This is called “augmentation,” and it represents the superficial meaning [of the letter *Ma*].

People in the world at large only know these superficial meanings and have never understood the connotative meanings, and for this reason they are deemed to be people in [the cycle of] birth-and-death. The Tathāgata knows the real meanings as they really are, and therefore he is called “Great Enlightened One.”

## II. Connotative Meaning

Second, the analysis of the connotative meaning has four [sections] on account of the differences between the four letters *Ha*, *A*, *Ū*, and *Ma*.

### 1. The Letter *Ha*

First, as for the real meaning of the letter *Ha*, “the gateway of the letter *Ha* stands for the inapprehensibility of cause in all things.”

Why [is their cause inapprehensible]? “Because all things come into existence in contingency upon a series of causes. Know then that there is nothing on which they ultimately depend. Therefore, it is said that nonabiding is the origin of all things. The reason for this is that when one observes by various means the causes and conditions of all things, [it is found that] none of them is born. Know then that the myriad things are mind-only. In its real aspect the mind corresponds to knowledge of all modes [of existence], which corresponds to the Dharma realm of all things, and the Dharma realm corresponds to the essence of all things, but it cannot be regarded as their cause. In other words, causes are the Dharma realm, conditions are the Dharma realm, and things that are born of causes and conditions are the Dharma realm. The gateway of the [initial] letter *A* starts from the beginning [of the alphabet] and reaches the end [of the alphabet] to ultimately arrive at such a position; in the present instance too the gateway of the [final] letter *Ha* starts from the end [of the alphabet] and reaches the beginning [of the alphabet] to ultimately arrive at such a position. The letter *A* produces all things from original non-birth; in the present instance of the letter *Ha* too noncontingency upon cause is regarded as the cause of all things. Both the final [letter *Ha*] and the initial [letter *A*] come to the same thing, and the purport of all [twenty-seven letters] in between can be inferred.”<sup>5</sup> This is known as the real meaning of the letter *Ha*.

## 2. The Letter *A*

Next, as for the real meaning of the letter *A*, “it has three meanings: the meaning ‘non-birth,’ the meaning ‘empty,’ and the meaning ‘existent.’ The Sanskrit letter *A* has the sound (i.e., meaning) of ‘beginning’ (*ādi*). If something has a beginning, then it is [born of] causes and conditions. Therefore, it is referred to as ‘existent.’ Again, *A* signifies ‘non-birth.’ If something comes into existence by taking hold of causes and conditions, then it does not have any [inherent] nature of its own. Therefore, it is deemed to be ‘empty.’

Again, the meaning of 'non-birth' corresponds to the sphere that is one and real, that is, the Middle Path. Therefore, Nāgārjuna says that anything born of causes and conditions is empty, a provisional [designation], and the Middle [Path].<sup>6</sup> Again, the *Great [Perfection of Wisdom] Treatise* (T. 25: 258c–259b, 646bc), when explaining *sarvajñā[na]* (omniscience), has three terms: 'knowledge of everything,' which is shared by the two vehicles; 'knowledge of modes of the path,' which is shared by bodhisattvas; and 'knowledge of all modes [of existence],' which is a [special] quality of Buddhas not shared [by others]. These three knowledges are in reality obtained within the [same] one mind, and the three terms have been created in order to differentiate them so as to make it easier for people to understand them. This is the meaning of the letter A."<sup>7</sup>

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Again, "the gateway of the letter A stands for the non-birth of all things":[ . . . ] all speech throughout the three realms is dependent on words, and words are dependent on letters. Therefore, the Siddham (i.e., Sanskrit) letter A is also regarded as the mother of all letters. Know then that the true meaning of the gateway of the letter A is also like this, pervading the meaning of all things. What is the reason for this? Among all things there are none that are not born of various conditions, and everything that is born of conditions has a beginning and an origin. Now, if one examines these generative conditions, [it is found that] they too are born of various causes and conditions, and if one follows these conditions one after another, which should one regard as their origin[al cause]? When one observes in this manner, one then realizes the ultimate state of original non-birth, which is the origin of the myriad things. Just as one hears the sound A when one hears all speech, so one sees the ultimate state of original non-birth when one sees the birth of all things. If one sees the ultimate state of original non-birth, this is equivalent to knowing one's own mind as it really is, and knowing one's own mind as it really is corresponds to the wisdom of an omniscient one. Therefore, Vairocana has made this single letter his mantra. However, ordinary people in the world at large do not perceive the original source of all things, and so they erro-

neously see birth to exist. Thus, they follow the current of birth-and-death and are unable to extricate themselves from it. They are like the ignorant painter who used various colors to create the figure of a terrifying *yakṣa* and, when it was completed, looked at it and promptly fell to the ground terrified in his mind. Sentient beings too are like this: they use the original source of all things to create the three realms and then immerse themselves therein, their minds inflamed, and undergo much suffering. The Tathāgata, [on the other hand,] a wise painter cognizant of this, can freely establish the Maṇḍala of Great Compassion.<sup>8</sup> On the basis of this it can be said that the so-called most profound secret treasury is only concealed by sentient beings themselves, and it is not that the Buddha hides it from them.”<sup>9</sup> This is the real meaning of the letter A.

Again, it says in a sutra (T. 19: 565c):<sup>10</sup> “The letter A signifies ‘*bodhi*-mind,’ it signifies ‘gateways to the Dharma,’ it also signifies ‘nonduality,’ it also signifies ‘result of all *dharmas*,’ it also signifies ‘[inherent] nature of all *dharmas*,’ it signifies ‘absolute freedom,[ . . . ] it also signifies ‘Dharma body.’” Meanings such as these are all the real meanings of the letter A. Again, it is stated in the [same] *Sutra of the Dhāraṇī for Protecting State Rulers* (T. 19: 532a):<sup>11</sup> “Then, the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Sarvadharmēśvararāja addressed the Buddha, saying,[ . . . ].”

### 3. The Letter Ū

Third, as for the real meaning of the letter Ū, the letter Ū stands for the inapprehensibility of diminution in all things, and this is known as its connotative meaning.

Next, the Dharma realm of the one mind is everlasting like the single void, and its wisdom, [like] dust motes in number, is originally existent like, for example, the Three Luminaries (i.e., sun, moon, and stars). Even though Mount Sumeru may violate the Milky Way and a storied tower cleave the heavens, that [space] is not diminished thereby is an attribute of the great void; even though the flood [at the end] of the eon [of cosmic destruction] may

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set the earth adrift and the raging fire [at the end of the eon of cosmic destruction] may burn the palaces [of the gods], that [space] is not increased thereby is an attribute of the great void. The empty space of the one mind is also like this: even though the ground of ignorance may have no bounds and self-pride, like Mount Sumeru, have no peak, the empty space of the one mind is from the beginning everlasting and is neither impaired nor decreased thereby. This is the real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$ .

Even though the six non-Buddhist teachers may repudiate [the law of] cause and result, the empty space of the three mysteries is from the beginning serene and without either impairment or decrease. This is known as the real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$ .

Those of the two vehicles may raise the sharp axe of no-self to chop the firewood of body and mind, but how could the original Dharma of the one mind have impairment or decrease? Therefore, this is known as the nondiminution of the letter  $\bar{U}$ .

Again, the raging fire of the Mahayana meditation on emptiness may burn the dust and dirt of attachment to persons and things until nothing remains, but the nonimpairment of the three mysteries is like fire[proof] cloth, the dirt of which is consumed [by fire] and the garment thereby cleansed. The real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  is also like this.

Then again, [those of the Hossō school] may break down the mirage towers of [false] discrimination and destroy the illusory city of other-dependence,<sup>12</sup> but how could the original Dharma of the three mysteries be harmed? The real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  should be known in this manner.

Again, some people may loathe the untruthfulness of the conditioned and rejoice in the delusionlessness of the unconditioned, and they may terminate the path of speech at the gate to non-verbalization and extinguish the workings of the mind at the ferry to quiescence, but this original Dharma of the three mysteries has never been terminated or diminished<sup>13</sup> thereby. This should be known as the real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$ .

“Diminution” is because of suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and no-self; because of transition between the four phases [of existence] (i.e., birth, duration, change, and extinction); because of a lack of freedom; because of nonabiding in own-nature; because of birth from causes and conditions; and because of mutual contingency. It is because of these six meanings that one refers to the diminution of all things. But the real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  at issue here is not like this.

It says in a sutra that the letter  $\bar{U}$  signifies “recompense body” (T. 19: 565c). This “recompense” is not a recompensive result in reward for [past] causes and conditions; it is because of mutual correspondence and mutual contrast that it is called “recompense.” It is because of the mutual correspondence between principle and wisdom that one says “recompense”; it is because of the mutual contrast between mind and object that one says “recompense”; it is because of the mutually correspondent nonduality of the Dharma body and the wisdom body that one refers to “recompense”; it is because of the unobstructed interpenetration of [inherent] nature and [external] aspect that one says “recompense”; and it is because of the nondual mutual correspondence between essence and function that one says “recompense.”

Therefore, permanence, bliss, self, and purity are the real meanings of the letter  $\bar{U}$  because there is no diminution; immovability in oneness is the real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  because there is no transition to other states; tenfold freedom is the real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  because there are no obstacles; originally abiding in essential nature is the real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  because [things] do not transmute; distant remove from causes and conditions is the real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  because [things] are originally unborn and like empty space; and transcendence of contingency is the real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  because of their identical nature.

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Then again, things born of causes and conditions invariably assume the four phases [of existence]; because they assume the four phases [of existence], they are transient and impermanent;

because they are transient and impermanent, they entail suffering and are empty and without self; because they entail suffering and are empty and without self, they lack freedom; because they lack freedom, they do not abide in their own-nature; and because they do not abide in their own-nature, there are many levels of worthiness and lowliness when high and low are contrasted with each other—if the inferior is contrasted with the superior, then the inferior is deemed to be impaired, and if that below is compared with that above, then that below is called decreased. Impairment and decrease such as this are immeasurable in number.

Verily, this is because people turn their backs on the fundamental and turn toward the derivative and because they go against the source and follow the current. Therefore, those in the three realms and the six paths remain long confused about the principle of oneness, they are always intoxicated by the three poisons, they hunt recklessly in the fields of illusion without any thought of returning home, and they sleep long in the hamlet of dreams—when will they ever wake up?

Now, if one considers it through the eyes of the Buddha, the Buddha and sentient beings similarly rest upon the bed of liberation; there is no this and no that, and they are nondual and equal; there is no increase and no decrease, and [everything] is completely perfect, completely perfect. There being nothing augmented by [distinctions between] superior and inferior, how can there be anyone diminished by [distinctions between] high and low? This is known as the real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$ .

Then again, if it is interpreted in terms of the method of the revolving *dhāraṇī*,<sup>14</sup>

Because all things (*dharmas*) are originally unborn (*a*: *ādyanutpāda*, “original nonarising”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  stands for nondiminution;

Because all things are dissociated from action (*ka*: *kārya*, “action”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  again stands for nondiminution;

- Because all things are like empty space (*kha: kha*, “space”) and without [distinguishing] characteristics, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for nondiminution like empty space;
- Because all things are without going (*ga: gati*, “going”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for non-going;
- Because all things are without the characteristic of agglomeration (*gha: ghana*, “compact [mass]”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of the characteristic of agglomeration;
- Because all things are dissociated from transiency (*ca: cyuti*, “fall”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for dissociation from transiency;
- Because all things have no shadow (*cha: chāyā*, “shadow”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of shadow;
- Because all things are without birth (*ja: jāti*, “birth”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for non-birth;
- Because all things have no enemies (*jha: ?jhalla*, “prizefighter”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of enemies;
- Because all things have no pride (*ṭa: ṭaṅka*, “pride”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of arrogance;
- Because all things are without nurture (*ṭha: viṭhapana*, “[illusory] creation”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of nurture;
- Because all things have no resentment (*ḍa: ḍamara*, “riot, tumult”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of resentment;
- Because all things are without attachment (*ḍha: ?*), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for nonattachment;
- Because thusness (*ta: tathatā*, “thusness”) is inapprehensible in all things, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  stands for the inapprehensibility of thusness;

Because dwelling place (*tha: sthāna*, “abode, dwelling”) is inapprehensible in all things, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of dwelling place;

Because giving (*da: dāna*, “giving”) is inapprehensible in all things, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for non-giving;

Because the Dharma realm (*dha: dharmadhātu*, “Dharma realm”) is inapprehensible in all things, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of the Dharma realm;

Because the supreme truth (*pa: paramārtha*, “supreme truth”) is inapprehensible in all things, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of supreme truth;

Because all things are not solid and are like foam (*pha: phena*, “foam”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of foam;

Because bondage (*ba: bandha*, “bond, binding”) is inapprehensible in all things, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of bondage and liberation;

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Because existence (*bha: bhava*, “being, existence”) is inapprehensible in all things, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for nonexistence;

Because a vehicle (*ya: yāna*, “vehicle”) is inapprehensible in all things, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of a vehicle;

Because defilement (*ra: rajas*, “dust, dirt”) is inapprehensible in all things, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of defilement;

Because characteristics (*la: lakṣaṇa*, “characteristic”) are inapprehensible in all things, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of characteristics;

Because all things are dissociated from speech (*va: vāc*, “speech”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the absence of speech;

Because all things are originally quiescent (*śa: śānti*, “quiescence”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for aboriginal quiescence;

Because all things are dull by nature (*śa* [for *śaṭha*], “fool”), the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for dullness of nature;

Because truth (*sa: satya*, “truth”) is inapprehensible in all things, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the inapprehensibility of truth;

Because a cause (*ha: hetu*, “cause”) is inapprehensible in all things, the gateway of the letter  $\bar{U}$  also stands for the inapprehensibility of cause.

If the cause is inapprehensible, then it is from the very beginning unborn; if it is from the very beginning unborn, then it neither increases nor decreases; if it neither increases nor decreases, then it is the oceanlike [ultimate] fruit of great *parinirvāṇa*; and if it is the oceanlike fruit of great *parinirvāṇa*, then it is the Dharma body of the Tathāgata. This is known as the real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$ .

The body of suffering in the six paths, which is retribution for [past] actions in the three realms,

Is no sooner born than it dies, without staying put even for a moment;

It has neither essence nor substance and is like an apparition, like a shadow.

Be they ordinary beings with limited lifespans or enlightened sages who can transform their bodies at will, anything born of causes and conditions

Is born and dies nine hundred times [in a second], just like a flame or a stream.

Although the sea of the storehouse[-consciousness] (*ālaya-vijñāna*) is everlasting, the waves of the seven [other consciousnesses] toss and turn [constantly on its surface].

Such impermanence may be destructive and injurious,

But in this state of original being why be troubled or concerned?

The real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  should be known in this manner.

The [Three] Luminaries—sun, moon and stars—have been originally abiding in empty space,

Yet they may be hidden by clouds and mist or veiled by smoke and dust,

And seeing this, the foolish say that there is no sun or moon.

The originally existent three bodies are also like this:

Although they have been originally abiding since the beginningless past in the mind's space,

They have been covered by delusionary thoughts and entrained by mental afflictions—

Reality is like a mirror inside a box, and the [truth-]principle the same as a gem in ore—

And seeing this, the deluded say that there is no original enlightenment:

What is this repudiation on the part of the foolish and blind if not an impairment?

But diminution is not found in the original [three] bodies.

The real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  should be known in this manner.

Those with the determinate [nature] of the two vehicles erroneously give rise to thoughts of extinction (i.e., nirvana),

And by reducing the body to ashes and extinguishing knowledge they would become identical with the great void;

Heavily intoxicated with the wine of *samādhī*, they are neither enlightened nor awakened.

Although there are differences in the relative severity [of their condition], those of determinate [nature destined to be *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*] and those of indeterminate [nature who may also become bodhisattvas]

Spend many eons in vain — than this there is no greater  
impairment.

The originally existent three bodies are solemn and  
unmoving,

But should the Buddhas pervading space startle [the  
*śrāvakas* and so on] into wakefulness and reveal [the  
true teachings to them],

Then they will leave their phantom city and proceed  
toward the treasure cache [of true enlightenment].<sup>15</sup>

If even plants and trees become [enlightened], why not  
sentient beings?

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By erroneously grasping at incomplete [teachings] they  
suffer a very great impairment.

The real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  should be known in this  
manner.

The physical body [of the recompense body], a recompen-  
sive result born of correct causes,

Is adorned with myriad virtues and has completely per-  
fected the four wisdoms;

But it is only a continuum and not set,

And that which is born must die, since it was unequivocally  
so affirmed [by the Buddha]—

This is the sword of the expedient [Hossō teachings], which  
may kill or injure.

But the originally existent three mysteries are like the sun  
pendent from the heavens,

And the four wisdoms, like space, resemble gold buried in  
the ground.

Though a violent wind may be the cause [of the clouds'  
being blown away] and a sharp hoe the condition [for  
digging up the gold],

Who can produce [the sun] and who can create [the gold]?

The real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  should be known in this  
manner.

Thusness or Dharma-nature is the real and permanent  
[essence] of the mind;

Among those with mind, who does not possess this  
[truth-]principle?

The mind's wisdom is identical to this principle, and it is  
not a principle outside the mind;

Mind and principle are one: how can the wet nature [of  
water] (i.e., principle) and its reflecting function (i.e.,  
wisdom) be separate?

The nature of thusness equally pervades everywhere, but  
those whose ways of thinking are narrow and inferior  
Are expediently guided as if they were infants, yet those  
confused [of the Sanron school] do not realize this;

Brandishing this halberd of the expedient [teachings], they  
destroy the true Buddha:

This is called diminution.

But the original Buddha, eternal and all-pervading,  
neither diminishes nor wanes.

[Thus] you should know the real meaning of the letter U.

[Just as] waves do not exist apart from water, the objects  
of cognition are within the mind;

If plants and trees were devoid of Buddha[hood], then  
waves would not be wet.

Some have it and some do not—what is this if not an  
expedient [teaching]?

To reject being and posit nonbeing represents impairment  
and decrease.

The sharp axe of diminution may constantly hack at  
Buddha-nature,

Yet the original Buddha is without impairment and  
without decrease.

The three truths [of the Tendai school] interpenetrate  
perfectly, and the ten divisions of time [of the Kegon  
school] are [mutually] unobstructed;

The entire threefold world is of Buddha-essence,  
And the four kinds of *maṇḍa[la]*s correspond to the true  
Buddha.

The real meaning of the letter *Ū* should be studied in this  
manner.

Since those of the two vehicles are of inferior intelligence,  
the six consciousnesses were taught for them;  
Those of the Mahayana being somewhat superior, the eight  
and nine [consciousnesses] were revealed.

Clinging [to their doctrines], they stall and do not advance:  
how can they know the innumerability [of consciousness]?  
Not comprehending the esoteric meaning, they are  
satisfied with what little they have gained;  
They do not know what they possess—than this there is no  
greater poverty.

The oceanlike assembly of [*maṇḍala* deities, as innumer-  
able as] countless lands, is their very own treasure.

The real meaning of the letter *Ū* should be studied in this  
manner.

Identical and one, yet many in its thusness, and because  
many, thusness upon thusness;

Principles innumerable and wisdoms unbounded:

The sands of the Ganges River are no comparison, and  
the dust motes of [countless] lands are still too few  
[for compare].

Though raindrops are many, they are all of the same  
water;

Though the rays of [many] lamps are not one, they merge  
to become of the same essence.

Matter and mind are immeasurable, reality is boundless.

The mind-king and mental functions act as principal and  
subordinate in inexhaustible ways,

And they interpenetrate one another like the gems of  
Indra[’s net] or like the light of [many] lamps.

Their manifold interconnectedness is difficult to conceive,  
and each is endowed with the five wisdoms.  
They are many and yet not different, not different and yet  
many:  
Therefore, they are said to be one thusness.  
But this “one” is one that is not one—innumerability is  
deemed to be “one”;  
And “thusness” is not [ordinary] thusness but permanency  
—they are quite the same and resemble one another.  
Unless this principle is expounded, the teachings are  
expedient ones,  
Whereby the inexhaustible precious treasury is drained,  
And wherein innumerable precious carriages completely  
vanish:  
This is called diminution.  
The four bodies [of the Buddha], too numerous to paint  
with ink made from the powder of the earth of countless  
worlds, and the three mysteries, too vast to depict with  
Mount Sumeru as a brush,  
Are completely perfect from the very beginning, set, and  
unchanging.  
This indeed is the real meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$ .

#### 4. The Letter *Ma*

Fourth, as for the real meaning of the letter *Ma*, the gateway of the letter *Ma* stands for the inapprehensibility of the self (*mama*, “my,” or *mamatā*, “state of ‘mine’”) in all things, and this is called its real meaning.

There are two kinds of “self”: 1) the self of persons, and 2) the self of things. “Person” means the fourfold Dharma body, and “thing” (*dharmā*) means all things, ranging from one Dharma realm, one thusness, and one *bodhi* to eighty-four thousand things indescribably indescribably [numerous] like minute dust motes in number. These fourfold Dharma bodies are immeasurable in their

number, but their essence is of one form and one flavor, and there is no this or that. There being no this or that, how can there be a self? This is the real meaning [of the letter *Ma*] in terms of [negatively] inhibiting the passions [of ordinary people].

By the four kinds of practitioners below [the final fifth level of] the adamantine [teachings of Esoteric Buddhism] this position can be neither heard nor seen, and they are like the deaf and the blind. It is beyond the beyond and more remote than the remote; the four propositions cannot approach it, and the six [supernatural] faculties are also out of their depth. This is known as the real meaning [of the letter *Ma*] in terms of transcending speech.

It says in the sutras that the letter *Ma* is the seed[-syllable] of Mahāvairocana. Although people in the world at large speculate on the self [of persons] and the self [of things], they have yet to realize its real meaning. There is only the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana who has obtained the great self in no-self. The Tathāgata, the mind-king, having already reached this state, who among his attendants, the mental functions like dust motes in number and difficult to conceive, shall not obtain the body of this great self? This is the real meaning [of the letter *Ma*] in terms of [positively] expressing the attributes [of ultimate truth].

It says in a sutra that this letter *Ma* signifies “transformation body” (T. 19: 565c). “Transformation” means the function of transforming (or converting) or action by transformation (or for conversion). This means that the Tathāgata [Mahāvairo]cana actuates by transformation various supernatural changes for the sake of his own enjoyment, manifesting innumerable clouds of bodies and creating infinite wondrous lands. This is known as the real meaning [of the letter *Ma*] in terms of wondrous function difficult to conceive.

It also says that this letter *Ma* signifies “mastery of *samaya*” and signifies “all-pervading.”<sup>16</sup> In China one says *teng-ch’ih* (Jp.: *tōji*, “equally holding”) for *samaya*.<sup>17</sup> *teng* is *p’ing-teng* (Jp.: *byōdō*, “equal[ity]”) and *ch’ih* is *she-ch’ih* (Jp.: *shōji*, “incorporate and hold”). Though the three mysteries of the Dharma body may enter a particle of fine dust, it will not be too narrow, and though they

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may spread throughout the great void, it will not be too broad. They do not opt for [non-sentient] tiles, stones, plants, and trees, nor do they [specially] choose [sentient] people, gods, [hungry] ghosts, and animals. Where do they not pervade? What object do they not incorporate? Therefore, it is called “equally holding.” This is known as the real meaning [of the letter *Ma*] in terms of equality.

It also says that a phonetic change of the letter *Ma* is called *Maṃ*, which corresponds to the one-syllable mantra of Wondrous Virtue (i.e., Mañjuśrī) and signifies “perfect endowedness.”<sup>18</sup> The Youth Mañjuśrī (Mañjuśrikumārabhūta) represents the *pāramitā* (perfection) of self among the four attributes [of nirvana]. There is nothing about his wisdom that is not wondrous and nothing about his virtues that is not perfect; he is endowed with the two fine attributes [of merit and wisdom] and pellucid in the four kinds of eloquence. This corresponds to the real meaning [of the letter *Ma*] in terms of perfect virtue.

It also says that the eleventh [vocalic] change of the letter *Ma* is called *Maṃ*. This is the heart[-mantra] of Acalanātha.<sup>19</sup> This deity is the patriarch of all Buddhas throughout the three ages and ten directions, and he is honored by all bodhisattvas in the forty-two stages. Nonetheless he assumes the form of a messenger with a squint eye, appears as a servant with a queue hanging down [over his left shoulder], stoops down from the honorable position that he has already attained, and feeds on the leftover scraps of novices. This means that although he is high[-ranking], he does not vaunt himself, and although he harms himself, he attracts surfeit. This corresponds to the real meaning [of the letter *Ma*] in terms of harming oneself to benefit others.

If one enters the gateway to the self, for which the letter *Ma* stands, one will incorporate all things and there will not be a single thing that is not included. Therefore, it says in the sutras that I am the Dharma realm, I am the Dharma body, I am the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana, I am Vajrasattva, I am all Buddhas, I am all bodhisattvas, I am *pratyekabuddhas*, I am *śrāvakas*, I am Maheśvara, I am Brahmā, I am Śakra, and so on, I am the eight

classes [of semidivine beings] such as gods, dragons, and demons, and so on. Among all sentient beings and non-sentient beings there is none that is not [encompassed by] the letter *Ma*. This means that it is one, yet can be many, and is small, yet contains what is large. Therefore, this is known as the real meaning [of the letter *Ma*] in terms of perfect fusion.

### III. Synthetic Interpretation

Next, if interpreted synthetically, this [word] *Hūm* is a single letter composed of four letters, and these four letters are *A*, *Ha*, *Ū*, and *Ma*. *A* signifies "Dharma body," *Ha* signifies "recompense body," *Ū* signifies "response body," and *Ma* signifies "transformation body." In citing these four kinds [of Buddha bodies], all things are incorporated without any not being included.

First, if stated in terms of their separate characteristics, by means of the gateway of the letter *A*, all [truth-]principles such as thusness, Dharma realm, Dharma-nature, and ultimate reality are incorporated without any not being incorporated; by means of the gateway of the letter *Ha*, all teachings, such as Buddhist and non-Buddhist, Maha[yana] and Hina[yana], expedient and real, and exoteric and esoteric, are incorporated without any not being incorporated; by means of the gateway of the letter *Ū*, all practices, that is, the practices of the three vehicles, five vehicles, and so on, are incorporated without any not being incorporated; and by means of the gateway of the letter *Ma*, all results [of practice] are incorporated without any not being incorporated. [The word *Hūm*] completely holds all [truth-]principles and totally incorporates all phenomena, and therefore it is called "that which comprehensively holds" (*dhāraṇī*).

[Next,] if interpreted in terms of their common characteristics, each incorporates principle, teaching, practice, and result without any not being incorporated and without any not being exhausted. It is like the school of Indra in that all meanings are

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established,<sup>20</sup> and like the hexagrams invented by Fu Hsi in which each line embodies myriad forms.

Next, in this word *Hūm* there is the letter *Ha*, representing "cause," that is, things born of causes and conditions. Among these things, the net of teachings, such as the teachings of non-Buddhists, the two vehicles and the Mahayana, is wildly tangled, with each raising their banners and drums and vying in declaring themselves false emperors. If either non-Buddhists or those of the two vehicles or Mahayanists assert that there are persons, there are things, there are causes, there are results, there is permanence, or there is a self, these [false assertions] are all incorporated in the dot representing the letter *Ma*,<sup>21</sup> these correspond to the extreme of augmentation, and they have not yet attained the Middle Path. If they assert that there are no persons, there are no things, there are no causes, there are no results, there is no permanence, there is no self, and so on, then these [false assertions] are incorporated in the stroke representing the letter *Ū*,<sup>22</sup> these correspond to the extreme of diminution, and they too do not yet accord with the Middle Path. If they assert that [things] are neither empty nor existent, neither permanent nor annihilated, neither identical nor different, and so on, [these false assertions] are incorporated in the meaning of "not" (*hi*) in the letter *A*.<sup>23</sup> If they assert the eight negations, that is, that [things] are not born, are not extinguished, do not increase, do not decrease, etc., and so on, [these false assertions] are also incorporated in the meaning of "not" (*fu*) in the letter *A*. Again, if they assert that [ultimate truth] is colorless, shapeless, wordless, speechless, and so on, [these false assertions] are also incorporated in the meaning of "not" (*mu*) in the letter *A*, and they too do not yet accord with the true meaning. These all belong to the [negative] extreme of inhibiting the passions [of ordinary people]. If one does not comprehend the secret designations of things, the characteristics of names, true speech, and speech accordant with the [true] meaning, then all statements, thoughts, and practices are all perverted and all nonsensical since one is ignorant of the true and ultimate [truth-]principle. The bodhisattva Nāgārjuna therefore says (T. 25: 336bc):<sup>24</sup>

In the Buddhist Dharma there are two truths: one is conventional truth, and the second is the truth of the first principle (i.e., supreme truth). On account of conventional truth it is taught that sentient beings exist, and on account of the truth of the first principle it is taught that sentient beings do not exist. Again, there are two kinds [of people]: for those who do not know the characteristics of names and secret designations, it is taught that in the truth of the first principle sentient beings do not exist, and for those who do know the characteristics of names and secret designations it is taught that in the truth of the first principle sentient beings do exist.

Should someone be cognizant of the secret designations and secret meanings of this word *Hūṃ* and so on, then he is called a perfectly all-knowing one (*samyaksambuddha*). That when one first generates the [*bodhi*-]mind one immediately attains perfect enlightenment, turns the great Dharma wheel, and so on, is indeed because one knows this ultimate real meaning.

Next, I shall explain the causes, practices, and results of people of the three vehicles in terms of this single word [*Hūṃ*]. First I shall explain those of people of the *śrāvaka* [vehicle], then I shall deal with those of *pratyekabuddhas*, and lastly I shall explain those of bodhisattvas.

First, I shall explain [the causes, practices, and results of] *śrāvakas*. In this word *Hūṃ* there is the letter *Ha*, and this signifies “cause.” The generic nature (*gotra*) of the *śrāvaka* vehicle mentioned in the [*Yo*]ga [*Treatise*] (T. 30: 395c) and so on is their cause. Below [the graphic form of the word *Hūṃ*] there is the letter *Ū*, and this represents their practices.<sup>25</sup> The teaching of the Four [Noble] Truths, the five meditations for settling the mind, the seven expedient means, and so on of people of the *śrāvaka* [vehicle] are their practices. This is the superficial meaning of the letter *Ū* (i.e., diminution, insofar that these practices aim to eliminate mental afflictions, etc.), and it corresponds to these [practices]. Now, people of the *śrāvaka* [vehicle] regard reducing the body to

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ashes and extinguishing knowledge as the final result. Above [the graphic form of] this word *Hūṃ* there is the dot of emptiness (i.e., *anusvāra*: -ṃ), and this dot of emptiness is born of the letter *Ma*. The letter *Ma* combines the meanings of the emptiness of both persons and things, and this principle of the emptiness of persons corresponds to the principle realized by *śrāvakas*. These are known as the causes, practices, and results of people of the *śrāvaka* [vehicle].

Next, I shall explain [the causes, practices, and results of] *pratyekabuddhas*. The generic nature and so on of the *pratyekabuddha* vehicle mentioned in the [*Yo*]ga [*Treatise*] (cf. T. 30: 395c) and so on are their cause. In this word *Hūṃ* there is the letter *Ha*, and this represents their cause. *Pratyekabuddhas* also meditate on the twelve causes and conditions (i.e., twelvefold chain of dependent arising), the Four [Noble] Truths, the [seven] expedient means, and so on. Below [the graphic form of] this word *Hūṃ* there is the letter *Ū*, and this corresponds to these [practices]. *Pratyekabuddhas* also realize the principle of the emptiness of persons, and this is their result. This should be understood in accordance with the above [explanation of *śrāvakas*].

Next, I shall explain [the causes, practices, and results of] bodhisattvas. The [*Mahāvairo*]cana *Sutra*, the *Adamantine Pinacle Sutra*, and so on state that for people of the bodhisattva [vehicle] the *bodhi*-mind is the cause, great compassion is the root, and expedient means is the final aim.<sup>26</sup> Now, the main body [of the graphic form] of this word *Hūṃ* is the letter *Ha*, and this represents the fact that [for bodhisattvas] the *bodhi*-mind of all Tathāgatas is the cause. Below there is the *samādhi* stroke (i.e., *Ū*),<sup>27</sup> and this signifies the myriad practices of great compassion. Above there is the dot of great emptiness, and this represents the final result of great *bodhi* and nirvana.

This single word [*Hūṃ*] incorporates the causes, practices, and results of people of the three vehicles, incorporating everything with nothing left out. In addition, the causes, practices, and so on of the One Vehicle of the exoteric teachings and the One Vehicle of the esoteric [teachings] should also be understood accordingly.

Next, I shall explain how the principles elucidated in the sutras and treatises are all incorporated in this one word. First, everything elucidated in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* and the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* does not go beyond these three propositions, namely, that *bodhi* is the cause, great compassion is the root, and expedient means is the final aim. If the extensive is reduced to its summary form and the derivative to its origins, then all doctrines do not go beyond these three propositions, and these three propositions are compressed into the single word *Hūṃ*. Expanded [to their full ramifications], there is no confusion, and reduced [to their simplest form], nothing is omitted. This is due to the Tathāgata's inconceivable power and natural empowerment. Even a thousand sutras and ten thousand treatises do not go beyond these three propositions and one word. Think upon the causes, practices, and results revealed in this single word in accordance with the earlier [explanations]. It is not just the word *Hūṃ* that incorporates meanings such as these, and every other letter gateway is also like this.

Next, [*Hūṃ* has] the meaning "protection."<sup>28</sup> That is to say, above there is the dot of great emptiness, representing the gateway of the letter *Kha*; this signifies "great emptiness" (cf. *kha*, "space"), and it signifies the *vidyārājñī prajñā* (wisdom), mother of the Buddhas. In the center there is the letter *Ha*, signifying "cause." "This matrix of empty space contains and nurtures the seeds of the true cause [of becoming a Buddha]. This corresponds to the meaning of 'great protection.'"

Next, [*Hūṃ* has] the meaning "defeating at will." That is to say, above there is the dot of emptiness, corresponding to the gateway of the letter *Kha*. "The gateway of the letter *Kha* is like empty space, which is ultimately pure and without possession, and this corresponds to the state known in the [*samādhi* called] 'Observation from the High Peak.'<sup>29</sup> In the center there is the letter *Ha*. "This is the banner of *bodhi*, and it is also the power of absolute freedom. Because of the intercorrespondence of these two letters (i.e., *Kha* and *Ha*), they are like a great commander who defeats his foes." Therefore, this is known as the meaning of "defeating at will."

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Next, [*Hūm* has] the meaning “fulfilling wishes.” That is to say, “the gateway of the letter *Ha* represents the jewel of the *bodhi*-mind, and by combining with the gateway of the letter *Kha*, representing the matrix of empty space, it is able to become a *maṇi* of variegated colors that fulfills the wishes of all sentient beings.”<sup>30</sup> This is called the meaning of “fulfilling wishes.”

Next, [*Hūm* has] the meaning “great power.”<sup>31</sup> That is to say, “the *bodhi*-mind represented by the letter *Ha* is endowed with the ten powers and so on of all Tathāgatas.<sup>32</sup> Now, by combining with the letter *Kha* it is freed of all bonds and is also without any obstructions, just like the wind whirling about at will in empty space. Therefore, it is called ‘great power.’[ . . . ] This great firm power is originally born of the adamantine (*vajra*) generic nature of the Buddhas. Furthermore, for innumerable eons they have constantly been fully cultivating Dharma practices on the basis of the true cause (i.e., the *bodhi*-mind) represented by this letter *Ha*; every single one of the myriad virtues of the letter *Kha* is indestructible like the *vajra*.”<sup>33</sup> Therefore, this is known as the meaning of “great power.”

Next, [*Hūm* has] the meaning “fear.”<sup>34</sup> That is to say, this word *Hūm* is an expression of the sincerity of all Tathāgatas; it means that all things are without cause, without result, originally pure, and perfectly quiescent. Therefore, as soon as one generates the *bodhi*-mind, one is immediately seated at the place of enlightenment (*bodhimaṇḍa*) and turns the wheel of the true Dharma. Through intercorrespondence with this [word *Hūm*] one is able to realize the entire Buddhist Dharma, in every moment of thought one possesses the wisdom of a *sarvajña* (omniscient one), one directly reaches the final aim, and one is seated on the adamantine seat (*vajrāsana*). Should the four demons appear, one enters the *samādhi* of great compassion and, frightening the four demons, subjugates them. The “four demons” are the demon of the [five] aggregates, the demon of mental afflictions, the demon of death, and the heavenly demon. None of these demonic hosts will not be

frightened and subjugated, just as darkness vanishes as soon as the sun rises.

Next, "by what means does the Tathāgata frighten away various obstacles? It is by means of this gateway of the letter *Hūṃ*.<sup>35</sup> The *samādhi* stroke below corresponds to the full cultivation of the myriad practices; above there is the dot of great emptiness, and this corresponds to the myriad virtues that have already been accomplished. The letter *Ha* corresponds to the banner of the Dharma. Because of the combination of the *samādhi* [stroke] with the dot of emptiness, this corresponds to the *samādhi* 'Observation from the High Peak.' [The letter *Ha* represents the seed of all Tathāgatas.] The dot above represents the mother of the *vidyārājñī*, and the stroke below represents the daily growth of the embryo. Because of meanings such as these, should one utter the sound [*Hūṃ*], and then the demonic hosts will be routed." This corresponds to the meaning of "fear."

Next, [*Hūṃ* has] the meaning "joy in equal view."<sup>36</sup> "In the center of" this "word *Hūṃ* there is the letter *Ha*, which signifies 'joy.' Above there is [the dot of] great emptiness, representing *samaya*. Below there is the *samādhi* graph-stroke, which also represents *samaya*. One practices within [these] two *samayas* (i.e., self-realization represented by the superscript *ṃ* and altruistic practice represented by the subscript *ū*), and the Buddhas of the three ages all identify with this view." Therefore, this is known as the meaning of "equal view."



THE PRECIOUS KEY TO THE SECRET TREASURY

by

Kūkai



## Fascicle One

### Introduction

Remote, remote, ever so remote—Buddhist and non-Buddhist tomes number in their thousands and tens of thousands;

Abstruse, abstruse, ever so abstruse—some speak of One Path, others speak of another path, and there are a hundred kinds of paths.

Were their copying to cease and their reciting to end, what would happen to the basis [of the teachings]?

No one, but no one, would know of them, and I too would not know of them.

Though they might ponder over and over again, even sages would not gain cognizance of them.

Cow-Head, taking pity on the sick, licked grasses [to make medicine];

Broken Stump, feeling sorry for those who were lost, used a compass cart [to show them the way home].<sup>1</sup>

People crazed in the three realms do not know that they are crazy,

And the blind born by the four modes of birth do not realize that they are blind.

Born and reborn again and again, we are ignorant of the beginnings of birth;

Dying again and again and yet again, we are nescient of the ending of death.

As [illusory] flowers in the sky confuse the eyes and [imaginary] hairs on a tortoise delude the senses [of those with impaired vision], [ordinary people] are mistakenly attached to a real self and, their

minds intoxicated, they stubbornly cling [to external objects]; like thirsty deer and wild horses they rush about in the realm of sense objects, and like ruttish elephants and leaping monkeys they give themselves over to [the instincts of] the citadel of consciousness. Thus the ten evil [deeds] delight their minds as they commit them day and night, while the six perfections grate on their ears and do not enter their thoughts. They slander people [who promote Buddhism] and slander the Dharma without considering the criminality of burning their seeds [of potential enlightenment]; indulging in wine and indulging in lust, who is aware of retribution in future lives? Yama and his guardians of hell establish hells and pass judgment on offenses—as hungry ghosts or birds and beasts, [sinners] have burning mouths or bodies weighed down [with heavy loads], and they transmigrate through the three realms and wander about in the four modes of birth. [—first stage]

Seeing this, how could the Great Enlightened One, the Compassionate Father, remain silent? Thus, it was here that his true intent lay in providing various kinds of medicine and pointing out the various kinds of delusion.

Hence, if one cultivates the three bonds and five virtues, then the path of ruler and subject, of father and son, will be orderly and not in disarray. [—second stage]

If one rehearses the six practices and four *dhyānas*, then one's vision of loathing for the lower world and delight in the upper world will progressively advance and one will obtain happiness. [—third stage]

If one rejects the self in what is merely the [five] aggregates, [one will obtain] the eight liberations and six [supernatural] faculties. [—fourth stage]

If one masters [the twelfold chain of] causes and conditions, the [resultant] wisdom of emptiness will eradicate the seeds [of karma]. [—fifth stage]

If one engenders compassion unconditionally and negates the objects [of cognition] with [the understanding of] consciousness-only,

then one will quash the two hindrances and transform [the eight consciousnesses] to obtain the four wisdoms. [—sixth stage]

If one realizes [the essential nature of] the mind in non-birth and transcends thought in absolute emptiness, then the one mind will be quiescent, nondual, and without any characteristics. [—seventh stage]

If one observes the One Path in its original purity, Avalokiteśvara will be contented. [—eighth stage]

If one meditates on the Dharma realm at the time of the initial [generation of the] aspiration [for enlightenment], Samantabhadra will smile. [—ninth stage]

The defilements covering the outside of the mind are here completely consumed, and the splendor of the *maṇḍa[la]* is now gradually revealed. The eyes of wisdom of [the practitioner who visualizes the letter] *Ma* [in his right eye] and [the letter] *Ṭa* [in his left eye] dispel the darkness of ignorance, and the light rays [emitted] in meditation by [his eyes transfigured into] the sun and moon manifest *sattvas* possessed of wisdom. The Buddhas of the Five Families, displaying knowledge-seals (*jñāna-mudrā*), are in close array, and the four kinds of *maṇḍa[la]*s,<sup>2</sup> abiding in the essence of the Dharma, are interlinked. With a single side-long glance from Aca[lanātha] the winds of karmic life are stilled, and with three shouts [of the mantra “*Hūṃ*”] by Trai[lokyavijaya] the waves of ignorance dry up.<sup>3</sup> The Eight Offering Goddesses cause wondrous offerings to arise like seas of clouds, and the Four Pā[ramitā] Consorts experience delight in Dharma bliss.<sup>4</sup> Those of the ten stages are unable to gain even a glimpse [of this state], and [those versed in the teaching of the one mind and] its own three [attributes of essence, aspect, and function]<sup>5</sup> cannot draw near. It is the secret of all secrets, the enlightenment of all enlightenments. [—tenth stage]

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Alas! Unaware of their own treasures, people regard their mad delusion as enlightenment—what is this if not foolishness? The Father’s compassion feels this keenly, and were it not for his

teachings, how could they be saved? It is for this reason that he administers the medicine [of the teachings], but if they do not take it, how are they to be cured? Should they aimlessly discuss [the teachings] and aimlessly recite [the scriptures], the King of Physicians will surely reprimand them.

Thus the nine kinds of medicine for the mind clear away its outer dust and curb its delusions, while the one Adamantine Palace opens up its inner vault and bestows its treasures. Whether or not one enjoys them, whether or not one obtains them hinges on one's own mind; it is neither one's father nor one's mother but only one's own mind that itself realizes [the truth]. *Sattvas* who would seek the Buddha must know this. They must distinguish between a *maṇi* and a stone resembling a gem, between donkey's milk and ghee from a cow. They must differentiate these—they really must.

The [relative] depth and shallowness of the stages of the mind are clearly explained in the sutras and treatises, and they will be presented in detail later. Here are some verses:

I take refuge in that which is adamant inner (i.e.,  
sentient) and outer (i.e., non-sentient) life

And is dissociated from speech, beyond taint, like space,  
and [free of] causes [—*Mahāvairocana*];<sup>6</sup>

In the silent ones of action, transiency, pride, thusness,  
truth, and vehicle [—*dharmamaṇḍala*];<sup>7</sup>

In the benevolent ones of the *caitya*, banner, radiance,  
lotus, and [conch] shell [—*samaya-maṇḍala*];<sup>8</sup>

In the Buddhas Vairocana, [Ratna]ketu, Saṃkusumita[rā-  
jendra], [Padma]netra (i.e., Amitābha), and Dundu-  
bhi[svara];

In the persons Vajra-, Ratna-, Dharma- and Karma[-pāra-  
mitā], [Vajra]gītā, and [Vajra]nṛtyā [—*mahā-maṇḍala*];<sup>9</sup>

In their clay, cast, and carved [images] and in their  
activities and deportments [—*karma-maṇḍala*]<sup>10</sup>

—[I take refuge] in all these beings, who are unobstructed  
and more numerous than the dust motes of [countless]  
lands.

Now, by imperial command I have written about the ten stages  
So that people may quickly pass beyond the three delusions<sup>11</sup> and understand the truth about their minds.  
When the mist lifts and one sees the light, there are inexhaustible treasures;  
Used for one's own enjoyment and that of others, they are renewed day by day.  
When setting out in search of [Bha]gavān,  
How many stations are there until one reaches the original resting place?  
The Tathāgata has clearly explained this—  
There are ten kinds [through which one passes] to enter the Adamantine Site.  
We have already heard the number of stages of the mind;  
We ask you to reveal their names and characteristics.  
The names of [the stages of] the mind are clearly listed below;  
Read them and realize your deluded state.

1. *The Mind of the Common Person, Like a Ram.*

The ordinary person, madly intoxicated, does not realize his own faults;  
He thinks only of fornication and food, just like a ram.

2. *The Mind of the Foolish Child, Observing Abstinence.*

Influenced by external causes and conditions, he suddenly thinks of moderation in eating;  
Thoughts of charity sprout, just like grain when it encounters the [proper] conditions.

3. *The Mind of the Young Child, without Fear.*

The non-Buddhist is born in heaven, there for a while to obtain respite;  
He is like an infant or calf following its mother.

4. *The Mind of Aggregates-only and No-self.*

He only understands the existence of things (*dharmas*) and  
totally rejects a self or person;  
The Tripitaka of the goat cart<sup>12</sup> is completely contained in  
this state.

5. *The Mind That Has Eradicated the Causes and Seeds of Karma.*

He masters the twelve [links of dependent arising] and  
eradicates the seeds of ignorance;  
Karmic birth having been terminated, without speaking he  
obtains the fruit.

6. *The Mind of the Mahayana Concerned for Others.*

He engenders compassion unconditionally, and great  
compassion arises for the first time;  
Observing [the workings of] the mind to be like illusory  
shadows, he negates the objects [of cognition] with [the  
understanding of] consciousness-only.

7. *The Mind Awakened to the Non-birth of the Mind.*

When he puts an end to frivolous [arguments] with the  
eight negations and observes emptiness in a single  
moment of thought,  
The mind's source becomes empty and tranquil, has no  
characteristics, and is at peace.

363c 8. *The Mind of the One Path As It Really Is.*

At one with thusness and originally pure, object and  
knowledge merge—  
He who knows this nature of the mind is called  
[Vairo]cana.

9. *The Mind of Ultimate Own-naturelessness.*

Water has no own-nature—it encounters wind, and then  
waves appear;

The Dharma realm is not the ultimate—thus admonished,  
he immediately forges ahead.

10. *The Mind of Secret Adornment.*

The medicine of exoteric [teachings] clears away the dust,  
and the mantra [teachings] lay open the vault;  
Secret treasures are at once displayed, and myriad virtues  
are instantly realized.

**1. The Mind of the Common Person, Like a Ram**

What is the mind of the common person, like a ram? It is the name given to the ordinary person who, madly intoxicated, does not distinguish between good and evil; to the foolish child who, stupid and ignorant, does not believe in cause and result. The ordinary person performs various actions and experiences various effects, and he is born with a myriad kinds of physical characteristics. Therefore, he is called a “common person” (lit., “differently born” [*prthagjana*]). Because his stupidity and ignorance are equal to the inferior nature of the ram, he is likened to the latter.

We are not born by choice, and we also abhor death. Nonetheless, birth after birth we transmigrate in the six destinies, and death after death we founder in the three [evil] paths. The parents who begot us do not know the reasons for birth, and we who have been born do not understand the consequences of death. When we look back on the past, it is dark and its beginning indiscernible; when we look ahead to the future, it is indistinct and its end undiscoverable. Though the Three Luminaries shine above, we are benighted as if we had the vision of dogs, and even though we may stand on the Five Marchmounts, we are lost as if we had the eyes of sheep.<sup>13</sup> Tied to the hell of food and clothing, we toil and moil day and night, and running around near and far, we fall into the pit of fame and wealth.

What is more, just as a magnet attracts iron, men and women run after one another, and just as a crystal draws water [when exposed to the moon], parents and children have affection for one another. But although parents and children may have great affection

for one another, they do not know the true character of affection, and although man and wife may love each other, they do not realize the true character of love. It is [transient] like water which flows in a continuous stream or like flames that leap one from another. They are bound to no purpose by the rope of deluded thoughts and are intoxicated for nothing by the wine of ignorance. It is as if they had met in a dream or come across each other at an inn.

There are some who believe that the One and the Two evolved from the Way and that the myriad things have proliferated on the basis of the Three,<sup>14</sup> while others claim that Īśvara produced [the universe] or that Brahmā created it. Not knowing the origins of the living, how can they discuss the provenance of the dead?

In the end wolves, lions, and tigers champ other hairy creatures, whales and *makaras* ingest those of the scaly tribe, *garuḍas* eat serpents, and *rākṣasas* consume people.<sup>15</sup> People and animals devour each other, and the strong and the weak feed on one another. Furthermore, when men cross the fields with bows and arrows, boars and deer are exterminated in their lairs, and when they set nets in streams, fishes and turtles are annihilated in their haunts. When hawks and falcons fly, pheasants and swans shed tears; when savage dogs come running, foxes and rabbits rend their hearts. Though birds and beasts may be decimated, people's minds are still not satisfied, and though the larders may be full, their appetite is not sated. Robbers and thieves are infatuated with rare treasures and punished with death. Adulterers and rapists are captivated by beautiful women and bring ruin upon themselves.<sup>16</sup> The four kinds of [wrongful] speech (i.e., lying, harsh speech, calumny, and frivolous chatter) make of the tongue an axe [with which to harm others], and indulging in the three mental faults (i.e., covetousness, malice, and wrong views), the mind poisons itself.

Without shame or embarrassment, people commit eighty thousand sins; they commit them themselves and they also abet others, constantly committing faults like dust motes or particles of sand [in number]. They are completely unaware of the fact that each sinful deed incurs suffering in the three evil [destinies of hell],

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the realm of hungry ghosts, and the realm of animals] and each root of goodness leads to the happiness of the four attributes [of nirvana].

Some say that when a person dies, he returns to the [primal] pneuma (*ch'i*) and is never born again—those of this type are called [advocates of] “annihilationism.” Others say that people will always be people and animals always animals, that high and low status are always fixed, and that the poor and the rich are forever divided—those of this type are called [advocates of] “eternalism.” Alternatively they may conduct themselves like cows or dogs [in order to be reborn in heaven], or else they may throw corpses in the Ganges River [so that the deceased may be purified]—those of this type are called [advocates of] “wrong views.” Non-Buddhists with wrong views are immeasurable in number, and not knowing any way to escape [the cycle of transmigration], they follow deluded views. Those of these types all have the mind of a ram.

Here are some verses:

Ordinary people are blind to good and evil,  
 And do not believe in the existence of causes and results.  
 Seeing only the prospect of immediate profit,  
 How can they know of the fires of hell?  
 Shamelessly they commit the ten evil [deeds],  
 And in vain do they argue about the existence of a divine  
     self.  
 Cherishing the three realms and attached to them,  
 Who can cast off the chains of mental afflictions?

*Question:* On the basis of which sutra have you established this thesis?

*Answer:* The *Mahāvairocana Sutra*.

[*Question:*] How is it explained in that sutra?

[*Answer:*] In that sutra it says (T. 18: 2ab):

Lord of Mysteries, ordinary people, foolish and childlike,  
 [who have been dwelling in] beginningless birth-and-death,

cling to the notion of “self” and to the possessions of the self and differentiate among innumerable distinctions of the self. Lord of Mysteries, if they do not discern the own-nature of the self, then [notions of] “I” and “mine” are born. Others again imagine that there exists [as the prime cause] time, the transformation of earth and other [elements], the self of *yoga*, established purity, unestablished non-purity, . . . sound, and non-sound. Lord of Mysteries, such distinctions of the self have since times of yore been associated with [false] discrimination, but [the adherents of these views] hope for liberation in accordance with reason. Lord of Mysteries, ordinary people and their ilk, foolish and childlike, are just like rams.

In Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind* it says (T. 32: 573a):

Ordinary people are attached to fame, gain, and the necessities of life. They strive for personal well-being and indulge in the three poisons and five desires. The mantra practitioner should truly detest these and should truly forsake them.

## 2. The Mind of the Foolish Child, Observing Abstinence

The bare trees [of winter] are not destined to remain bare, and once spring arrives, they flourish and bloom. Why does thick ice need to remain frozen? When summer comes, it melts and flows away. Seeds of grain wait for moisture to sprout, and fruit forms when the time is right. The likes of Tai Yüan's change of heart and Chou Ch'u's loyalty and filial piety<sup>17</sup> were as if unrefined ore had suddenly become a precious gem or a jewel made from [the eye of] a fish had illuminated the night. As things do not have a fixed nature, why should people remain forever wicked? When he encounters the right conditions, even a common fool aspires to the Great Way, and if he follows the teachings, even an ordinary person thinks of emulating sages. The ramlike person has no [immutable] own-nature, and the foolish child need not remain foolish.

Therefore, when his original enlightenment permeates within and the light of the Buddha shines from without, he promptly moderates his diet and performs acts of charity from time to time. His goodness, like the sprouting, budding, and leafing [of a tree], progressively develops and his mind, like the flowering and fruit-bearing [of a tree], shrinks from evil as if testing hot water and worries lest his good deeds are inadequate. He gradually learns the five virtues and reverently studies the ten good [deeds].

The five virtues are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity. "Benevolence" is termed "not killing" [in Buddhism], and it means to treat others as one would want to be treated by them. "Righteousness" corresponds to "not stealing," and it means to save things and give them to others. "Propriety" signifies "not committing adultery," and it means to observe the five rites<sup>18</sup> in due order. "Wisdom" corresponds to "not drinking intoxicants," and it means to make decisions carefully and to reason well. "Sincerity" is a synonym for "not lying," and it means to act without fail on one's words.

When people practice these five [virtues], the four seasons come in order and the five elements are in harmony. If a country practices them, then everything throughout the realm is at peace. If each household practices them, then no one will keep lost articles found by the roadside. These are excellent means by which to make a name for oneself and glorify one's forebears, and they are fine customs by which to keep a country at peace and secure the well-being of individuals. In Confucianism they are called the "five virtues," while in Buddhism they are termed the "five precepts." Though their names differ, their meanings merge, but though their practices are similar, their benefits are different. [The five precepts] are the basis for cutting off evil and cultivating good, and they represent the starting point for gradually escaping suffering and gaining happiness. Therefore, it says in a sutra:<sup>19</sup>

The five precepts of the lower grade lead to birth in the continent of Jambu[dvīpa], the five precepts of the middling

grade [lead to birth in] the land of Pūrvavideha, [the five precepts of] the higher grade [lead to birth in the continent of] Aparagodaniya, and [the five precepts of] the highest [grade] and [the realization of] no-self [lead to birth in the continent of] Uttarakuru.

This is explained in full [in the same sutra].

The inhabitants of the four continents all have kings, and there are five kinds of kings: [petty kings] scattered like grain and four [kinds of] wheel[-turning] kings (*cakravartins*). These five kinds of kings come [to be born as kings] invariably on account of [having practiced] the ten good [deeds in former lives]. Therefore, it says in the *Sutra for Benevolent Kings* (T. 8: 837b):

Bodhisattvas [who have practiced] the ten good [deeds]  
    engender the great aspiration  
And are long separated from the seas of the wheel of  
    suffering in the three worlds.  
Good [deeds] of middling and lower grades [lead to birth as  
    petty] kings scattered like grain,  
While the ten good [deeds] of the higher grade [lead to  
    birth as] iron-wheel kings.  
Those of the acquired lineage become copper-wheel [kings]  
    of two realms,  
And silver-wheel kings of three realms are those of the  
    innate lineage.  
Those of firm virtue in the lineage of the path become  
    wheel-turning kings,  
With seven treasures, a golden wheel, and four realms.<sup>20</sup>

Now, if one considers this passage, [it is evident that] kings and their subjects gain birth as human beings by having invariably practiced the five precepts and ten good [deeds], and there has never been anyone who neglected these and succeeded in gaining [birth as a human being]. Having cultivated good in former lives, one obtains [birth as] a human being in the present life, and if one does not cultivate [good] in the present life, then one will

again fall into the three [evil] paths. Without having sown seeds in spring, how can one hope to obtain a harvest in autumn? Good men and women must respect [this teaching]—they really must. As regards retribution for the ten evil and ten good [deeds] and rule by sage-kings and ordinary kings, they are discussed in detail in the *Treatise on the Ten Stages of the Mind* (T. 77: 316a-322c).

Here are some verses:

The foolish child understands a little about the poisons of  
greed and anger,

And he suddenly thinks of the advantages of observing  
abstinence.

The seeds having germinated within, he engenders  
thoughts of goodness,

And as they progressively sprout and bud, he comes to  
value excellent rules of conduct.

As he gradually practices the five virtues and ten good  
[deeds],

Even [petty kings] scattered like grain and wheel[-turning]  
kings will look up to his counsel.

*Question:* On the basis of which sutra have you explained this stage of the mind?

*Answer:* The *Mahāvairocana Sutra*.

[*Question:*] How is it explained in that sutra?

[*Answer:*] In [that] sutra it says (T. 18: 2b):

At times a virtuous thought may arise in an ordinary person, foolish and childlike, namely, [the thought of] observing abstinence. Reflecting on this small thing, he engenders joy and practices it from time to time. Lord of Mysteries, this represents the initial [stage of the] seed from which good deeds arise. Then, with this as the cause, on the six days of abstinence<sup>21</sup> he makes gifts to his parents, male and female [children], and relatives—this represents the second [stage of] sprouting. Then he presents these gifts to those who are

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not relatives or acquaintances—this represents the third [stage of] budding. Then he presents these gifts to those of competence and high virtue—this represents the fourth [stage of] leafing. Then he joyfully presents these gifts to musicians and so forth and proffers them to venerable elders—this represents the fifth [stage of] flowering. Then with these gifts he engenders thoughts of affection and makes offerings of them—this represents the sixth [stage of] bearing fruit.

### 3. The Mind of the Young Child, without Fear

The mind of the young child, without fear, is the mind of non-Buddhists who loathe the human world and of ordinary people who long for heaven. Even though it is said that above they are born in [the Station of Neither Thought Nor] Non-thought and below they dwell in the palace of transcendents, that their physical size is forty thousand *yojanas* (one *yोजना* = approximately nine miles) and their lifespan eighty thousand eons, that they loathe the lower realms like scabs and regard the world of human beings as [transient] like the mayfly, and that their radiance eclipses the sun and moon and the rewards for their merit exceed those of the wheel[-turning] king, their inferiority and ignorance when compared with the Great Sage are nonetheless like that of a child. Because they are to some degree free of the bonds of misfortune, they are without fear, but because they have not yet gained the bliss of nirvana, they are [still] young children.

*Question:* We have heard it said that when the dog of [the prince of] Huai[-nan] rose high up [in the sky] and when the dragon of Fei [Ch'ang-fang] flew far away, [the former] was brought about through the power of drugs and [the latter] was due to the art of the teacher.<sup>22</sup> Now, on what teaching do these heavenly beings rely and on which teacher do they attend so as to be able to obtain such bodies of spontaneous radiance and such happiness of great longevity? In addition, how many kinds of heaven are there? And we beg you to give their names.

[*Answer:*] Since you have asked me, like a bell [which rings when struck] or a valley [which echoes to sounds], how can I remain silent? I shall attempt to address these matters.

A violent poison cannot counteract itself, and only a king of physicians can treat it. A *maṇi* is not in itself precious, but only when polished by an artisan. How could this king of physicians and this artisan be different people? My great teacher Bhagavān is that very person. The virtues of the Tathāgata are of a myriad kinds, and every single virtue represents the lord of a gateway to the Dharma. With each of his bodies he expounds various methods in accordance with the religious capacity [of his audience] and liberates sentient beings. Therefore, in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* it says (T. 18: 1b):

The Tathāgata, worthy of worship (arhat) and perfectly all-knowing (*samyaksaṃbuddha*), having obtained the wisdom of an omniscient one, expounds it widely and disseminates it for the sake of innumerable sentient beings, proclaiming the wisdom of an omniscient one in accordance with various destinies, various inherent desires, and various expedient ways, [expounding] either the path of the *śrāvaka* vehicle, or the path of the *pratyekabuddha* vehicle, or the path of the Great Vehicle, or the path of knowledge of the five [supernatural] faculties, or [the method for] aspiring to birth as a heavenly being, or [the methods for] birth among humans or as a *nāga* (dragon), *yakṣa* (type of demon), or *gandharva* (celestial musician) through to expounding the method for birth as a *mahoraga* (mythical snake). . . .

Now, according to this passage, the teachings of the three vehicles and of the vehicles for [rebirth as] humans and heavenly beings were all expounded by the Tathāgata. If one practices in accordance with the teachings, one will certainly be born in heaven.

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*Question:* In that case, are all the practices of non-Buddhists the same as the Buddhist Dharma?

*Answer:* There are two kinds: 1) those that conform, and 2) those that run counter. Those that conform do so because they accord with the teachings of the Tathāgata, and those that run counter do so because they are contrary to the Buddha's teaching. Although they were originally the Buddha's teaching, in the course of their continuous transmission from the beginningless past their original purport has become misconstrued. In accordance with their own views, some conduct themselves like cows, dogs, and so on and thereby seek to be born in heaven. [Teachings of] this type have all lost their original meaning.

*Question:* If these are the Buddha's teaching, the Buddha vehicle and so on should be expounded directly. Why is it necessary to expound the vehicles for [rebirth as] heavenly beings and so on?

[*Answer:*] Because they suit their religious capacity and because other medicines would have no effect.

*Question:* We have heard about the teacher and the teachings. Please give the number of heavens.

[*Answer:*] There are three kinds of heavens, namely, the realms of desire, form, and non-form. The first realm of desire has six heavens—they are the Four [Great] Heavenly Kings (Cāturmahārājika), Trāyastriṃśa, Yāma, Tuṣita, Enjoying [Magical] Transformations (Nirmāṇarati), and Controlling the [Magical] Transformations of Others (Paranirmitavaśavartin). The realm of form has eighteen [heavens], and they are divided into four on account of the distinctions between the four *dhyānas*. The first *dhyāna* has three—they are Brahmā's Retainers (Brahmapāriṣadya), Brahmā's Aides (Brahmapurohita), and Great Brahmā (Mahābrahmā); the second *dhyāna* has three—they are Limited Radiance (Paritābha), Immeasurable Radiance (Apramāṇābha), and Extremely Radiant Purity (Ābhāsvara); the third *dhyāna* also has three—they are Limited Purity (Paritāsubha), Immeasurable Purity (Apramāṇasubha), and Complete Purity (Śubhakṛtsna); and the fourth *dhyāna* has nine heavens—they are Unclouded (Anabhraka), Birth of Merit

(Puṇyaprasava), Extensive Fruit (Bṛhatphala), Thoughtless (Asaṃjñisattva), Unafflicted (Avṛha), Untormented (Atapa), Good-Looking (Sudṛśa), Good-Appearing (Sudarśana), and Limit of Form (Akaṇiṣṭha). The realm of non-form has four [heavens]—they are [Station of] the Infinity of Space (Ākāśānantyāyatana), [Station of] the Infinity of Consciousness (Vijñānānantyāyatana), Station of Nothingness (Ākiṃcanyāyatana), and [Station of] Neither Thought Nor Non-thought (Naivasamjñānāsamjñānāyatana). The distances above the ocean of these twenty-eight kinds of heavens, the physical size and lifespan [of their denizens], and so on are discussed in detail in the *Treatise on the Ten Stages of the Mind* (T. 77: 324b-328c), and for fear of complicating matters I will not describe them here.

*Question:* We have heard the names of the heavens and their number. We again beg you to describe the characteristics of their practices.

*Answer:* Non-Buddhists also posit terms like “Three Jewels” and “three disciplines.” They regard Brahmā and so on as the Buddha jewel, the four Vedas and so on as the Dharma jewel, and those who transmit and practice them as the Sangha jewel. They regard the ten good [deeds] and so on as the precepts, and the four *dhyānas* correspond to meditation. This meditation is attained by means of six practices, and these six practices are suffering, coarseness, obstacles, purity, excellence, and dissociation. Loathing the lower world, they conceive of it in terms of suffering, coarseness, and obstacles, and longing for the heavens above, they view them in terms of purity, excellence, and dissociation. On account of these views they are progressively born in higher [realms]; by virtue of the *samādhi* of emptiness [dependent on] another entity (i.e., self or creator) the wisdom of emptiness is generated; and by means of these three disciplines they obtain the wondrous bliss of the heavens above. But because their path is not the ultimate one, they are unable to escape birth-and-death and attain nirvana. While aiming at [the Station of Neither Thought Nor] Non-thought up above,

they end up falling into hell, just as an arrow shot into the sky comes down when its momentum runs out. Therefore, one should not seek after it.

*Question:* Non-Buddhists similarly cultivate the three disciplines, they are born in the two realms [of form and non-form], and they realize the *samādhi* of emptiness, in which speech dis-  
365b appears and thought is eliminated. Why are they unable to cut off mental afflictions and realize nirvana?

*Answer:* Because their views are attached to the two extremes [of being and nonbeing] and their meditation is characterized by the two [wrong] views [of annihilationism and eternalism].

*Question:* They similarly meditate on nonbeing and non-nothingness. Why do they lapse into the two extremes and the two [wrong] views?

[*Answer:*] Because they are dependent on another entity (i.e., self or creator) and do not know the Middle Path of causes and conditions.

[*Question:*] What do you mean by the Middle Path of causes and conditions?

[*Answer:*] Because one sees that things exist on account of causes and conditions, one does not lapse into the extreme of annihilation, and because one sees that things are empty of any own-nature, one does not lapse into eternalism. Seeing that existence and emptiness [both] represent the Dharma realm, one obtains the right view of the Middle Path. By relying on this right view of the Middle Path, one quickly attains nirvana. Non-Buddhists with wrong views are ignorant of this thesis, and therefore they do not attain true and perfect tranquility. If they were to hear this principle, they would attain [the state of] an arhat.

*Question:* How many types [of beings] are there who, observing the precepts, are born in heaven?

[*Answer:*] There are four types [of beings] who are born in heaven: 1) non-Buddhists, as explained above; 2) those of the two vehicles, who are also born in heaven; 3) bodhisattvas of the Mahayana, because they invariably become kings of the ten heavens;<sup>23</sup> and 4) Buddhas and bodhisattvas in responsive transformation, because they transform themselves into kings of the heavens. This has been explained in detail in the *Treatise on the Ten Stages of the Mind* (cf. T. 77: 324b).

Here are some verses:

Non-Buddhists, generating the [religious] mind, wish for  
the happiness of heaven;  
Devoutly observing the precepts, they seek refuge.  
Not knowing of him in whom great enlightenment was  
perfected (i.e., the Buddha),  
How can they perceive the wrongs of [following] Brahmā or  
*nāga* deities?  
Cultivating the six practices, they are born in [the realm  
of] non-form;  
Scorching their bodies and minds with fivefold heat,<sup>24</sup> they  
needlessly torment themselves.  
In annihilation and permanence, emptiness and existence,  
they wish for a superior abode.  
Were they to meet the World-honored One, they would  
realize their errors.

*Question:* Now, on the basis of which sutra and treatise have you explained this stage of the mind?

*Answer:* The *Mahāvairocana Sutra* and the *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind*.

[*Question:*] How is it explained in that sutra?

[*Answer:*] In that sutra it says (T. 18: 2b):

Lord of Mysteries, they observe the precepts so as to be born  
in heaven—this represents the seventh [stage of] taking in

seeds. Next, Lord of Mysteries, as they transmigrate through birth-and-death with this mind [of the seventh stage], they hear the following words from a good friend: "This is a god, a great god, who bestows all happiness. If you worship him with devotion, all your wishes will be fulfilled. [These gods are,] namely, Īśvara, Brahmā, Nārāyaṇa, Śaṅkara, the son of Īśvara (= Skanda), Āditya (Sun), Candra (Moon), the honored *nāgas*, ... or celestial seers, and great masters of the Vedas. Each of these should be duly worshiped." Upon hearing this, their hearts are filled with blessed joy, and venerating [these gods] with respect, they practice accordingly. Lord of Mysteries, this is called the eighth [stage of the] mind of the young child, the basis of fearlessness for common people, foolish and childlike, as they transmigrate through birth-and-death.

Again, it says (T. 18: 2bc):

Next there is a special practice. Following their [friend's] instructions, they dwell in a special state, whereupon there arises the wisdom that seeks liberation. This is, namely, [the teachings of] permanence, impermanence, and emptiness, and they follow these teachings. Lord of Mysteries, it is not that they understand emptiness and non-emptiness, permanence and annihilation. With regard to both nonexistence and non-nothingness, they consider what they discriminate to be without discrimination. How is one to discriminate emptiness? They do not know the varieties of emptiness, and [so] they will never be able to know nirvana. Therefore, one should realize that emptiness is removed from annihilation and permanence.

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*<Remarks: Non-Buddhists, wishing for a way to escape [the cycle of transmigration], torment their bodies and minds in various ways. With the teachings of annihilation and permanence, emptiness and existence, this is like seeking milk by squeezing a*

*cow's horn. Once they realize that things arise on account of causes and conditions and are therefore empty, they will immediately attain liberation.>*

It also says (T. 18: 9c):

Lord of Mysteries, cause and result, as well as action, in the world at large, whether they arise or perish, do so in dependence on another entity, and so the *samādhi* of emptiness is born—this is called the path of *samādhi* for worldlings.

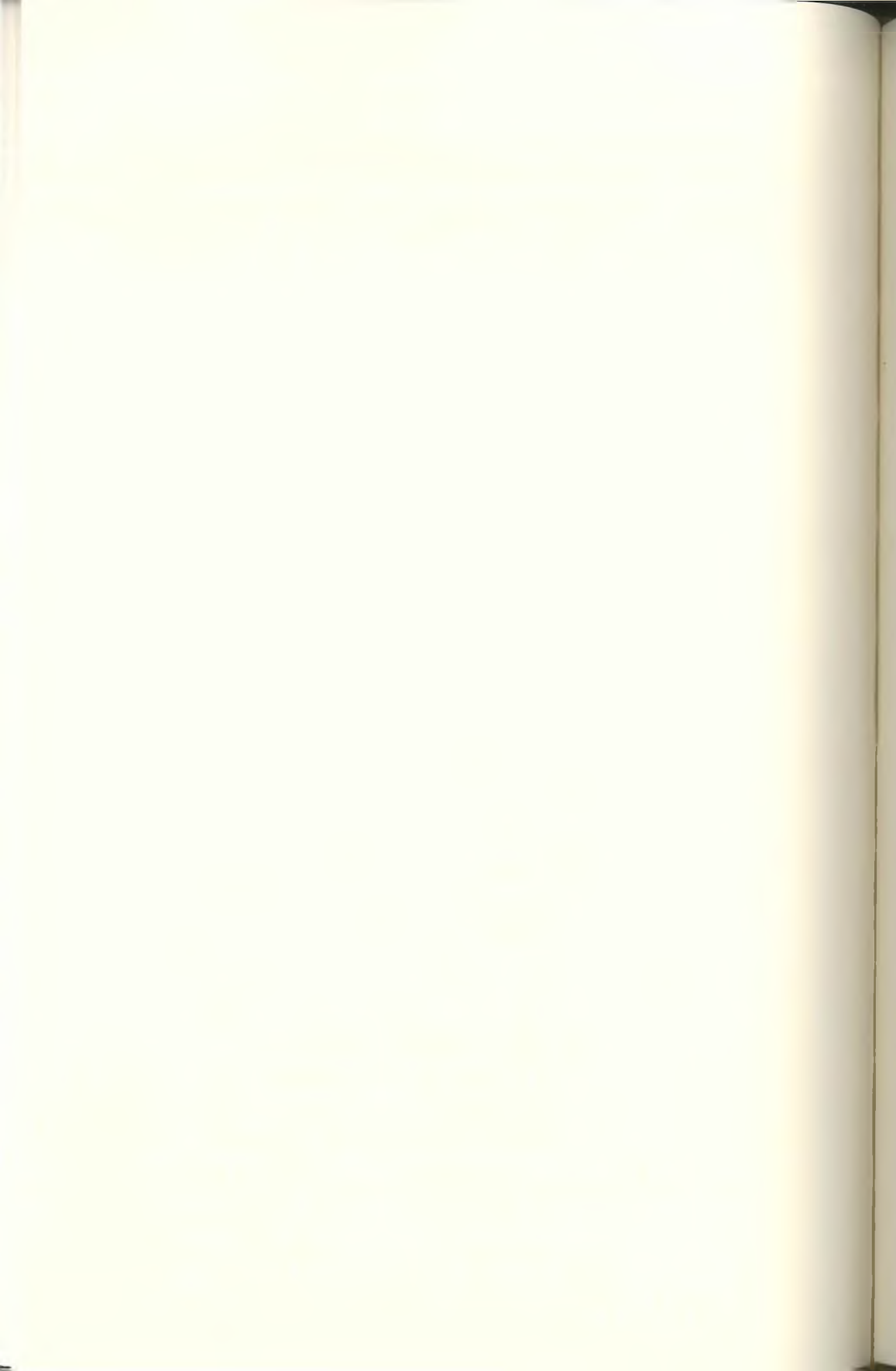
It also says (T. 18: 9c):

In the case of the gods' mundane path of the teachings of mantra rites,  
The Striving Hero (i.e., the Buddha) has thus [expounded it] in order to benefit sentient beings.

It says in the *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind* by the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna (T.32: 573a):

Non-Buddhists are enamored with their own physical life[span]: some, with the help of drugs, obtain longevity dwelling in the palace of transcendents, while others again regard birth in heaven as the final goal. The mantra practitioner should observe them. Once the force of their [good] karma has been exhausted, they are still not freed from the three realms, mental afflictions still exist, residual troubles have not yet been extirpated, and wicked thoughts whirl up. Then they will founder in the sea of suffering, from which it is difficult to escape. Know that the teachings of non-Buddhists are like an apparition, a dream, or a mirage.

*The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury, Fascicle One*



## Fascicle Two

### 4. The Mind of Aggregates-only and No-self

A sword of lead cannot match the achievements of Excalibur,<sup>25</sup> and how can a dragon of clay have the abilities of a winged dragon? Imitation gems are confused with precious stones, and the words for “unpolished jade” and “[dried] mouse” are homonyms.<sup>26</sup> The confusion between words and things is of long standing. Thus, there are the names of the “truths” of the Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya, the epithet “Buddha” for Brahmā and Nārāyaṇa, the “reality” of Dirghanakha, and the “ineffableness” of the Vātsīputriya,<sup>27</sup> and [their adherents] all toil in vain for the wisdom of liberation without knowing the cause of nirvana.

For this reason the Great Enlightened One, the World-honored One, expounded this goat cart<sup>28</sup> to extricate people from the extreme suffering of the three [evil] paths and to liberate them from the karmic fetters of the eight sufferings. As for its teachings, the Tripiṭaka is broad in its compass, and the Four [Noble] Truths are universally applicable. The thirty-seven factors [of enlightenment] serve as aides along the path, and the four approaches and four fruits represent the stages of the practitioner.<sup>29</sup> When speaking of consciousness, there are only six [consciousnesses] and not a seventh or an eighth.<sup>30</sup> As regards the accomplishment [of Buddhahood], it requires [at least] three lives or [as long as] sixty eons. To prevent wrongdoing, there are two hundred and fifty [precepts], and to cultivate good, there are the four [fields of] mindfulness and the eight abandonments. Every half month they recite the [list of] offenses, and it becomes immediately clear who has committed any; at the end of the summer retreat they confess their sins at will, and the holy ones are promptly distinguished from ordinary people. They shave their heads, wear robes, and have an iron staff and a steel [begging] bowl. They walk with

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care so as not to harm insects, and they sit with lowered heads, counting their breath. Such is their physical conduct. There are euphemisms such as “know” for “kill” or “take,” and they think of beautiful women, comparable to floating clouds and whirling snow, as dead corpses. Thus [are their mental and verbal actions purified by] thoughts of the ashes [of burnt corpses] and [by pure words flowing unceasingly from] their mouths like sawdust [from a saw]. In cemeteries, their eyes closed, they focus their minds on bleached bones. They beg for food in villages and are satisfied with coarse fare. The foliage of trees provides shelter from the rain, and so who would wish for a whitewashed house? Robes made of rags protect them from the wind, and so what need is there for garments of fine silk?

In the *samādhi* of the emptiness of [sentient] beings they realize that the self is like an apparition or a mirage, and with the knowledge of nonarising and extinction<sup>31</sup> they cut off future existence due to mental afflictions. Their supernatural faculties are such that they cause the moon to wane and the sun to be hidden and turn heaven and earth upside down. With their eyes they see through the three ages, and with their bodies they manifest eighteen [supernatural transformations]. Stone walls are no obstacle to them, and they can fly up into the sky. Their virtues are such that wheel[-turning] kings bow down before them, Śakra and Brahmā take refuge in them, the eight classes [of gods and demigods] attend on them, and the four groups [of believers] (i.e., monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen) look up to them. Loathing the foamlike and dewlike ephemerality of the five aggregates and detesting the tribulations of the three [evil] paths, they long for the refreshing state of mental equipoise, vast like the great void, tranquil, and unconditioned. Is this not bliss? They prize the reduction of the body to ashes and the extinction of knowledge.

Such is the general gist of this vehicle. Because they retain the *dharma*s and reject the [individual] person, [it is called “the mind of] aggregates-only and no-self”; “only” because it implies to select and uphold [only certain tenets].

A young man concerned about the nation put some questions to the Dharma master Genkan.<sup>32</sup> "I have now heard about the followers and teachings of the *śrāvaka* vehicle, and I have learned that its path is more wondrous than that of humans and heavenly beings and its followers are superior to Śakra and the wheel[-turning kings]. They are endowed with the six [supernatural] faculties and have perfected the three knowledges. It is indeed quite reasonable that they be revered by both men and heavenly beings and trusted as fields of merit. For this reason sage-emperors and wise ministers of former times erected monasteries far and wide and installed monastics, allotting myriads of households to cultivate thousands of acres so that, with bells sounding, the monks might eat [many-course meals] from cauldrons. They trusted and revered them for no other reason than the pacification of the state and the benefit of the people.

"But nowadays monks and nuns, though they shave their heads, do not shed their desires, and though they dye their robes they do not imbue their minds [with the Buddhist teachings]. [The three disciplines of] morality (*śīla*), meditation (*dhyāna*), and wisdom (*prajñā*) are rarer than the horn of a unicorn, while excessive behavior contrary to the Dharma is more prolific than the scales on a dragon. They assiduously kowtow to the feet of officials and their concubines day and night, and kneel with gifts at the feet of their servants and maids morning and evening. The traditions of Śākyamuni have consequently declined and the Buddhist path has thereby been brought to ruin. Droughts and floods occur frequently, and epidemic diseases break out annually; the realm is in a state of trouble and disorder, and both officials and the people suffer extreme distress—it is all because of this (i.e., the degeneracy of monks and nuns). It would be best to put an end to all ordination and stop making any offerings to [them]. If, however, there should be any arhats who have attained the path, we should prostrate ourselves with utmost reverence and provide for them even if it exhausts the nation's wealth."

The master said, "Well put! There is much that is profitable in your comments. With the sharp ears of Ling Lun<sup>33</sup> you should listen attentively and with the quick mind of Yen Tzu<sup>34</sup> you should consider carefully as I dispel your confusion with one or two examples.

366b "An insect living in the eyebrows of a mosquito does not see the wings of a great roc; how can a tiny lizard imagine the scales of a dragon? The horns of a snail cannot reach the top of the firmament; how can a dwarf walk along the bottom of the ocean? Those born blind cannot see the sun and moon; those who are deaf and dull cannot hear the rumbling of thunder. Such would seem to be the situation among the half-witted.

"Again, among things there are good and bad, and among people there are differences between the wise and the foolish. The wise and good are rare, while the foolish and bad are many. The unicorn and phoenix are remarkable among birds and beasts, and the *mani* and diamond are extraordinary among minerals and stones. The most outstanding among people are sages, the most praised among emperors are Yao and Shun,<sup>35</sup> the best among queens was the wife of [King] Wen,<sup>36</sup> and the most admired among ministers are the [Eight] Good Men and the [Eight] Wise Men.<sup>37</sup> When a unicorn or phoenix is seen, the realm is at peace; when a *mani* or diamond is found, all things respond to one's wishes. When a sage-king appears in the world, the four seas are undisturbed; and if wise ministers assist in governing, the king can rule with folded arms. Nonetheless, it is rare to encounter a sage-king, and he may govern once in a thousand years; it is also difficult to obtain a wise aide, and he may manage [state affairs] once in five hundred years. We have only heard the name of the *mani*, and who has actually seen a unicorn or phoenix?

"But just because we have not seen a unicorn or phoenix, we should not exterminate winged and hairy creatures, and just because we have not obtained a wish-fulfilling [*mani*], we should not throw away the likes of gold and jade. Although Yao and Shun may not be reborn, why should there be no ruler of the realm? And although the [Eight] Good Men and [Eight] Wise Men may not

reappear, why should ministers throughout the land resign? Confucius is long dead, but Confucianists brush against each other in every country; Lao-tzu has long gone west, but followers in search of the path jostle with each other in every district. Even if the present reign is without Pien [Ch'üeh] and Hua [T'a],<sup>38</sup> why should the path of medicine come to an end? Even if the present age has no I or Yang [Yu-chi],<sup>39</sup> who would give up the martial arts? Shih [K'uang] and Chung [Tzu-ch'i]<sup>40</sup> moved the heavens with their zithers, while [Wang] Hsi[-chih] and [his son] Hsien[-chih]<sup>41</sup> responded with the brush[strokes] of transcendents. They are long gone, and who has acquired their skills? Yet the strumming of instruments is deafening to the ears and handwritten letters sully one's vision, and this is all because it is wiser to practice these arts than to abandon them.

"Thus [in the case of Buddhism too] it is difficult to obtain the holy fruit of the arhat in a single lifetime. For this reason someone of dull faculties will spend sixty eons and someone of sharp intellect three lives in training and ascetic practices, whereupon he will realize the stage of a holy one. Although there may be no sages of the [four] approaches and [four] fruits, why should their path be abolished?"

The young man said, "The difficulty of meeting a sage may indeed be as you say. But why is it that we have not yet heard of anyone who observes the precepts and [possesses] wisdom?"

The master said, "There are times of increase and of decrease, and there is the True Dharma and the Imitative Dharma.<sup>42</sup> During eons of increase people all think of the ten good [deeds], and during eons of decrease households indulge in the ten evil [deeds].<sup>43</sup> During the thousand years of the True Dharma there are many who observe the precepts and attain the path, but during the thousand years of the Imitative Dharma there are few who abide by the prohibitions and cultivate virtue. Now we are in a period of defilement and evil in which people's faculties are inferior and dull. Though they may resort to the path and imitate its manner, it is difficult for them to penetrate the wondrous path, and like light

down blown by the wind they follow their inclinations. How can stars move toward the east when the firmament declines to the west? How can grasses and trees stand still when heaven and earth tremble and split open?"

The young man said, "If it is as you say, then it would be difficult for those pulled by the times and by their own [inferior] faculties to go against the current. Does this mean that in this evil age characterized by the five defilements there are no people at all who observe the precepts, [practice] meditation, and [possess] wisdom?"

366c The master said, "Why should that be necessarily so? Even though the vault of heaven revolves westward, the sun and moon go eastward; while the Southern Dipper moves with the seasons, the North Star does not shift its position. Although winter weather kills off everything, the pine and cypress do not wither; while cold snaps freeze water, brine and wine do not freeze over. Among the subjects of [King] Chou all registered households may have deserved to be killed, but there were still three men who were praised as being benevolent, and the households under [King] Yao may have deserved to be enfeoffed house by house, but there were still four criminals who were put to death. Fire is said to burn things, but a certain kind of rat plays in its midst; water causes people to drown, but dragons and turtles swim in it. When viewed in this light, although there are some who conform [to circumstances], there are others who do not. Therefore, though the present age may be defiled and confused, why should there be no such people?"

The young man said, "I now understand that there are such people. Where, then, are they?"

The master said, "The great square has no corners; the great note makes little sound; great whiteness seems sullied; great straightness seems bent; great perfection seems incomplete; great fullness seems empty. Mysterious virtue and mysterious sameness<sup>44</sup>—who except a sage can recognize these? Even the sages of yore found it difficult to recognize such a person."

The young man said, "I have previously heard of softening the glare [of one's virtue] and assimilating with the dust [of the

mundane world]. On the other hand, when jade is hidden in a mountain, grasses and trees thrive, and when a sword is buried under a peak, its luster breaks through; by examining the footprints [of an animal], we know its shape, and on seeing smoke, we infer the presence of fire. Why then should it be so difficult to recognize someone who has wisdom and is practicing [the teachings]?"

The master said, "Things have no mind, and therefore manifest their attributes; people possess minds, and so it is difficult to differentiate between them."

The young man said, "I now realize that it is not easy to discern sages. Nonetheless, Buddhism preys upon the nation's wealth like silverfish eating books and monastics consume the nation's food like silkworms munching on mulberry leaves. Of what benefit are they then?"

The master said, "Whether or not they are of benefit will be discussed again later. For the moment I will give in broad outline an indication of the relative merits of Buddhist monks and lay officials.

"Listening now to your question, it would seem that you are concerned solely about the advantages and disadvantages to the state without having considered why Buddhism has spread. For one who is both a loyal subject and a righteous man that is quite proper.

"Now, the reason for founding a nation, establishing a bureaucracy, installing a ruler, and governing the people is originally not to administer the realm and offer it to the king, nor is it to subjugate the land and give it to officials; it is to alleviate the tribulations of all people as do parents throughout the realm [relieve the suffering of their children]. However, it is impossible to control a horse without a bit and whip, and [likewise] it is impossible to govern the people without teachings and regulations. For this reason the code of the five virtues was bequeathed so as to guide the people within the four seas, the Five Classics and Three Histories show them the right path, and laws and statutes guard against wicked and aberrant behavior. If the ruler above practices this, then the realm is peaceable, and if the people below follow this, then the world is trouble-free; there is orderliness in the etiquette governing

relations between a ruler and his subjects, between father and son, and there is nothing lacking with respect to the meaning of [the ideal of] those above and those below being at peace and on good terms with one another.

367a “But nowadays those who recite the [*Book of*] *Songs* do not possess a mind that is gentle and docile, simple and amiable, while those who read the [*Book of*] *Rites* have forgotten the spirit of respect and frugality, courtesy and deference. The gist of the *Spring and Autumn [Annals]* lies in punishing the wicked and encouraging the good; what is prized in the *Book of Changes* is purity and serenity, exactitude and subtlety. Though everyone may read them, who conforms to the admonitions of Confucius and who meets the exhortations of the Duke of Chou? If it is only a question of reciting and talking, even a parrot can do this. If one does not practice what one says, how is one different from an ape?

“Government officials who act on behalf of the emperor, the nine governors [of ancient China] who controlled the people, the heads of the seven districts and five home provinces [of Japan], the prefects of the three hundred and sixty [prefectures of China], the magistrates and commandants in every county, the village heads in every township, fathers and sons in every household, and peasants in every home—their number is immeasurable and their range, from the noble to the humble, infinite. But how many practice benevolence and righteousness? How many cultivate loyalty and filial piety? How many carefully observe propriety and sincerity? How many do not violate laws and regulations? People, high and low alike, read books but are careless in their conduct. Both the noble and the humble mouth what is right, but their thoughts and conduct are all wrong. There is a proverb about a man who brandished the *Book of Filial Piety* and struck his mother on the head with it. It undoubtedly refers to what I have just described. Without having ever considered that they themselves have transgressed the Dharma teachings, they castigate others for violating the Dharma set out in the sutras. This is tantamount to exposing another’s swollen legs while concealing one’s own tumescent shanks.

“Applying your arguments, one could say that there are many government officials and district magistrates throughout the realm who violate the laws, and that one rarely hears of any people in the land who practice loyalty and filial piety. The three teachings [of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism] were all propagated by individuals (i.e., kings). Why is it that you pick out even minor faults with regard to the transgressions of Buddhist monks, but condone the wrongs of Confucian students without rectifying them?”

“Furthermore, the households allotted to Buddhist temples do not exceed ten thousand, and monks and nuns live on no more than a single bowl of food [daily]. They read the sutras and worship the Buddha in return for the state’s favors, and they contemplate and sit in meditation to repay the kindnesses of the four debts of gratitude. But nowadays the lifestyle of lay officials is such that they consume [the income from] a marquisate of ten thousand households or squander [the revenue of] a country of one thousand chariots. The overseers of [districts measuring] one hundred *li* and those holding the posts of the Three Dukes<sup>45</sup> sit [idly] like corpses, yet [their avarice] is like a ravine [into which water rushes unceasingly], and like enormous rats [they overtax the people with the insatiability of] the hole in the ocean [into which all water is said to flow]. They receive stipends to no avail and accept official positions to no purpose. Why does one not hear of achievements and virtues like those of the Eight Good Ministers and the Five Virtuous Ministers, or of I Yin who took his cauldron with him, [T’ai-]kung Wang who cast his fishing line, Chang Liang with his *Three Strategies*, and Ch’en P’ing with his six ploys?<sup>46</sup> If you must censure monks and nuns on account of their single bowls [of rice], why do you not scrutinize the profligacy of lay officials?”

Thereupon the young man, nonplussed, did not know what to say. After a while he said with a sigh, “The emoluments of lay officials are commensurate with their official rank. What is more, they leave [early in the morning] with the stars and return [late at night] with the stars. Tossed by the wind and drenched by the rain, they attend to official duties day and night. Why should they

deny themselves their stipends? When it comes to monks and nuns, on the other hand, who read the sutras and worship the Buddha, they sit at ease in halls and practice as they please. How can they return the state's great favors and repay the extensive kindnesses of the four debts of gratitude by reciting a volume of the *Prajñā[pāramitā Sutra]* or worshiping the name of a Buddha?"

The master said, "What you say, sir, may appear to be true, but you are still ignorant of the more subtle aspects of the matter. The Dharma is called the teacher of the Buddhas, and a Buddha is someone who transmits the Dharma. It is difficult to encounter a single phrase of the wondrous Dharma in a million eons, while [the opportunity to hear] the name of a single Buddha is incomparably rarer than [the flowering of] an *udumbara* [once every three thousand years]. It was for this reason that as a youth [practicing] in the Himalayas [a former incarnation of Śākyamuni] cast himself [off a cliff to appease the hunger of a demon in order to hear the second half of a verse containing the final truth of Buddhism], and as an ascetic he stripped off his own skin [to use as paper on which to write a verse with his own blood for ink and his bones for a pen].<sup>47</sup> It is better to have a single phrase of the Dharma than all the wealth in the entire world, and lives [as numerous as] the sands of the Ganges River cannot compare with a four-line verse (*gāthā*) [of the Buddhist teachings]. Thus there were indeed good reasons for a wheel[-turning] king to make a couch [of his own body for a seer] and [the bodhisattva Sarvasattva]priyadarśana to burn his own body [as an offering].<sup>48</sup> By reciting the name of a single Buddha one extinguishes immeasurable grievous sins, and by chanting a mantra of a single syllable one acquires boundless merit. How much more would a bowl of plain rice not repay the kindnesses of the four debts of gratitude?"

The young man said, "What you have just said is absurd and not credible. My teachers Confucius and Lao-tzu never uttered such words. If reciting the sutras is a meritorious accomplishment and worshiping the Buddha a worthy deed, I too recite passages from the Five Classics and Three Histories and worship images of

[Duke] Tan of Chou and Confucius. What is the difference with this? In addition, the texts of the Five Classics and the letters of the Tripiṭaka are [written] in the same [Chinese] characters. What difference is there in their recitation?”

The master said, “What you say, sir, may appear to be true when heard for the first time, but upon careful reflection it is found to be quite wrong. The deeper meaning [of what I have said] is difficult to believe immediately, and so let me explain it with an analogy. Imperial edicts and official dispatches are [written] in the same characters as correspondence among the emperor’s subjects, but their effects are very different. A single command by imperial decree is carried out by the entire realm, and depending on whether it grants rewards or metes out punishment, the people are either joyous or afraid. The scriptural Dharma of the Tathāgata is also like this. Who among bodhisattvas, *śrāvakas*, gods, dragons, and others of the eight classes [of gods and demigods] does not believe in it? You should realize that non-Buddhist books are like the writings of the people, while Buddhist sutras are like the emperor’s edicts. It was for this reason that Śakra recited them, destroying the *asuras*’ army, and King Yama knelt down before them and made obeisance to those who upheld them. There has never been an example of someone reciting the Five Classics and extinguishing his sins or reading the Three Histories and escaping a calamity.”

The young man said, “Śākyamuni was eloquent and discoursed on the merits [of his own teachings], whereas Confucius was modest and did not boast about himself.”

The master said, “Do not say such things! Confucius himself praised and revered the Sage of the West (i.e., Śākyamuni), and Lao-tzu also declared that [the Buddha] was his teacher. The Great Sage does not lie. If you slander him, you will fall into the deep pit [of hell].”

The young man said, “It is reasonable that those who commit the ten evil [deeds] and five rebellious [offenses] should fall into hell. But why should this be so if one slanders the person [of the Buddha] or slanders the Dharma?”

The master said, "Sir, have you never heard of how to treat an illness? In order to cure a physical illness, one requires three things: first, a physician; second, a book of prescriptions; and, third, wondrous medicine. If the sick person respects the physician, believes in his prescription, and takes the medicine with utmost sincerity, then his ailment will be promptly cured. But if the sick person abuses the physician, does not believe in his prescription, and does not take his wondrous medicine, then how can his illness be cured?"

"The Tathāgata's treating of the mental illnesses of sentient beings is also like this. The Buddha is like the king of physicians, his teachings are like a book of prescriptions, and their principles are like wondrous medicine. To reflect in accordance with these principles is just like taking medicine, and if one takes medicine in accordance with the Dharma, one will extinguish one's sins and realize the fruit [of enlightenment]."

367c "But nowadays ignorant people with grievous sins slander people [who promote Buddhism] and slander the Dharma. How can they escape their grievous sins? The Dharma spreads with the assistance of people, and people are elevated by means of the Dharma. The person and the Dharma are as one, and they cannot be differentiated. Therefore, to slander the person is [to slander] the Dharma, and to vilify the Dharma is [to vilify] the person. If one slanders the person and slanders the Dharma, one will certainly fall into the Avī[ci] Hell with no further chance of escape. Not knowing the reasons for this, worldlings talk rashly as their tongues dictate without any regard for the profound harm that this can do. Though one may commit the ten evil [deeds] and five rebellious [offenses] day and night, one should slander neither people [who promote Buddhism] nor the Dharma with a single word or phrase. Those who commit murder and theft actually obtain the advantages of clothing and food, but what benefit do those who slander these people and the Dharma bring to themselves?"

The young man said, "I respectfully accept your guidance, and henceforth I will never act against it." The young man [then] said, "I have understood that one should slander neither the person nor

the Dharma. But I still do not know any details of how many kinds of person and Dharma there are, and whether there are [differences of] profundity and shallowness.”

The master said, “Broadly speaking, there are two kinds [of teachings]: first, the Dharma of the exoteric teachings and, second, the Dharma of the esoteric teachings.<sup>49</sup> In the exoteric teachings there are again two [kinds] on account of the distinction between the One Vehicle and the three vehicles. The One Vehicle is the Dharma of the One Vehicle expounded by the Tathāgata’s other-enjoyment body, that is, the recompense body which manifests [to bodhisattvas] from the tenth stage to the first stage [of the ten stages]. The three vehicles are the sutras expounded by Śākyamuni, a responsive-transformation [body], for those of the two vehicles and for bodhisattvas yet to enter the [ten] stages. The esoteric teachings are the Dharma expounded by the own-nature Dharma body, the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana, together with his attendants for his own enjoyment of Dharma bliss. This corresponds to the so-called mantra vehicle.

“These various scriptural teachings accord with individual religious capacities, and all act as wondrous medicine. On the basis of these scriptural teachings, bodhisattvas have composed treatises and teachers of men have written commentaries. Disciples of later generations recite and practice in accordance with these sutras and treatises. Such are the differences in person and Dharma. Their shallowness and profundity, as well as their blessings and punishments, are as [explained] in the *Treatise on the Ten Stages of the Mind*.”

The young man said, “Listening to your explanation, I now understand the differences in person and Dharma. But those who currently compose treatises and commentaries all refute others to assert their own [positions]. Is this not tantamount to slandering the Dharma?”

The master said, “In applying their minds, bodhisattvas all base themselves on compassion and give precedence to benefiting others. Abiding in this state of mind, they refute the shallow attachments

[of others] and introduce them to the profound teachings, and the benefits of this are the most wide-ranging. If, however, harboring thoughts of fame and wealth, one is attached to shallow teachings and refutes the profound Dharma, then one will not be free of the fault [of having slandered the Dharma].”

The young man said, “By the grace of your instructions the mist covering my mind has suddenly dispersed, but there is still something about which I am unclear in my mind. I have already heard from you that although there may be none who have attained the path, the path itself should not be abolished and that those endowed with morality and wisdom appear disgraceful and ignorant [because they do not flaunt their virtues]. But nowadays, when one observes the world at large, there are many who [have become monks to] evade labor service and many who are villains and thieves. The sage-emperor who rules the age and his wise ministers who assist the times cannot remain silent when they see their simian behaviour. How can the teachings of the Buddha and the laws of the king exist in harmony with each other?”

368a The master said, “In this there are two kinds [of approaches]: one is the approach of compassion and the other is the approach of wisdom. The approach of great compassion is tolerant and unrestraining, while the approach of great wisdom is constraining and intolerating. The approach of constraint is as [explained] in sutras such as the *Nirvana [Sutra]* and the [*Mahā*]satya[nir-granthaputravyākaraṇa Sutra], and the approach of compassion is as [explained] in sutras such as the *Ten Wheels [Sutra]*. In the harmony [between Buddhism and the state] there is give and take, with the sole exception of cases of bribery. Furthermore, although the laws and statutes of a king of men and the prohibitory precepts of the Dharma emperor differ in form, their intents are compatible. If one controls and directs in accordance with the law, the benefits are enormous. But if one perverts the law and follows one’s own inclinations, the retribution for one’s sins will be extremely severe. Worldlings, ignorant of this principle, are neither well versed in the laws of the king, nor do they seek out the Buddhist

Dharma. Ups and downs [in fortune] depend on others' feelings of love or hate, and the severity of punishment accords with social status. If one governs the world in this fashion, how can one escape subsequent retribution? One must be careful, most careful.

"Sir, you said before that droughts and floods, epidemic diseases, and trouble and disorder throughout the realm are caused by monastics, but this too is not so. You recklessly say such things without having seen the grand principle. I will now hold up, as it were, the [flawless] mirror of the [First Emperor of the] Ch'in so that you can see your own visage [and the falseness of your assertions].

"If calamities were due to lawless monks and nuns, then on account of which monks did droughts and floods such as the nine-year flood during the reign of [King] Yao and the seven-year drought during the time of [King] T'ang occur? At that time there were no monks, and so why should [calamities] be necessarily due to monks? The overturn in the fortunes of Hsia, the annihilation of the dynasty of Yin, the extinction of the descendants of Chou, and the early deaths of the heirs of Ch'in were all calamities that arose because of three women and in which fortune followed the mandate of Heaven. In those days there were no monks, and so how can you implicate Buddhism?

"As regards the occurrence of calamities, there are in brief three kinds: first, the fate of the times; second, the punishment of Heaven; and, third, karmic influence. The fate of the times is the so-called cyclic calamities, and the flood [at the time] of [King] Yao and the drought [at the time] of [King] T'ang correspond to this. It was also for this reason that the sage-emperor [Fu Hsi] came out from the east, saw [premonitory] signs, and made preparations in advance. The five defilements during eons of decrease are also examples of this. The punishment of Heaven is such that when [the ruler's] commands run counter to principle, Heaven then punishes this. For example, the putting to death of a filial woman which led to no rain [for three years] and the imprisonment of a loyal minister which caused frost to fall [in midsummer] were of this type. Karmic influence is such that sentient beings with evil

karma are born together in evil times, and because of karmic influence they invite such calamities. Detailed discussions of such matters are found in the monographs on the five elements of successive dynasties<sup>50</sup> and also in the *Sutra [of the Dhāraṇī] for Protecting State [Rulers]*, the *Sutra of the Correct Theory for the Laws of the King*, and so on. You, sir, ignorant of their meaning, perversely utter wild statements which are quite unreasonable.”

The master [then] said, “[I said earlier that] the question of whether or not [Buddhism] is of benefit would be addressed later [and I will do so now]. If there is no illness, then there is no medicine; if there are [mental] hindrances, then there are teachings. Wondrous medicine arises out of pity for illness, and the Buddhist Dharma appeared out of compassion for hindrances. Therefore, the emergence of a sage in the world is invariably due to compassionate pity. Great compassion bestows happiness and great pity eradicates suffering. As for the essence of eradicating suffering and bestowing happiness, there is nothing better than to guard against [hindrances] at their source, and guarding against [hindrances] at their source is impossible without teachings. Illnesses may be slight or serious, and the medicine will be mild or strong; hindrances may be deep-seated or superficial, and the teachings will be profound or shallow. In eons of increase illnesses are slight and a wheel[-turning] king can govern the people, but in eons of decrease hindrances are deep-seated and the Tathāgata dispenses his teachings. Sentient beings during [this] evil age characterized by the five defilements are seriously ill; the three poisons are rife, the eight sufferings oppress them, and they have very few blessings, while poverty and illness are extremely prevalent. This is retribution brought about by evil causes from former lives. Then gourmands end up killing living beings to fill their stomachs, misers seize the belongings of others to secure their own food and clothing, lechers ruin themselves like moths flying into a flame, and drinkers are bound to the vicinity of wine jars like apes [who are also attracted to wine]. Such actions based on wrong views are innumerable. Committing evil deeds in this life, they will subsequently fall into the three [evil]

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paths, and even after eons it is difficult to escape from the suffering of the three [evil] paths. The Tathāgata, like a compassionate father, having witnessed this extreme suffering, explained its causes and results. Explaining how evil causes [lead to evil] results, he eradicates their extreme suffering and, showing how good causes [lead to good] results, he bestows upon them extreme happiness.

“There are, in brief, two kinds of people who cultivate his teachings. One is renunciants, and the other is householders. Renunciants are the *bhikṣus* (monks) and *bhikṣuṇīs* (nuns), who shave their heads and dye their robes. Householders are the *upāsakas* (laymen) and *upāsikās* (laywomen), who wear headgear and have tassels. From the Son of Heaven on high down to the commoners below, those who observe the five precepts and ten good [deeds] and take refuge in the Buddhist Dharma are all [householders]. Those called ‘bodhisattvas’ are householders such as these who observe the ten good precepts and cultivate the practices of the six perfections, as are also renunciants who have engendered the great aspiration [for enlightenment]. By cutting off evil they dissociate themselves from suffering, and by cultivating good they obtain happiness. From [birth as] a human being or god below up to [the attainment of] the fruit of Buddhahood above, everything is the result of cutting off evil and cultivating good. In order to show both of these approaches, the Great Sage established his teachings. Now that the teachings of the Buddha already exist, it is up to people to propagate and practice them. Therefore, those who know the Dharma become renunciants and transmit the lamp [of the teachings], and those who look up to the path enter it and change their appearance [to that of renunciants]. In a [certain] sutra it says that if a country’s king or parents release the populace or their sons and daughters and allow them to leave home and enter the path, the merit thus obtained is immeasurable and infinite.<sup>51</sup> It is because there are monks and nuns that the Buddhist Dharma does not die out, and it is because the Buddhist Dharma exists that people all open their eyes [to the truth]. When their vision is clear, they proceed along the right path, and because they travel by the right way,

they reach nirvana. What is more, wherever the scriptural teachings are found, the Buddhas will protect and the gods will defend that place. Benefits such as these are innumerable.”

The young man said, “The benefits of those who know the Dharma and propagate the path are quite clear. But why do those who act contrary to the Dharma and contrary to the sutras fill the land?”

The master said, “Because a large mountain is generous in its bounty, birds and beasts vie in returning there and medicinal herbs and poisonous plants grow together; because the deep ocean is vast in its compass, fishes and turtles swim in schools and dragons and demons also dwell there. In the vicinity of a precious gem there are invariably wicked demons surrounding it; beside a treasure house there are inevitably thieves waiting for their chance. Though a beautiful woman may not beckon them, men both handsome and ugly vie in pursuing her; even without being summoned, sick people flock to the gate of a physician. Ants swarm around rank flesh, and flies converge on a foul-smelling corpse. Though a sage-king may say nothing, a myriad nations will compete to submit to him; though the ocean may have no such thought, a thousand streams each flow into it. Poor people gather around a rich man even though he does not call them; the young and ignorant congregate around a wise man even though he remains silent. A bright mirror, shining and clean, reflects images of that which is beautiful and that which is ugly; clear water, limpid and still, reflects the forms of that which is large and that which is small. Great space has no mind, but the myriad existents are contained therein; the great earth has no thoughts, but the hundred grasses spring forth from it. Though [King] Yao’s son was unworthy of him, the father was a sage; though [King] Shun’s father wanted to kill him, he remained filial. Confucius’s disciples numbered three thousand, but of these seventy understood [his teaching], while the rest are not mentioned. Śākyamuni’s disciples were immeasurable and incalculable, but the immoderate conduct of the Group of Six, Devadatta, and the *bhikṣu* Sunakṣatra was excessive.<sup>52</sup> Even in the days when the Tathāgata was alive [his disciples] did not [all] manage to be pure and good;

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how much less so in the case of their successors in later generations! And yet the Tathāgata's compassion pervades the three realms like that of a father. Why should the wise and the foolish, the good and the wicked not look up to him in anticipation?

"Such is the truth of the matter. What is there to be surprised about? Nonetheless, poison can be transformed into medicine and iron converted into gold. It was because of the effect of the fate of the times and because of the influence of the emperor's character that the households under [King] Yao deserved to be enfeoffed and the people under [King] Chieh deserved to be put to death. The Tathāgata Kāśyapa has explained the reasons clearly, and they appear in detail in the *Sutra [of the Dhāraṇī] for Protecting State [Rulers]* (T. 19: 571c-574c). Because the passage is lengthy, I will not quote it here; those who wish to peruse it should consult the sutra."

Here are some verses:

Although established [purity] and [unestablished] non-purity<sup>53</sup> are profound,

They still do not cut off mental afflictions.

Arguing in vain about the inner and outer selves,

[Their proponents] continue to transmigrate within the confines of birth-and-death.

The Great Sage opened up the Great Vehicle;

By meditating on it, they attain nirvana.

With the five [meditations] for settling [the mind] and the four fields of mindfulness

They meditate for sixty [eons] or three lives,

And by observing two hundred and fifty precepts

They dissociate themselves from the eight difficulties.<sup>54</sup>

The undefiled fire of the emptiness of the person

Extinguishes knowledge, and the body and mind are consumed.

Happening to encounter the Tathāgata's admonishments,

They turn their minds toward the expansiveness of the bodhisattva.

*Question:* And on the basis of which sutra and treatise have you established this [stage of the] mind?

*Answer:* The *Mahāvairocana Sutra* and the *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind*.

*Question:* How is it explained in that sutra and treatise?

[*Answer:*] In that sutra it says (T. 18: 3ab):

That is to say, having thus understood that there are only the [five] aggregates and no self, they linger on in cultivation [associated with] the [six] sense organs, [six] sense objects, and [six] realms [of consciousness].

It also says (T. 18: 9c):

Multitudes of *śrāvakas*, dwelling in the stage with objects of cognition, recognize birth and extinction, reject the two extremes [of annihilation and permanence], and with the knowledge of ultimate observation obtain the causes of practice that does not conform [with the cycle of transmigration]—this is called the path of *samādhi* for *śrāvakas*.

It also says (T. 18: 10a):

In the case of mantras expounded by *śrāvakas*, each single phrase is set out.

As for the evidential passage from the *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind*, it also applies to the following section, and so it has not been quoted separately. For its content, see below.

### **5. The Mind That Has Eradicated the Causes and Seeds of Karma**

The mind that has eradicated the causes and seeds of karma is that which is realized by [*pratyekabuddhas* who live alone like] the horn of a unicorn and is practiced by those who practice in groups. They meditate on causes and conditions in terms of the twelve [links of dependent arising] and loathe birth-and-death

with its four [constituent elements] and five [aggregates]. Seeing flowers [scattering in the wind] and leaves [falling to the ground], they awaken to the impermanence of the four phases [of existence], and living in forests or villages, they realize *samādhi* in taciturnity. In this manner they pull out the roots of karma and [mental] afflictions, and by this means they cut off the seeds of ignorance. Dirghanakha and the Vātsīputriya watch from afar, unable to approach, and how can the [proponents of] established [purity] and sound [theorists] catch a glimpse of them? They swim in the pool of deep serenity and wander about the palace of the unconditioned. They are endowed with the spontaneous *sīla* (precepts) without having had them conferred, and they obtain teacherless wisdom by themselves. They realize the thirty-seven factors [of enlightenment] without relying on others, and their skillful [understanding] of the [five] aggregates, [twelve] sense fields, and [eighteen] realms is not dependent on any model. They save people with their [supernatural] physical faculties and do not use speech. They lack great pity and are not equipped with expedient means. They merely extinguish their own suffering and realize a state of quiescence. Therefore, in the [*Mahāvairocana*] *Sutra* it says (T. 18: 3b):

They pull out the stumps of karma and mental afflictions and the seeds of ignorance whence are born the twelve causes and conditions [of dependent arising].

It also says (T. 18: 10a):

Among these, those of *pratyekabuddhas* differ slightly again, For their *samādhi* is different and purifies karmic birth.

*Interpretative Remarks:* As regards the twelve causes and conditions, in the *Sutra* [of the *Dhāraṇī*] for Protecting State [Rulers] it says (T.19: 547ab):

Next, good sir, the Tathāgata quashes mental afflictions in all [four] meditations, [eight] liberations, mental equipoise (*samādhi*), and mental attainment (*samāpatti*) and knows as they really are all the causes and conditions from which they

arise. In what manner does the Buddha know this? He knows, namely, with respect to the arising of the mental afflictions of sentient beings by which cause they are born and by which condition they are born, and with respect to the extinguishing of delusions and the [resultant] purification by which cause they can be extinguished and by which condition they can be extinguished. Among these, the cause and condition of the birth of mental afflictions is, namely, wrong thinking; with this as its cause, ignorance becomes the condition; ignorance becomes the cause, and formative forces (*samskāra*) become the condition; formative forces become the cause, and consciousness becomes the condition; consciousness becomes the cause, and name-and-form (*nāma-rūpa*) becomes the condition; name-and-form becomes the cause, and the six sense fields become the condition; the six sense fields become the cause, and contact becomes the condition; contact becomes the cause, and sensation becomes the condition; sensation becomes the cause, and craving becomes the condition; craving becomes the cause, and grasping becomes the condition; grasping becomes the cause, and existence becomes the condition; existence becomes the cause, and birth becomes the condition; birth becomes the cause, and old age and death become the condition; mental afflictions become the cause, and karma becomes the condition; [wrong] views become the cause, and greed becomes the condition; latent mental afflictions become the cause, and active mental afflictions become the condition. These are the causes and conditions of the arising of mental afflictions.

How do sentient beings extinguish mental afflictions? Among the causes and conditions, there are two kinds of causes and two kinds of conditions. What are these two? One is hearing from other people various sounds that conform with the Dharma, and the other is generating right thought in one's inner mind. Next, there are again two kinds of causes and two kinds of conditions that cause sentient beings to be purified

and liberated. They are, namely, *śamatha*, due to the mind's [focusing on a] single object, and *vipaśyanā*, due to skillfulness [in observation]. Next, there are again two kinds of causes and two kinds of conditions on account of the knowledge [of enlightenment] of one who does not come [back to this world] and on account of the [post-enlightenment] knowledge of one who has thus come [back to this world]. Next, there are again two kinds of causes and conditions on account of the minute observation of the principle of non-birth and on account of nearness to liberation. Next, there are again two kinds of causes and conditions on account of the completion of practice and on account of the actual manifestation of wisdom and liberation. Again, there are two kinds of causes and conditions, namely, on account of the knowledge of extinction and on account of the knowledge of nonarising. Again, there are two kinds of causes and conditions on account of realizing the principles of the truth conformably and on account of acquiring the knowledge of the truth conformably. These are the pure causes and conditions whereby sentient beings eliminate their mental afflictions. The Tathāgata knows them all.

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Next, good sir, there is no [fixed] number or quantity of causes and conditions of mental afflictions, nor is there any [fixed] number or quantity of causes and conditions of liberation. A certain mental affliction may become a cause and condition of liberation by observing its real essence, and a certain [state of] liberation may become a cause and condition of mental afflictions by engendering attachment toward it.

Here are some verses:

The deer cart of *pratyekabuddhas* is without speech;  
 Those who practice in groups and [those who live alone  
 like] the horn of a unicorn are not of the same type.  
 Meditating deeply on the twelve causes and conditions,  
 They practice for one hundred eons and possess super-  
 natural faculties.

Eradicating karma and mental afflictions, as well as their  
seeds,  
They reduce their bodies to ashes and extinguish knowl-  
edge, and are just like empty space.  
Serenely they rest in *samādhi* for a long time, as if  
intoxicated,  
But upon receiving the admonishments [of the Buddha]  
they turn their minds toward the palace of One Thusness.

*Question:* And on the basis of which sutra and treatise have you expounded this stage of the mind?

*Answer:* The *Mahāvairocana Sutra* and the *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind*.

[*Question:*] How is it explained in that sutra and treatise?

[*Answer:*] In that sutra it says (T. 18: 3b):<sup>55</sup>

*Pratyekabuddhas* pull out the stumps of karma and mental afflictions and the seeds of ignorance whence are born the twelve causes and conditions [of dependent arising], and they dissociate themselves from the schools of established [purity] and so on. Such deep serenity cannot be known by any non-Buddhists, and previous Buddhas have proclaimed it to be free of all faults.

It also says (T.18: 9c):

*Pratyekabuddhas*, deeply observing cause and result and dwelling in the Dharma of speechlessness, do not preach and are speechless, and in all *dharmas* they realize the *samādhi* of the utter extinction of speech—this is called the path of *samādhi* for *pratyekabuddhas*.

It also says (T. 18: 9c):<sup>56</sup>

Lord of Mysteries, if one abides in mantras expounded by *pratyekabuddhas* or *śrāvakas*, one will destroy all faults.

It also says (T. 18: 10a):

In the case of mantras expounded by *śrāvakas*, each single phrase is set out;  
 Among these, those of *pratyekabuddhas* differ slightly again,  
 For their *samādhi* is different and purifies karmic birth.

In the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind* it says (T. 32: 573a):

Again, among those of the two vehicles, *śrāvakas* cling to the Dharma of the Four [Noble] Truths and *pratyekabuddhas* cling to the twelve causes and conditions. Knowing that the four elements and five aggregates will ultimately disappear, they engender a deep sense of aversion and destroy their attachment to the sentient being (i.e., individual self). They diligently practice their own doctrines and succeed in realizing their [respective] results, and they consider hastening to nirvana proper<sup>57</sup> to be the final goal.

The mantra practitioner should observe that although those of the two vehicles have destroyed their attachment to persons, they still have an attachment to things. They only purify the [sixth] mind-consciousness and do not know of the other [seventh and eighth consciousness]. After a very long period of time they accomplish the resultant stage, and with the reduction of the body to ashes and the extinction of knowledge they hastened to their nirvana, which is serene and eternally tranquil like vast empty space. For those who have the determinate nature [of a *śrāvaka* or *pratyekabuddha*] it is difficult to develop beyond this; they must wait until their term of eons has expired, whereupon they develop further. In the case of those of indeterminate nature, there is no question of any term of eons, and if they encounter the [right] conditions, they will turn their minds toward the Great [Vehicle] (i.e., Mahayana). Setting out from the phantom city,<sup>58</sup> they consider themselves to have transcended the three realms. That is to say, because of their previous faith in the Buddha, they then receive the empowerment of Buddhas and

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bodhisattvas, and by expedient means they finally generate the great aspiration [for the Mahayana]. Then, starting from the initial ten [levels of] faith at the bottom, they pass through the [subsequent] levels and spend three incalculable eons in difficult practices and ascetic practices, whereupon they become Buddhas. It is now evident that the wisdom of the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha* is narrow and inferior, and it should not be sought after.

In the *Treatise of the Ten Abodes* it says (T. 26: 41a):

If one were to fall into the stage of a *śrāvaka* or the stage of a *pratyekabuddha*, this would be a great disaster, as is explained in connection with the methods conducive to [cultivation of] the path.

If one falls into the stage of a *śrāvaka* or the stage of a *pratyekabuddha*, this is called the death of the bodhisattva, and one loses all one's gains.

If one falls into hell, it does not cause such fear;

If one falls into the stages of the two vehicles, it is cause for great fear.

If one falls into hell, one will ultimately succeed in reaching [the state of] a Buddha;

If one falls into the stages of the two vehicles, one ultimately blocks the path to [becoming] a Buddha. The Buddha himself has explained such matters in the sutras.

Just as someone who covets longevity greatly fears decapitation,

So too should the bodhisattva engender great fear

Toward the stage of the *śrāvaka* and the stage of the *pratyekabuddha*.

*The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, Fascicle Two

## Fascicle Three

### 6. The Mind of the Mahayana Concerned for Others

There is a Dharma for great beings (i.e., bodhisattvas), called the vehicle concerned for others. It goes beyond established [purity] and [Dirgha]nakha, rising high above them, and transcends *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, carrying a wide range of people. With the twofold emptiness [of persons and things] and the three natures they wash away the dust of self-attachment, and with the four [im]measurables and the four means of conversion they arrange practices for benefiting others.<sup>59</sup> They contemplate the profound subtleties of [ā]dāna[-vijñāna]<sup>60</sup> and concentrate on how apparitions and mirages resemble [the nonsubstantiality of] the mind. During this time a city full of mustard [seeds] is emptied and filled again, and an enormous stone is worn away and recreated.<sup>61</sup> With three kinds of training they spur themselves on when their initial aspiration is about to recede, and through the practice of the four extensive vows they aspire to the supreme fruit in a future life.<sup>62</sup> They construct a citadel of mental equipoise and install the general of consciousness-only. They overcome the armed hosts of the demon Pāpīyas and attack the commander of the bandits which are the mental afflictions. They marshal the soldiers of the Eightfold Noble [Path] and bind [their foes] with the rope of adaptation, and they dispatch the élite cavalry of the six [supernatural] faculties and kill [their foes] with the sword of wisdom. For their efforts they are invested with the ranks of the five levels, and their mind-king is established in the capital of the four attributes [of nirvana].

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The supreme truth among all supreme truths [thus attained] has the transforming influence of great peace; telling of the [ultimate] purport by abandoning explication fans the zephyrs of untroubled calm. They sit with folded arms on the platform of the one truth and rest passively in the hall of the Dharma realm. The common

person [who has practiced for] three great *asamkhyeya* [eons] is here called an emperor, and he now gains for the first time the title of Dharma King with the Four Wisdoms. Then in the sea of the [eighth] storehouse[-consciousness] the waves of its seven transformations<sup>63</sup> are put to rest, and in the hamlet of the [five] aggregates the harm caused by the six bandits (i.e., sense organs) is brought to an end. [Like a lid,] their nondiscriminating perfect wisdom fits exactly on the box of eternal truth, and their compassion arising from the expedient [wisdom] obtained after [nondiscriminating wisdom] extends to beings in all destinies. Composing the laws and statutes of the Tripiṭaka, they convert sentient beings of the three kinds of faculties,<sup>64</sup> and producing the regulations and ordinances of the ten good [deeds], they guide sentient beings in the six destinies.

As for vehicles, there are three, and with regard to consciousnesses, there are only eight. Among the five natures [into which they categorize sentient beings], there are those who can and cannot become [Buddhas], and among the three bodies [of the Buddha, the Dharma body] is eternal and [the recompense and transformation bodies] are transient. One hundred million responsive transformations all set afloat the six boats (i.e., six perfections), and the [Śākya]munis on one thousand [lotus] petals all bestow the three carriages (i.e., three vehicles).<sup>65</sup>

Because they concern themselves for sentient beings throughout the Dharma realm, [this stage of the mind is called] “concerned for others”; because it is contrasted with the goat and deer [carts] of the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha*, it has the epithet “great”; and because it carries both oneself and others to consummate nature,<sup>66</sup> it is called a “vehicle.” This is, namely, something to be practiced by the nobleman and to be borne in mind by the bodhisattva. Such is the gist of the Northern school.<sup>67</sup>

Here are some verses:

The sea of the mind is still, without any waves,  
 But when the winds of the [seven] consciousnesses stir,  
 [waves] move to and fro.

The ordinary person is captivated by illusory men and  
women,  
And non-Buddhists crazily cling to mirage towers.  
Not knowing that their own minds create heaven and hell,  
How can they realize that mind-only will free them from  
calamity?  
They practice the six perfections and myriad practices for  
three eons,  
And the fifty-two levels unfold within the one mind.  
[The two hindrances of] mental afflictions and the known  
having been severed and purified,  
*Bodhi* and nirvana become their own assets.  
They are now endowed with the four attributes [of nirvana]  
and the three dots,<sup>68</sup>  
But unaware of this, how long have they searched without!  
That before which speech disappears and thought is elimi-  
nated pervades the Dharma realm;  
Alas for him who [not knowing this] sinks like duckweed  
[in the sea of transmigratory existence]!

*Question:* And on the basis of which sutra and treatise have you established this stage of the mind?

*Answer:* The *Mahāvairocana Sutra* and the *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind*.

[*Question:*] How is it explained in that sutra and [treatise]?

[*Answer:*] In the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* it says (T. 18: 3b):

Lord of Mysteries, the practice of the Mahayana is such that one generates the mind of the unconditional vehicle and [comprehends] that things have no self-nature. How? Just like those who practiced thus in former times, one observes the *ālaya* (abode) of the aggregates and realizes that its own-nature is like an apparition, a mirage, a reflection, an echo, a whirling wheel of fire, and an [imaginary] *gandharva* city.

In the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind* it says (T. 32: 573a):

Again, there are sentient beings who generate the mind of the Mahayana and practice the practices of the bodhisattva. Among the gateways to the Dharma, there is none that they do not thoroughly cultivate. In addition, for three *asaṃkhyeya* eons they cultivate the six perfections and myriad practices. Having completed everything, they realize the fruit of Buddhahood. That it takes them so long to accomplish this is because the Dharma teachings that they study have progressive stages.

370b *Question:* Is a Buddha such as this, who has severed the two hindrances and realized the four attributes [of nirvana], to be regarded as the final goal?

[*Answer:*] Such a state has still not reached the original source.

[*Question:*] How can you know?

[*Answer:*] The bodhisattva Nāgārjuna has explained it [in the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*] (T. 32: 637c):<sup>69</sup>

All such practitioners that cut off all evil, cultivate all good, transcend the ten stages, reach the unsurpassed stage [of Buddhahood], perfect the three bodies [of the Buddha], and are endowed with the four attributes [of nirvana] belong to the station of ignorance and not to the station of knowledge.

Now, according to this evidential passage, the Buddha of this stage of the mind has not yet reached the source of the mind; he has merely shut out the delusions outside the mind, but has not opened up the jewels of the secret treasury.

### 7. The Mind Awakened to the Non-birth of the Mind

The great void, empty and vast, encompasses the myriad phenomena in the one [primal] pneuma; the ocean, deep and clear, contains

a thousand things in one and the same water. Know verily that the one is the mother of hundreds and thousands [of existents], and emptiness is the root of provisional existence. Provisional existents are not [real] existents, and yet they exist as existents in close array; absolute emptiness is not [mere] emptiness, and empty of emptiness, it is nonabiding. Matter, no different from emptiness, establishes all things, and yet it appears to be empty; emptiness, no different from matter, nullifies all attributes, and yet it seems to exist. Therefore, matter is emptiness, and emptiness is matter. All things are thus; what is not so? It is similar to the inseparability of water and waves, and the same as the identity of gold and [gold] ornaments. [For this reason] the expression “neither one nor two” is posited, and the terms “two truths” and “four middle [paths]”<sup>70</sup> appear. Emptiness is observed in inapprehensibility, and frivolous arguments are transcended in the eight negations.

Then the four demons surrender without fighting, and the three poisons give themselves up without being killed. Since birth-and-death is nirvana, there are no further grades, and because mental afflictions are *bodhi*, there is no troubling oneself about cutting off [mental afflictions] and realizing [*bodhi*]. Nonetheless, the grades of gradelessness do not preclude the fifty-two levels, and the gradelessness of grades does not hinder the accomplishment of awakening in a single moment of thought. In the thought of a single moment of thought one passes through three great [eons], diligently attending to one's own practice, and with the vehicle of the One Path one drives the Three Carriages, laboring to convert others. One feels sorry that those of [the fourth stage of the mind of] aggregates-only are deluded about the fact that [the aggregates] have no [permanent] nature, and one laments that those [of the sixth stage of the mind] concerned for others differentiate between the object [of cognition] and [cognitive] knowledge. The mind-king, absolutely free, has attained the [still] waters of its original nature, and the adventitious defilements of the mental functions have ceased their waves of turbulence. Expedient and real wisdom both realize perfect enlightenment in One Thusness, and the true (i.e., supreme)

and mundane (i.e., conventional) truths both obtain their doctrinal principles in the Absolute Middle. One understands that the nature of the mind is [originally] unborn, and one realizes that object and knowledge are not different from each other. Such are the main tenets of the Southern school.<sup>71</sup>

Therefore, [in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*] the Honored One Vairocana addressed the Lord of Mysteries, saying (T. 18: 3b):

Lord of Mysteries, if one thus abandons no-self, the mind-lord being absolutely free, one awakens to the fact that one's own mind is originally unborn. Why? Because, Lord of Mysteries, the anterior and posterior limits of the mind cannot be apprehended.

In the commentary it says (T. 39: 603ab):<sup>72</sup>

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The "mind-lord" is the mind-king. Because it does not remain stuck in existence and nonexistence, the mind is without impediments, and the wondrous deeds that it performs are accomplished at will. Therefore it says, "the mind-lord being absolutely free." The absolute freedom of the mind-king clearly shows that the pure *bodhi*-mind has made a further advance in its understanding and is twice as good as it was during the previous eon. The mind-king is just like the water of a pond, which is by nature originally clear and pure, and the purification of the mental functions is just like the clearing away of foreign particles of dust. Therefore, when one realizes this natural purity, one is able to awaken by oneself to the fact that the mind is originally unborn. Why? Because both the anterior and posterior limits of the mind cannot be apprehended. For instance, since ocean waves arise from conditions, they exist neither before nor after, but the nature of water is not like this. When waves arise from conditions, the nature of water is not such that it did not exist before, and when the waves' causes and conditions cease, the nature of water is not such that it will not exist after. The mind-king is also like this, having no anterior or posterior limits because

anterior and posterior limits have been severed. The nature of the mind is always without birth and extinction even though, upon again encountering the winds of the objective realm, [the mental functions] may rise and perish according to conditions. If one awakens to the fact that this mind is originally unborn, one will gradually enter the gateway of the letter A.<sup>73</sup> [ . . . ] The meanings of conditions, causes, birth, and destruction in such unconditioned birth-and-death are extensively explained in the *Victorious Garland Sutra*, the [*Treatise on Jewel Nature*], the *Treatise on Buddha-nature*, and so on.

The expression "originally unborn" covers [the eight negations of] not born, not extinguished, not annihilated, not eternal, not identical, not different, not gone, and not come. Exponents of the San-lun [school] cite these eight negations, regarding them as the ultimate Middle Path. For this reason the Dharma master Chitsang widely discusses their meaning in sections on the two truths, local dialects, and Buddha-nature [in his *Treatise on the Profundities of the Mahayana*].<sup>74</sup>

Here are some verses:

Things born of causes and conditions are originally devoid  
of any [permanent] nature;

Empty, provisional, and characterized by the Middle Path,  
they are all unborn.

Waves, disappearing and reappearing, are nothing other  
than water,

And the one mind is aboriginally still and limpid.

With neither matter nor emptiness annulled, wisdom is  
able to reach [the truth],

And the principles of the true and mundane [truths], just  
as they are, become quite clear.

The sharp sword of the eight negations cuts through  
frivolous arguments,

And the five extremes surrender and give themselves up,  
whereupon [everything] is at peace.

The mind perspicacious and unobstructed, one enters the  
path of the Buddha,  
And from this first gateway one moves on to the [next]  
station of the mind.

In the [*Mahāvairocana*] *Sutra* it says (T. 18: 3b):

Lord of Mysteries, if one thus abandons no-self, the mind-lord  
being absolutely free, one awakens to the fact that one's own  
mind is originally unborn. Why? Because, Lord of Mysteries,  
the anterior and posterior limits of the mind cannot be appre-  
hended. When one thus knows the nature of one's own mind,  
this represents the *yogin*'s practice for transcending the sec-  
ond eon.<sup>75</sup>

In the *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind* it says (T. 32: 573b):

Know that all things are empty. Once one understands that  
[all] things are originally unborn, the mind's essence is of  
itself thusness and does not see [any distinction between]  
body and mind. Dwelling in the wisdom of quiescent equal-  
ity and ultimate truth, one ensures that there is no regres-  
sion. If a deluded thought arises, recognize it but do not pur-  
sue it; when the delusion ceases, the mind's source becomes  
empty and tranquil.

*Question:* Has this stage of the mind, which has ended all friv-  
olous arguments and is tranquil and unconditioned, reached the  
ultimate bourne or not?

371a [Answer:] The bodhisattva Nāgārjuna has explained it [in the  
*Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*] (T. 32: 637c):<sup>76</sup>

Since the beginningless past, pure original enlightenment  
has not looked to the cultivation of practice, nor has it been  
subject to some other power; its inherent virtues are com-  
pletely perfect, and it is endowed with original wisdom; it  
both goes beyond the four propositions and is also removed  
from the five extremes; the word "naturalness" cannot express

its naturalness, and the idea of “purity” cannot conceive of its purity; it is absolutely removed [from verbalization] and absolutely removed [from conceptualization]. An original locus such as this belongs to the extremity of ignorance and not to the station of knowledge.

### 8. The Mind of the One Path, Unconditioned

(Also called “Knowing One’s Own Mind As It Really Is”  
and also called “Mind of Emptiness and No Objects”)

Confucius appeared in China and preached the five virtues throughout the nine provinces [of ancient China]. The best of men (i.e., Śākya-muni) was born in India and opened up the One Vehicle into three.<sup>77</sup> But the madly intoxicated populace remained where they were and did not go [to listen to Confucius], while the foolishly benighted people left [Śākya-muni’s sermons] and did not return. Seventy who understood [Confucius’s teaching] ascended as far as his reception hall, and eleven thousand arhats believed [the words spoken by] the golden mouth [of Śākya-muni]. But the people of China were not suited to the five virtues, just as a square does not match a circle, and those of the Maha[yana] and Hina[yana] would not enter the single [ox] cart outside the precincts [of the burning house].<sup>78</sup>

For this reason [Śākya-muni] sat in meditation beneath the [*bodhi*] tree for three weeks [after his enlightenment] and waited forty [years] for the opportunity [to preach the *Lotus Sutra*]. First he preached the Four [Noble] Truths and the Vaipulya [sutras] so as to wash away the grime of [attachment to] persons and things, and then he uttered the perfect sounds [of the *Lotus Sutra*], like a shower of rain, so as to moisten the shoots and leaves of herbs and trees.<sup>79</sup>

He entered the lotus *samādhi*, observing how the inherent virtues [of sentient beings] are unsoiled [just as a lotus is unsoiled by the mud in which it grows], and emitted a ray of light from the tuft of white hair [between his eyebrows], giving expression to universal illumination [by the wisdom] that he had cultivated and achieved.<sup>80</sup> Combining the three [vehicles] and bringing them to the One [Vehicle], he praised the profundity and diversity of the

Buddha's wisdom,<sup>81</sup> and pointing to the original [Buddha] and rejecting the provisional [Buddha], he spoke of how he had accomplished enlightenment in the remote past.<sup>82</sup> A bejeweled stupa rose up into the air, and the two Buddhas [Prabhūtaratna and Śākyamuni] shared the same seat;<sup>83</sup> the Sa[hā] world trembled and split open, and the four leaders [among the countless bodhisattvas who welled up from the earth] gathered in one place [and extolled the Buddha];<sup>84</sup> [the Buddha] bestowed the [bright] pearl in his top-knot,<sup>85</sup> and [the bodhisattva Akṣayamati] offered a necklace [to the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara who then divided it into two parts which he presented to Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna];<sup>86</sup> Śāriputra, of acute wisdom, wondered whether the Buddha had turned into a demon,<sup>87</sup> and Maitreya, of enlightenment equal [to that of a Buddha], was surprised that the age of the sons was greater than that of the father.<sup>88</sup> It was on this occasion that the principles of the one real [teaching], the long-cherished wish [of the Buddha], were proclaimed, and it was on this day that the [One] Path, without a second [or third], achieved fulfillment. Thereupon, the goat and deer [carts] collapsed, and the ox [cart] waiting outside [the burning house] ran swiftly. When the dragon girl appeared, the king of elephants welcomed her [and she attained Buddhahood].<sup>89</sup>

The two loci of practice provide shelters for the body and mind,<sup>90</sup> and the ten thusnesses are a palace for practicing calming [of thoughts] and contemplation [of reality].<sup>91</sup> The Tathāgatas from [the Land of Eternally] Tranquil Light (i.e., Prabhūtaratna and Śākyamuni) merge object and knowledge and perceive the nature of the mind, while the Honored Ones, responsive transformations [of Śākyamuni], consider [Prabhūtaratna's] vow to practice, and [Śākyamuni's] emanations appear in accordance with the sign [of a ray of light emitted from his tuft of white hair].<sup>92</sup>

[The state achieved through the practice of calming and contemplation] is tranquil and yet illuminating, illuminating and yet always tranquil. It is similar to the ability of clear water to act as a mirror, and like the way in which images are cast on polished gold. The water and gold are identical to the reflected images, and

the reflected images are identical to the gold and water. Thus, know that the object is *prajñā* (wisdom) and *prajñā* is the object. Therefore, [this state] is said to have no objective realm. This is, namely, to know one's mind as it really is, and it is called *bodhi*.

Therefore, [in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*] the Honored One Vairocana addressed the Lord of Mysteries, saying (T. 18: 1c):

“Lord of Mysteries, what is *bodhi*? It means to know one's mind as it really is. Lord of Mysteries, this is *anuttara samyak-sambodhi* (unsurpassed perfect enlightenment), and there is not the smallest portion of it that can be apprehended. Why? [Because] *bodhi* has the characteristic of empty space, and there is no one to comprehend it, nor is there any understanding of it. Why? Because *bodhi* has no [distinguishing] characteristics. Lord of Mysteries, all *dharmas* are without characteristics. That is to say, they have the characteristic of empty space.”

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Then Vajrapāṇi again said to the Buddha, “World-honored One, who is it that seeks omniscience? Who is it that accomplishes perfect enlightenment on account of *bodhi*? Who is it that generates the wisdom of an omniscient one?”

The Buddha said, “Lord of Mysteries, it is in one's own mind that one seeks *bodhi* and omniscience. Why? Because it is by nature pure. The mind is neither within nor without, nor can the mind be apprehended between the two. Lord of Mysteries, the Tathāgata, worthy [of worship] and perfectly enlightened, is neither blue nor yellow nor red nor white nor crimson nor purple nor the color of crystal, neither long nor short nor round nor square, neither bright nor dark, neither male nor female nor neuter. Lord of Mysteries, the mind is not of the same nature as the realm of desire, nor is it of the same nature as the realm of form, nor is it of the same nature as the destinies of gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kiṃnaras*, *mahoragas*, humans, and non-humans. Lord of

Mysteries, the mind does not reside in the realm of the eyes, nor does it reside in the realms of the ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind, and neither is it visible, nor does it manifest itself.

“Why? [Because] the mind, which has the characteristic of empty space, is removed from all discrimination and non-discrimination. What is the reason for this? That whose nature is the same as empty space is the same as the mind, and that whose nature is the same as the mind is the same as *bodhi*. In this manner, Lord of Mysteries, the three entities of mind, realm of empty space, and *bodhi* are not different. They have compassion as their root and are fulfilled by the *pāramitā* (perfection) of expedient means. For this reason, Lord of Mysteries, I expound the *dharmas* in this manner so as to make the hosts of bodhisattvas purify the *bodhi*-mind and know their mind.

“Lord of Mysteries, if a man or woman of [good] family wishes to know *bodhi*, they should know their own mind in this manner. Lord of Mysteries, how is one to know one’s own mind? It cannot, namely, be apprehended by seeking it in distinctions or in color or in shape or in the objective realm or in matter or in sensation, ideation, volition, or consciousness or in ‘I’ or in ‘mine’ or in the grasper (i.e., subject) or in the grasped (i.e., object) or in the pure or in the [eighteen] realms or in the [twelve] sense fields or in any other distinctions. Lord of Mysteries, this gateway to the bodhisattva’s pure *bodhi*-mind is called the path whereby the Dharma becomes clear for the first time.”

*Interpretative Comments:* Phrases such as “no [distinguishing] characteristics,” “the characteristic of empty space” and “neither blue nor yellow” all elucidate the truth of the thusness of the Dharma body and the One Path, unconditioned. The Buddha explains this, calling it “the path whereby the Dharma becomes clear for the first time.” In the [*Great*] *Perfection of Wisdom [Treatise]* (T. 25: 289a)

it is called “the first gateway for entering the path of the Buddha.”<sup>93</sup> The “path of the Buddha” refers to the Buddha in the *maṇḍala* of Mahāvairocana in the Palace of the Adamantine Realm. In the exoteric teachings this is the ultimate Dharma body combining the [truth-]principle and wisdom, but when viewed from the mantra gateway it corresponds to the first gateway. The Honored One Vairocana and the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna have both clearly explained this, and so one should have no doubts about it.

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Again, in a subsequent passage [in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*] it says (T. 18: 3b):

So-called emptiness is removed from the sense organs and sense objects, has no [distinguishing] characteristics and no [cognitive] objectivity, transcends all frivolous arguments, and is like empty space;[ . . . ] it is removed from the conditioned and unconditioned realms, removed from all activities, and removed from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

This too elucidates the Dharma body of the [truth-]principle. The Tripiṭaka master Śubhākarasiṃha explains it as follows (T. 39: 603c):

When the practitioner dwells in this [state of] mind, he knows that Śākyamuni’s pure land is not destroyed,<sup>94</sup> and he sees that the Buddha’s lifespan is very long and that the [Buddha’s] original body meets in one place together with Viśiṣṭacāritra and the other bodhisattvas who welled up from the earth; he who cultivates the path of antidotes, though a manifestation close to the state of one limited [to only one more life before enlightenment], does not recognize a single one of them.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, this is called a “mystery.”

A Buddha who realizes this principle is also called Vairocana of the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light.

The Ch’an master Chih-che (Man of Wisdom) of Kuo-ch’ing Temple on Mount T’ien-t’ai in the Greater Sui<sup>96</sup> cultivated calming and contemplation in accordance with this approach and gained

the Dharma-flower *samādhi*.<sup>97</sup> With the *Lotus [Sutra]*, *Middle Treatise*, and [*Great*] *Perfection of Wisdom [Treatise]* as his basis, he formulated the tenets of his school. Such is the general gist of this vehicle.

Here are some verses:

Bodhisattvas of the previous eon<sup>98</sup> engage in frivolous  
arguments,  
But the perfect enlightenment of this [eighth stage of the]  
mind is also not genuine.  
Unconditioned and without characteristics, the One Path  
is pure;  
It explains nonduality, neither existent nor nonexistent.  
With the mind and its objects completely dissolved, [there  
appears] the Land of Eternally Tranquil [Light];  
With the path of speech cut off, one is a guest of  
[Vairo]cana.  
Body and mind also extinguished, it is like the great void,  
And manifesting in accordance with the different kinds of  
beings, one becomes a person of transformations.

*Question:* Is this principle of the one Dharma realm and the  
thusness of the One Path regarded as [a mark of] the ultimate  
Buddha?

[*Answer:*] The bodhisattva Nāgārjuna has explained it [in the  
*Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*] (T. 32: 637c).<sup>99</sup>

The one Dharma-realm mind is not found in a hundred  
negations, it defies a thousand affirmations, and it does not  
correspond to the middle; not corresponding to the middle,  
it defies heaven (i.e., supreme truth), and since it defies  
heaven, discourses of flowing eloquence are stopped in their  
tracks and speculations of careful deliberation are left with  
no recourse. The one mind such as this belongs to the extrem-  
ity of ignorance and not to the station of knowledge.

## 9. The Mind of Ultimate Own-naturelessness

The mind of ultimate own-naturelessness—in now interpreting this mind, there are two approaches: one is the exoteric cursory approach, and the other is the esoteric secret approach.

The exoteric cursory approach: That which is very deep is the *varu[ṇa]* (ocean), that which is lofty is [Mount] Sume[ru], that which is vast is empty space, and that which is long is a mustard[-seed eon] or a stone [eon].<sup>100</sup> Nonetheless, the mustard seeds are [eventually] exhausted and the stone is worn away, while empty space can be measured; [Mount] Sume[ru] is 160,000 [*yojanas* high], and the *varu[ṇa]* is eight million [*yoja[nas]* [deep]. That which is near and yet difficult to see is one's own mind, and that which is infinitesimal and yet pervades space is one's own Buddha. One's Buddha is difficult to conceive, and one's mind is vast. A [mathematical] genius and Śīlpābhijña would become perplexed and abandon their calculations;<sup>101</sup> [the sharp-eyed] Li [Chu] and [the clairvoyant] Aniruddha would become blind and give up looking;<sup>102</sup> [King] Yü, [famed for] his naming, would hold his tongue, and K'ua [Fu], [famed for] his walking, would lose his feet.<sup>103</sup> The cognition of *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* cannot recognize them, and the wisdom of [bodhi]sattvas cannot know them. The remarkable among all that is remarkable, the absolute among all that is absolute—surely it is only the Buddha of one's own mind.

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Because one is deluded about one's own mind, the waves of the six paths [of transmigration] are stirred up, but by understanding the mind's source, the one great expanse of water becomes clear and calm. Clear and calm water reflects a myriad images, and the Buddha of the one mind knows all things. Sentient beings, deluded about this principle, are unable to put an end to the cycle of transmigration, and living beings, quite madly intoxicated, are unable to awaken to their own mind.

The Great Enlightened One, like a compassionate father, has pointed out the way of return, and the way of return is five hundred

*yojanas*.<sup>104</sup> This mind is a wayside inn, and a wayside inn is no permanent abode. Depending on conditions, it will suddenly move, and in its moves it has no fixed location. Therefore, it has no own-nature, and because things have no own-nature, one can eschew the lowly and opt for what is worthy. Hence there is the ultimate assertion of the permeation of thusness [with ignorance] and the secret declaration of the [own-]naturelessness of the supreme truth. [Those in the eighth stage of the mind] are startled out of the One Path with a snap of the fingers and awakened to the inultimacy of the unconditioned. It is here that the [ninth stage of the] mind, like space, arises for the first time. The result of quiescence [for the eighth stage of the mind], this result in turn becomes the cause [with respect to the tenth stage of the mind]. This cause and this mind are the ultimate fruit when viewed from the foregoing exoteric teachings, but with respect to the subsequent secret mind [of the tenth stage] it is the initial mind. It must indeed be true that when one first generates the aspiration [for enlightenment] one immediately accomplishes perfect enlightenment.<sup>105</sup> The virtues of the Buddha of the initial aspiration are inconceivable. A myriad virtues appear for the first time, and the one mind manifests to a small degree. When one realizes this mind, one knows that the threefold world is identical to one's own person and awakens to the fact that the ten [bodies of the Tathāgata] equal in size [to all things] are also one's own mind.<sup>106</sup>

When the Buddha Vairocana<sup>107</sup> first attained enlightenment, he discussed these matters extensively with Samantabhadra and other great bodhisattvas during the second week, and this corresponds to the *Flower Ornament Sutra*.

[Vairocana] enveloped the Lotus-Repository [World],<sup>108</sup> making it his home, and encompassed the Dharma realm, making it his kingdom. He adorned seats in seven places and revealed the sutra to eight assemblies.<sup>109</sup> Entering this ocean-seal *samādhi*, he observed the perfect interfusion of Dharma-nature, and shining on those whose religious capacity is [elevated] like the king of mountains, he showed that the mind and the Buddha are not

different. He embraced the nine ages<sup>110</sup> in a single moment, and stretched a single moment of thought into many eons. The one and the many interpenetrate, and the [underlying truth-]principle and phenomena interrelate. Their manifold interconnectedness is compared to Indra's net, and their inscrutable interfusion is likened to the light of [many] lamps. Finally, [the young pilgrim Sudhana]<sup>111</sup> generated the aspiration [for enlightenment] under the Mother of Enlightenment (i.e., Mañjuśrī) and realized the [ultimate] fruit by taking refuge in Samantabhadra; he practiced assiduously for three lifetimes<sup>112</sup> and visited [spiritual] friends in one hundred cities. With a single practice one practices all [practices], and by cutting off one [mental affliction] one cuts off all [mental afflictions]. Although it is said that one accomplishes enlightenment with the initial aspiration and that the path is perfected in the ten [levels of] faith,<sup>113</sup> because cause and result are not different, one drives the carriage [of the teachings of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*] through the five levels,<sup>114</sup> and because attributes and inherent nature do not differ, all ten bodies (i.e., attributes) [of the Tathāgata] are equally reduced [to Vairocana]. This is the general import of the flower-ornament *samādhi*.

Therefore, the Tathāgata Vairocana addressed the Lord of Mysteries [in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*], saying (T. 18: 3c):

So-called emptiness is removed from the sense organs and sense objects, has no [distinguishing] characteristics and no [cognitive] objectivity, transcends all frivolous arguments, and is like empty space;[ . . . ] it is removed from the conditioned and unconditioned realms, removed from all activities, and removed from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. [Then] is born the mind of ultimate own-naturelessness.

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The Tripitaka master Śubhākarasiṃha (T. 39: 612b) explains that this one phrase "the mind of ultimate own-naturelessness" completely encompasses all the teachings of the Hua-yen [school]. The reason for this is that the general import of the Hua-yen [school] in probing the origins and seeking the end is to explain

how the Dharma realm of thusness does not preserve its own-nature but [manifests] in accordance with conditions.

Relying on this Dharma gateway, Master Tu-shun<sup>115</sup> composed the *Flower-Ornament Samādhi of the Five Teachings*,<sup>116</sup> the *Meditation on the Dharma Realm*,<sup>117</sup> and so on. He was succeeded by his disciple Chih-yen.<sup>118</sup> Chih-yen's disciple, the Dharma master Fa-tsang,<sup>119</sup> also spread the five teachings and composed the *Essential Purport [of the Flower Ornament Sutra]*, the *Main Points [of the Meaning of Passages from the Flower Ornament Sutra]*, and a commentary [on the *Flower Ornament Sutra*].<sup>120</sup> These are the exegetical works of the Dharma gateway of the Hua-yen school.

Here are some verses:

Just as wind and water and the dragon-king [who causes them] constitute a single Dharma realm,  
So too do thusness and birth-and-death lead to this [one] peak.

[The mind, like] a brightly shining gem, produces the [three] elements of essence[, aspect, and function];  
[The threefold world of] the physical [world], [unenlightened] sentient beings, and enlightened beings is most profound.

The ten mysteries of dependent arising are as principal and subordinate to one another;  
The sound of the ocean-seal [*samādhi*] swallows up the five teachings.

The manifold unobstructedness [of all things] is likened to Indra's net,

And their inscrutable perfect interfusion is at the heart of [the analogy of] the light of [many] lamps.

The flower-ornament *samādhi* is [a single practice which encompasses] all practices,

And the Ten Honored Ones<sup>121</sup> of the resultant realm [of enlightenment] are present in all lands.

Though one may enter this palace [of the ninth stage], one

is a Buddha who has generated [the aspiration for enlightenment] for only the first time,  
 And one should seek out the accomplishment of the body  
 [of a Buddha] in five phases.<sup>122</sup>

In the [*Mahāvairocana*] *Sutra* it says (T. 18: 3b):

It is removed from the conditioned and unconditioned realms, removed from all activities, and removed from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. [Then] is born the mind of ultimate own-naturelessness.

It is boundless like empty space, and all Buddha *dharma*s are successively born in dependence on it.

Lord of Mysteries, such an initial aspiration the Buddha has declared to be the cause for becoming a Buddha; although liberated from karma and mental afflictions, it still has karma and mental afflictions at its base.

In the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* it is explained as follows (T. 18: 207c):

The Lord, the great mind of enlightenment and great bodhisattva Samantabhadra, was residing in the hearts of All the Tathāgatas.

At that time the Tathāgatas filled this Buddha land just like sesame [seeds packed closely together in a sesame pod]. Then All the Tathāgatas gathered as if in a cloud and betook themselves to where the bodhisattva and *mahāsattva* Sarvārthasiddhi was seated at the place of enlightenment (*bodhimaṇḍa*). Manifesting the enjoyment body, they spoke all together as follows: "Good sir, how will you, who endure ascetic practices without knowing the truth of All the Tathāgatas, realize unsurpassed perfect enlightenment?"

Thereupon the bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi, having been aroused by All the Tathāgatas, arose from the *āsphānaka-samādhi*,<sup>123</sup> made obeisance to All the Tathāgatas, and said,

“World-honored Tathāgatas, please instruct me! How should I practice? What is the truth?”

When he had finished speaking thus, All the Tathāgatas addressed the bodhisattva in unison, saying, “Good sir, abiding in the *samādhi* of observing one’s mind, you should chant as [many times as] you please the [following] mantra, which is effective of its own nature.”

372c In the *Sutra [of the Dhāraṇī] for Protecting State [Rulers]* it says (T. 19: 570c):<sup>124</sup>

Then the Buddha Śākyamuni said, “Lord of Mysteries, for immeasurable and incalculable eons I cultivated and accumulated these *pāramitās*, and on reaching my last life I engaged in ascetic practices for six years, but I failed to obtain *anuttara samyaksambodhi* and become Vairocana. When I was seated at the place of enlightenment, innumerable Transformation-Buddhas filled empty space just like sesame [seeds packed closely together in a sesame pod]. With one voice the Buddhas addressed me, saying, ‘Good sir, how do you seek to accomplish perfect enlightenment?’ I said to the Buddhas, ‘I am an ordinary person and still do not know what I am seeking. I beg you to have pity and explain it for me.’ Thereupon the Buddhas addressed me together, saying, ‘Good sir, listen attentively! We will explain it for you. You should now imagine a lunar disc on the tip of your nose, and in the lunar disc visualize the letter *Oṃ*. After having performed this visualization, in the last watch of the night you will succeed in accomplishing *anuttara samyaksambodhi*. Good sir, among the Buddhas of the three ages in world-systems throughout the ten directions, [as numerous as] the sands of the Ganges River, there has never been an instance of one who succeeded in becoming a Buddha without performing the visualization of the letter *Oṃ* in a lunar disc. Why? The letter *Oṃ* represents all gateways to the Dharma; it is also the precious torch and lock of the eighty-four thousand gateways to the Dharma.

The letter *Om* is the true body of Vairocana; the letter *Om* is the mother of all *dhāraṇīs*. From this all Tathāgatas are produced; from the Tathāgatas all bodhisattvas are produced; from the bodhisattvas all sentient beings are produced; and so on until all the merest roots of good are produced.”

In Nāgārjuna’s *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind* it says (T. 32: 573b):

The *dharma*s of the paths of delusion arise from deluded thinking. They then develop into innumerable and infinite mental afflictions, and one transmigrates in the six destinies. Once one is enlightened, deluded thinking ceases and various *dharma*s are extinguished. Therefore, there is no own-nature. Next, the compassion of the Buddhas is activated out of the truth and saves sentient beings. Giving medicine as is appropriate to the illness, [the Buddhas] bestow the gateways to the Dharma, and in accordance with the mental afflictions [of sentient beings] they counter the fords of delusion. As when one finds a raft and has reached the other shore, so too must the Dharma be abandoned, for it has no own-nature. . . . When delusion ceases, the mind’s source is empty and tranquil; it is endowed with a myriad virtues, and its wondrous functions are boundless.[ . . . ] Anyone who possesses this mind is able to turn the Dharma wheel and benefit both himself and others.

It also says [in the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*] (T. 32: 622a):

Original enlightenment, pure by nature, is not dissociated from anywhere in the threefold world. Permeating these three [worlds], it makes of them a single enlightenment and adorns the one great Dharma body representing the result. For this reason it is called the mirror of causal permeation. What is the threefold world? It is 1) the world of sentient beings, 2) the physical world, and 3) the world of the wise and enlightened. The world of sentient beings is, namely, the realm of

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those with the nature of ordinary people; the physical world is, namely, the ground by which they are supported; and the world of the wise and enlightened is, namely, Buddhas and bodhisattvas. These constitute a threesome. The “mirror” in this case is a mirror consisting of a brightly shining gem. When one takes the brightly shining gem, places it in a [certain] spot, and gathers things all around, all those things are made pellucid by the permeating influence of that gem; furthermore, those pellucid things all without exception manifest in the gem, and the gem also manifests without exception in all those things. Similarly, the mirror of causal permeation is also like this: it permeates all things, making of them pure enlightenment, and renders them all equal.

*Question:* Is this original *dharma* of the one mind the ultimate stage of the mind?

[*Answer:*] The bodhisattva Nāgārjuna has explained it [in the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*] (T. 32: 637c).<sup>125</sup>

In the Dharma of [the Mahayana with] the one mind and its own three [attributes of essence, aspect, and function], the “one” [mind] cannot be one [since it is one yet all], but it is provisionally called “one” from the standpoint of entry [to the Mahayana]; [likewise] the [one] “mind” cannot be the mind [since it is one mind yet all minds], but it is provisionally called “mind” from the standpoint of entry [to the Mahayana]; although it is not really [the referent of] the term “self,” it is [provisionally] called “self,” and although it is not [the referent of] the designation “own,” it [provisionally] corresponds to “own”; it is termed [“self”] as if it were the self, but this is not the real self, and it is called [“own”] as if it were the own, but this is not the real own; it is more mysterious than the mysteriously mysterious and more remote than the remotely remote. A superior state such as this belongs to the extremity of ignorance and not to the station of knowledge.

### 10. The Mind of Secret Adornment

The nine stages of the mind have no own-nature;  
 Becoming progressively deeper and progressively more  
     wondrous, they are all causes [for the next stage].  
 The esoteric teachings of the true word (mantra) were  
     expounded by the Dharma body,  
 And the Secret Adamantine [Vehicle] is the supreme truth.  
 The five phases,<sup>126</sup> the five wisdoms, the essence of the  
     Dharma realm,  
 The four *maṇ[ḍalas]*, and the four seals<sup>127</sup> are revealed in  
     this [tenth stage of the] mind.  
 Buddhas [as numerous as] the dust motes of [countless]  
     lands are the Buddhas of one's own mind,  
 And [deities of the] Vajra and Lotus [Families as numerous  
     as] the drops of water in the ocean are also one's own body.  
 Every single letter gateway incorporates a myriad forms,  
 And every single [symbolic] sword and *vajra* manifests  
     the divine.  
 The own-nature of a myriad virtues is completely perfected,  
 And in a single lifetime one succeeds in realizing [the state  
     of] one of [secret] adornment.

In the [*Mahāvairocana*] *Sutra* it says (T. 18: 3b):

Next, Lord of Mysteries, bodhisattvas who cultivate bodhi-  
 sattva practices via the gateway of mantras accomplish all  
 the immeasurable merit and wisdom accumulated during  
 immeasurable and incalculable hundreds of thousands of *koṭis*  
 of *nayutas* of eons and all the immeasurable wisdom and expe-  
 dient means for fully cultivating all practices.

*Explanatory Remarks:* This extols the merits of bodhisattvas who  
 enter the mantra [path] for the first time. It also says (T. 18: 9b):<sup>128</sup>

Thereupon the World-honored One Vairocana entered the  
*samādhi* "Swift Power of the Single Essence of All Tathāgatas"

and expounded the *samādhi* of the essential nature of the Dharma realm which he himself had realized, saying:

I awoke to original non-birth, transcended the path of  
speech,  
Obtained liberation from all faults, dissociated myself  
from causes and conditions,  
And knew emptiness, which is like empty space,  
and knowledge concordant with reality was born;  
Having been freed from all darkness, foremost reality  
is untainted.

*Explanatory Remarks:* These verses are terse in wording but broad in meaning; their language may seem superficial, but the thoughts are profound. It is difficult to explain except face to face.

373b There are also the *samādhi* gateways of methods for visualizing mantras such as the Wheel of One Hundred Letters and the Twelve Letters [in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*], as well as the *samādhis* of the four wisdom-seals of the thirty-seven deities of the Adamantine Realm. These represent the most secret *samādhis* of the Tathāgata Vairocana. Because the [source] passages are extensive, they cannot be quoted in full.

Again, in the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind* it says (T. 32: 573c-574c):

Third, as for *samādhi*, after the mantra practitioner has contemplated thus, how can he realize unsurpassed *bodhi*? Know that, with things as they naturally are, he should dwell in the great *bodhi*-mind of Samantabhadra. All sentient beings are innate *sattvas*, but because they are bound by the mental afflictions of greed, anger, and ignorance (i.e., the three poisons), the Buddhas out of great compassion have expounded with the wisdom of expedient means this most profound and secret *yoga*, making the practitioner visualize a solar or lunar disc in his inner mind. By performing this visualization, he sees his original mind, serene and pure just like a full moon

whose light pervades empty space without any discrimination. This is also called “without apperception” or “pure Dharma realm” or “sea of the *prajñā-pāramitā* (perfection of wisdom) of reality.” Encompassing various innumerable *samādhis* of rare preciousness, it is just like a full moon in its purity and clarity, for all sentient beings contain the mind of Samantabhadra. “I see my heart to be like a lunar disc in shape.”<sup>129</sup> Why is a lunar disc used as an analogy? Because the form of the full moon, round and bright, is similar to the *bodhi*-mind. The lunar disc has sixteen phases, which are analogous to the Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas from Vajrasattva to Vajramuṣṭi in the [*Adamantine Pinnacle*] *Yoga* [*Sutra*].

Among the thirty-seven deities [of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala], the Buddhas of the five directions each represent one wisdom. The Buddha Akṣobhya in the eastern quarter is also called Adamantine Wisdom because he has attained great perfect mirrorlike wisdom; the Buddha Ratnasambhava in the southern quarter is also called Consecration Wisdom because he has attained the wisdom of equality; the Buddha Amitābha in the western quarter is also called Lotus Wisdom or Wisdom of Turning the Dharma Wheel because he has attained the wisdom of wondrous observation; the Buddha Amoghasiddhi in the northern quarter is also called Karma Wisdom because he has attained the wisdom of accomplishing what is to be done; and the Buddha Vairocana in the center represents the fundamental [wisdom] because he has attained the wisdom of the Dharma realm. The wisdoms of the above [first] four Buddhas generate the Four Pāramitā Bodhisattvas. [These] four bodhisattvas are Vajra[pāramitā], Ratna[pāramitā], Dharma[pāramitā], and Karma[pāramitā]. They are the mothers who give birth to and nurture all sages of the three ages. The Four Buddhas emanate from [the wisdom of] the essential nature of the Dharma realm here sealed [by the Four Pāramitā Bodhisattvas].

The Tathāgatas of the four quarters each encompass four bodhisattvas. The Buddha Akṣobhya in the eastern quarter encompasses four bodhisattvas; the four bodhisattvas are Vajrasattva, Vajrarāja, Vajrarāga, and Vajrasādhu. The Buddha Ratnasambhava in the southern quarter encompasses four bodhisattvas; the four bodhisattvas are Vajraratna, Vajrateja, Vajraketu, and Vajrahāsa. The Buddha Amitābha in the western quarter encompasses four bodhisattvas; the four bodhisattvas are Vajradharma, Vajratikṣṇa, Vajrahetu, and Vajrabhāṣa. The Buddha Amoghasiddhi in the northern quarter encompasses four bodhisattvas; the four bodhisattvas are Vajrakarma, Vajrarakṣa, Vajrayakṣa, and Vajramuṣṭi. The four bodhisattvas of each of the Buddhas of the four quarters [together] constitute the Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas. Among the thirty-seven deities, one excludes the Five Buddhas, the Four Pāramitā [Bodhisattvas], and the ensuing Four Gatekeepers and Eight Offering [Goddesses] and takes only the Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas encompassed by the Buddhas of the four quarters [when likening them to the sixteen phases of the moon].

Again, in the *Mahāprajñā[pāramitā] Sutra* there are sixteen meanings [of emptiness], from inner emptiness to emptiness of the own-nature of nonbeing [and these can also be likened to the sixteen phases of the moon].

All sentient beings have in the core of their minds a portion of purity which is completely appointed with all practices. Its essence is extremely subtle, clear, and bright, and it remains unchanged even when transmigrating in the six destinies. It is like the sixteenth phase of the moon. When the bright aspect of that phase of the moon meets the sun, it is merely deprived of its brightness by the rays of the sun and therefore does not appear, but from the start of the [new] moon that then rises it gradually waxes day by day until the fifteenth day, when it is perfectly full and [its brightness] unobstructed.

Therefore, the practitioner of meditation first arouses

the brightness within his original mind by means of the letter A, gradually makes it pure and brighter, and realizes the knowledge of nonarising. The letter A signifies the original non-birth of all things.

*<According to the commentary on the [Mahā]vairocana Sutra (T. 39: 723b), in interpreting the letter A, it has in all five meanings: 1) A (short) stands for the bodhi-mind; 2) Ā (long) stands for the practices of bodhi; 3) Am̐ (short) signifies the realization of bodhi; 4) Aḥ (short) signifies parinirvāṇa; and 5) Āḥ (long) signifies complete possession of the wisdom of expedient means.>*

*Again, the letter A can also be interpreted in accordance with the four words "open," "reveal," "understand," and "enter" in the Lotus Sutra.<sup>130</sup> The word "open" means to open the door to the Buddha's knowledge-and-insight and also to open the door to the bodhi-mind; it is like the first letter A and signifies the bodhi-mind. The word "reveal" means to reveal the Buddha's knowledge-and-insight; it is like the second letter Ā and signifies the practices of bodhi. The word "understand" means to understand the Buddha's knowledge-and-insight; it is like the third letter Am̐ and signifies the realization of bodhi. The word "enter" means to enter the Buddha's knowledge-and-insight; it is like the fourth letter Aḥ and signifies parinirvāṇa. In sum, they represent the fifth letter Āḥ of complete accomplishment, and they signify the perfection of the wisdom of skill in expedient means.>*

In a verse extolling the fact that the letter A signifies the bodhi-mind it says (T. 18: 328b):

[In a lunar disc] one cubit across on an eight-petaled  
white lotus

Make manifest the letter A, the color of white light.

Insert both the right and left thumbs in the adaman-  
tine bind,

And draw in the tranquil wisdom of the Tathāgata.

Those who understand the letter *A* must meditate on it; they should meditate on pure consciousness, round and bright. If one has a glimpse of it, one is called “he who has perceived the truly supreme truth,” and if one sees it constantly, one has entered the first stage of the bodhisattva. As it gradually expands, it will pervade the Dharma realm in extent and become equal to empty space in size. Able to reduce it and expand it at will, one will be endowed with omniscience.

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All those who cultivate the meditation practices of *yoga* must fully cultivate the practices of the three mysteries and realize the meaning of accomplishing the body [of a Buddha] in five phases.

The so-called three mysteries are: 1) the mystery of the body—this is, for instance, binding pledge-seals and invoking the hosts of holy ones; 2) the mystery of speech—this is, for instance, reciting mantras in secret with the words pronounced distinctly and clearly without any mistakes; and 3) the mystery of the mind—this is, for instance, abiding in *yoga*, entering into union with the perfect fullness of a white and pure moon, and meditating on the *bodhi*-mind.

Next, accomplishing the body [of a Buddha] in five phases can be explained as follows: 1) penetration of the [*bodhi*-]mind, 2) accomplishment of the *bodhi*-mind, 3) adamant mind, 4) adamant body, and 5) realization of unsurpassed *bodhi* and attainment of an adamantine firm body. Moreover, when these five phases have been completed, one accomplishes the body of one’s own deity. Its perfect brightness is that of the body of Samantabhadra, and it is also the mind of Samantabhadra. It is identical with the Buddhas of the ten directions. Again, although in the cultivation of practices during the three ages there are differences in progress regarding realization, once one has attained enlightenment, there is no past, future, or present.

The mind of an ordinary person is like a closed lotus flower, while the mind of a Buddha is like a full moon. If one

accomplishes this meditation, there will appear in it lands, both pure and defiled, throughout the ten directions, sentient beings in the six destinies, and the stages of practice of the three vehicles, as well as the creation and destruction of lands throughout the three ages, the karmic differences among sentient beings, the characteristics of practice in the causal stages of the bodhisattva, and the Buddhas of the three ages, and one will realize the body of one's own deity and fulfill all Samantabhadra's vows to practice. Therefore, in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* it says (T. 18: 22a): "Such a true mind has been proclaimed by former Buddhas."

*Question:* Earlier it was said that because people of the two vehicles have attachment to things, they are unable to attain Buddhahood. How is that different from this *samādhi* which makes one cultivate the *bodhi*-mind?

*Answer:* Because people of the two vehicles have attachment to things, they realize the [truth-]principle after a very long time, whereupon they sink into emptiness and linger in quiescence for a period measured in eons. Then they engender the great aspiration (*bodhicitta*), and spend incalculable eons availing themselves of the gateway of good deeds performed in a distracted state of mind. For this reason [their teachings] should be eschewed and not relied upon. Now, the mantra practitioner has already destroyed the attachments beyond [attachments to] persons and things, but although he has the wisdom to perceive the truth correctly, because of his beginningless separation [from enlightenment] he has been unable to realize the Tathāgata's wisdom of an omniscient one and therefore seeks after the wondrous path, cultivates the gradational procedures, and from [the state of] an ordinary [person] enters the stage of a Buddha. With this *samādhi* one is, namely, able to attain the own-nature of the Buddhas, comprehend the Dharma body of the Buddhas, realize the wisdom of the essential nature of the Dharma realm,

and accomplish the own-nature body, enjoyment body, transformation body, and homogeneous body of the Buddha Mahāvairocana. Because the practitioner has not yet realized this, it stands to reason that he should cultivate this [*samādhi*].

Therefore, in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* it says (T. 18: 19b): “*Siddhi* is born of the mind.” As is explained in the *Adamantine Pinnacle Yoga Sutra*, the bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi first sat on the adamantine seat, realized the unsurpassed path, finally came to be conferred this state of mind by the Buddhas, and was then able to realize the [ultimate] fruit. If anyone of the present age, his mind resolute, practices in accordance with the teachings, *samādhi* will manifest itself without his rising from his seat, and he will here-with accomplish the body of his own deity. Therefore, in the “Procedural Rites of Worship” in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* it says (T. 18: 45bc):

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Should you not have the strength to bring extensive  
benefit [to others],  
Abiding by the rite, simply meditate on the *bodhi*-mind;  
The Buddha has taught that it is endowed with the  
myriad practices  
And satisfies the immaculate and pure *dharmas*.

Because this *bodhi*-mind contains the meritorious attributes of all Buddhas, if one actualizes it by cultivating and realizing it, then one will become a leader of all. If one returns to the source, then one finds oneself in the Land of Secret Adornment,<sup>131</sup> and without rising from one’s seat, one will be able to accomplish all Buddha deeds. In praise of the *bodhi*-mind it is said:

If someone seeking the Buddha’s wisdom should penetrate the *bodhi*-mind,  
He will quickly realize the stage of great enlightenment with the body born of his parents.

*Question:* We have already heard the words of the verse [at the start of this section]. Please explain their meaning.

*Answer:* In the mantra doctrines every single sound and syllable, every single word and name, every single phrase, and every single clause are each possessed of infinite meanings, and even if one were to spend eons it would be difficult to exhaust [their meanings]. Furthermore, every single syllable has three meanings, namely, sound, sign, and reality.<sup>132</sup> They also have two meanings: the superficial meaning and the connotative meaning.<sup>133</sup> Again, every single phrase has both a shallow and cursory and a profound and secret meaning. [Thus] it is difficult to discuss them hurriedly. If one explains it as it really is, those of small capacity will engender doubts and engage in slander, [as a result of which] they will most certainly become *icchāntikas* [with no hope of attaining Buddhahood] and denizens of [the Hell of] Immediate [Retribution]. Therefore, it is for this reason that the Responsive-Transformation Tathāgata has kept it secret and not spoken of it, and bodhisattvas who transmitted the Dharma left it and did not discuss it. Therefore, in the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* it is explained [as follows] (T. 19: 321a):<sup>134</sup>

One must explain not a single word of this *samādhi* rite for Vairocana to those who have not yet been initiated. As for the ritual manuals and mantras of one's own deity, one must not speak about them casually even to practitioners of the same rite. If one does so, one will promptly die while young or invite some calamity and subsequently fall into the Hell of Immediate [Retribution]. . . .

[*Question:*] We respectfully accept your admonitions and will not presume to act against them. We would once again ask you to explain the content of the verse at the start [of this section].

[*Answer:*] "The nine stages of the mind have no own-nature; Becoming progressively deeper and progressively more wondrous, they are all causes [for the next stage]."—These two lines reject

the nine minds explained previously since none of them represents the ultimate fruit of Buddhahood. The nine [stages of the mind] are those from “the mind of the common person, like a ram” to “the mind of ultimate own-naturelessness.” Among these, the first one refers to the ordinary person who performs only acts of evil and does not cultivate the slightest bit of goodness. The next one represents the vehicle of human beings. The next one describes the vehicle of heavenly beings; it corresponds to non-Buddhists who loathe the lower realms below and long to be born in heaven above, but while seeking liberation they eventually fall into hell. The above three minds are all mundane minds and cannot yet be called supramundane. [The stages of the mind] from the fourth “[mind of] aggregates-only [and no-self]” onward are called “obtaining the holy fruit.” Among the supramundane minds, “[the mind of] aggregates-only [and no-self]” and “[the mind] that has eradicated [the causes and seeds of] karma” correspond to the teachings of the Hinayana, while those from “[the mind of the Mahayana] concerned for others” onward are the minds of the Mahayana. The first two [minds] of the Mahayana are the bodhisattva vehicles and the second two are the Buddha vehicles. Each of these vehicles may appropriate the name “Buddha” for its own vehicle, but when viewed in light of the subsequent [vehicles], it becomes a frivolous assertion. None of the previous [stages of the mind] is stationary, and therefore they are described as having no own-nature; none of the subsequent [stages of the mind] is the [ultimate] fruit, and therefore they are all causes. When viewed successively in relation to each other, each is profound and wondrous, and therefore they become “[progressively] deeper and [progressively] more wondrous.”

“The esoteric teachings of the true word (mantra) were expounded by the Dharma body.”—This line reveals the expositor of the mantra [teachings]. The seven teachings apart from that of “[the mind of] ultimate own-naturelessness” were all expounded by the Response- and Transformation-Buddhas of other-enjoyment.<sup>135</sup> The secret treasury of the esoteric teaching

of mantras in two divisions<sup>136</sup> was expounded by the Dharma body, the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana, together with his retainers, the four-fold Dharma body, for their own enjoyment of Dharma bliss while residing in the Adamantine Dharma-realm Palace, the Mantra Palace, and so on. Passages in the *Indications of the Goals of the Eighteen Assemblies* and so on are clear about this, and I will cite no further evidence.

“And the Secret Adamantine [Vehicle] is the supreme truth.”—This line shows that the teaching of the mantra vehicle is the ultimate truth, transcending all other vehicles.

*The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury, Fascicle Three*



## Notes

### On the Differences between the Exoteric and Esoteric Teachings

- <sup>1</sup> Kūkai's use of the term *ōkeshin* (or *ōkebutsu*) both in *The Differences* and elsewhere is by no means consistent. Here *ōke* is clearly an abbreviation for *ōjin* (response body) and *keshin* (transformation body), but *ōke(shin)* can also refer to a single type of Buddha body (responsive-transformation body). Furthermore, in some instances it would seem possible to interpret it either way, and in such cases a note has been added to indicate the alternative interpretation.
- <sup>2</sup> An allusion to the parable of the phantom city in Chapter Seven of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>3</sup> See the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutra*, Chapter Nine (T. 12: 485c).
- <sup>4</sup> Alternatively, "... by the other-enjoyment and responsive-transformation bodies."
- <sup>5</sup> Both these passages are quoted below in Fascicle Two.
- <sup>6</sup> In *The Precious Key* Kūkai equates the standpoints articulated by the first four of these five questions and answers with the teachings of the Fa-hsiang (Hossō), San-lun (Sanron), T'ien-t'ai (Tendai), and Hua-yen (Kegon) schools respectively.
- <sup>7</sup> The first line of the four-line verse for the transference of merit with which Paramārtha's translation of the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* ends (T. 32: 583b).
- <sup>8</sup> There exist three-fascicle and four-fascicle redactions of this work; the version given in the Taishō edition is the four-fascicle redaction, and there the passage quoted here appears in Fascicle Four.
- <sup>9</sup> Two of the "Ten Mysteries," which represent ten aspects of universal interpenetration as propounded in Hua-yen doctrine.
- <sup>10</sup> In Hua-yen doctrine the process of becoming a Buddha is explained in terms of three "lifetimes": after having "seen and heard" the teachings of the *Flower Ornament Sutra* in a past lifetime, one "understands and

practices” them in one’s present lifetime and “realizes and enters” the state of enlightenment in a future lifetime.

- <sup>11</sup> The original has been adapted by Kūkai.
- <sup>12</sup> The *Lamp of Prajñā Treatise* is a commentary on Nāgārjuna’s *Madhyamaka-kārikā* by Bhāviveka, but because the root verses are by Nāgārjuna, Kūkai here writes “Nāgārjuna’s *Lamp of Prajñā Treatise*” when quoting the following verses. These verses, however, are not from the *Madhyamaka-kārikā*, and they would seem to summarize an opponent’s views.
- <sup>13</sup> *Madhyamaka-kārikā* 25.24cd; cf. T. 30: 36b.
- <sup>14</sup> The original has been abridged by Kūkai.
- <sup>15</sup> Kūkai has adapted the original, which lists more than two hundred names.
- <sup>16</sup> The first eight “minds” listed here correspond to the eight consciousnesses posited in Fa-hsiang doctrine (with “*manas*-consciousness” representing ego-consciousness and “*ālaya*-consciousness” [“storehouse-consciousness”] corresponding to the subconscious underlying the other seven consciousnesses), while the final two are peculiar to the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*: 9) “mind of many-and-one-consciousness” signifies the state of mind that recognizes the plurality of phenomena as well as their ultimate oneness, while 10) “mind of one-oneness-consciousness” refers to the state of mind that transcends all distinctions between plurality and oneness and dwells in a state of total oneness.
- <sup>17</sup> This quotation forms part of an explication of the Dharma as the second of the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha), but the original has been adapted by Kūkai.
- <sup>18</sup> This refers specifically to the T’ien-t’ai school, in whose fivefold classification of Buddhist teachings the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Nirvana Sutra* are equated with ghee.
- <sup>19</sup> In the Sanskrit text of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* his name is given as Nāgāvaya, but the Chinese translation gives the standard equivalent of Nāgārjuna, and I have rendered it accordingly since this is how it would have been understood by readers of the Chinese.
- <sup>20</sup> The original has been abridged by Kūkai. In the Sanskrit text of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, the terms rendered here as “Recompense-Buddha [emanating from] the Dharma-Buddha,” “Recompense-Buddha,” “Dharma-Buddha” and “Response-Buddha created by the Responsive-Transformation Buddha” correspond to *dharmatā-ṇiṣyanda-buddha*, *ṇiṣyanda-buddha*, *dharmatā-buddha*, and *nirmita-nirmāṇa-buddha* respectively.

- <sup>21</sup> Jp.: *ōkebutsu*. Since Kūkai here refers to “three bodies,” this term could also be taken to mean “Response- and Transformation-Buddhas.” Cf. note 1.
- <sup>22</sup> This passage is quoted in full (except for the first paragraph) in *Becoming a Buddha*, pp. 77–8.
- <sup>23</sup> The original has been adapted by Kūkai, but the full version is given in the passage from the same work quoted below in Section III.
- <sup>24</sup> The original has been adapted by Kūkai, but the full version is given in the passage from the same work quoted below.
- <sup>25</sup> The original, corresponding to the preface of this sutra, has been slightly abridged by Kūkai.
- <sup>26</sup> This refers to the enlightenment of Sarvārthasiddhi as described at the start of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*; see T. 18: 207c–208a (cf. “The Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra” in *Two Esoteric Sutras*, translated by Rolf W. Giebel [Numata Center, 2000], pp. 23–5).
- <sup>27</sup> The “five circles” are the five circles of five deities, each centered on one of the Five Buddhas, that constitute the main part of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, and the foregoing section refers to the generation of the maṇḍala deities by Vairocana.
- <sup>28</sup> This passage corresponds to the opening section of this sutra (which in the original begins: “Thus have I heard . . .”).
- <sup>29</sup> The “five phrases” are the five phrases from “in the originally existent Adamantine Realm” to “. . . palace of the radiant mind,” and properly speaking they constitute a single compound representing the name of the palace in which Vairocana dwells.
- <sup>30</sup> I.e., the Four Gatekeepers, who in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala are male: Vajrāṅkuṣa, Vajrapāśa, Vajrasphoṭa, and Vajrāveśa.
- <sup>31</sup> I.e., the Four Inner Goddesses of Offering and the Four Outer Goddesses of Offering in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala: Vajralāsyā, Vajramālā, Vajragītā, Vajranṛtyā, Vajradhūpā, Vajrapuṣpā, Vajrālokā, and Vajragandhā.
- <sup>32</sup> Variant reads: <—the wisdom that has completely perfected the virtue of cutting off>.
- <sup>33</sup> Variant has “Adamantine One Vehicle” for “one vehicle of adamantine wisdom.”
- <sup>34</sup> Perhaps a reference to the *Ta-lo chin-kang pu-k’ung chen-shih san-mei-yeh ching pan-jo po-lo-mi-to li-ch’ü shih* (T. 1003).

- <sup>35</sup> This passage corresponds to the opening section of this sutra (which in the original begins: “Thus have I heard . . .”), but it has been abridged by Kūkai.
- <sup>36</sup> The original has been adapted by Kūkai.
- <sup>37</sup> This passage is part of the response to a question about why the Buddha, in spite of his divine powers, should have received on nine occasions “retribution for sins,” and it continues, “Because there are two kinds of Buddhas, it is not wrong [to say] that he should receive [retribution for] sins.”
- <sup>38</sup> Here and below “response and transformation [bodies]” (*ōke*) could perhaps also be taken in the sense of “responsive-transformation [body].” Cf. note 1.

### The Meaning of Becoming a Buddha in This Very Body

- <sup>1</sup> An apparent reference to the section on the ten stages of the development of the religious mind in Chapter One of the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (T. 18: 3b).
- <sup>2</sup> An apparent reference to the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra on Differentiating the Positions of the Deities*, which describes the generation of thirty-six of the thirty-seven chief deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala by the central deity Vairocana.
- <sup>3</sup> This passage describes the fourth stage of a five-stage process of enlightenment based on the enlightenment of Sarvārthasiddhi as described in the first chapter of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*. The original has “. . . your own body becomes an adamantine body” for “. . . your own body becomes the Adamantine Realm.”
- <sup>4</sup> Several manuscripts add parenthetical comments to each of the four lines of the second stanza, but because they are repeated in the following “Interpretative Remarks,” and also because they are not found in the standard text, those appended to the first three lines have been omitted, while that for the fourth line follows the standard text.
- <sup>5</sup> Variant reads: *Buddhābodhi a vi ra hūṃ khaṃ hūṃ*. Cf. *Namaḥ samantabuddhānāṃ, āḥ vi ra hūṃ khaṃ* (T. 18: 20a).
- <sup>6</sup> The Five Buddhas each symbolize one of the five elements, but in Sino-Japanese Esoteric Buddhism there are two schools of thought on the correspondences between the Five Buddhas and five elements; see *The Meanings of Sound, Sign, and Reality*, note 12.
- <sup>7</sup> Strictly speaking “cognition-only” (*vijñapti-mātratā*), but it is translated here as “consciousness-only” because both “consciousness” (*vijñāna*) and “cognition” (*vijñapti*) are rendered by the same term in Chinese and Kūkai’s comments hinge on this identity.

- 8 The original has: “the letter *Hūṃ* refers to wrath.”
- 9 The subject of the initial verb “produce” is not specified in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*, but in the translation the six elements have provisionally been given as the subject in accordance with Kūkai’s subsequent exposition. In addition, the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* has “*dharmas* marks of *dharmas*” for “*dharmas* and *dharmas* marks.” “The *dharmas* that are born, abide, and so on” in the final line refers to the four phases of existence exhibited by all transient phenomena, i.e., birth (*jāti*), duration (*sthiti*), change (*anyathāva*), and extinction (*vyaya*).
- 10 For a further discussion of the *dharmas-maṇḍala*, etc., see the exposition of line two of the first stanza below.
- 11 See note 3.
- 12 One of the seven treasures possessed by a wheel-turning king (*cakravartin*), although in the present context it could possibly be construed as “wheel, gem, . . .”
- 13 According to the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha*, the “adamantine bind” (*vajra-bandha*) forms the basis of all *samaya* seals (*samaya-mudrā*), i.e., hand gestures (cf. T. 18: 220c, 243c, 356c; see also *Two Esoteric Sutras*, p. 88).
- 14 In orthodox Buddhist doctrine a “dominant condition” (*adhipati-pratyaya*) refers to any general cause, such that with respect to a particular element X all elements apart from X act as dominant conditions of X insofar that they do not hinder the occurrence of X.
- 15 This analogy plays on the literal meanings of the two characters that make up the term *chia-ch’ih / kaji*, the Sino-Japanese equivalent of the Sanskrit *adhiṣṭhāna*, “empowerment.”
- 16 T. 18: 12c, 24b, etc. The salutation is: *Namaḥ samantabuddhānām* (“Homage to all Buddhas!”). The mantra can be translated as follows: “O you who are unequaled! you who have three equal parts! pledge! All hail!” Kūkai’s interpretation of *samaya* as “equality” is based on the traditional interpretation of this term in Sino-Japanese Esoteric Buddhism, according to which “equality” is one of the four meanings of this term, presumably because of a supposed link with the word *sama*, “equal,” to which it is not, however, directly connected etymologically.
- 17 The Taishō text of the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (as well as the Tibetan translation) reads “. . . completely removed from cause and karma,” and in addition a variant found in several editions (and supported by the Tibetan translation) has: “. . . and so how can there be any cause?”
- 18 The original has been adapted by Kūkai; it is quoted in full in *The Differences*, pp. 52–4.

- <sup>19</sup> Strictly speaking, the Sanskrit equivalent of the Chinese term rendered here as “all-knowing wisdom” is *sarvajñajñāna*, which refers to the knowledge (*jñāna*) possessed by an all-knowing or omniscient one (*sarvajña*). In addition, the Sanskrit equivalent of the Chinese transliteration *sa-pan-jo* (Jp.: *sahannya*) could be *sarvajña*, *sarvajña[tā]*, or *sarvajñā[na]*, but in light of Kūkai’s interpretation it has for the sake of convenience been given as *sarvajñāna* (lit., “omniscience”).
- <sup>20</sup> This explanation draws on traditional interpretations of the terms *jñāna*, *citta*, and *dharma*. The definition of “accumulative arising” for *citta* is based on the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* (ad II.34ab), which states that “[the mind is termed] *citta* because it accumulates (*cinoti*)” (cf. T. 29: 21c), while the definition of *dharma* as “norm-support,” partially based on the fact that the word *dharma* derives from the verb *dhṛ*, “to hold,” is found in the *Treatise on the Establishment of Consciousness-only* (T. 31: 1a).
- <sup>21</sup> On “many-and-one–consciousness,” see *The Differences*, note 16.

### The Meanings of Sound, Sign, and Reality

- <sup>1</sup> There are several possible interpretations of “the inner and the outer breath”: they could refer to the breath of sentient and non-sentient beings respectively, in which case “sound” would encompass all sounds in the natural world; alternatively, when confined to a human context, they could refer either to inhalation and exhalation respectively or to the breath within the body during respiration and the external air with which it comes in contact upon exhalation. It should also be noted that the word translated as “vibration” can also mean “echo.”
- <sup>2</sup> A dependent compound (*tatpuruṣa*) in the narrow sense of the term is one in which the first member (“sound” or “sound-sign”) modifies the second member (“sign” or “reality”) and there also exists a case relationship between the two members, in this case either instrumental (“sign dependent on sound” or “reality dependent on sound-sign”) or genitive (“sign of sound” or “reality of sound-sign”).
- <sup>3</sup> A possessive compound (*bahuvrihi*) is one that functions as an adjective qualifying another substantive and has some sense of possession or attribution. Therefore, strictly speaking, it cannot apply to the relationship between “sound” and “sign,” but only to the relationship between “sound-sign” and “reality,” nor can there exist, at least grammatically, a relationship of mutual possession between the two.
- <sup>4</sup> An appositional compound (*karmadhāraya*) is one in which the first member modifies the second member appositionally or by way of equivalence. Thus in the present case “sound” and “sign,” as well as “sound-sign” and “reality,” stand in apposition to each other and are also deemed to be essentially equivalent to each other.

- 5 An indeclinable (or adverbial) compound (*avyayībhāva*) is a compound in which the first member is an indeclinable and the compound functions as an adverb, but in China it came to be interpreted as a form of metonymy, with either both the metonym and its referent or only the metonym being indicated; “sound-sign” and “sound-sign-reality” are considered to be examples of the former, and Kūkai presumably means that “sound” and “sign,” or “sound-sign” and “reality,” are so closely connected in meaning that they can serve as metonyms of each other.
- 6 A copulative compound (*dvandva*) is one in which the two or more members of the compound are simply enumerated together without any syntactical dependence of one case upon another obtaining between them. Thus in the present case “sound-sign” means “sound and sign,” while “sound-sign-reality” means “sound-sign and reality.”
- 7 A numeral compound (*dvigu*) is one in which the first member is a numeral.
- 8 See especially Chapters Four and Nine.
- 9 See especially T. 18: 10ab.
- 10 See especially Chapters Eight, Seventeen, and Twenty-two.
- 11 See especially Chapters Two and Eleven. The term translated as “reality” means literally “characteristic of the real” or “real characteristic,” and hence it is associated with “characteristiclessness” and the characteristics of the deities.
- 12 In Sino-Japanese Esoteric Buddhism there are two traditions concerning the correspondences between the five elements, the five syllables, and the Five Buddhas. According to Śubhākarasiṃha, they correspond as follows:

|       |      |                   |
|-------|------|-------------------|
| Earth | A    | Akṣobhya          |
| Water | Varṇ | Amitābha/Amitāyus |
| Fire  | Raṇ  | Ratnasambhava     |
| Wind  | Haṇ  | Amoghasiddhi      |
| Space | Khaṇ | Vairocana         |

According to Amoghavajra, on the other hand, they correspond as follows:

|       |     |                   |
|-------|-----|-------------------|
| Earth | A   | Vairocana         |
| Water | Va  | Amoghasiddhi      |
| Fire  | Ra  | Ratnasambhava     |
| Wind  | Ha  | Amitābha/Amitāyus |
| Space | Kha | Akṣobhya          |

- 13 The “commentators” alluded to here are probably the authors of the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* and the *Treatise on the Establishment of Consciousness-only*, in both of which “[articulatory] pattern” (*wen / mon* = Skt.

*vyañjana*) and “sign” (*tz’u/ji* = Skt. *akṣara*) are regarded as synonymous (see T. 29: 29a; T. 31: 6b). Kūkai, on the other hand, is here pointing out the difference between what in modern parlance might be described as the phonological and semantic aspects of a linguistic unit.

- <sup>14</sup> This is believed to be an allusion to the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise* (T. 25: 336c), and the passage in question is quoted in *The Differences*, p. 37, and summarized in *The Meanings of the Word Hūṃ*, p. 127, although the actual term “secret speech” does not appear in this passage. Strictly speaking, the equivalent of “mantra” in the preceding sentence is the standard transliteration of *maṇḍala*, but, given the context, it is presumably an error (possibly scribal) for “mantra.”
- <sup>15</sup> “True speech” (or “true word”; *chen-yen/shingon*) is the standard Sino-Japanese equivalent of “mantra,” and hereafter it is generally rendered as “mantra.”
- <sup>16</sup> T. 32: 605c–606a. The passage in question is quoted in *The Differences*, pp. 39–41.
- <sup>17</sup> The following definitions of color, shape, and movement are based chiefly on the *Yoga Treatise* (T. 30: 279b).
- <sup>18</sup> Our text reads “commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*,” but the word “commentary” is probably superfluous.
- <sup>19</sup> The original has been abridged by Kūkai.
- <sup>20</sup> In the original this and the previous two quotations constitute a single sentence describing the bodies that emerged from the (Dharma) body of Mahāvairocana to utter a verse in all world-systems, whereupon they once again entered the body of Mahāvairocana, and therefore Kūkai’s interpretation of it in terms of the Buddha’s recompense, responsive-transformation, and homogeneous bodies goes beyond its original intent.
- <sup>21</sup> This analogy is taken from the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sutra* (T. 39: 643c). *Kaṣāya/kāṣāya* refers to a brown-red or yellowish-red color and, by extension, to a monk’s robe, which is dyed this color.

### The Meanings of the Word Hūṃ

- <sup>1</sup> I follow the variant in reading *chūō* [no] *hontai* for *chūō honzon* [no] *tai*.
- <sup>2</sup> In Abhidharma doctrine the patterns of relationship obtaining between different elements of existence are classified into six causes, four conditions, and five results, and the six causes are: 1) general cause (*kāraṇa-hetu*), 2) coexistent cause (*sabhū-hetu*), 3) homogeneous cause (*sabhāga-hetu*), 4) concomitant cause (*saṃprayukta-hetu*), 5) pervasive cause (*sarvatraga-hetu*), and 6) maturative cause (*vipāka-hetu*). Among these, 1) “general

cause” signifies an indirect cause in the broadest sense of the term, i.e., anything that does not hinder the occurrence of a particular result, while the remaining five causes (2–6) refer to different types of causes with the potential for producing particular results, and these five types of causes are also known as “causal conditions” (*hetu-pratyaya*), one of the four types of conditions (with the remaining three types of conditions referring to different instances of a “general cause”).

- 3 Quoted from the *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sutra* (T. 39: 656a). Strictly speaking, the Sanskrit equivalent *hetu* has been transliterated as *hetva*, and the *Commentary* reads, “...*hetva*, which means ‘cause’”; this is preferable to Kūkai’s “causal condition” (or “cause and/or condition”).
- 4 Quoted from the *Commentary* (T. 39: 651c).
- 5 Quoted from the *Commentary* (T. 39: 656a). Although I have followed Kūkai when translating “[This corresponds to] the Dharma realm of all things,” the *Commentary* reads, “[This corresponds to] the Dharma realm of all Buddhas.”
- 6 *Madhyamaka-kārikā* XXIV.18; T. 30: 33b.
- 7 Quoted from the *Commentary* (T. 39: 649b).
- 8 The *maṇḍala* described in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*, the full name of which is “Maṇḍala Born of the Matrix of Great Compassion.”
- 9 Quoted from the *Commentary* (T. 39: 651c).
- 10 The original has only “[inherent] nature” for Kūkai’s “[inherent] nature of all *dharmas*.”
- 11 Sarvadharmesvararāja asks the Buddha to explain the eight kinds of “*dhāraṇī* gateways” to which the latter had previously alluded, and in his explication of the first the Buddha lists one hundred meanings of the letter A (532b–533b).
- 12 This is an allusion to the three modes of being (or “three natures” [*trisva-bhāva*]) posited in Yogācāra (Hossō) doctrine: “discriminated nature” (*parikalpita-svabhāva*), “other-dependent nature” (*paratantra-svabhāva*), and “consummate nature” (*pariniṣpanna-svabhāva*).
- 13 Variant has “extinguished” for “diminished.”
- 14 One of several techniques for meditating in regular and reverse order on the meanings of the individual syllables constituting a mantra or some other formula (*dhāraṇī*) arranged in a “wheel of letters.” Here, Kūkai interprets the meaning of the letter  $\bar{U}$  on the basis of a series of twenty-nine letters/syllables given in Chapter Two of the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (T. 18: 10ab) and further explained in the commentary on the same (T. 39:

651c–656a); Kūkai omits the letters themselves, but in the translation each letter and the Sanskrit term representing its meaning (corresponding to a word generally beginning with that particular syllable) have been added in parentheses.

- <sup>15</sup> An allusion to the parable of the phantom city in Chapter Seven of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>16</sup> Cf. T. 18: 10b and T. 39: 715b.
- <sup>17</sup> The Chinese term *teng-ch'ih* is normally a translation of *samādhi*, and the pertinent passage alluded to in note 16 (T. 18: 10b) gives in fact “mastery of all *samādhis*” (not “all *samayas*”) as the meaning of the nasals *ṅa*, *ṇa*, *ṇa*, and *ma*. On Kūkai’s interpretation of *samaya* as “equality,” see *Becoming a Buddha*, note 16.
- <sup>18</sup> Cf. T. 39: 582b, 686c.
- <sup>19</sup> The heart-mantra of Acalanātha is usually *hām māṃ* or *hmmām*.
- <sup>20</sup> See *Sound, Sign, and Reality*, pp. 88–9.
- <sup>21</sup> When representing the nasalization of a preceding vowel (as in *hūṃ*), the letter *m* is indicated by a simple dot (*anusvāra*) placed either over the vowel that is to be nasalized or to the right of the vowel mark.
- <sup>22</sup> When combined with a consonant (as in *hūṃ*), the vowel *ū* is indicated by a curved stroke placed below the consonant.
- <sup>23</sup> In Sanskrit, *a*, when used as a prefix, has a negative or privative meaning, similar to English *in-*, *un-*, *-less*, etc. Kūkai gives three sets of negative propositions exemplifying the negative meaning of *a*, and these are differentiated by the use of three separate negatives in Sino-Japanese (Ch.: *fei*, *pu*, and *wu*; Jp.: *hi*, *fu*, and *mu*).
- <sup>24</sup> The original has been adapted by Kūkai; it is quoted in full in *The Differences*, p. 37.
- <sup>25</sup> In Sino-Japanese Siddham studies, twelve standard vowels are distinguished (*a*, *ā*, *i*, *ī*, *u*, *ū*, *e*, *ai*, *o*, *au*, *aṃ*, and *aḥ*), and when the four phases of cause, practice, realization, and nirvana are assigned to these twelve vowels, *a* corresponds to cause, *ā*–*au* correspond to practice, *aṃ* corresponds to realization, and *aḥ* corresponds to nirvana. Hence here and below *ū* is associated with practice and *ma* (i.e., [*a*]ṃ) with result, and similarly *ha* may be considered to represent cause not only because it is the first letter in the word *hetu* (“cause”), but also because it contains the initial vowel *a*.
- <sup>26</sup> This corresponds to what is known in Sino-Japanese Esoteric Buddhism as the “three propositions,” which appear in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (T. 18: 1bc); see also T. 19: 527c and T. 20: 539a.

- <sup>27</sup> In Sino-Japanese Siddham studies vowels are divided into male and female—*a* is regarded as male and the rest as female—and because meditation is, moreover, deemed to be “female” and wisdom “male,” the subscript representing the vowel *ū* is here referred to as the “*samādhi* stroke.”
- <sup>28</sup> In the following Kūkai elaborates on six further meanings of the word *Hūṃ*, and the first five are based on the commentary (T. 39: 673b–674a) on a mantra appearing in Chapter Two of the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* and called “spell-consort of great strength and great protection” (T. 18: 12c); it includes the two seed-syllables *ham* and *kham*, and Kūkai’s explication of the meaning “protection” (as well as the next two meanings “defeating at will” and “fulfilling wishes”) is based on the commentary on these two letters (T. 39: 673c; here and below direct quotations from the *Commentary* have been enclosed in quotation marks).
- <sup>29</sup> The *samādhi* into which Vairocana entered before pronouncing the mantra mentioned in note 28 is called “Observation from the High Peak of the Pure Dharma Banner.”
- <sup>30</sup> The *Commentary* has simply “... fulfills all wishes.”
- <sup>31</sup> This section is based on the commentary (T. 39: 673c) on the word *mahābale* (“O [you who have] great power/strength!”) appearing in the aforementioned mantra (see note 28).
- <sup>32</sup> The *Commentary* has simply “... the powers of all Tathāgatas.”
- <sup>33</sup> The *Commentary* omits “Dharma practices” and reads “... cultivating ... the myriad virtues of the letter *Kha* (—reading *ch’ü* for *fa*), every single one of which is ...”
- <sup>34</sup> This section is based on the commentary (T. 39: 674a) on the words *hūṃ hūṃ* appearing in the aforementioned mantra (see note 28).
- <sup>35</sup> The *Commentary* has *Ha* instead of *Hūṃ*.
- <sup>36</sup> This section is based on the commentary (T. 39: 681b) on the mantra of Avalokiteśvara given in Chapter Four of the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (T. 18: 14a). In the following quotation the *Commentary* has *samādhi* for Kūkai’s *samaya*.

### The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury

- <sup>1</sup> “Cow-Head” was an epithet of Shen Nung, one of the legendary founders of Chinese civilization and renowned as a great agriculturalist and the father of medicine; “Broken Stump” was an epithet of Duke Tan of Chou, so called because he is said by some to have been a hunchback.
- <sup>2</sup> See *Becoming a Buddha*, pp. 74–5.

- <sup>3</sup> Acalanātha and Trailokyavijaya are both deities of fearsome appearance. Acalanātha is described as having only his right eye open; hence the reference to a “sidelong glance.”
- <sup>4</sup> The Eight Offering Goddesses correspond to the Four Inner Goddesses of Offering and the Four Outer Goddesses of Offering in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala (see *The Differences*, note 31), while the Four Pāramitā Bodhisattvas are the four deities surrounding Vairocana in the center of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.
- <sup>5</sup> A teaching found in the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*; cf. *The Differences*, p. 23. Here it implies the ninth stage, while “those of the ten stages” is an allusion to the eighth stage.
- <sup>6</sup> Mahāvairocana is here represented by the five elements; cf. *Becoming a Buddha*, pp. 68–9.
- <sup>7</sup> The *dharma-maṇḍala*, corresponding to linguistic representations of the deities (e.g., seed-syllables, mantras, and also scriptures), is here represented by words which in Sanskrit begin with the first letters of the five series of consonants and the semivowels in the Sanskrit alphabet—*ka: kārya* (“action”); *ca: cyuti* (lit., “fall”); *ṭa: ṭaṅka* (“pride”); *ta: tathatā* (“thusness”); *pa: paramārtha* (“supreme truth”); and *ya: yāna* (“vehicle”).
- <sup>8</sup> The *samaya-maṇḍala*, corresponding to symbolic representations (*samaya*) of the deities, is here represented by the insignia of the Five Buddhas Vairocana (*caitya*), Ratnaketu (banner), Saṃkusumitarājendra (radiant gem), Amitābha (lotus), and Dundubhisvara (conch shell).
- <sup>9</sup> The *mahā-maṇḍala* (“great *maṇḍala*”), corresponding to the physical manifestations of the deities, is here represented by the Five Buddhas of the Mahākaruṇāgarbhodbhava Maṇḍala and the Four Pāramitā Bodhisattvas and two of the Eight Offering Goddesses of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.
- <sup>10</sup> The *karma-maṇḍala* (“action *maṇḍala*”) corresponds to the activities and concrete representations of the deities.
- <sup>11</sup> “Three delusions” refers both to three levels of delusion (coarse, subtle, and very subtle) and to the three eons said to be necessary for eradicating these three levels of delusion.
- <sup>12</sup> See note 28.
- <sup>13</sup> The “Three Luminaries” refers to the sun, moon, and stars, while the “Five Marchmounts” are the five sacred mountains of China.
- <sup>14</sup> This is an allusion to the teachings of Taoism; the “One” is *ch’i* (primal pneuma), the “Two” are *yin* and *yang*, and the “Three” are heaven, earth, and humankind.

- <sup>15</sup> The *makara* is a kind of sea monster, the *garuḍa* a mythical bird, and the *rākṣasa* a type of demon.
- <sup>16</sup> The foregoing sentences describe the three kinds of evil or unwholesome physical activity (killing, stealing, and adultery); these and the four kinds of unwholesome verbal activity and three kinds of unwholesome mental activity described next together constitute the "ten evil deeds."
- <sup>17</sup> Tai Yüan was an outlaw who later rose to the position of district governor after having been admonished by one of his intended victims; Chou Ch'u was an unruly and violent young man, but eventually became a loyal minister of the king of Wu after having been reprimanded by his father.
- <sup>18</sup> Ancestral sacrifices, funeral rites, protocol for receiving guests, military rites, and coming-of-age and marriage ceremonies.
- <sup>19</sup> The source of this quotation is not known. According to Indian cosmology, the four continents mentioned here lie to the south, east, west, and north of Mount Sumeru; the first in particular is said to be the home of human beings.
- <sup>20</sup> "Acquired lineage," "innate lineage," and "lineage of the path" correspond to the ten abodes, ten practices, and ten [levels of] merit transference, which in turn correspond to the first thirty levels in the forty-two levels or stages of the path leading from the state of an ordinary person to enlightenment.
- <sup>21</sup> The six days of abstinence are the eighth, fourteenth, fifteenth, twenty-third, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth days of each month.
- <sup>22</sup> It is said that when Liu An, Prince of Huai-nan, flew up into the sky after having taken a special medicine, a dog licked the remainder of the medicine left in a container in the garden and followed him up into the sky, while Fei Ch'ang-fang is said to have ridden on a staff, given to him by a transcendent, which turned out to be a dragon.
- <sup>23</sup> The six heavens of the realm of desire and the four *dhyāna* heavens of the realm of form.
- <sup>24</sup> The heat of the sun from above and the heat from four fires burning around a Hindu ascetic.
- <sup>25</sup> "Mo-yeh," the name of a famous sword, so named after the wife of its maker, Kan Chiang, of the third century B.C.E.
- <sup>26</sup> The people of the state of Cheng referred to unpolished jade as *p'ò*, while the people of Chou called the dried corpse of a mouse by the same name.
- <sup>27</sup> The Vaiṣeṣika and Sāṃkhya schools of orthodox Indian philosophy posit six and twenty-five basic principles respectively, and these are referred to in Chinese texts as the "six truths" and the "twenty-five truths."

Dirghanakha was a wandering religious mendicant at the time of Śākya-muni whose view of reality was one that repudiated all philosophical viewpoints. The Vātsīputriya, one of the schools of Nikāya Buddhism, maintained that the self belonged to a category of *dharmas* called “inexponible.”

- <sup>28</sup> In the parable of the three carts and the burning house in the *Lotus Sutra* (Chapter Three), carts drawn by a goat, a deer, and an ox are likened to the three vehicles of *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and bodhisattvas respectively. (Here and below, all references to the *Lotus Sutra* are to the Chinese translation by Kumārajīva.)
- <sup>29</sup> In early Buddhism the path to enlightenment is divided into four stages, known as “entering the stream” (*srota-āpanna*), “returning once more” (*sakṛdāgāmin*), “not returning” (*anāgāmin*), and “arhat.” These correspond to the “four fruits,” each of which is considered to be preceded by a preliminary stage, collectively known as the “four approaches.”
- <sup>30</sup> The six consciousnesses are the eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, and mind-consciousness; the seventh consciousness is ego-consciousness (*manas*); and the eighth consciousness is the storehouse-consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*).
- <sup>31</sup> The “knowledge of nonarising” (*anutpāda-jñāna*) and the “knowledge of extinction” (*kṣaya-jñāna*) are the last two of the ten forms of knowledge; the latter is knowledge of the extinction of all one’s defilements, and this is followed by the former, namely, the knowledge that defilements will never again arise.
- <sup>32</sup> There follows a lengthy dialogue between a young Confucian and a monk; the monk’s name, Genkan, means “Gateway to the Mysteries.”
- <sup>33</sup> A famous musician who lived during the reign of the Yellow Emperor.
- <sup>34</sup> Yen Yüan (alias Hui), the most gifted of Confucius’s disciples.
- <sup>35</sup> Two early legendary rulers of China; Yao is said to have devised a calendar and encouraged agriculture, while Shun initially served him as a minister.
- <sup>36</sup> The last king of the pre-dynastic state of Chou, later idealized as a paragon of virtue.
- <sup>37</sup> Sixteen famous ministers during the reign of Shun.
- <sup>38</sup> Two famous physicians of ancient China.
- <sup>39</sup> Two famous archers of ancient China.
- <sup>40</sup> Two famous musicians of ancient China.

- 41 Two famous calligraphers of the fourth century C.E.
- 42 The manifestations of the Dharma in the first two of the three periods after the Buddha's *parinirvāna*: 1) the period of the True Dharma, during which the Buddha's teaching is practiced and enlightenment can be attained; 2) the period of the Imitative Dharma, during which the Buddha's teaching is practiced but enlightenment can no longer be attained; and 3) the period of the Latter Dharma, during which only the teaching exists.
- 43 Eons of increase and decrease are periods during which, according to traditional Buddhist cosmology, the human lifespan gradually increases to eighty thousand years and then decreases to ten years.
- 44 The foregoing statements and phrases that make up the master's reply are all taken from the *Tao te ching*.
- 45 A collective designation for three officials considered the paramount aides to the ruler; from the Sui to the mid-Sung dynasties they were the Defender-in-Chief, Minister of Education, and Minister of Works.
- 46 The Five Virtuous [or Famous] Ministers were, like the Eight Good Ministers, ministers during the reign of the sage-king Shun. I Yin is said to have become a cook in order to approach King T'ang of Yin and advise him. T'ai-kung Wang was fishing when he was spotted by King Wen of Chou, whom he subsequently served. Chang Liang and Ch'en P'ing both served under the founder of the Former Han dynasty.
- 47 These are both incidents said to have occurred in Śākyamuni's former lives.
- 48 See Chapters Twelve and Twenty-three of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- 49 This subject is treated at greater length in *The Differences*.
- 50 Fourteen of the twenty-four standard histories of successive Chinese dynasties contain a monograph on the "five elements" (*wu-hsing*), i.e., water, fire, wood, metal, and earth.
- 51 *Hsien-yü yin-yüan ching*, T. 4: 376b; the original has been adapted by Kūkai.
- 52 The Group of Six was a group of six monks notorious for their misdemeanors at the time of Śākyamuni; Devadatta was a cousin of Śākyamuni who turned against him and formed his own community; and Sunakṣatra was a disciple of Śākyamuni who eventually became dissatisfied and left the order.
- 53 Two heterodoxical views mentioned in a passage quoted earlier from the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (pp. 143-4); they correspond to the standpoints of eternalism and annihilationism respectively.

- <sup>54</sup> Eight places or conditions in which it is difficult to see a Buddha or hear the Dharma.
- <sup>55</sup> Kūkai has added the first word “*pratyekabuddhas*.”
- <sup>56</sup> The original has been adapted by Kūkai.
- <sup>57</sup> *Parinirvāṇa*, or complete nirvana attained after death.
- <sup>58</sup> An allusion to the parable of the phantom city in Chapter Seven of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>59</sup> The “four immeasurables” are loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity; the “four methods of conversion” are giving, kind speech, beneficial action, and adaptation to the conditions of others.
- <sup>60</sup> Lit., “grasping consciousness”; an alternative name for either the seventh or eighth consciousness, it here refers to the latter.
- <sup>61</sup> These are two analogies used to describe the length of an eon (*kalpa*), which is said to be longer than either the time required to remove all the mustard seeds from an enormous city if one took away one seed every hundred years, or the time needed for an enormous stone cube to wear away if a celestial nymph came and brushed against it with a light garment once every hundred years.
- <sup>62</sup> The “three kinds of training” correspond to the efforts made to overcome three kinds of lassitude that arise upon hearing that enlightenment is vast and profound, that giving is difficult to practice, and that enlightenment is difficult to attain. The “four extensive vows” are the vow to save sentient beings, infinite though they may be; the vow to eradicate mental afflictions, inexhaustible though they may be; the vow to study the teachings, immeasurable though they may be; and the vow to accomplish the Buddhist path, unsurpassed though it may be. Both the “three kinds of training” and the “four extensive vows” are practiced in the first of the five levels or stages into which the path to enlightenment is divided in the Fa-hsiang (Jp: Hossō) school, and the following four sentences refer to practices carried out in each of the succeeding four stages.
- <sup>63</sup> The functioning of the other seven consciousnesses (cf. note 30).
- <sup>64</sup> *Śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *bodhisattvas*.
- <sup>65</sup> An allusion to the cosmology of the *Brahmajāla-sūtra* (T. 1484).
- <sup>66</sup> The third of the three natures, or modes of being, posited in Yogācāra doctrine; it corresponds to the state of enlightenment (cf. *The Meanings of the Word Hūm*, note 12).
- <sup>67</sup> The Fa-hsiang school, so called because it was prevalent north of the Yangtze River.

- <sup>68</sup> A reference to the Dharma body, wisdom, and liberation.
- <sup>69</sup> The original has been slightly adapted by Kūkai; it is quoted in full in *The Differences*, p. 22.
- <sup>70</sup> The “four middle paths” are the middle path as opposed to the biased views of annihilationism and eternalism, the middle path that emerges when the biased views of annihilationism and eternalism come to an end, the absolute middle path, and the provisional middle path.
- <sup>71</sup> The San-lun (Jp.: Sanron) school, so called because it spread to the south of the Yangtze River.
- <sup>72</sup> The original has been slightly adapted by Kūkai.
- <sup>73</sup> The letter A here stands for [ādy]anutpāda (“[original] nonarising”).
- <sup>74</sup> Chi-tsang (549–623) consolidated the foundations of the San-lun school. In his *Treatise on the Profundities of the Mahayana* (T. 1853; Ch.: *Ta-ch’eng hsüan-lun*; Jp.: *Daijōgenron*) he attempts to systematize the teachings of Buddhism from the Mādhyamika standpoint of the San-lun school. He also wrote a work entitled *The Meaning of the Two Truths* (T. 1854; Ch.: *Erh-ti i*; Jp.: *Nitaigi*), to which Kūkai may also be referring here.
- <sup>75</sup> During the second of the three eons, the subtle delusions are eradicated; cf. note 11.
- <sup>76</sup> The original has been slightly adapted by Kūkai; it is quoted in full in *The Differences*, pp. 22–3.
- <sup>77</sup> Lit., “three herbs”; an allusion to the inferior, middling, and superior herbs mentioned in the parable of the three kinds of medicinal herbs and two kinds of trees in Chapter Five of the *Lotus Sutra*. The three herbs have traditionally been interpreted as referring to the vehicle for humans and gods, the vehicle for *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, and the vehicle for bodhisattvas respectively, while the two kinds of trees are identified with two levels of bodhisattvas.
- <sup>78</sup> An allusion to the parable of the three carts and the burning house in Chapter Three of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>79</sup> Another allusion to the parable of the three kinds of medicinal herbs and two kinds of trees in Chapter Five of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>80</sup> Cf. Chapter One of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>81</sup> Cf. Chapter Two of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>82</sup> Cf. Chapter Sixteen of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>83</sup> Cf. Chapter Eleven of the *Lotus Sutra*.

- <sup>84</sup> Cf. Chapter Fifteen of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>85</sup> An allusion to the parable of the bright pearl in the topknot in Chapter Fourteen of the *Lotus Sutra*; the "bright pearl" represents the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>86</sup> Cf. Chapter Twenty-five of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>87</sup> Cf. Chapter Three of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>88</sup> An allusion to Chapter Fifteen of the *Lotus Sutra*, in which the Buddha ("father") declares that the countless bodhisattvas who had welled up from the earth are his disciples ("children") from long ago.
- <sup>89</sup> Cf. Chapter Twelve of the *Lotus Sutra*. The phrase "king of elephants" could be taken to refer to either the Buddha or Mañjuśrī.
- <sup>90</sup> Cf. Chapter Fourteen of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>91</sup> The "ten thusnesses," mentioned in Chapter Two of the *Lotus Sutra*, are ten factors or aspects common to all phenomena; they are appearance, nature, substance, power, action, cause, condition, result, retribution, and the totality of the foregoing nine factors. "Calming" (*śamatha*) and "contemplation" (*vipāśyanā*) are the two main components of the system of meditation employed in the T'ien-t'ai (Jp.: Tendai) school.
- <sup>92</sup> Cf. Chapter Eleven of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>93</sup> Cf. *The Differences*, p. 34.
- <sup>94</sup> Cf. Chapter Sixteen of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>95</sup> This is an allusion to Maitreya in Chapter Fifteen of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>96</sup> Chih-i (538–597), the founder of the T'ien-t'ai school.
- <sup>97</sup> I.e., the *samādhi* of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>98</sup> I.e., bodhisattvas of the sixth and seventh stages.
- <sup>99</sup> The original has been slightly adapted by Kūkai; it is quoted in full in *The Differences*, p. 23.
- <sup>100</sup> See note 61.
- <sup>101</sup> Śilpābhijñā (lit., "Higher Knowledge of the Arts") was one of the fifty-three teachers visited by Sudhana in the course of his pilgrimage as described in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the final section of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*, and he is said to have attained liberation through his knowledge of various arts, including mathematics. The "mathematical genius" is mentioned in Chapter Two of the *Chuang-tzu*.

- <sup>102</sup> Li Chu is mentioned in the *Huai-nan-tzu*, while Aniruddha was one of the Buddha's ten chief disciples and is said to have been foremost in clairvoyance.
- <sup>103</sup> Yü, said to have founded the Hsia dynasty in ancient China, is also credited with having assigned names to all manner of things, while K'ua Fu is said to have challenged the light of the sun in a race to the place where the sun sets, but died of thirst on the way.
- <sup>104</sup> Cf. the parable of the phantom city in Chapter Seven of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- <sup>105</sup> A famous statement in the *Flower Ornament Sutra* (T. 9: 449c).
- <sup>106</sup> In the *Flower Ornament Sutra* it is stated that at the time of enlightenment the Tathāgata obtained a body equal in size to all *dharmas*, all lands, etc., and it lists a total of thirteen items with which his body is equal in size (T. 10: 275a). Kūkai's reference to "ten" rather than "thirteen" is probably due to prosodical considerations.
- <sup>107</sup> The main Buddha of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*, on the teachings of which this ninth stage of the mind is based.
- <sup>108</sup> The name of the realm presided over by Vairocana in the *Flower Ornament Sutra*.
- <sup>109</sup> The various sections of the *Flower Ornament Sutra* are said to have been expounded to eight assemblies in seven different locations.
- <sup>110</sup> The three ages of the past, present, and future are in turn each said to have past, present, and future aspects, resulting in a total of "nine ages."
- <sup>111</sup> The youth Sudhana's pilgrimage is described in the final section of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*, known as the *Gaṇḍavyūha* or, in Chinese, as "Entry into the Dharma Realm."
- <sup>112</sup> According to Hua-yen doctrine, enlightenment is attained by listening to the Dharma in a past lifetime, practicing in the present lifetime, and realizing enlightenment in a future lifetime.
- <sup>113</sup> The first ten levels of the fifty-two levels or stages.
- <sup>114</sup> The five groups of ten stages which together constitute the first fifty of the fifty-two levels into which the Mahayana path is divided.
- <sup>115</sup> Tu-shun (557-640) was the first patriarch of the Hua-yen (Jp.: Kegon) school.
- <sup>116</sup> T. 1867; it is probably the work of Fa-tsang.
- <sup>117</sup> This work is quoted in its entirety in the *Essay on Generating the Bodhi-mind in the Hua-yen* (T. 1878; Ch.: *Hua-yen fa p'u-t'i-hsin chang*; Jp.:

*Kegonhotsubodaishinshō*) by Fa-tsang, the *Profound Mirror of the Dharma Realm in the the Hua-yen* (T. 1883; Ch.: *Hua-yen fa-chieh hsüan-ching*; Jp.: *Kegonhokkaigenkyō*) by Ch'eng-kuan, and the *Commentary on the Gateway to Meditation on the Dharma Realm* (T. 1884; Ch.: *Chu Hua-yen fa-chieh kuan-men*; Jp.: *Chūkegonhokkaikanmon*) by Tsung-mi.

- <sup>118</sup> Chih-yen (602–668) was the second patriarch of the Hua-yen school.
- <sup>119</sup> Fa-tsang (643–712) was the third patriarch of the Hua-yen school.
- <sup>120</sup> T. 1871, 1734, and 1733 respectively.
- <sup>121</sup> A reference to ten aspects of the enlightened state of a Buddha.
- <sup>122</sup> A reference to the five-stage process of enlightenment described in the first chapter of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*, the opening section of which is quoted below from the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* (cf. “The Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra” in *Two Esoteric Sutras*, pp. 23–5).
- <sup>123</sup> The exact meaning of *āsphānaka* is obscure, but *āsphānaka-samādhi* seems to refer to a deep state of meditation characterized by a complete absence of mental activity.
- <sup>124</sup> The original has been slightly adapted by Kūkai.
- <sup>125</sup> The original has been slightly adapted by Kūkai; it is quoted in full in *The Differences*, pp. 23–4.
- <sup>126</sup> Another reference to the five-stage process of enlightenment described in the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*; cf. note 122.
- <sup>127</sup> On the four *maṇḍalas* and four seals, see *Becoming a Buddha*, pp. 74–5.
- <sup>128</sup> The original has been adapted by Kūkai. See also *Becoming a Buddha*, pp. 68–9.
- <sup>129</sup> T. 18: 207c. This sentence occurs in the account of the first stage of the five-stage process of enlightenment alluded to earlier.
- <sup>130</sup> An allusion to Chapter Two of the *Lotus Sutra*, where it is stated that the Buddhas appear in the world for one great reason alone, namely, to open the door of the Buddha’s knowledge-and-insight to sentient beings, to reveal it to them, to make them understand it, and to induce them to enter it (T. 9: 7a).
- <sup>131</sup> In light of the Sanskrit equivalent “*ghanavyūha*,” “Secret Adornment” should perhaps be translated “Dense (or Close) Adornment,” but in Japan it has traditionally tended to be interpreted in the sense of “Secret Adornment” or “Adorned with Mysteries
- <sup>132</sup> This theme is dealt with in detail in *Sound, Sign, and Reality*.

<sup>133</sup> This theme is dealt with in detail in *The Meanings of the Word Hūm*.

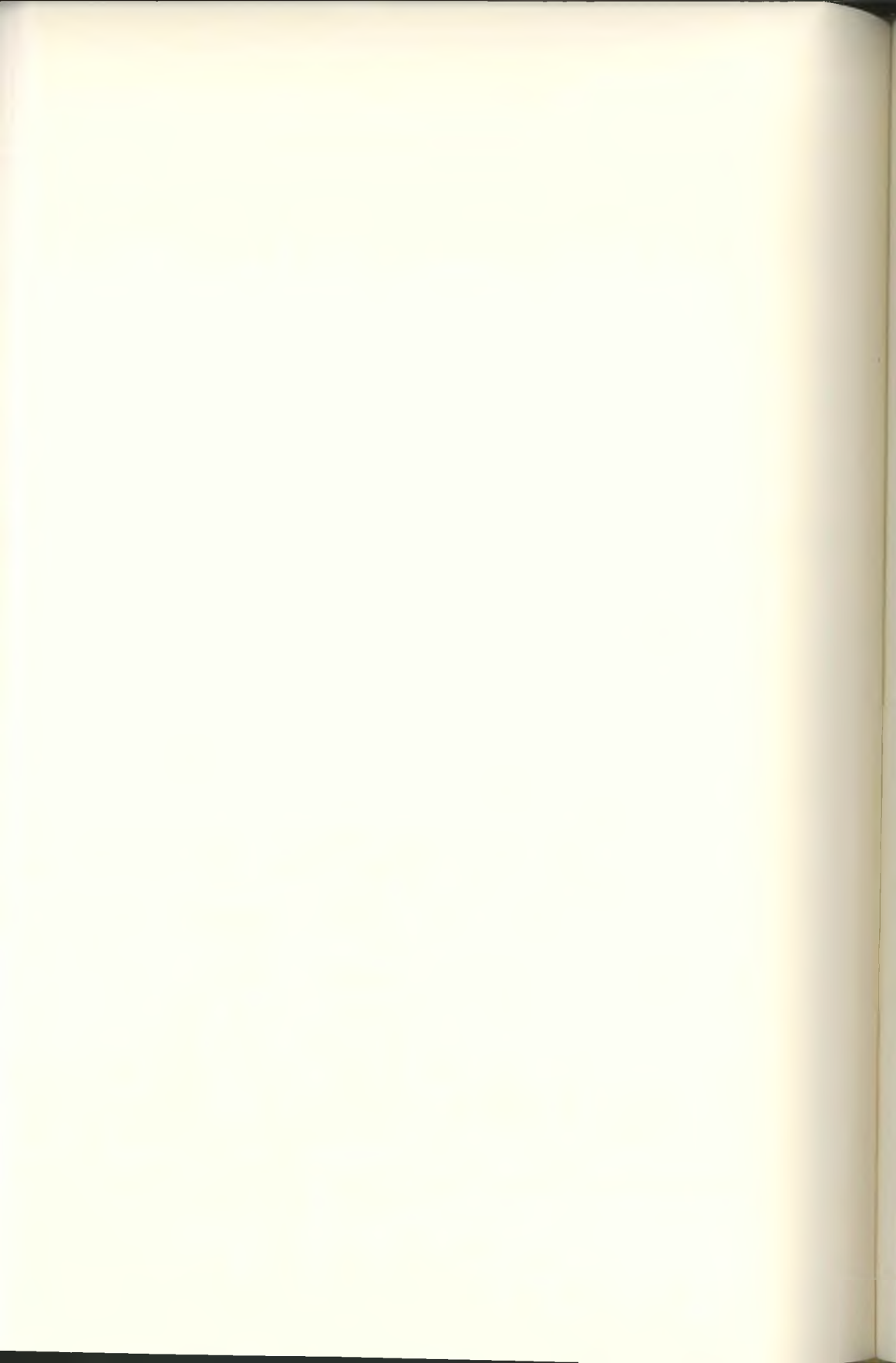
<sup>134</sup> The original has been adapted by Kūkai.

<sup>135</sup> Alternatively, "... by the Buddhas of other-enjoyment and responsive transformation." Cf. *The Differences*, note 1.

<sup>136</sup> This refers to the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* and *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* together with their associated rites and teachings.

THE MITSUGONIN CONFESSION

THE ILLUMINATING SECRET COMMENTARY  
ON THE FIVE CAKRAS AND THE NINE SYLLABLES



## Translator's Introduction

This Introduction first discusses *The Mitsugonin Confession*, composed circa 1136 C.E., followed by a doctrinal analysis of *The Illuminating Secret Commentary on the Five Cakras and the Nine Syllables*, composed around 1142 C.E. The first commentary gives biographical data on Kakuban (1095–1143), the author of both these texts, and puts into historical perspective the origin and content of the *Mitsugonin Confession*. *The Illuminating Secret Commentary on the Five Cakras and the Nine Syllables* is a pivotal work of Kakuban. It was written at the end of his life, and presents the culmination of his religious views, teachings, and practices.

### *The Mitsugonin Confession*

This introduction gives a brief biography of Kakuban and discusses the circumstances surrounding the composition of the Mitsugonin text on the confession and repentance of transgressions.

Kakuban, *ex post facto* founder of the Shingi (“New Doctrine”)-Shingon school, was born in Hizen no kuni (present-day Saga and Nagasaki prefectures), Kyūshū. His infant name was Yachi Tosemaro and he was the third of four children. His mother was a Tachibana and his father, Isano Heiji Kanemoto, is said to have been a local manor administrator. When his father died, Kakuban, then thirteen years old, took the tonsure along with his three brothers and mother.

He became the disciple of Kanjo of the Jōjuin. This temple belonged to the Ninnaji, the temple that had dominion over the territory of Kakuban’s birth. In 1108 Kakuban traveled to the Kōfukuji; there he studied the *Abhidharmakośa* and Yogācāra philosophy with

Tokugyō for three years. In 1110 he returned to the Jōjuin and was ordained by his teacher, Kanjo, taking the name Shōgakubō Kakuban. (Shōgakubō means “the lineage of the perfectly enlightened” and Kakuban means “the enlightened *vaṃ*”; “*ban*” is a transliteration of the Sanskrit syllable *vaṃ*, the seed-syllable of Mahavairocana in the Vajradhatu Maṇḍala). Kakuban then returned to Nara and for the next two years studied Mādhyamika philosophy with Kakuju of the Tōdaiji as well as Yogācāra philosophy and Avatamsaka doctrine.

At the age of eighteen, in 1112, Kakuban undertook the *prayoga* practice of the eighteen rites (*jūhachidō kegyō*) under Kanjo’s guidance. At this time Kanjo became the chief abbot of the Toji (the administrative headquarters of the Shingon sect) and received the support of Emperor Toba (r. 1107–1123).

At age twenty Kakuban for the first time went to Mount Kōya (Kōyasan), the center of Shingon Buddhism. There he encountered Shōren, who was a *besshosei*, i.e., a member of a *hijiri* group on Kōyasan that jointly practiced Esoteric Buddhism and the *nembutsu*. By the middle of the Heian period *nembutsu* practice had greatly influenced Kōyasan and three groups had emerged there: the *gyonin* (ascetics), the *hijiri* (itinerant lay practitioners), and the *gakuryo gata* (scholars). The *gyonin* took charge of esoteric rituals and the ascetic mountain practice. The *hijiri* fostered the Pure Land faith, managed the disposal of the ashes of the dead, and they also wandered throughout the country popularizing Kōyasan. The *gakuryo gata* specialized in Shingon doctrinal studies.

Kakuban first stayed in Shōren’s quarters and in the following year went to live with another *hijiri* named Myōjaku. For the next eight years Kakuban lived on Kōyasan. He learned the *gumonji* practice from Myōjaku and practiced it himself eight times. Typically this practice involves chanting the mantra of the bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha one million times over a period of one hundred days. The practice is based on the *Kokuzōgumonjinohō* (T. 20, No. 1145) translated by Śubhakarasiṃha. This work is thought to have been introduced into Japan by the Japanese monk Dōji (d. 744 C.E.) of the Daianji in Nara, and the recitation practice was probably transmitted to Kūkai

by Gonzō. Like Kūkai, Kakuban undertook this practice many times during his short life. This practice is still orally transmitted today. Later, at the age of nineteen, Kakuban also received initiations into the Vajradhātu and Garbhadhātu Maṇḍalas. In 1121, Kakuban left Kōyasan and received the *ācārya* initiation (*denbō kanjō*) of the Hiro-sawa branch of Shingon Buddhism from his master Kanjo at the Jōjuin. He also later received Ono branch initiations from Gengaku of the Daigoji.

At thirty-two Kakuban planned to establish on Kōyasan the Denbōin as a place to revive the Shingon school. He hoped to accomplish the following: 1) unite the Ono and Hirosawa branches of the Shingon school, which had developed after Kūkai's death; 2) reemphasize the joint cultivation of study and practice (perhaps to counter the *gakuryō gata*, who tended to emphasize study at the expense of practice); and 3) assimilate the burgeoning Pure Land faith within the Shingon school by arguing that Amida was just another aspect of Mahavairocana. He also planned to start up again the *denbōe*, a special gathering of monks for the study of Shingon doctrine thought to have originated with Kūkai at the Takaosanji. By emphasizing the *nembutsu* practice during an age when the theory of *mappō* was prevalent he also sought to appeal to the needs of the populace and gain their economic support. Not until 1130, however, did Kakuban receive sufficient support from the former emperor Toba (who had supported Kakuban's teacher Kanjo) to complete construction of the Denbōin (also called the Shōdenbōin). Thirty-six scholar-monks took up residence there. From this time he also gained the support of the farmers around Mount Negoro.

Kakuban also built the Mitsugonin on Kōyasan as a *nembutsu* hall, and the Daidenbōin. The latter was later moved to the site of the Hofukuji, built in 1087, on Mount Negoro after Kakuban's death. Hofukuji and its manors had been donated to Kakuban by the former emperor Toba in 1132. According to a government tally in 1134, these two temples were officially recognized as prayer temples for the imperial family. Kakuban assumed the post of chief abbot of the Daidenbōin and both temples became centers for Shingon studies. One hundred and

sixty-one monks were in residence at the Daidenbōin and thirty-seven (fifteen of whom were *hijiri*) resided at the Mitsugonin.

Opposition to Kakuban from the Kongōbuji on Kōyasan spread when Toba donated seven manors for the functioning of Kakuban's *den-bōe*, of which two had originally belonged to Kōyasan. This act incensed the Kongōbuji group, who had thereby lost economic support. They were opposed to Kakuban's association with the *hijiri* and his newfound status as head of the Daidenbōin, especially as he was an outsider with ties to the former emperor. In the sixth month of 1134 they issued a declaration denouncing the activities of the Daidenbōin, which, they argued, usurped the privileges of the Kongōbuji and politically divided the management of Kōyasan. The party to this statement, which was signed by two hundred and six monks, was headed by Ryōzen.

In the twelfth month of 1134, Jōkai of the Daigoji, who as head of the Tōji was also chief abbot of the Kongōbuji through an imperial declaration, resigned his post. The chief abbot of the Daidenbōin—Kakuban—was then declared head of the Kongōbuji. Although the petition of the Kongōbuji group had failed, there was continuing opposition to Kakuban's appointment, which was correctly interpreted as a sign that he was planning to make Kōyasan independent from the management of the Tōji. Kakuban resigned both posts in the second month of 1135 and retired to the Mitsugonin. The posts were transferred to Shinyō. The post of administrator of the Kongōbuji was taken from Ryōzen and given to Kakuban's disciple Shine. Due to opposition from the Kongōbuji and Tōji parties, however, in 1136 the former emperor Toba dismissed Shine.

In 1136 the Kongōbuji leaders were plotting to have Kakuban murdered. Kakuban began a one thousand-day *gumonji* practice in the Mitsugonin, and it was around this time that he composed the *Mitsugonin Hotsuro Sangemon* (*The Mitsugonin Confession*), a verse text in forty-four stanzas with seven characters in each.

Upon entering the *gumonji* practice, Kakuban issued five stipulations to his followers, including an exhortation to protect the meditation hall where he was performing the practice. (There is also extant a written oath by Minamoto no Tameyoshi, dated 1140, to protect the

Denbōin.) During Kakuban's self-imposed internment, relations between the Mitsugonin and the Kongōbuji steadily worsened. In the twelfth month of 1140, the Kongōbuji dispatched warriors who attacked and destroyed both the Mitsugonin and the Denbōin. It is not known whether or not Tameyoshi's troops actually intervened to protect Kakuban, but Kakuban and his followers managed to escape to Mount Negoro. Shortly thereafter, in 1143, Kakuban died there.

Later some seven hundred monks of the Denbōin took up residence at Mount Negoro and founded the Shingi-Shingon school, which later split into the Chizan and Buzan branches. This school differed from the Kogi ("Old Doctrine") Shingon school in advocating *kaji seppō* (preaching of the Dharma by manifestations of Mahavairocana) instead of *hosshin seppō* (direct preaching of the Dharma by Mahavairocana). Kakuban was posthumously named Kōgyō Daishi ("Great Master Who Revived the Teachings") in 1690 by Emperor Higashiyama.

The rituals of the Shingi-Shingon school are called the *denbōin-ryū*. Today the brief *Mitsugonin Confession* is recited in the daily services of Shingi-Shingon temples throughout Japan. Self-explanatory and filled with a deeply felt sense of contrition, this work is considered especially poignant since it is thought to reflect the actual conditions of monastic life on Kōyasan during Kakuban's lifetime.

### *The Illuminating Secret Commentary*

Historically this commentary by Kakuban is important for several reasons. First, it is a work assimilating the Shingon and Pure Land schools from the standpoint of the Shingon teachings established by Kūkai. It reflects how strong the influence of the Pure Land faith was in Kakuban's day, and as well Kakuban's own understanding of the Pure Land faith. In the introduction of this commentary Amitābha, representing discriminative wisdom, appears as the *saṃbhogakāya* of the *dharmakāya* Mahāvairocana, and Kakuban argues this is the same in essence as the latter. Likewise, the Western Paradise is the same as the palace of Mahavairocana, i.e., the Vajradhātu and Garbhadhātu Maṇḍalas. Second, Kakuban explains in clear outline what practices he taught lead to Buddhahood in the present

body. These clearly combine Pure Land and Shingon practices and are based on those already transmitted by Kūkai. For example, the important visualization of the eight *hriḥ*-syllable *maṇḍala* (*hriḥ* is the seed-syllable of Avalokiteśvara and Amitābha) at the end of Chapter II can be traced to Kūkai's *Sahōshidai* (also called *Amidashidai* or *Muryōjūshidai*, in the *Teihon Kōbō Daishi zenshū*).

It is significant that Kakuban argues that attaining enlightenment in one's present body through esoteric practices is the same ultimately as being born in the Western Paradise through chanting Amitābha's name. Kakuban claims in this work that he has in fact already attained enlightenment and birth in the Western Paradise, and his sole purpose in writing this commentary is to indicate how others can too.

The five *cakras* in the title refer to those of the head, face, chest, stomach, and lower limbs of the *yogin*'s body, correlated with the Five Buddhas, five wisdoms, etc. The nine syllables refer to the nine-syllable mantra of Amitābha: *Oṃ a mṛ ta te je ha ra hūṃ*. By chanting this mantra, Kakuban argues, enlightenment can be attained in one's present body—an enlightenment represented by the five *cakras*. Kakuban argues the person in the flesh can attain Buddhahood through purification and various practices.

Third, this work is an extraordinary example of the assimilation of Chinese Taoist teachings and Shingon teachings on the constitution of a human being. The five Chinese elements, five internal organs, five Chinese gods, planets, and so on are correlated with the five Buddhist wisdoms, five Shingon elements (excluding the sixth, consciousness), etc. Such correlations are typical of Tantric writings. Different orders of reality are ultimately always interrelated. Finally, this work is well known for its brief mention of a fifth *dharmakāya*, the *dharmadhātukāya*. This doctrine too can be traced to Kūkai's writings and also to other sutras Kakuban quotes. (See, for example, the end of Kūkai's *Hizōhōyaku* [*The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, pp. 133–215 in this volume], where he writes that the *dharmakāya* Mahāvairocana resides in his palace accompanied by his four companions the four *dharmakāyas*.)

In the colophon to this work Kakuban describes how a vision of his teacher Kyōjin appeared to him after he finished writing the commentary. Kyōjin died in 1141. As Kakuban died in 1143, this work probably was composed late in Kakuban's life and thus reflects his mature thought.

Kakuban divides the commentary into an introduction and the following ten chapters:

**Chapter I. Selecting the Teaching in Which the Provisional and Absolute Have the Same Meaning.** In this section Kakuban discusses ten stages in the development of the mind. His commentary is clearly based on Kūkai's *Benkenmitsunikyōron* (*On the Differences between the Exoteric and Esoteric Teachings*, pp. 15–61 in this volume), *Jūjūshinron* (*Ten Stages in the Development of the Mind*, T. 79, No. 2425) and the aforementioned *Hizōhōyaku*. Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism also are contrasted in numerous ways.

**Chapter II. Correctly Entering the Esoteric Shingon Teaching.** This is the longest chapter in the commentary and involves a detailed explanation of the five *cakras* and nine syllables. Kakuban divides this section into two parts. The first part on the brief interpretation of the meaning of the syllables is further divided into two sections: 1) a section on the meaning of the mantra letters *aḥ vi ra hūṃ khaṃ*—a mantra of Mahāvairocana in the Garbhadhatu Maṇḍala. These five syllables are correlated with five elements, Five Buddhas, five organs, etc. (pp. 272–92); 2) a section on the nine-syllable mantra given above (pp. 292–301). The second part on the all-encompassing *dharmadhātu dharmakāya* (pp. 301–4) is divided into a section on Kakuban's *dharmakāya* theory and an esoteric practice. The latter involves visualizing a *maṇḍala* of Avalokiteśvara who is clearly equated with Mahāvairocana. The offering Vajrasattvas found in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala are found in the outer courts surrounding Avalokiteśvara.

Kakuban quotes Śubhakarasiṃha as saying the repetition of the mantra *aḥ vi ra hūṃ khaṃ* leads to innumerable virtues. Kakuban claims it leads to enlightenment. These five syllables are correlated with the fundamental five elements of the Shingon school (excluding

the sixth, consciousness); the Five Buddhas (Mahāvairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi respectively); the five colors yellow, white, red, black, and blue; five organs (liver, lungs, heart, kidneys, spleen); five Chinese elements (wood, metal, fire, water, earth); and so on. The repetition of these five syllables is claimed to rid the above organs of disease and lead the *yogin* to enlightenment in the present body. Repetition of this mantra reveals the ten stages of the mind as well. Kakuban lists several traditions in this chapter: Śubhakarasiṃha's tradition of correlating the five-syllable mantra of Mahāvairocana in the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala (*a, vi, ra, ha, kha*); Amoghavajra's tradition of correlating the same (but he gives the syllables *a, vi, ra haṃ, khaṃ*); the correlations of the five seed-syllables of the Five Buddhas of the Garbhādhatu (*a, ā, aṃ, ah, āṃḥ*), etc. Kakuban discusses individually one mantra of Mahāvairocana: *a, vaṃ, raṃ, haṃ, khaṃ*. He also explains the seed-syllables of the five wisdoms and Five Buddhas of the Vajradhātu (*vaṃ, hūṃ, traḥ, hriḥ, and ah*) in relationship to Chinese gods, specific internal organs, Buddhist deities, planets, colors, and so on.

**Chapter III. Obtaining Unequaled Virtues.** Kakuban states that the three mysteries practiced only in the Shingon school lead to innumerable virtues.

**Chapter IV. Cultivated and Self-perfected Secret Practices.** In this chapter Kakuban specifies the virtues obtained through the practice of the three mysteries.

**Chapter V. Briefly Cultivating One Practice and Perfecting Many [Practices].** Kakuban briefly argues that the practice of chanting just one mantra, forming just one *mudrā*, and practicing one *samādhi* does not mean one cannot attain enlightenment now. Even though the Shingon school teaches numerous practices, one alone can be sufficient for reaching the Western Paradise.

**Chapter VI. Realizing the Three Highest of the Nine Stages of Birth in the Pure Land.** Kakuban enjoins the practitioner to recite Amitābha's nine-syllable mantra so as to enter the Western Paradise in the present life and/or after death. He describes the direct causes for birth there and gives numerous examples of

famous figures like Nāgārjuna, Dharmapala, Chih-i, etc., who were born in the Pure Land.

**Chapter VII. Understanding Demons and Their Pacification.** Kakuban discusses four types of demons: the subjects of Māra, heretics, evil demons, and evil spirits. All, in general, obstruct the *yogin* in practices leading to enlightenment. To overcome these Kakuban advises their pacification through the recitation of *dhāraṇīs*. He exhorts the reader to realize all demon worlds are only the *dharmadhātu*.

**Chapter VIII. Attaining Buddhahood and Practicing the Uncommon in the Present Body.** Kakuban outlines four practices for attaining enlightenment in one's present body. He takes the stance that the practice of one mystery can lead to enlightenment because all three are interrelated. Through the mysterious empowerment gained through the practice of one mystery the benefits of the other two are achieved.

**Chapter IX. The Differences of People Converted According to Their Faculties.** Kakuban says those converted to Shingon are generally of two types: Those who are born in the Pure Land in their present body and those born there after death. He further distinguishes between those endowed with great and small faculties, and of these between the keen-witted and the dull-witted. He gives a clear outline of the practices suited to each category of person. Kakuban lastly specifies what actions and attitudes prevent birth in the Pure Land.

**Chapter X. Giving Questions and Answers and Resolving Doubts.** Kakuban presents miscellaneous questions and answers. He reasserts his claim that chanting Amitābha's nine-syllable mantra or Mahāvairocana's five-syllable mantra leads to birth in the Pure Land. He claims the practice of the three mysteries and realization of the *dharmadhātu* are hard to fathom and profound yet not beyond the reach of the exoteric Buddhist practitioner. He exhorts monks of the Esoteric Buddhist tradition: "Do not conceal *yoga* from the exoteric person."

THE MITSUGONIN CONFESSION

by

Kakuban



## The Mitsugonin Confession

We repent the transgressions we have committed from  
beginningless time, bound by illusions. 53b

We have unceasingly acted against the Dharma in acts of  
body, speech, and mind.

Doing wrong, we have committed countless evil deeds.  
Miserly with precious valuables, we have not practiced  
generosity (*dāna-pāramitā*).

Willful in mind and self-indulgent, we have not observed  
the precepts (*śīla-pāramitā*).

Frequently given to anger, we have lacked patience  
(*kṣānti-pāramitā*). Often lazy, we have not striven  
(*vīrya-pāramitā*).

With our minds and thoughts scattered, we have not  
practiced meditation (*dhyaṇa-pāramitā*).

With our backs to [true] reality, we have not endeavored  
to cultivate wisdom (*prajñā-pāramitā*).

In these ways, we have continually abandoned the  
practice of the six *pāramitās*. We have, therefore,  
created karma that causes transmigration in the three  
realms of suffering (the realms of hell, hungry ghosts,  
and animals).

We call ourselves *bhikṣus*, but in effect we have defiled the  
temples. We appear to be *śramaṇas*, yet we have  
accepted gifts from lay followers.

The Vinaya vows we made are forgotten and broken, 53c  
and the rules we should study have been abandoned and  
even detested.

We have felt no shame in desiring the things the Buddhas  
abhorred, and we have not hesitated to do that which  
the bodhisattvas struggled and suffered to avoid.

The Mitsugonin Confession

We have passed the years aimlessly, being frivolous in our actions and speech, and we have spent the days flattering and deceiving others.

We have not heeded the words of good friends and we have been intimate with fools.

We have not devoted ourselves to cultivating good qualities and we have perpetuated bad actions.

Hoping to obtain benefits, we have lauded our own virtues.

We have been envious of the virtuous deeds of others.

Seeing ignoble persons, we have become arrogant. We have been covetous of the wealth and abundance of others.

Hearing of those who are impoverished, we have been disinterested and felt abhorrence. Intentionally or inadvertently, we have taken the lives of living beings.

Openly or secretly, we have stolen others' valuables.

Purposefully or not, we have committed impure deeds.

We have continued to commit the four evil [acts] of speech (lying, duplicity, slander, and exaggeration) and the three evil [acts] of the mind (greed, anger, and ignorance).

Contemplating the Buddha, our minds have been disturbed by attachment [to the world]. Reading the sutras, we have misunderstood the words.

When we have tried to cultivate good roots, we have tended to adhere to their [outer] form [only]. Thus we have produced the causes of continual rebirth in samsara.

Aware or unaware, in walking, standing, sitting, and lying down, we have committed countless transgressions such as these.

Now each of us deeply reflects upon and confesses our transgressions toward the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha).

Have compassion and pity on us so that these transgressions may be eliminated. We sincerely confess and fully repent our transgressions.

The Mitsugonin Confession

On behalf of all living beings of the *dharmadhātu* who  
have transgressed in the perpetration of impure acts of  
body, speech, and mind,  
We completely regret and fully repent these transgressions.  
May all beings be spared from suffering the adverse  
results of these impure actions.



THE ILLUMINATING SECRET COMMENTARY  
ON THE FIVE CAKRAS AND THE NINE SYLLABLES

Also called *The Secret Meditation on Rapid Enlightenment  
and Birth in the Pure Land*

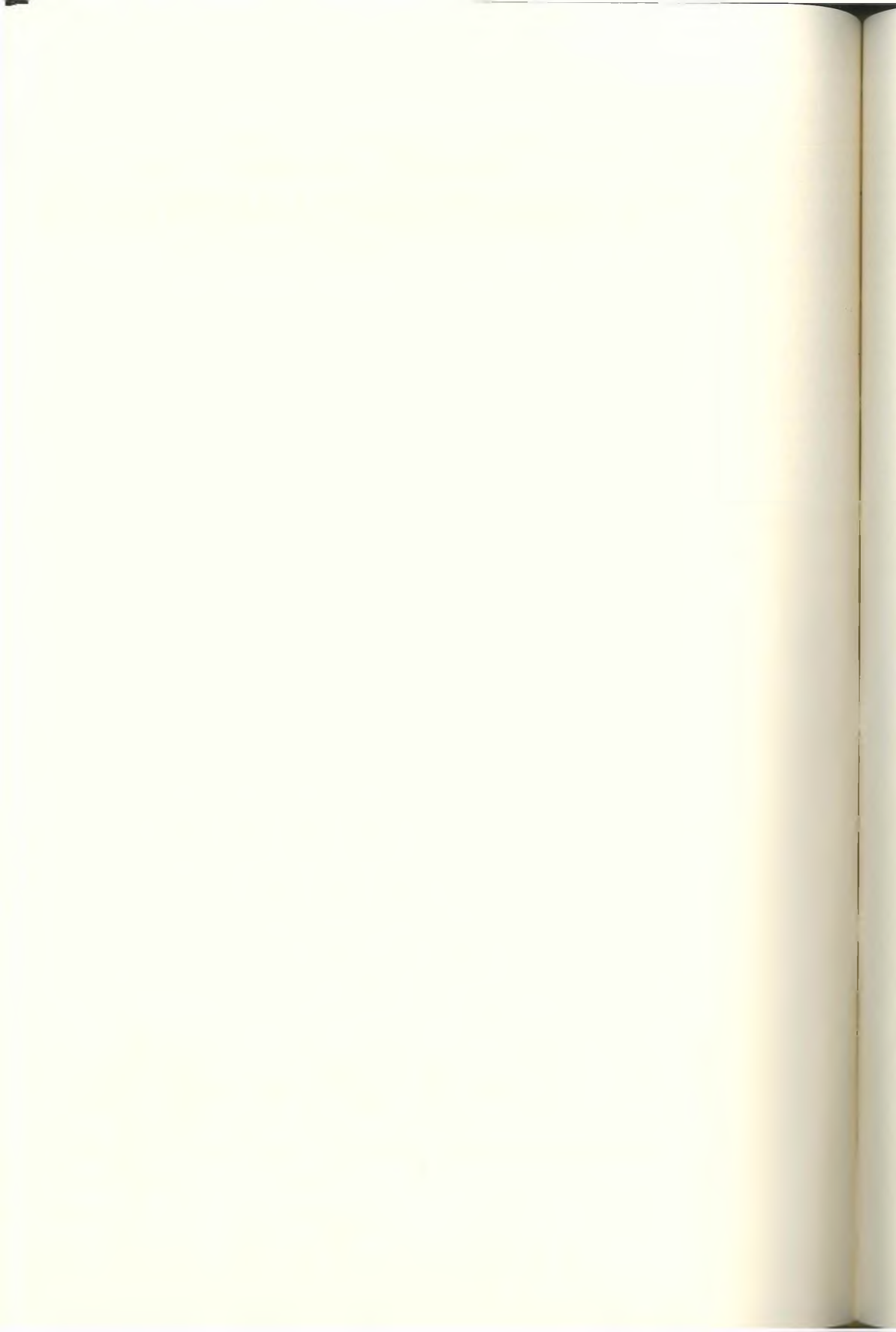
by

Kakuban



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## Introduction

Considered secretly, the fourteen *maṇḍalas* (i.e., the five *cakras* and the nine syllables) are the inner realization of Lord Mahāvairocana, the essence of the Bhagavat Amitābha, the universal gate of great enlightenment in the present life, and the One Vehicle of rebirth after death in the Pure Land. Why? 11a13

Those who for one moment see and hear [about a *maṇḍala*] attain in this life a vision of the Buddha and hear the teaching. Those practicing one meditation and one recitation realize in the present body freedom from pain, and they experience happiness. How much more so if one is faithful and pure and practices zealously! This is to grasp in the palm of the hand the enlightenment and realization of the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana and to rely on chanting for birth in the Pure Land of Sugata Amitābha. This is the virtue of chanting. How much more is the virtue of contemplating reality!

In Exoteric Buddhism, Amitābha exists apart from Śākya-muni. In Esoteric Buddhism Mahāvairocana is the Lord of Sukhāvātī (i.e., Amitābha). One should know that the pure lands in the ten directions are all one Buddha land for conversion. All Tathāgatas are all Mahāvairocana. [Mahā]vairocana and Amitābha have the same essence but different names. Sukhāvātī and the Land Adorned with Mysteries are different names for the same place.

Through the supernatural power and virtue of discriminative wisdom (*pratyavekṣa-jñāna*), the form of Amitābha appears on the body of Mahāvairocana. If one fully attains such a visualization, then above one, one surpasses all Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and sages, and below one, down to the eight deities, the *devas*, dragons, demons, and so on, there is nothing that is not the body of the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana. In opening the gate of the five *cakras* one reveals the *svabhāvakāya* (*svabhāva-dharmakāya*). In erecting the gate of the nine syllables one indicates the *saṃbhogakāya* 11b

of bliss. One already knows that the two Buddhas are the same. How, in the end, could there be a difference between wise ones? [Amitābha's Land of] Tranquil Refreshment and the Tuṣita Heaven are the habitudes of the same Buddha. [The Land] Adorned with Mysteries and the Lotus treasury are the lotus dais of the undivided mind. How unfortunate that the ancient masters should quarrel about the difficulty or ease of attaining the Western Paradise. How fortunate that here and now I have attained birth in that paradise! Moreover, the meaning of giving this secret commentary lies in just this. The difficult realm of the Pure Land must be made discernible, nothing more!

Now, briefly, there are ten chapters in this Shingon commentary: 1) a chapter on selecting the teaching in which the provisional and the absolute have the same meaning; 2) a chapter on correctly entering the esoteric Shingon teaching; 3) a chapter on obtaining unequalled virtues; 4) a chapter on cultivated and self-perfected secret practices; 5) a chapter on the brief cultivation of one practice and the perfection of many; 6) a chapter on realizing the three highest of the nine stages of birth in the Pure Land; 7) a chapter on understanding the demons and their pacification; 8) a chapter on true practices, or attaining Buddhahood in the present body; 9) a chapter on the differences of people converted according to their faculties; and 10) a chapter on giving questions and answers and resolving doubts.

## Chapter I

### Selecting the Teaching in Which the Provisional and the Absolute Have the Same Meaning

If one wants to enter this supreme esoteric nondual Mahayana and its practice, one must first generate a mind of profound insight (*prajñā*). Then later one must cultivate the practice of the three mysteries (body, speech, and mind). If a man or woman of good family enters this teaching a little, then the eighty-four thousand troops of delusion are commanded as one and subdued. One hundred and sixty reckless rebels are led as followers and busy themselves doing what one tells them to do. The many mountains of the four or eight precepts (not to kill, steal, and so forth) rock with the wind. The numerous oceans of the three or five obstructions (of defilements, acts, retributions, and so forth) are destroyed by the waves. Based on this, the deeds and bonds of samsara are resolved in a moment. The causes of the sea of samsara and suffering are destroyed in an instant. In addition, the wild winds of the five types of vicissitudes (fundamental ignorance, birth, existence, old age, and death) are not exhausted but themselves cease. The causeless (*animitta*) enlightenment of the three families (Buddha, Lotus, and Vajra) is not sought but is immediately obtained. How could this not be wonderful and pleasant? Such profound ideas based on sutras and commentaries explain the meaning of this mind. Verses say,

Select the provisional and absolute mountain path of the  
Buddha vehicle.

To discard the inferior and seize the superior is called the  
excellent meaning.

Discern the places with shallow or deep seas of doctrine.

Not promoting false tenets is called insight (*prajñā*).

The *svabhāva-dharmakāya*, Lord Vairocana, all the  
*nirmāṇakāya* Buddhas working for others,  
The marvelous and virtuous Vajrasattva, the ancient  
Buddhas, the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, and so on,  
These *nirmāṇakāya* Buddhas and bodhisattvas differenti-  
ate and expound the sutras and commentaries that have  
been explained.

If one wants quickly to realize Buddhahood, then one must  
practice on the basis of this mind.

*Question:* How many Buddhist paths are there? How many are  
provisional and how many are absolute? Which are shallow and  
which are profound?

[*Answer:*] Verses (“The Ten Minds”) say,

11c

The strange goat fundamentally is absorbed in evil.

The foolish child who fasts begins to cultivate virtue.

The infant, without fear, seeks heaven.

Only *skandhas* and no ego—this is the *śrāvakayāna*.

The castle of the *pratyekabuddhas* uproots the seeds of  
karma.

The Mahayana committed to others is the house of the  
Yogācāra (Fa-hsiang) school.

The enlightened mind of nonarising is the Mādhyamika  
(San-lun) school.

The palace of the *Lotus* [*Sutra*] is the one path of non-  
existence.

The absolute absence of a self-nature is the teaching of the  
*Avatamsaka* [*Sutra*].

This Shingon teaching is adorned with the mysteries.

The former nine stages of the mind are called shallow and  
provisional.

The final, undivided mind of the Buddha is called the  
profound and absolute.

Although each is called a marvelous realization, they are  
not the absolute Buddha.

What truth is there in the moon in the water?

Moreover, although they are called the mature teaching,  
all are imperfect vehicles.

There is no truth in the bubbles on the lake's surface.

The gradual paths from the shallow to the profound are  
the successive stations of discarding the inferior and  
seizing the superior.

*Question:* What is the difference between the Buddha of the former nine types of teaching and the deity of the final, single type of Shingon realization?

[*Answer:*] Verses say,

The exoteric Buddha is both ignorant and not illuminated.  
The esoteric Buddha exhausts delusion without remainder.  
Exoteric Buddhism is the explanation of the *sambhoga-*  
*kāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya*.

Esoteric Buddhism is the explanation of the one *dharmakāya* Buddha.

Exoteric Buddhism creates a teaching in accord with the  
thoughts of others.

Esoteric Buddhism is classified as the teaching in accord  
with [Mahāvairocana's] own thoughts.

Exoteric Buddhism is an expedient, provisional teaching.

Esoteric Buddhism is the absolute, fundamental, and final  
teaching.

Exoteric Buddhism spends three *kalpas* attaining Buddha-  
hood.

Esoteric Buddhism in a single life perfects the Buddhist path.

Exotericism explains one or two *dharmakāya* names.

Esotericism, in brief, has four or five and at length  
innumerable [*dharmakāyas*].

Exotericism seems to explain the secrets of just one half,  
noumena,

Esotericism explains both secret aspects, noumena and  
phenomena.

Exotericism seems to explain the meaning of the precepts;  
Esotericism concurrently explains in detail the virtues  
expressed by the precepts.

Exoteric Buddhism is said to be the teaching that explains  
[Buddhas and living beings] as separate.

Only Shingon explains the *samādhi* [of the union of the  
Buddha and living beings].

Exoteric Buddhism teaches that causes can be explained.  
Shingon teaches that results can be explained.

In Exoteric Buddhism there are various causal seas of  
practice.

In Shingon there is the perfected sea of virtue.

Exotericism explains the foundation of an undivided-mind  
reality.

Esotericism explains the principle of the equality of the  
three mysteries.

Exoteric Buddhism does not explain the undivided mind of  
everything.

Esotericism explains innumerable individual minds.

Exotericism does not explain countless realities.

Esotericism explains the principle of Indra's compound net.

Exotericism makes principle the basis of all forms.

Esotericism explains indestructible form to be principle.

Exotericism explains that principle decidedly lacks  
expression.

Esotericism explains that principle has countless  
expressions.

12a

In Exoteric Buddhism the *dharmakāya* does not explain  
the teaching.

In Esoteric Buddhism four bodies alike explain the teaching.

Exotericism explains that the four universal vows (to save  
all living beings and so on) exhaust practices and pledges.

Esotericism establishes five vows as practices and pledges.

In Exotericism the *dharmakāya* is one and without retinue.

Esotericism provides for four types of *dharmakāya* companions.

In Exotericism the Buddha of principle and wisdom does not benefit living beings.

In Esotericism, in the three times, living beings are always saved.

Exoteric Buddhism realizes the principle of a single reality. Esotericism realizes untold, countless principles.

Exotericism posits serious impediments so one does not realize Buddhahood.

In Esotericism, though there are impediments one always realizes Buddhahood.

In Exotericism, without a profound contemplation there is no attaining Buddhahood.

In Esotericism, by merely intoning a mantra one also achieves Buddhahood.

Exotericism is the teaching of bodhisattvas and human masters.

Esotericism is the teaching of the four types of *dharmakāyas*.

Exoteric Buddhism is the rise and fall of the true teaching (True Dharma), its semblance (Imitative Dharma), and decay (Latter Dharma).

Shingon is the eternal and unchanging teaching.

Exoteric Buddhism is the teaching of birth through direct and secondary causes.

Esoteric Buddhism is the teaching of the truth itself.

Exoteric Buddhism explains one topic with many names and phrases.

Esotericism incorporates many meanings in the principle of one syllable.

Exoteric Buddhism is the teaching of the *saṃbhogakāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya*.

Esoteric Buddhism is the teaching of the *dharmakāya* for its own enjoyment.

Exotericism explains the theory of one principle and many phenomena.

Esoteric Buddhism is the teaching of [all phenomena] together being alike but different.

Exoteric Buddhism is the teaching that explains just a little the features of a syllable.

Esoteric Buddhism is the principle of the feature and meaning of a syllable.

Exotericism does not explain the four seals (*mudrās*, i.e., *mahā-mudrā*, *samaya-mudrā*, *dharma-mudrā*, and *karma-mudrā*); Esotericism does.

Exotericism does not explain the five stages of attaining enlightenment (*pañcākārābhisambodhikrama*); Esotericism does.

Exotericism does not explain the five wisdoms; Esotericism does.

The six elements of Exotericism are shallow; in Esotericism they are profound and extensive.

Exotericism obscures the three mysteries; Esotericism clarifies them.

Exotericism obscures the three families; Esotericism masters them well.

Exotericism neglects both worlds (Garbhadhātu and Vajradhātu); Esotericism alone explains them.

Exotericism does not have the theory of attaining Buddhahood with one visualization.

Exotericism is not the teaching of attaining Buddhahood by visualizing syllables.

Exotericism does not have the theory of attaining Buddhahood by forming *mudrās*.

Exotericism reveals a Buddhahood first attained five hundred *kalpas* (eons) ago.

Esotericism teaches a path of perfection, originally unborn.

The above differences are called the excellent meaning.

## Chapter II

### Correctly Entering the Esoteric Shingon Teaching

This has three components: the practice of the mystery of the body, the practice of the mystery of speech, and the practice of the mystery of mind. The practice of the mystery of speech has itself three sections: mantra recitation, visualization of [the forms of] the syllables, and realization of the syllables.

Mantra recitation is the recitation of the mantras with care, since mistakes in the phrases are not allowed. Visualization of syllables means that one visualizes the form of each syllable of the mantras. For instance one visualizes [the form of] the syllable *Om* on the tip of the nose, and in the latter watch of the night one attains enlightenment. Realization of the syllables means realizing the true meaning of each syllable.

There are also two parts to the teaching on the realization of the meaning of syllables. The first is the brief interpretation of the meaning of each syllable. The second is the teaching on the all-encompassing *dharmadhātu dharmakāya*. The first is the *dharmakāya* teaching of the five *cakras* and five wisdoms. The second is the *sambhogakāya* teaching of the nine syllables and nine vehicles. 12b

Now the *dharmakāya* is the fundamental Mahāvairocana *dharmakāya*. He enters the *samādhi* of the one essence and rapid power of all Tathāgatas and explains the *samādhi* of the *dharmadhātu* essence, saying, "I realize the originally unborn and transcend the path of speech. All offenses are resolved. I am far removed from direct and secondary causes. I realize that emptiness is like space."

Also, Vairocana Buddha abides in the diamond-sport *samādhi*, which destroys the four demons (*kleśamāra*, *skandhamāra*, *mṛtyumāra*, and *devaputramāra*). He explains the verses on the

destruction of the four demons, the salvation of the six paths of rebirth, and the fulfillment of the all-knowing wisdom *vajra*: *Namaḥ samanta-buddhānāṃ* (Homage to all the Buddhas) *aḥ vī ra hūṃ khaṃ*. These five syllables are the mantra verse that destroys the four demons. The former verse, [the homage,] means to take refuge in the Three Jewels and so on.

The syllable *aḥ* means practice and the originally unborn. The two dots (the *ḥ*, *visarga*, two dots in Indic scripts) mean purification. This can destroy the four demons and remove all suffering. Its extensive interpretation is as follows.

As the earth nurtures all things, so the earth element of the syllable *A* nurtures all practices of the six *pāramitās*. Earth has the meaning of hardness. The mind of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*) is adamant, nonretrogressing, and always tied to all virtuous fruits. If, when the Shingon practitioner tosses a flower, [it lands] on the mental ground of the [form of the] syllable *A*, [which is] the innate *bodhicitta*, one plants the seed of enlightenment that is first perceived. The underlying causes of pestilence and so on are removed, and one quickly reaches the highest enlightenment. One should know that this person has the surname of One Syllable, [the Buddha] Uṣṇīṣacakravartin. Therefore do not belittle the body. One should cultivate the *bodhi* practice. In this Shingon teaching the adverse agents doubt and slander are advantageous in the harmonious practice of the teachings of the three vehicles. How much more [if] one is able to toss a flower! How much more does the *yogin* have faith and discipline! This, in other words, signifies the syllable *A* and growth.

The syllable *vī* means to bind. A picture is an indestructible *samādhi*, that is, a mysterious liberation. The syllable *va* is the water element, which can cleanse the grime of the defilements. This is mind and body striving, the total cultivation of *bodhi*[*citta*] and not being scatterbrained. The syllable *va* signifies the water element and not being dissipated, that is, this is a perfected ocean of virtue.

The syllable *ra* means purifying the six sense organs. It can consume the defiled firewood of action, purify the transgressions and obstructions of the six sense organs, and realize the fruit of enlightenment.

The syllable *hūṃ* has three meanings [corresponding to] *ha*, *ū*, and *ma* (in Indic scripts). This is explained in detail in [Kūkai's] *Unjigi* (*The Meanings of the Word Hūṃ*). Also, these are the three gates to liberation [of emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness]. Just as the wind element can sweep up light and serious defilements, the wind element of the syllable *ha* can sweep up eighty thousand defilements and realize the principle of the four nirvanas (i.e., the nirvana of original self-purity, nirvana with remaining defilements, nirvana without remaining defilements, and nirvana without abode). When the wind of the syllable *ha*'s direct and indirect causes ceases, this is called the rest and bliss of great nirvana.

The syllable *khaṃ* signifies the space element. It means that the encompassing *dharmadhātu*, like space, is indestructible. Like the space element, it does not hinder any existence but permits growth. The space element of the syllable *khaṃ* encompasses pure and defiled lands and can perfect the direct and indirect fruits of the simpleton and the wise.

12c

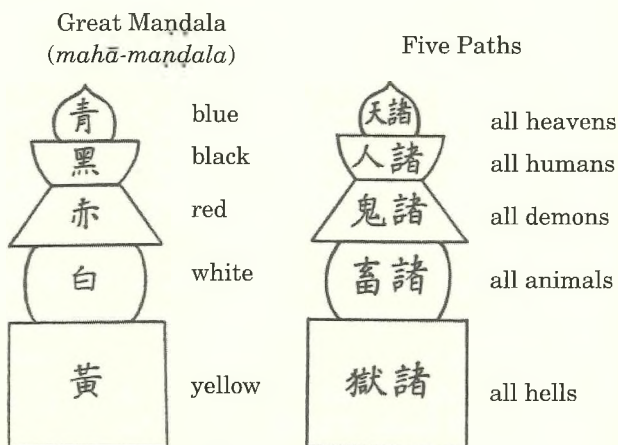
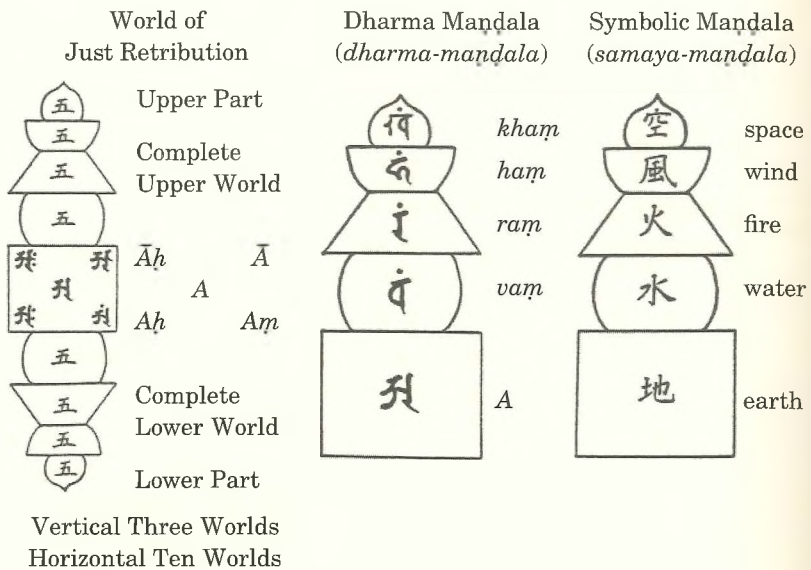
The Tripiṭaka master Śubhākarasiṃha said (? T. 18: 910b):

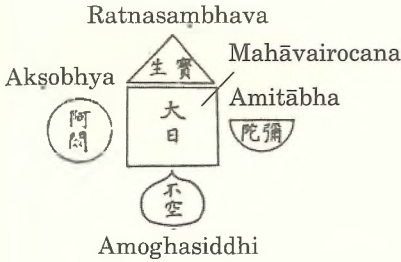
The heart of the *Vajrasekhara-sūtra*, the eye of the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*, the peerless field of merit, and the superlative virtue lie just in this diamond mantra of five syllables. If one receives this then the virtues one obtains cannot be measured. Forever there will be neither calamities nor illnesses. One will eliminate heinous offenses and assemble manifold virtues.

Also, your body born from your parents quickly experiences the state of great enlightenment. If you recite this one time per day, or from twenty-one to forty-nine times, compared to one recitation, it is like repeating one hundred million recitations of the twelve divisions of the Tripiṭaka.

This has been praise of the power of this mantra.

[What follows is a] picture of the five elements, the five *cakras*, the *dharmadhātu* of the six elements, the wheel of the ten worlds, the true nature of the form and mind of all living beings, the perfected Buddhahood of one's own body. Peacefully establish the receptacle world.





The five *cakras* are the five families.  
 The five families are the five  
 wisdoms.  
 The five wisdoms are the five  
 directions.



The two dots of the space *cakra* are the *uṣṇiṣa*.  
 The knowledge-fist (*bodhyagrya*)-*mudrā*  
 signifies the Vajradhātu.  
 The *samādhi-mudrā* signifies the Garbha-  
 dhātu.  
 These two parts are the nondual *maṇḍalas*.

### Action (*Karma*) *Maṇḍala*

13a

The above five *cakras*, called the head *cakra*, the face *cakra*, the chest *cakra*, the stomach *cakra*, and the knee *cakra*, are established on the basis of the *yogin*[’s body]. In the Vajradhātu the single syllable *vaṃ* turns into the five *cakras*. In the Garbhadhātu the single syllable *aḥ* is manifested in five *cakras*. Or *a*, *va*, *ra*, *ha*, and *kha* alike become the five-*cakra* world. In reference to the *yogin*, his pure mind of faith becomes the seed-syllable of the five *cakras*. The pure mind of faith is the pure mind of enlightenment. This is to know one’s own mind as it really is. Vertically it displays ten types of shallow and profound [minds]. Horizontally it displays a countless number [of minds].

### [The First Type of Mind]

When I leave my hometown and appear in the land of sentient beings, the offensive acts of the three poisons (greed, anger, and ignorance) are equal to the reckless thoughts of the goat. One can degenerate into the three [evil] paths (the realm of hungry ghosts,

the realm of animals, and the hell realms) and the eight conditions in which it is difficult to hear the teaching. By knowing the evil acts of one's own mind just as they are, one is removed from a parental home of ignorance. Furthermore, one forsakes a mind of fame and deeply believes in unlimited, adorned, and boundless self-existence. This, in other words, is the initial seed of knowing one's own mind just as it is.

### [The Second Type of Mind]

13b Chou Ch'u [of the Western Chin dynasty] kept apart from the three dangers (dragons, tigers, and self-love). Ajātaśatru regretted the three [evil] actions and realized the principle of fasting and moderation in eating. Occasionally he accepted the eight precepts (not to kill, steal, and so on), and redoubled his vows to attain success. Notwithstanding that the purple imperial palace was an old haunt of his previous life, the fabulous realm of the five desires was satiated right before his eyes, and he knew his own mind just as it was.

### [The Third Type of Mind]

The high platform of the first *dhyāna* is the proud abode of the past. A joy beyond this life is experienced forever and does not end. This is knowing an infant's own mind just as it is.

### [The Fourth and Fifth Types of Mind]

Gradually to understand the firewood of this burning house (i.e., samsara, this world of suffering) is to be asleep in the house of the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*. To know the slight eradications of these two vehicles just as they are is not to experience the principle of the empty nature of living beings.

### [The Sixth and Seventh Types of Mind]

[For the mind] committed to others, which severs speech, there are differences in human nature. For the unborn thought of

enlightenment there is emptiness alone and deliberations are severed. These [two minds] know, just as they are, that existence is ill and that emptiness is ill. They leave the distant path of the three great *kalpas* and anticipate the end of a vast and endless *kalpa*.

### [The Eighth and Ninth Types of Mind]

The Eternal Buddha of the *Lotus Sutra*, moreover, demonstrated an origin five hundred *kalpas* ago. The Reward Buddha of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* also echoes with an explanation of the ineffable. This is a partial understanding of one's own mind just as it is and not a complete understanding.

### [The Tenth Type of Mind]

The secrets of the five stages of meditation (*pañcākārābhisambodhikrama*) and the five wisdoms, the adornment of the world of wisdom and the world of principle, the stage of the mind of original self-enlightenment, these are called natural enlightenment. Also, they are called "knowing one's own mind just as it is." The profound meaning will be further discussed.

The true characteristics of the form and mind of all living beings is Vairocana's wisdom body of equality of beginningless origin. Form is the form *skandha*. Developed, it forms five *cakras*. Mind is the element of consciousness. United, it forms four *skandhas*. These indeed are the intrinsic wisdom of the *dharmadhātu dharmakāya* of the six elements. Because the five *cakras* are each endowed with manifold virtues, they are called *cakras*. Their innate features are extensive and if named are called "great." Because the Five Buddhas are self-enlightened and enlighten others, they are called Buddhas. Because the five wisdoms are concisely interpreted and resolute, they are termed wisdoms. Form is not apart from mind. The five elements are the five wisdoms. Mind is not separate from form. The five wisdoms are the five *cakras*. Form is emptiness. All elements are the five wisdoms. Emptiness is form. The five wisdoms are all elements. Because form and mind are

nondual, the five elements are the five organs. The five organs are the five wisdoms. These are pictured.

A Liver; Lord: Eye



Earth

*Ālaya*-consciousness; great perfect mirrorlike wisdom  
Ratnaketu Buddha; Akṣobhya, Bhaiṣajyaguru  
Generating the mind of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*)  
East; Wood; Spring; Blue

Va Lung; Lord: Nose



Water

*Manas* perception; discriminative wisdom; *dharmacakra*  
*pravartana* wisdom  
Amitāyus  
Developing the fruit of enlightenment  
West; Metal; Fall; White

13c

Ra Heart; Lord: Tongue



Fire

[*Kliṣṭa*]*mano* perception; equality wisdom  
Saṃkusumitarājendra; Ratnasambhava; Prabhūtaratna  
Cultivation of *bodhi* practice  
South; Fire; Summer; Red

Ha Kidney; Lord: Ear



Wind

Five perceptions; duty-fulfillment wisdom  
Amoghasiddhi; Śākyamuni; Dundubhisvara  
Principle of entering nirvana  
North; Water; Winter; Black

Kha Spleen; Lord: Mouth



Space

*Amara*-consciousness; intrinsic *dharmadhātu* wisdom  
Vairocana Buddha  
Endowed with means  
Center; Earth-function; Yellow

The above is the tradition of Śubhākarasiṃha (T. 18: 909b).

A: Earth; Earth; Saturn; Center; Yellow; Pṛthivi Lord;  
Sthāvarā (Stable Earth) Goddess.

*Vi*: Water; Water; Mercury; North; Black; Varuṇa;  
dragons and river gods.

*Ra*: Fire; Fire; Mars; South; Red, Agni Deva; fire god.

*Haṃ*: Metal; Wind; Venus; West; White; metal god; Vāyu Deva.

*Khaṃ*: Wood; Space; Jupiter; East; Blue; wood god;  
Ākāśa Deva; sky god.

The above is the tradition of the Tripiṭaka master Amoghavajra  
(T. 21: 391c, 398b).

*A*: Generating enlightenment in one's own mind; great  
perfect mirrorlike wisdom; Ratnaketu, Akṣobhya; East.

*Ā*: Endowing this very mind with all practices; equality  
wisdom; Saṃkusumitarāja; Ratnasambhava; South.

*Aṃ*: Witnessing genuine enlightenment of the mind;  
discriminative wisdom; Amitābha Buddha; West.

*Aḥ*: Realizing the great nirvana of the mind; duty-fulfillment  
wisdom; Dundubhisvara; Amoghasiddhi; Śākyamuni;  
North.

*Āṃḥ*: Generating the expedient means of the mind; intrinsic  
*dharmadhātu* wisdom; Mahāvairocana Buddha; Center.

The Five Buddhas and the five wisdoms of the [Pure] Land Adorned  
with Mysteries and the nondual principle and wisdom are the  
Vajradhātu. These are the Five Buddhas and five wisdoms of the  
Garbha[dhātu].

*Va*: Generating *bodhicitta*; great perfect mirrorlike wisdom;  
Akṣobhya; Ratnaketu.

*Vā*: Cultivating *bodhi* practice; equality wisdom; Ratna-  
sambhava; Saṃkusumitarāja.

*Vaṃ*: Achieving the fruit of enlightenment; discriminative  
wisdom; Amitābha Buddha. 14a

*Vaḥ*: Entering the principle of nirvana; duty-fulfillment wisdom; Amoghasiddhi; Dundubhisvara; Śākyamuni.

*Vāṃḥ*: Endowment of expedient means; intrinsic *dharmadhātu* wisdom; Mahāvairocana Tathāgata.

The mind—the Five Buddhas of the Vajradhātu and the nondual Mahayana—is the Garbha[*dhātu*]. That is, it is the nondual Five Buddhas and five wisdoms of the Vajradhātu. Just as one knows the five *cakras* of this syllable *va*, just so also are the other syllables. Because each is endowed with the five wisdoms, they also are innumerable wisdoms. Because of the power of the [great] perfect mirror[like wisdom], they are truly enlightened wisdoms. This is called Buddhahood attained by one's own mind. If the *yogin*, in the four periods (i.e., evening, night, morning, and afternoon), is not interrupted, and if whether asleep or awake he contemplates wisdom without disruption and accords with *samādhi*, he attains Buddhahood in the present body in this life without difficulty.

*Ra Ha Kha* Liver

*Rā Hā Khā* Heart

*Raṃ* (the Five Buddhas of the Ratna Family)

*Haṃ* (the Five Buddhas of the Karma Family)

*Khaṃ* (the Five Buddhas of the Ākāśa Family)

Spleen; the contemplation of the *yogin*

*Raḥ Haḥ Khaḥ* Lung

*Rāḥ Hāḥ Khāḥ* Kidney

The Tripiṭaka master [Amoghavajra] said:

I have transmitted these five syllables from the Tripiṭaka master Vajrabodhi. Having faith, and cultivating these over one thousand days, suddenly on a full moon night in autumn I attained the *samādhi* eliminating obstructions.

Accordingly I heard this secret and deeply believed in it. For many years I practiced this and finished attaining the first stage

of *samādhi*. The faithful *yogin* does not conceive doubts or fantasies. If *vaṃ* were an empty word, in cultivating it you would know yourself, and your vows still would not be fulfilled in a single lifetime but be in vain or cease.

Next, the syllable *A* is the Vajra Family of Akṣobhya who rules the liver and visual perception. That is, the syllable *A* is the principle *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana, self-purity, the realm of the originally unborn and incomprehensible *śūnyatā*. It is the seed-syllable of the earth *cakra* of great compassion and the *maṇḍala* of the Vajra Family. In reference to form, earth is the form element. It is the consciousness *skandha* of the mind among the five *skandhas* and upholds the earth. If impurities are applied to this seed-syllable, the earth consciousness is stirred and beckons love. Windy skies are the essence of potential offenses, and the burning earth is the gate of offenses. If the seed-syllables of water, space, and consciousness descend and dwell in the womb, they all become the five *skandhas*. Because the consciousness *skandha* of the mind among the five *skandhas* is developed, it is called "earth." This is the form element. Now the liver rules the spiritual soul. The spirit (Ch.: *ch'i*) of the soul is the spirit of wood in the eastern direction. Its color is sky blue. This blue color depends on wood to arise. Wood depends on water to grow. The liver depends on the blue breath and kidney for life. Its shape is like the lotus leaf. A bunch of stones is found in it. It is found to the left of the heart in the body (from a frontal view). The liver externalized forms the eye and governs the muscles. When the tendons are exhausted they become nails.

14b

[Chih] Chiao Ch'an Shih [of the Sung dynasty] said that the liver lotus has eight leaves and is blue in color; it has five shades.

The syllable *vaṃ* is the Lotus Family of Amitābha Buddha who rules the lungs and olfactory perception. That is, the syllable *vaṃ* is the eleventh vocal change [of the syllable *va*]. The syllable *vī* is the third change. This is the wise water of the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana. It is the seed-syllable of the great compassionate water *cakra* of Amitābha. The Dharma of the mastery of spiritual powers

is called the *dharmakāya*. Conformity to and response to features is also called the *saṃbhogakāya*. This is the *maṇḍala* of the Lotus Family. The lungs rule the animal soul. The appearance of animal souls is like the form of the nose. This is the western direction and the element metal. It rules autumn and its color is white. Breath is found naturally in the lungs and nose, i.e., this is the element wind. This is the idea (*saṃjñā*) *skandha* of the mind among the five *skandhas* and upholds the wind. The idea *skandha* of the mind depends on consciousness to arise. The consciousness of the mind depends on the two causes of the past (*avidyā*, ignorance, and *saṃskāra*, mental formations) to produce the present five effects (i.e., the five *skandhas*: consciousness, *viñāna*; name-and-form, *nāma-rūpa*; six sense bases, *ṣaḍāyatana*; contact, *sparsa*; and feeling, *vedanā*). That is, based on ignorance (*avidyā*) and mental formations (*saṃskāra*) there arise consciousness, name-and-form, and so on. Erroneous thinking develops and becomes an endless samsara. These are the twelve links of dependent arising (*pratīyasamutpāda*).

The lungs generate mental consciousness. Mental consciousness generates erroneous thoughts and these cause samsara. When white breath and many pungent smells of the lungs enter the lungs, these swell and damage the liver. If there is no animal soul in the lungs, there is trepidation and disease, and the heart damages the lungs, which become ill. Just as if fire were victorious over metal, if the heart is strong, the lungs are weak. One should stop the lungs in the heart. With the white spirit gather the red spirit and the illness of the lungs will vanish. "White spirit" is a name for the lungs. The flower of the lungs has three leaves, is white in color, and is semicircular in shape. They are found 45.45 centimeters to the right and left of the third vertebra.

The syllable *raṃ* is the Ratna Family of Ratnasambhava, who rules the heart and mouth. That is, the syllable *raṃ* is the wise fire of the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana, the great compassion of Ratnasambhava, the *maṇḍala* of the body of blessed virtues, and the seed-syllable of the fire element. It burns the defilements of beginningless ignorance and erroneous attachment of all living

beings and causes the seed of the mind of enlightenment (*bodhi-citta*) to sprout. In other words, this is the body of the Tathāgata's blessed virtues. The fire of true wisdom consumes the karmic causes of poverty and makes one a master of blessed virtues. The fire of the heart rules the summer, and its color is red. From the color red, fire arises, and fire arises from wood. It is the feeling (*vedanā*) *skandha* of the mind among the five *skandhas* and upholds fire. Feelings depend on thoughts to arise. Also, the heart depends on the red breath and lungs to exist. The heart externalized becomes the tongue, which governs the blood. Blood exhausted becomes milk. Also, this governs the auditory perceptions and produces the nasal passages, the bridge of the nose, the forehead, the jaws, and so on. When many bitter flavors enter the heart, it swells and injures the lungs. If there is no spirit in the heart, one will largely forget the past and future. The kidneys injure the heart, which becomes ill. Just as if water were victorious over fire, if the lungs are strong the heart is weak. One should stop the heart in the lungs. With the red spirit gather the black spirit and the illness of the heart will vanish. "Red spirit" is a name for the heart. The flower of the heart is red in color and triangular in shape. It is found 45.45 centimeters exactly to the left of the fifth vertebra.

14c

The syllable *haṃ* is the Karma Family of Amoghasiddhi Buddha, who rules the kidneys. That is, the syllable *haṃ* is the eleventh changed sound of the syllable *ha*. It is generally interpreted as the others. It is common to the fifteen vowels, i.e., it is the eternal life of the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana, the true essence of Śākyamuni, the seed-syllable of the great compassionate wind element. This signifies that the gate of the three liberations and the three times are incomprehensible. This is the *karma-maṇḍala* of the karmic body. Wind is the idea *skandha* of the mind and upholds the ocean water of the six internal organs. The breath of the lungs circulates and becomes the sea of samsara. The five organs are the liver, lungs, heart, spleen, and kidneys. The stomach is one of the six internal organs. The stomach is the abdomen, which includes the spleen. The ocean water of the six internal organs

fully enters the stomach. The excretions of the internal organs all are received in the stomach, and each of the five flavors flows. Since good flavors enter the stomach, the kidneys are connected with the stomach. The stomach is below the twelfth vertebra on both sides for 45.4 centimeters. The kidneys are on either side of the fourteenth vertebra, each 45.4 centimeters. Also, the one below the waist on the left is called the “kidney,” while the one on the right is called the “gate of life.” The kidneys supply the heart. If they tire they drain off rice nutrients. They govern [human] resolution. They become the northern direction and water. Water governs the winter. They are black and are the impulses (*saṃskāra*) in the mind among the five *skandhas* and uphold water. Impulses depend on feelings to arise, and feelings depend on thoughts to arise. The kidneys depend on the color black and the lungs to arise and govern the ears. The kidneys manifested become the bones and govern the marrow. The marrow exhausted becomes the ears and breasts. The bones weakened become the teeth. When many salty flavors enter the kidneys, they swell and damage the heart. If there is no resolution in the kidneys, there is much sorrow, and the spleen injures the kidneys, which become ill. Just as if the earth were superior to water, if the spleen is strong, the kidneys are weak. One should stop the kidneys in the spleen. With the black spirit gather the yellow spirit and the illness of the kidney will vanish. “Black spirit” is a term for water.

The syllable *khaṃ* is the Ākāśa Family of Vairocana, the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana of the upper region, who rules the spleen and tongue perception. That is, the syllable *khaṃ* is the invisible *uṣṇīṣa* of Mahāvairocana, the five Buddha Uṣṇīṣacakravartins (Sitātapatra, Jayoṣṇīṣa, Vijayoṣṇīṣa, Tejoraśyuoṣṇīṣa, and Vikīraṇoṣṇīṣa), the wisdom of great space, nirvana, reality (*bhūtatathatā*), the enlightenment realized by all Buddhas in the ten directions and the three times, and the peerless supreme *maṇḍala*. The spleen governs the *amara*-consciousness and is in the very middle. Also, it rules the season of summer, and its color is yellow. The syllable *A* has a true golden color. The collar yellow nurtures wood from

the earth and creates fire from wood. It is the consciousness *skandha* in the mind among the five *skandhas* and upholds the earth. Or, this is the wood consciousness. Wood is blue; this is the sky. The spleen depends on the yellow spirit and heart to exist. It rules the mouth and is [human] volition. When many sweet flavors enter the spleen, it swells and injures the kidneys. If in the spleen there is no willing spirit, there is much perplexity; the kidneys harm the spleen and it becomes ill. Just as if wood were superior to earth, if the kidneys are strong, the spleen is weak. One should stop the heart in the kidneys. With the yellow spirit gather the blue spirit and the illness of the spleen will vanish. "Yellow spirit" is a name for the spleen. The flower of the spleen has one leaf, is yellow in color, and has four corners. 15a

The five organs are like a lotus flower facing downward. The inner five organs are manifested in the five outer actions and take on an appearance. This is called form. Form is the five elements and the five senses. Name is thought, the fourth *skandha* of the mind. Form and mind are the *dharmakāya* of the six elements, the Tathāgata of the five wisdoms, the five great bodhisattvas (Vajrapāramita, Vajrasattva, Vajraratna, Vajradharma, and Vajrakarma), and the five great *vidyārājas* (Acalanātha, Trailokyavijaya, [Amṛta]-kuṇḍalin, Yamāntaka, and Vajrayakṣa). In general, the sun, the moon, the five planets, the twelve [astrological] houses, and the twenty-eight constellations become the human form.

The earth element of mountains and islands arises from the syllable *A*. All river and ocean currents arise from the syllable *vaṃ*. Gold and precious gems, the constellations, the sun and moon, and radiant gems arise from the syllable *raṃ*. The five grains, all fruits, and the blossoms of all flowers depend on the syllable *haṃ* for fruition. Excellent and fragrant beauties, the growth of people and animals, facial color and radiance, proper features, blessings, virtues, wealth, and honor depend on the syllable *khaṃ* to adorn one.

The syllable *A* is the essence of thought, profound *sūnyatā*, and nirvana. In comprehending this there can be no comprehension. In

rejecting this there can be no rejection. It is the mother principle of all natures' ability to exist and the essential wisdom at the basis of consecrations. Just as the syllable *A* has been discussed, so too can the other syllables.

In general, the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* and the *Vajraśekhara-sūtra* combine in outline a profound, wonderful, and peerless field of merit and a deep, inscrutable, and virtuous essence. All sutras of the Mahayana explained by the *saṃbhogakāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya* exist in these five syllables only. If one recites these once, the virtues obtained are immeasurable and mysterious. Moreover, all virtues of eliminating calamities (*śāntika*), increasing benefits (*pauṣṭika*), subduing (*ābhicāruka*), subjecting (*vaśikaraṇa*), and attracting (*ākaraṇa*) are all completely perfected. The mantra of five syllables is an incantation of all Buddhas. The five *mudrās* are all *mudrās* of living beings. Further, the *yogin* who practices these should know that they forever end calamities and eliminate all diseases. They are the jeweled topknot of the Five Buddhas, the profound base of the five wisdoms; the mother principle of the Tathāgatas in the ten directions benefiting living beings; the protective wise father of the sages in the three times. Furthermore, they are the complete essence of the six elements and the four *maṇḍalas*, the different four bodies and three mysteries, the refuges of the four [kinds of] sages (i.e., *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, *bodhisattvas*, and Buddhas), the six common beings (i.e., hell dwellers, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, *asuras* [demigods], and *devas* [gods]), and the true nature of the five destinies (i.e., the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, and *devas*), and the four [modes of] births. They destroy the four *māras* and liberate one from the six destinies (i.e., the above five destinies plus the realm of *asuras*).

The syllable *A* is the diamond earth and the contemplation of the diamond seat. The syllable *vaṃ* is diamond water and the contemplation of the lotus dais of the mind. The syllable *raṃ* is the diamond fire element and constitutes the solar disc contemplation. The syllable *haṃ* is the wind of diamond wisdom and constitutes

the lunar disc contemplation. The syllable *kham* is the space of the diamond *samādhi* and constitutes the great space contemplation. By traversing the stage of great space one perfects the mystery of the body, that is, this is the supreme drink of the unborn nectar and the wonderful medicine of the sweet Buddha-nature.

If one syllable enters the five organs, all illnesses and all troubles will cease. Thus the great master [Kūkai in his *Nenjishingon-rikankeibyakumon*] says, "If one syllable enters the organs, all illnesses cease." The common person contemplating the solar or lunar disc attains Buddhahood.

Also, the heart of the common person has a form like a closed lotus flower. It is a muscle divided into eight parts. These are the eight petals of the heart lotus and the eight parts of the flesh. In contemplating this heart lotus make the eight petals of the white lotus unfold. Above the dais, contemplate the syllable *amḥ* with a *vajra* shape. This is expedient means constituting the end, the Lord of the Mind Mahāvairocana Tathāgata, the intrinsic wisdom of the *dharmadhātu*, the eternally quiescent and fundamental *dharmakāya*. It is the complete essence of the [lotus] flower dais, it transcends the petals, and moreover it is not of the realm of thought or speech. Only Buddhas and solely Buddhas can realize this. With this expedient, all images that appear are identical to great emptiness. The central dais of the heart is empty space possessing all forms. It is the causeless *dharmakāya* manifesting forms. In other words, this is the universal ocean assembly of the *maṇḍala* of the empowered world in the ten directions. It is not a place beyond reach. Everywhere it is united with the *dharmadhātu*. This is entirely the form body of one essence of the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana. Since it is endowed with all virtues, it is the Buddha. All Buddhas are the being (*sattva*) Mahāvairocana. All beings are Vairocana. Gods, *rākṣasas*, demons, and spirits too are features of the *dharmakāya*. Thus realize that these five syllables are the incantations of all Buddhas.

When people transmit this teaching, they should present offerings such as *caityas* and be endowed with the virtues of the arhats. How much more should they have faith and practice! Such

people are white lotuses among people. They are relics of the *dharmakāya*. They combine the four bodies of Vairocana, that is, they are identical to the innate and pure five wisdoms of all Buddhas. The nine consciousnesses of my nature arise from the two forms of karma resulting from the past, are nondual, and have the same nature. The great being (*mahāsattva*) [Mahāvairocana] of Shingon has the three mysteries alike and is like deep space. If the *dharmadhātu* is a palace, the site of the practice is the Land Adorned with Mysteries. If there is a main deity with six elements, then living beings are the main deity. If the main deity and the *yogin* are fundamentally equal, then I realize the origin. I am the ancient Buddha.

15c The world of principle and wisdom are my heart-*maṇḍala*. The five families and three families are my body. One can be ignorant of the five elements, construct the castle of the three realms (i.e., the realms of desire, form, and non-form), and transmigrate in the five organs, five elements, and samsara. Making the syllable A the basis of ignorance, one suffers without abatement. If one realizes the five elements, one constructs the aspects of the four *maṇḍalas* and realizes the Five Buddhas, the five wisdoms, and nirvana. This is the origin. All natures return to and enter the one syllable A. The features of the hells and the heavens, Buddha-nature and the *icchāntikas*, defilements and enlightenment, samsara and nirvana, non-Buddhist views and the correct Middle Path, *sūnyatā* and existence, the relative and the absolute, the two vehicles and the One Vehicle, pain and joy—are all the results of the karmic effects of the six elements. Actually, these are the workings of the six elements that form causes. Consequently, with the sensations of the six elements, effects are produced. Based on true wisdom one can realize the six elements. By cultivating the five wisdoms, four bodies, four *maṇḍalas*, three mysteries, and an upright mind, they are expressed and realized and one perfects the infinite and adorned great *maṇḍala*. Through reckless attachments one can be deluded in the five destinies. Samsara, the defilements, the four and eight kinds of [grave] offenses, the five rebellious offenses, and the offense

of slander affect corrupt minds. People suffer, grieve, and experience the effects of great pain and great hell. Ignorance and enlightenment exist in oneself. In the absence of attachment one reaches [nirvana]. The other syllables are also like this.

*Vam*, *hūṃ*, *trāḥ*, *hriḥ*, and *aḥ*, in reference to the Vajradhātu, also clarify the five organs. These are the liver, heart, spleen, lungs, and kidneys.

The liver is blue and governs wood. The syllable *hūṃ* constitutes its original enlightenment. The syllable *hriḥ* can destroy this. Why? The syllable *hūṃ* is the element wood, that is, the seed-syllable of the liver. The syllable *hriḥ* is the element metal and the seed-syllable of the lungs. Because metal is superior to wood, the lungs are also superior to the liver. Thus know that with the syllable *hriḥ* one can destroy the syllable *hūṃ*.

The *yogin* should contemplate the meaning of the syllable *hriḥ*. Visualize the color white, that is, contemplate the principle of the originally unborn. Metal changes and becomes the sword of wisdom. This destroys the wood nature of the three shades of blue; false views, that is, the five obstacles; and the one hundred and sixty minds risen from ignorance and erroneous views on the features of the syllable *hūṃ*. All are exhausted. Furthermore, this nourishes the great *bodhicitta* tree of the originally unborn five wisdom-*vajras*—the meaning of the syllable *hūṃ*—and the lord of the *sāla* tree. This form gradually grows and becomes the Tathāgata Akṣobhya of the great perfect mirrorlike wisdom (*ādarsa-jñāna*). That is, this reveals the gate of the diamond *bodhicitta samādhi*.

The heart is red in color and governs fire. The syllable *trāḥ* constitutes its original enlightenment. The syllable *aḥ* can destroy this. Why? The nature of water is superior to that of fire, and the kidneys also are superior to the heart. Thus the meaning of the syllable *aḥ* destroys the features of the syllable *trāḥ*. Thus with the black water of the originally unborn five wisdoms one douses the fire of the three shades of red; false views, that is, the one hundred and sixty minds; and the five obstacles risen from ignorance and erroneous views. Furthermore, this gives birth to the *vajra*-red fire

of the blessings and virtues of the originally unborn five wisdoms of the syllable *trāḥ*. This gradually increases, and the blazing fire of wisdom becomes Ratnasambhava Tathāgata of the equality wisdom (*samatā-jñāna*). In other words, this reveals the gate of the diamond *samādhi* of blessings and virtue.

16a The lungs are white and govern metals. The syllable *hrīḥ* constitutes their original enlightenment. The syllable *trāḥ* can destroy this. Why? The nature of fire is superior to that of metal, and the heart also is superior to the lungs. The meaning of the syllable *trāḥ* destroys the features of the syllable *hrīḥ*. Thus with the red fire of the originally unborn five-pronged *vajra* wisdom one consumes the falsely conceived rough metal of the three shades of white, i.e., the five obstacles and the one hundred and sixty minds risen from ignorance and erroneous views. This changes into the white metal of truth—the wisdom of the originally unborn five-pronged *vajra* wisdom. Gradually increasing and perfected, this becomes Amitāyus Tathāgata of the discriminative wisdom (*pratyavekṣa-jñāna*) and the gate of the diamond *samādhi* of wisdom.

The kidneys are black in color and govern water. The syllable *aḥ* constitutes their original enlightenment. The syllable *raṃ* can destroy this. Why? Earth is superior to water, and the spleen also is superior to the kidneys. The meaning of the syllable *raṃ* destroys the features of the syllable *aḥ*. Thus with the indestructible yellow earth of the originally unborn five-pronged *vajra* wisdom one pours away the three kinds of black water, that is, the five obstacles and one hundred and sixty minds risen from ignorance and erroneous views. Moreover, one masters the black water of eight virtues of the originally unborn five-pronged *vajra* wisdom. This gradually overflows and produces the body of Amoghasiddhi Tathāgata of the duty-fulfillment wisdom (*krtyānuṣṭhāna-jñāna*) and the gate of the diamond *samādhi* of action.

The spleen is yellow in color and governs earth. The syllable *vaṃ* constitutes its original enlightenment. The syllable *hūṃ* can destroy this. Why? The nature of wood is superior to that of earth. The liver is superior to the spleen. The meaning of the syllable

*hūṃ* destroys the features of the syllable *vaṃ*. Thus with the wood of the originally unborn five-pronged *vajra* wisdom one destroys the falsely conceived earth of three shades of yellow, that is, the five obstacles and one hundred and sixty minds arisen from ignorance and erroneous views. Moreover, this produces the indestructible Nārāyaṇa-like yellow originally enlightened earth of the fundamentally unborn five-pronged *vajra* wisdom of the letter *vāṃḥ*. Gradually this increases and becomes the Tathāgata Vairocana of the intrinsic *dharmadhātu* wisdom. This is the diamond *samādhi* gate of the *dharmadhātu* of the six elements.

If, when chanting, it is the Vajradhātu, the body enters the *vajra-pāramitā samādhi* and one becomes this deity. This is the essence of the *nirmāṇakāya*. If it is the Garbha[dhātu], the body enters the *samādhi* of Mañjuśrī. That is, the main deity becomes a *nirmāṇakāya*. You and others form a profound assembly. This is the indestructible *dharmakāya*.

The gall bladder, in the stage of attainment, is named and becomes Trailokyavijaya. The large intestines, in the stage of attainment, are named and become [Amṛta]kuṇḍalin. The bladder, in the stage of attainment, is named and becomes Yamāntaka. The small intestines, in the stage of attainment, are named and become Vajrayakṣa. The stomach, in the stage of attainment, is named and becomes Acala. The three entrails, in the stage of attainment, are named and become Samantabhadra.

Emperor Saga (r. 809–823) asked, “What is the proof of attaining Buddhahood in the present body in the Shingon school?” Reverently the monk [Kūkai] entered the *samādhi* of the contemplation of the five organs. Suddenly on the monk’s head a jeweled crown of the Five Buddhas appeared, and from his physical body of the five substances a brilliant light in five colors radiated. Then [the emperor] rose from his seat, and all the people bowed to Kūkai. All the schools waved banners, and the empress sent robes. Thus this *samādhi* of five organs was the secret of secrets. [Kūkai] did not rise from his seat; it was a *samādhi* explained at that moment. However, it was all the more so only in response to his faith.

16b

16c

The Forms of the Gods of the Five Organs



**Blue Dragon** (top right):

Liver; *hūm*; eyes; to call; rancid; Jupiter; Great Year God; blue; wood.

**Mysterious Warrior** (top left):

Kidneys; *ah*; ears; to hum; foul; Mercury; Year God of Penalty; black; water.

**Yellow Dragon** (center):

Spleen; *vam*; tongue; to sing; fragrant; Saturn; Year God of Virtue; yellow; earth.

**Red Sparrow** (bottom right):

Heart; *trāḥ*; mouth; to talk; burnt; Mars; Year God of Destruction; red; fire.

**White Tiger** (bottom left):

Lungs; *hrīḥ*; nose; to weep; rank; Venus; Great General; white; metal.

It is said in the *Stanzas on One Syllable Entering an Organ* [Whereupon] *All Diseases Cease and One Attains Buddhahood in the Present Body*: 17a

If either a common person or a sage receives a consecration, forms the *stupa-mudrā* with his hands, recites in the mouth the mantra *vaṃ*, and contemplates that he is Mahāvairocana, the one without doubts in this present life suddenly eliminates ignorance as well as the five rebellious offenses, the four or eight grave offenses, the seven rebellious acts violating the vows, the slandering of the Mahayana sutras, the countless serious offenses of the *icchantikas*, and so on—all these are completely eliminated. In the absence of the slightest offenses one attains Buddhahood in the present body and is forever removed from samsara. One always benefits living beings without cease. The Tathāgatas in the ten directions likewise enter *samādhi*, and all the Buddhas of the three times themselves experience pleasure in the teaching. With mastery in spiritual powers one experiences the mysteries. The raising of the hands and the moving of the feet are all secret *mudrās*. The sounds made upon opening the mouth are all mantras. The thoughts one has are one's own *samādhi*. The wonderful function of all virtues are the *maṇḍala* of one's own mind. If one forms [a *mudrā*] one time, then one surpasses the constant forming of all *mudrās*. If one recites [a mantra] one time, then one also surpasses the chanting of countless untold mantras. If one visualizes just once, then it is certain that one transcends the three times, enters myriad *samādhis*, and

cultivates wonderful visualizations. If there are living beings who hear of these virtues but do not have faith, then you should know that these people invariably fall into the Avīci [Hell] and crush their own Buddha-natures. [Since] even all the Buddhas cannot save them, how much less [so could] other people [save them]!

The above stanzas were transmitted when Kakuban was initiated. Another version of these stanzas has been transmitted, but I have not written it down and do not remember it. The above teaching on the present body endowed with the five *cakras* is finished.

Next is the teaching on the nine syllables and the ninefold future life in the Pure Land. This teaching has two parts. First is the teaching on the meaning of the phrase (the words). Second is the teaching on the meaning of the syllables.

First is the teaching on the meaning of the phrase *oṃ amṛta tse* [sic; *teje*] *hara hūṃ*. These nine syllables (*oṃ a mṛ ta te je ha ra hūṃ*) form five words. The initial syllable *oṃ* has three meanings. The first meaning is the *trikāya*. The second meaning is to take refuge and bow. The third meaning is a vast offering. In general it is as [explained] in the *Shou hu ching* (*Shugokyō*, T. 19, No. 997: 565a).

Next is the meaning of the three syllables *a mṛ ta*. This is as in the commentary on the ten *amṛtas*.

17b The next two syllables (*te je*) have six meanings. The first meaning is great majestic virtue, since [Amitābha] has six arms of majestic virtue. The second meaning is great majestic light, since he has a ubiquitous shining light. The third meaning is great majestic spiritual power, since he has supernatural power. The fourth meaning is great majestic power, since he has the majestic power of the six elements. The fifth meaning is great majestic strength, since he has the virtue of quickly destroying enemies. The sixth meaning is great majestic wrath, since he has the virtue of roaring in the first bodhisattva stage (*bhūmi*).

The next two syllables (*ha ra*) have six meanings. The first meaning is attaining Buddhahood, since [Amitābha's] mind, which

attained Buddhahood, attained it long ago as an initial enlightenment. The second meaning is to do deeds, since he welcomes and joins [people to the Pure Land] without cease. The third meaning is to perform a function, since he has mastery in spiritual powers. The fourth meaning is to make recitation, since he welcomes persons with ten recitations. The fifth meaning is to practice meditation, since he enters the *samādhi* of discriminative wisdom. The sixth meaning is to make vows, since he generates the forty-eight great vows.

The final syllable [*hūṃ*] is composed of the four letters *a*, *ha*, *u*, and *ma*. They have the meaning of destroying, since they destroy the enemies of Buddhism. They mean the power to create, since they can create countless truths. They mean fear, since they terrorize the *deva māras* of the non-Buddhist teachings. The commentary [of Kūkai, the *Unjigi*,] on the meaning of the syllable *hūṃ* treats this in detail.

The syllable *A* is as above. Also, the one hundred meanings are as in the sutra (T. 19: 532b). There are, in brief, ten meanings of the three truths (emptiness, existence, and the Middle Path). To give one level of truth on the truth of existence, stanzas say:

The three truths of *pratītyasamutpāda* are the truth of emptiness.

The three truths of *pratītyasamutpāda* are the truth of provisional [reality].

The three truths of *pratītyasamutpāda* are the truth of the Middle Path.

The infinite undivided mind is the truth of emptiness.

The infinite undivided mind is the truth of existence.

The infinite undivided mind is the truth of the Middle Path.

The three mysteries of the *dharmadhātu* are the truth of the unborn.

The three mysteries of the *dharmadhātu* are the truth of innate existence.

The three mysteries of the *dharmadhātu* are the truth of the Middle [Path].

The three mysteries of the *dharmadhātu* are the truth of the *maṇḍala*.

Even one such meaning is however not known in Exoteric Buddhism. How much less does it possess a knowledge of the profound meanings of the ten truths! The first three truths, from the point of view of the three truths established by Exoteric Buddhism, constitute a wonderful contemplation of the mysterious three truths. However these are three teachings of an ignorant person. The next three teachings, in reference to the undivided mind of the shallow and abbreviated teachings of Esoteric Buddhism, use the name infinite for the mysterious three truths. All the above teachings, whether of the three vehicles or the One Vehicle, are all completely ignorant of the infinite extent of the stage of the undivided mind. Some know six consciousnesses, some know eight consciousnesses, some know nine consciousnesses, and some know ten consciousnesses.

In the second [group of] three truths, three infinite truths are posited. In the third [group of] three truths, in direct reference to the interpenetration of phenomena and principle, there is a broad discussion of the principle of the three truths. In the three truths of the third group, the *dharmadhātu* of phenomena and principle is united and explained. Moreover, this encompasses all natures. Since these are not unchanging natures with a secret self-nature, in direct reference to an original equality, the three mysteries of the *dharmakāya* Buddha with an unborn self-nature beyond one and all do not exist as subject or object. Still, we have the term third truth. The fourth single truth concerns the innate *dharmadhātu* reality, the *svabhāva-dharmakāya* of wisdom. It signifies the wonderful truth of the deeply mysterious essence, characteristics, and function of the nondual Mahayana *maṇḍala*.

Next, since the syllable *u*, [which means] the destruction of all natures, is incomprehensible, in six senses it is termed the destruction of all natures, because of 1) suffering, *śūnyatā*, non-eternity, and egolessness; 2) the changes of the four phases [of existence:

birth, duration, change, and extinction]; 3) an incomparable self-existence; 4) nonabiding self-nature; 5) existence due to dependent arising; and 6) relativity. Now the meaning of the syllable *u* is like this. One should know further that, since all natures originally have permanence, bliss, personality, and purity, the one absolute is immovable and is not hindered. They abide in self-nature, are without coming or going, transcend dependent arising, are originally unborn, have a nature identical to space, and thus have one nature. Thus in the sutra (T. 19: 505c) it says that the syllable *u* signifies the *sambhogakāya*. Also, there are nine types of destruction. These are the former nine types of mental states, since they are unaware of the inexhaustible and countless number of infinite three mysteries.

The final syllable *ma* signifies that the selfhood of all natures is incomprehensible. That is, a self signifies self-existence and two kinds of masters (i.e., ego and *dharmas*). The ego is oneself. Selves are all common folk. Non-Buddhist teachings, the two vehicles, the three vehicles, the One Vehicle of the same teaching, and the One Vehicle of the separate teaching [in the Kegon school] and so on are all attached to selves. [While] they all consider their own vehicle as the absolute self-existing and enlightened Buddha, in this Shingon school these form the initial mind. Also, the realm of nondual wisdom where all natures originally are equal is neither creator nor created. Potentially everywhere, it is nowhere destroyed. Still, as this is the undivided mind of the three mysteries, already it lacks two features. How can selves exist? Because a self is contrasted with others and is distinct from the features of others, a self also cannot be comprehended.

Also, the syllable *ma* signifies the *nirmāṇakāya*. The third syllable *mṛ* combines two syllables, that is, the syllable *r* is added to the syllable *ma*. This means that defilements cannot be comprehended, or this is used as a syllable meaning that supernatural powers cannot be comprehended. The syllable *mṛ* means the *nirmāṇakāya* and changes in supernatural powers. Since it is akin to the meaning of the *nirmāṇakāya*, this meaning is the best. Also,

the syllable *r* means that all innately pure natures transcend impurities and purity. It also means *samādhi* and [specifically] the lotus *samādhi* of discriminative wisdom.

18a The fourth syllable, *ta* [in *a*, *ma*, *r*, and *ta*], means that the suchness of all natures cannot be comprehended. Thus the *Chung-lun* (*Madhyamaka-sāstra*; *Chūron*; T. 30: 36a) states, “The reality of nirvana and the reality of the world are without the slightest difference.” Since they are not different, all natures are without opposition. Since they are not in opposition, they are without attachment. Since there is no attachment there also is no reality or liberation.

The fifth syllable, *te*, has the syllable *e* added to [*ta*], and this syllable *e*, [which means] seeking [salvation], is incomprehensible. As a stanza [in Kūkai’s *Unjigi*] says, “The unity of the sameness is called suchness.” Because of diversity, Suchness exists. Principle is boundless and wisdom is infinite. Even the [number of] sands of the Ganges River are not comparable, and the dust particles obtained by crushing the [entire] Buddha land are too few. Although there are many raindrops, they also are [of] a single [body of] water. [Although] the rays of a lamp are not one, in relation to the darkness they have the same substance. Form and mind are countless, and truth and relativity are boundless. The Lord of the Mind and the mind’s attributes as a lord with followers are inexhaustible. They interpenetrate each other like the light of the jeweled net of Indra. Exceedingly difficult to consider, each is endowed with the five wisdoms. Although numerous they are not different, and although not different they are many. Thus they are called a single suchness. The single is not one and one. The countless are one. Suchness is not the permanence of suchness. It is oneness and relativity. Unless this principle is explained, this [teaching] will be [viewed as] a relative one. The inexhaustible jewel treasury thereby will be drained dry. The countless jeweled vehicles will be exhausted in this. This would be a great loss. The four countless bodies and the vast three mysteries, too vast to depict even if we used the earth for ink and Mount Sumeru as a brush, originally themselves are perfect, fixed, and unchangeable.

On the meaning of seeking being incomprehensible, a stanza says:

All living beings of the four modes of birth and six destinies originally possess innumerable virtues. Walking, standing, sitting, and lying down are all secret *mudrās*. Rough and detailed discussions are all mantras. Both the wise and the foolish are insightful. Being immersed [in samsara] or struggling [to be freed] are *samādhis*. All virtues are already possessed by me and are not far. With what, moreover, does one seek another place?

The sixth syllable, *se* (sic; *je*) has the sign for *e* added to *sa* (for *ja*), since the syllable *sa* [means] that the truth of all natures cannot be comprehended. *Sa* in Sanskrit is called *satya* and is translated [into Chinese] as *ti* (truth). Truth, like the true features of all natures, is known to be without error or fallacy. The truth of suffering explained by the Buddha could not be made otherwise even if the sun should be made cold or the moon hot. The *samudāyas* are in truth causes, and there are no other causes. The end of causes is the end of results. The path of the cessation of pain is the true path, and there are no other paths.

Next, it is said in the [*Mahāpari*]nirvāṇa-sūtra (T. 12: 411a):

Realize that suffering (the First Noble Truth) is not suffering. Because it is not suffering, it is the absolute. The other three [of the Four Noble] Truths (origination, cessation, and path) are also like this. In distinguishing the Four [Noble] Truths there are countless characteristics as well as a single truth.

It is as explained in the [*Mahāpari*]nirvāṇa-sūtra [T. 12: 374–5]. This deals with the features of the syllables and further the original unborn nature of all things, as well as the reason why the absolute is without features, a path beyond speech, innately quiescent, with a dull self-nature. One should know that there is no seeing, there is no cessation, there is no realization, and there is no practice. Seeing [suffering], cessation [of its origin], realization [of

18b its cessation], and practice [of the path] are all the mysterious *dharmadhātu*. It is also *sūnyatā*, the relative, and also the Middle Path. There is no truth and no delusion. The [features of *samādhi*] have no specific forms that could be shown. Thus it is said that truth is incomprehensible. The mark of the syllable *e* is as above.

The seventh syllable, *ha*, means that the cause of all natures cannot be comprehended. In Sanskrit this is called *hetu*, that is, cause. If one realizes the principle of the syllable *ha*, then one knows that all natures arise from dependent arising. This is the feature of this syllable. Since all natures arise in succession, they arise from causes. One should know that since finally there is no dependent arising, nonabiding is explained as the basis of all natures. The reason why is as explained in the *Chung-lun* (T. 30: 2b). One contemplates the dependent arising of all natures from numerous standpoints. Since all are unborn, one should realize that all natures are mind-only.

The true characteristic of mind-only is a perfect knowledge of all things. This is the *dharmadhātu* of all Buddhas. The *dharmadhātu* is the essence of all natures. One cannot comprehend there being a cause. By knowing this [one knows that] the direct cause is the *dharmadhātu*. The secondary cause is the *dharmadhātu*. Natures arising from dependent arising also are the *dharmadhātu*. The above explanation on the letter *A* stems from a source and returns to its end. Ultimately we are led to this conclusion. Now the teaching on the syllable *ha* stems from an end and returns to the source; ultimately we are led to this conclusion. The syllable *A* is based on a source, is unborn, and creates all natures. The syllable *ha* also forms the cause of all things with no cause. The beginning and the end alike return, that is, the meaning interposed between the two (beginning and end) should be fully known.

The eighth syllable, *ra*, means that all natures are apart from all defilements. In Sanskrit these are called *rajas*, which means impurity. Defilements are the motivations of corrupt feelings. Thus it is said that the six sensations of the eye and so on motivate the six defilements of form and so on. If one understands the principle

of the syllable *ra*, then one knows that all natures that can be seen, heard, touched, or known are all defiled characteristics. Moreover, just as a clean robe that is soiled becomes defiled, so also does whirling dust swirl and make the great sky dark and obscure the sun and moon. These are the traits of this syllable. In the *Chung-lun* (T. 30: 7b), in the search for subject and object, there is no subject. If there is no subject, who can function as the seer of objects and differentiate external forms? Since there is nothing that could be a subject or an object of a subject, the four natures, consciousness, perception, feeling, and attachment, all do not exist. Because there is no attachment, the divisions of the twelve links of dependent arising also do not exist. Thus when the eye sees a form, this is a feature of nirvana. The other examples are similar.

Next, all natures are the pure *dharmadhātu* of Vairocana, how much more the defiled six senses of the Tathāgata! The *Aṅgulimāliya-sūtra* (T. 2: 532a) states:

Endowed with a permanent and eternal eye, the Buddha clearly sees eternal forms. . . . His mind (*manas*) as well is also like this.

This is the true meaning of the syllable *ra*.

The ninth syllable, *hūṃ*, has the meaning of the *trikāya* (three bodies). I shall very briefly explain this. The syllable *ha* forms the body of this syllable and the *saṃbhogakāya*. In this is the sound *A*. This is the *dharmakāya*. *U* is the *saṃbhogakāya*. *Ma* is the *nirmāṇakāya*. The *dharmakāya* encompasses these and in brief has four varieties. The first is the *svabhāvakāya*. The second is the *saṃbhogakāya*. The third is the *nirmāṇakāya*. The fourth is the *niṣyandakāya*. These four kinds of bodies alike are termed the *dharmakāya*. Why? A verse says:

The six elements everywhere penetrate all common and wise persons.

They are equally established and do not increase or decrease.

18c

The undivided mind is the *svabhāva-dharmakāya* Buddha.  
The one essence is the reward body, the *saṃbhogakāya*.  
The one characteristic is the *nirmāṇakāya* Buddha who  
changes.

The one function is the *niṣyandakāya* of equality.  
These four bodies are included in the meaning of that  
which enlightens.

Ordinary people of the six elements are those to be  
enlightened.

The three mysteries that enlighten encompass those to be  
enlightened.

The four *maṇḍalas* that are to be realized penetrate that  
which can enlighten.

Each interpenetrates and is a *maṇḍala*.

The three [kinds of] three equalities (i.e., mysteries) are  
the realization of Buddhahood.

The three mysteries as indestructible as a *vajra* encompass  
the *dharmadhātu* and do not choose a world with a  
Buddha or a world without a Buddha.

The *yogins* of the five mysteries (Vajrasattva and the four  
surrounding bodhisattvas) abide in the palace of the  
mind.

There is no distinction between adornment with the  
mysteries and no adornment with the mysteries.

Also, there are five kinds of *dharmakāyas*, since the *dharmadhātukāya* is united with the four bodies aforementioned. There are five kinds of *maṇḍalas*, since the *dharmadhātu maṇḍala* is added to the aforementioned four *maṇḍalas*. A verse in the *Cheng fa men* (*Shōikyō*; T. 18, No. 291) states:

The thirty-six Buddhist virtues of the *svabhāva[kāya]*, *saṃbhoga[kāya]*, *nirmāṇa[kāya]*, and *niṣyanda[kāya]* are all equally the *svabhāvakāya*. Since they are united with the *dharmadhātukāya* they become the thirty-seven virtues [*bodhipakṣikadharmā*].

Also, in the *Li ch'an wen* (*Raisankyō*; T. 18, No. 878), besides the *svabhāva* a *dharmadhātukāya* is established. Based on these sources there is a *dharmadhātukāya* in addition to the four bodies. The *dharmadhātukāya* is the *dharmakāya* of the six elements.

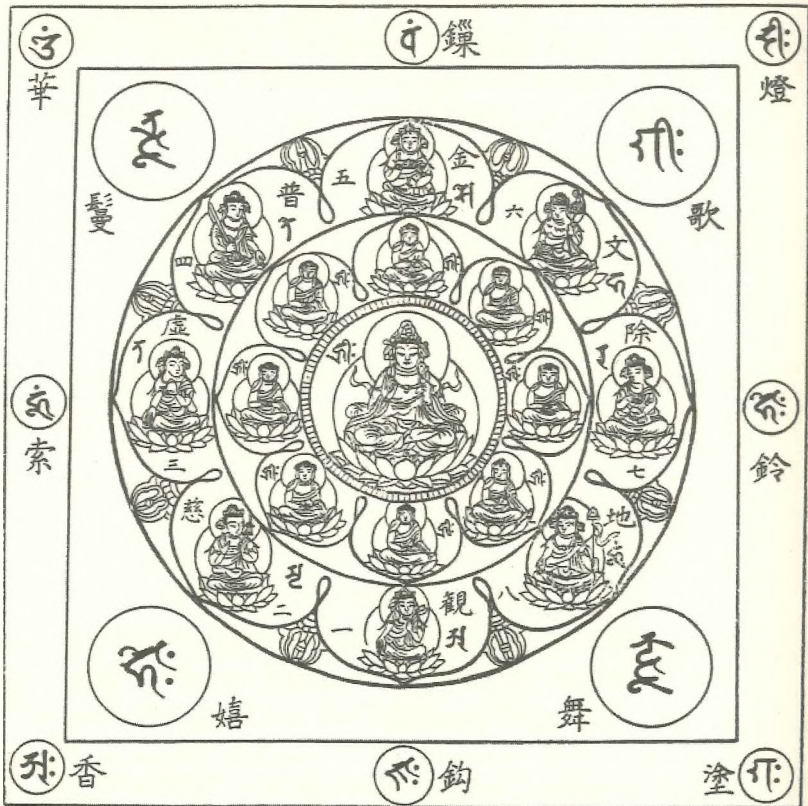
Next is the *amṛta-maṇḍala* of the nine-syllable mantra. Always contemplate it and keep the mind sincere.

[Visualize] the letter *A* in the mind. It becomes a seven-jeweled tower. First stabilize the visualization of the water [*bija*] *vaṃ*. Then visualize the earth [*bija*] *A*. Wave the hanging temple decorations and banners and fling the jeweled purification water (*argha*). [Visualize] the heavens raining down wonderful clothing and men burning *campaka* incense. The flowers have four rare colors and the birds sing with six kinds of tones. There is joy in the trails of clouds and beneath the trees. Within the palace and in the outer gardens there is dancing. Each verse of the Buddhist teaching is excellent. *Māṅḍārava* and *mañjūṣaka* [flowers] fall. The caves for entering into meditation are quiet caverns overflowing with the waters of constant meditation. The jeweled current of eight virtues is realized. The streamers resonate, combining six rhythms. The lake waters explain the six *pāramitās*. The jeweled vases reveal five stalks, and the candles burn the five wisdoms. The central dais opens into eight petals. Visualize on this the nine *hriḥ* syllables. Above the dais is Avalokiteśvara. On the petals are the eight Buddha meditations. On the next [circle of] eight petals are a *mṛ ta te me* (sic; *je*) *ha ra hūṃ* as follows. This is the *bija* body of eight deities: Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya, Ākāśagarbha, Samantabhadra, Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī, Sarvaṇīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, and Kṣitigarbha. The twelve great offering bodhisattvas are arranged in order. This is the innate lotus of living beings, the substance of enlightenment and ultimate bliss, the great ocean assembly of purity, the twenty-five bodhisattvas, and the flower-adorned mountain ocean assembly (*Jūjūseikyō*; *Dainihonzokuzōkyō-manji zokuzō*, 87–4: 294, left b). Always guard this day and night. The power of the mantra *bhuḥ khaṃ* changes this into the [Pure Land of] Absolute Bliss.

19a

19b

[Picture of the Esoteric Maṇḍala]



[Outer square, clockwise from top left:]

|             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| Vajrapuṣpā  | <i>Oṃ</i>  |
| Vajrasphoṭa | <i>Vaṃ</i> |
| Vajrālokā   | <i>Diḥ</i> |
| Vajrāveśā   | <i>Hoḥ</i> |
| Vajragandhā | <i>Gaḥ</i> |
| Vajrāṅkuṣa  | <i>Jaḥ</i> |
| Vajradhūpā  | <i>Aḥ</i>  |
| Vajrapāśa   | <i>Hūṃ</i> |

[Inner square, clockwise from top left:]

|            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| Vajramālā  | <i>Traṭ</i> |
| Vajrāgītā  | <i>Gīḥ</i>  |
| Vajranṛtyā | <i>Kṛt</i>  |
| Vajralāsyā | <i>Hoḥ</i>  |

[Outer circle, clockwise from bottom center:]

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Avalokiteśvara          | <i>A</i>   |
| Maitreya                | <i>Mr</i>  |
| Ākāśagarbha             | <i>Ta</i>  |
| Samantabhadra           | <i>Te</i>  |
| Vajrapāṇi               | <i>Se</i>  |
| Mañjuśrī                | <i>Ha</i>  |
| Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin | <i>Ra</i>  |
| Kṣitigarbha             | <i>Hūṃ</i> |

[Middle circle:] *Hriḥ*

[Center:] Avalokiteśvara

This nine-syllable *maṇḍala* originally issues from the syllable *ha* of the five *cakras*. This syllable generates the forty-eight vows of the causal stage of Dharmākara (T. 20: 267c). The winds of this teaching issue from the syllable *ha*. That having the syllable *ha* is the syllable named *hriḥ*. From the syllable *hriḥ* issues the nine-syllable *maṇḍala*. From this emerges the one hundred and thirteen-syllable mantra, that is, this is the great *dhāraṇī* of *amṛta*. 19c

*Question:* How should we understand the meaning of the phrases of this *dhāraṇī*?

[*Answer:*] The meaning of the phrases of the great Sanskrit text is [as follows.] *Namo* (sic; *nama*) *ratna trayāya* means to take refuge in and to bow to the Three Jewels, to save oneself, to pay homage, respect, and so on; *namaḥ* (sic; *nama*) *ārya* means *muni*, the Great Sage (i.e., Śākyamuni); *amitābhāya* (i.e., Amitābha) means infinite light and *apramāṇābha* means infinite disciple and [infinite] *amṛta* or spiritual food; *tathāgatāya* means the vehicle of the Tathāgata

("thus come" or "thus gone"); *arhate saṃyaksambuddhāya* means to kill [the enemy] (i.e., the passions), the unborn, suitable offerings, perfect enlightenment, and so on; *tadyathā* means that the mantra is about to be explained by the following; *oṃ* means the *trikāya*, to attain perfect enlightenment, to make an offering, and to take refuge; *amṛte* means [the nectar of immortality], to continue in life, to have no old age or death, and so on; *amṛtodbhave* means jeweled seat, to sit down, pleasure, comfortable seat; *amṛta-sambhave* means to be born, to exist, come, attract; *amṛta-garbhe* means Gaganagañja, Kṣitigarbha, Ākāśagarbha, Vajragarbha; *amṛta-siddhe* means accomplished, departed, to attain a result or the cause; *amṛta-teje* means exalted virtues, sublime light, noble power, regal strength; *amṛta-vihṛiṃte* (sic; *vikrānte*) means supreme bliss, peaceful life, pleasure, nirvana; *amṛta-vihṛiṃta* (sic; *vikrānta*) means that however one attains all pleasure it is called supreme happiness; *gāmine* means space, to abide, a world apart from suffering, peacefully residing in proper recitation; *amṛta-gagana-kīrtikare* means like space, without impediment or opposition, to attain life; *amṛta-duṣṭ-dubhi-svare* means pleasant sound, preaching the wonderful teaching, pleasant music, oneself taking pleasure in the teaching; *sarva-arthasādhane* means accomplishing everything, fulfillment, to be filled with joy in *samādhi*; *sarva-karma-kleśa-kṣayaṃ-kare* means to make deeds universal, to protect a precious birth, to nurture life, esteemed assembly of the living, the end of time; *svāhā* means for a *yogin* influenced [by the Buddha] and of pure faith, to fulfill the vow of welcoming others [to the Pure Land], to be successful in attracting an offensive person of the greatest evil.

The above in brief completes the [exposition of the] meanings of the phrases.

The fundamental secret *mudrā* [is as follows]. The two hands interlock outwardly with the middle fingers in the shape of a lotus flower. This is called the mind aspiring to enlightenment (*bodhi-citta*). It is also called the *mudrā* of a determined future birth in the Pure Land or the general *mudrā* of those of the nine classes of birth in the Pure Land.

## Chapter III

### Obtaining Unequaled Virtues

This refers to the virtues obtained upon entering the Shingon school and practicing for a moment. With reference to all six *pāramitās* and the four ceaseless beneficial actions (i.e., almsgiving, kind speech, beneficial actions, and service) and so on, the features of the wisdom of the Buddha of Exoteric Buddhism are fully present in innumerable *asaṃkhyeya kalpas*. Among those obtained through constant practice, those of Shingon alone are supreme, since the three mysteries that are now cultivated are the truth.

*Question:* In the unified practice of the three mysteries it is reasonable that virtues are obtained. If there is a *yogin* who only recites a mantra or only forms a *mudrā*, there is no wisdom [gained].  
20a  
Even granted that wisdom [is gained], what difference is there in the proportion of virtues obtained by a general practice lacking the other two mysteries?

*Answer:* Although there is no wisdom [gained] in a general practice or recitation, if there is faith the virtues obtained transcend those gained in Exoteric Buddhism over immeasurable *kalpas*. If there arises a single doubt about the mantra the result is constant karma, and one will always fall into hell. Therefore, unless there is an opportunity, one conceals the [treasure] chest in the bottom of the spring.



## Chapter IV

### Cultivated and Self-perfected Secret Practices

Although the *yogin* who practices mantras may lack profound wisdom, if one merely has suitable faith and merely chants them, forms [*mudrās*], and visualizes for a moment the forms of the three types of esoteric bodies—[the written forms of the] syllables, the *mudrās*, and the forms [of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas]—even though one may have countless serious hindrances from the past, endless serious offenses in the present, and vast ignorance and erroneous thought that have arisen in both past and present—one still obtains purity through the power of chanting these esoteric mantras and the power of the visualization.

Upon entering this teaching a little, three great *asaṅkhyeya* [*kalpas*] are transcended in the single recitation of the syllable A. Boundless blessings and wisdom are contained in the diamonds of the three mysteries. The eighty thousand toils change into ghee. The five *skandhas* suddenly become Buddha wisdoms. The mantras resounding from an opened mouth destroy offenses. The *mudrās* made by raising the hands and moving the legs enhance blessings. The wonderful visualization rising from the mind is created by oneself. Mental activity suddenly becomes *samādhi*, that is, it is perfected. A destitute woman in a filthy courtyard suddenly raises the banner of the *cintāmaṇi*, and in the dark room of ignorance suddenly the light of the sun and moon shines. One waves the banners of the four types of demons and binds them. One commands the bandit parties of the six realms and forms an alliance [with them]. The country of the Lord of the Mind and an uncreated happiness return and can be expected. The four types of *dharmakāyas* and innumerable virtues are obtained by oneself in the present body.

Also, on the virtues of receiving and chanting mantras, in the *Yü chi'eh ching* (*Yugayugikyō*; T. 18, No. 867: 260b) it is said that they are like all Buddha minds, like the *nirmāṇakāyas* of all Buddhas, like one hundred thousand *koṭis* of completely inexpressible Buddha relics, like the Buddha's mantras, and like the acts and thoughts of a Buddha. All deeds that are committed are like those of all Buddhas. Speech that is made, moreover, becomes a mantra, and the moving of limbs too becomes the binding of great *mudrās*. That which is seen by the eye becomes the great Vajradhātu. That which is touched by the body becomes a *mahā-mudrā*.

This is not the only textual evidence, but all of it is known by the one [example]. I pray that wise people will not doubt this!

## Chapter V

### Briefly Cultivating One Practice and Perfecting Many [Practices]

In cultivating the one practice of Amitābha, one anticipates present and future *siddhis*.

*Question:* The number of practices in the Shingon teaching is countless. Vajra[dhātu] and Garbha[dhātu] each have countless teachings and practices. In just entering one family of one world, the practices still thereby are countless. How much more the few practices of the three, five, or twenty-five families! How can they be cultivated? Moreover, if one wants merely to cultivate one practice and one teaching, attain Buddhahood, and dwell in the Pure Land, does this go counter to the intention of the teaching? 20b

*Answer:* With all of them one cannot go counter to the intention of this teaching. The *Vajraśekhara*[-sūtra], the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*, and so on all explain this path. The faculties and varieties of living beings are not the same. Some enter one teaching and the *samādhi* of one deity, [use] one *mudrā*, one mantra, and one visualization, and attain *siddhi*. There is no [need for] discussion on the differences of the three periods, [those of] the correct teaching (True Dharma), the semblance teaching (Imitative Dharma), and [that of] the decadent [era] (Latter Dharma). The time when one cultivates these is the correct [time for realizing the] teaching. *Siddhi* does not choose a time. Faithful practice [chooses] the time.



## Chapter VI

### Realizing the Three Highest of the Nine Stages of Birth in the Pure Land

This is to revere highly the wisdom and the vows of Mahāvairocana and to have deep faith in the basic vows of Amitābha. Moreover, it is not to abide in heterodox teachings. Yüeh-kai, the householder of Vaiśālī, and Vaidehī (in the *Vimalakirtinirdeśa-sūtra*, T. 12: 340c) attained birth in Amitābha's Pure Land in their present bodies, and Nāgārjuna (T. 26: 43a; T. 25: 134b) and Dharmapāla anticipated a subsequent future life in the Pure Land.

*Question:* With what mental vows does the *yogin* of intensive recitation and esoteric practice accomplish the great vow to be born in the Pure Land?

*Answer:* The four types of merit transference are the direct cause of birth in the Pure Land. The first is the recitation of the four boundless mantras [of kindness, sympathy, joy, and equanimity]. With the merits [of the recitations] given to all living beings, together with the wish to be made equal to the four great bodhisattvas [Samantabhadra, Ākāśagarbha, Avalokiteśvara, and Gaganagañja], this is the transference of the merit of this vow made with an utmost mind and profound faith. The second is, upon seeing the decay of the Buddhist teaching, to want to be made equal to the great vow of Kūkai to restore the Buddhist teachings. This is the transference of the merit of this vow made with an utmost mind and profound faith. The third is, in order to make all living beings of the *dharmadhātu* realize the supreme end of great enlightenment, the transference of the merit of this vow made with an utmost mind and profound faith. The fourth is, in order

to make oneself and others have good faculties, to practice right mindfulness (*saṃyaksṃṛti*) on one's deathbed and to be reborn in Sukhāvātī, the transference of the merit of this vow made with an utmost mind and profound faith.

Recite the nine syllables of the five *cakras* and simultaneously, on your deathbed, recite the four mantras and form the four *mudrās*. Aspire to reach Sukhāvātī and stop successive thoughts. One should then wait for the hour of death. This is the time when one is born into the Pure Land. The four *mudrās* and mantras on the deathbed are the Vajrāñjali, the Vajra Bond, Opening the Mind, and Entering Wisdom. Each mantra is a secret practice for birth in the Pure Land.

*Question:* Which of the nine classes is the Shingon *yogin* who is born in Sukhāvātī?

*Answer:* Most are of the three highest classes. In the *Vairocana-samādhi-sūtra* (*Sammajihō*; T. 18: 331b) it says that they realize the stage of joy in the present world. The bodhisattva Nāgārjuna realized the first stage of joy.

*Question:* How many deeds [lead] to birth in Sukhāvātī?

*Answer:* The three refuges and the five precepts are deeds [leading to] birth in Sukhāvātī. The six *pāramitās*, four *dhyānas*, ten virtues, contemplation of the absence of self, and so on are deeds [leading to] birth in Sukhāvātī. Contemplation of the Four Noble Truths and the twelve links of dependent arising are deeds [leading to] birth in Sukhāvātī. *Yogins* committed to [the welfare of] others, such as Dharmapāla and Śīlabhadra, were persons born in the Pure Land. *Yogins* with an unborn enlightened mind, such as Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, were persons born in the Pure Land. *Yogins* of the One Vehicle of the uncreated, in contemplating the three syllables *a mṛ ta*, contemplate *śūnyatā*, the provisional and middle [truths]. Hui-tzu (515–577) and Chih-i were persons born in the Pure Land. *Yogins* of the *dharmadhātu* with an absolute absence of a self-nature, such as [the third and fourth patriarchs]

20c

of the Kegon (Hua-yen) school], Hsiang-hsiang (Fa-tsang) and Ch'ing-liang (Ch'eng-kuan), were persons born in the Pure Land. [In reference to the Land] Adorned with Mysteries, the *yogins* who inwardly realized the three mysteries were persons born in the Pure Land. Thus Jichie and Shinnen were first born in Sukhāvati and afterward resided in the Tuṣita Heaven. [Although] miscellaneous studies confuse the mind, they do not [mean that one's] lifetime [has been lived in] vain. Rather, with the merit of the good seeds of miscellaneous studies transferred to Sukhāvati, one surely is born in the Pure Land of Laziness. By not returning to this corrupt world one proceeds to be born in Sukhāvati. If in one's own good faculties there arises a mind of doubt and confusion, and if the merit [of the good seeds] is transferred to Sukhāvati, then one is born in the vicinity of the Pure Land and proceeds to birth in Sukhāvati.

*Question:* Since the ten stages of the mind explained in the chapter on the stages of the mind in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* are in accord with both the superficial and the profound meanings of all the sutras and commentaries, are they also stages of sutras gradually realized by the *yogin* of Shingon practice?

*Answer:* Truly they are stages of sutras gradually [realized] by the Shingon practitioner. At the same time they enable one to comprehend the superficial and profound meanings of the sutras and commentaries. The *yogin* with an enlightened and unborn mind rejects the eight things to be negated and ignorance, pursues the increasing clarity of the One Vehicle, witnesses the uncreated still light, and realizes the fundamental eternal mind. He abides eternally on Mount Gṛdhrakūṭa where the fire of the *kalpa* [of destruction] does not burn. *Māndārava* and *mañjūṣaka* flowers fall day and night. One witnesses the bodhisattva Viśuddhacāritra appearing from the earth. The sutras that are gradually realized are known naturally. Anyone who seeks enlightenment does not long entertain doubts. It is not like the separate teaching of the Tendai school, where there is a teaching but no person [who practices or realizes

it] (T. 46: 33a). For one who does not experience them, these states do not exist! The *yogin* of these practices always experiences the stages of the mind. It is like being in the first stage and turning to the second stage.

## Chapter VII

### Understanding Demons and Their Pacification

There are four [kinds of] demons. The first are the subjects of Māra. The second are the heretics. The third are evil demons. The fourth are evil spirits.

Demons specifically are called *māras*. They create obstructions and difficulties. In translation [*māra*] means “destroyer of the good.” Those who hinder and destroy good works are called *māras*. Those who commit evil works are called heretics. Those who harm the body and prevent one from turning to the Buddhist path are called demons. Those who obstruct and destroy a good mind and make one abandon profundities are called evil spirits.

These include those who manifest as Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the two vehicles (the *śrāvakayāna* and the *pratyekabuddhayāna*), as gods, human beings, and so on, and as those who explain the Buddhist teachings in a way similar to [the expositions found in] the One Vehicle of the exoteric teaching and so on and drive away the practitioner. [They make one] abandon vigilant contemplations and practices and instantly switch to other practices. Immediately one attains vigor or instantly one is led to lassitude. Also, one takes delight in *dhyāna* but also relishes debate. Such are the acts of these demons, though not always. The two volumes on demons in the [*Mahā*] *prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (T. 6: 541a) discuss the control and pacification of these [demons]. If the demons have the advantage, they can obstruct and destroy all the secular good of all Buddhist teachings and straightaway make one succumb to an evil destiny. 21a

*Question:* When such activities of the *māras* occur, how should they be pacified?

*Answer:* There are four ways: pacification in accord with these as they arise, pacification through mutual opposition and contrast, pacification by both these actions, and pacification by neither.

For the first pacification one should contemplate in this way:

The constantly existing Buddha and Māra lands in all the three times are all the innate three mysteries of the *dharmakāya*. These three mysteries interpenetrate each other, are of one flavor, and are equal. The three mysteries of the *māras* and my three mysteries fundamentally are not two. Already there are no two natures. How can there be obstruction, since [their] three mysteries and [my] three mysteries fundamentally are equal and originally unborn? All Buddhas and all *māras* are the same *dharmadhātu*. The three mysteries of *yoga* interpenetrate each other. They are beyond harm, destruction, slander, and hatred. All wrathful deities are the incarnations of Vairocana manifested for pacifying evil persons. Actions and deportment are not without symbolic meaning. All sounds that occur are mantras. The meaning of thoughts is entirely the wisdom of *dhyaṇa*. All features that can be loved, as is appropriate for whatever exists, are also the innate [Dharma wheel]-turning body of the Tathāgata. Speech uttered is not without *dhāraṇīs*. Walking, standing, sitting, and lying down are all the features of *mudrās*. Thoughts and learning also are wisdom and *samādhi*.

These are called the features of pacification in accord with Esoteric Buddhism.

Second is pacification through mutual opposition and contrast. If the hands form a *mudrā*, one can avert these. If one chants a *dhāraṇī* and is empowered, one can control these. If the mind contemplates wisdom, one destroys these. What is the method of contemplation? Stanzas say:

I am a reciter of *dhāraṇīs*. The demon is a kind of precept offender. All Buddhas, bodhisattvas, *śrāvakas*, sages, and the

eight classes of good gods (*yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kiṃnaras*, *mahoragas*, *devas*, and *nāgas*), by protecting the keepers of the teaching, all fully protect me. Not even for a moment do they abandon one. Whenever an advantage is gained [by the demons], I am liable to be hindered in the true path. Demons arise from ignorance. From the start I have practiced the Buddhist path. The *yogin* is like a brilliant light. The activities of demons are like pitch-darkness. Thus light and darkness cannot coexist, just as fire consumes firewood. The activities of demons fundamentally are unborn. They are like an apparition or a dream. They resemble [imaginary] flowers in the sky. They are similar to the nonexistent hair of the tortoise. Darkness does not extinguish a brilliant light. How can error hinder the true path?

This is called pacification through opposition.

Third is pacification by both these actions. The two, pacification through accord and through opposition, are used in this.

Fourth is pacification through neither. A stanza says (T. 18: 331a), “All natures are fundamentally unborn. Their self-nature is beyond description. They are pure and not defiled. They are caused by actions and are like empty space.” A verse of the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* says (T. 18: 33c):

Because the mind lacks self-nature, it is far beyond direct and immediate causes. It is free from the rise of action. Its origin is the same as empty space.

It also says (T. 18: 9b):

All destinies are merely designations. The Buddha signs are also such. All elements of the Buddha land originally are pure. The truth is constant, blissful, pure, and possessed of selfhood. The deeds of myself and demons and so on are absolutely empty and quiescent. Nowhere do they exist. They are without mindfulness or deliberation. They are without attachment. They do not increase or decrease. They are not

that nor this. They are without essence, form, or function. They are not freed or hindered, and they are not destroyed. They lack selfhood and otherness. An empty sky is not obstructed by an empty sky. How could reality dispute with reality?

## Chapter VIII

### Attaining Buddhahood and Practicing the Uncommon in the Present Body

In general there are four different types of practice for realizing the stage of great enlightenment in the present body. These are the practice of *mudrās* and mantras in unison with profound wisdom, the practice of *mudrās* and mantras in unison with contemplation, the practice of *mudrās* and mantras with earnest faith, and the practice in accord with one mystery leading to merits.

As for the first practice, since an innerly realized profound wisdom is fully possessed in unison and one practices *mudrās* and mantras well, one attains Buddhahood in the present body. As for the second, although there is no contemplation of profound wisdom, since one fervently forms *mudrās* with the hands, chants mantras with the mouth, and contemplates in accord with one object among the three—[the written form of] a syllable, a *mudrā*, or a form—one attains Buddhahood in the present body. With the third practice, although there is nothing like the above two kinds of wisdom or contemplation, since one has an earnest and deep faith and understanding, and one combines the forming of *mudrās* and the chanting of mantras, naturally one quickly attains Buddhahood. As for the fourth practice, although it lacks the other two practices and is without profound wisdom, since one earnestly contemplates one meaning, understands one teaching, and attains a cultivated mind, one attains Buddhahood in the present body. Even if, further, this lacks the wisdom of one teaching and the other two practices, with an earnest faith in the teaching one contemplates the form of one syllable and attains Buddhahood; one contemplates the symbolic

form of one seal (*mudrā*) and attains Buddhahood; one contemplates one feature of the form of one deity and attains Buddhahood. Furthermore, although one lacks other practices, should one merely recite one mantra or one syllable, one attains Buddhahood. Also, by forming a *mudrā*, although there is no other secret practice, since there is a unity, certainly one attains Buddhahood in the present body. In general, these are explained in this way.

*Question:* At the moment of attaining perfect enlightenment, is Buddhahood attained on account of the three mysteries being in unison, or what should be said to be the reason?

*Answer:* When perfect enlightenment is attained, always Buddhahood is attained in the present body because the three mysteries are in unison.

*Question:* If it is said that Buddhahood is attained in the present body because the three mysteries are in unison, what should be said to be the reason?

*Answer:* Whenever one attains Buddhahood by relying on two practices or on one practice and so on, this is not an instance of attaining perfect enlightenment. However, since there is a mysterious power of empowerment, suddenly the other two mysteries are manifested [even if only one is cultivated]. Then the three mysteries are attained and one attains Buddhahood in the present body.

*Question:* What sutras, commentaries, or the like explain the meaning of attaining Buddhahood in the present body?

*Answer:* They are as explained in [Kūkai's] *Sokushinjōbutsugi* (*The Meaning of Becoming a Buddha in This Very Body*).

## Chapter IX

### The Differences of People Converted According to Their Faculties

Those converted according to their faculties generally are of two types. First are those born in the Pure Land in the present body. Second are those born in the Pure Land immediately after death. Among those born [in the Pure Land] in the present body there are again two differences. First are those with great faculties who attain Buddhahood in the present body. Second are those with small faculties who attain Buddhahood in the present body. Also, in each of these two there are two, since there are differences between the keen-witted and the slow-witted.

Those who are keen-witted and have great endowments directly enter the *samādhi* of the *dharmadhātu* essence, broadly contemplate the *dharmadhātu*, and attain Buddhahood in the present body. That is, all living beings are innate[ly enlightened] and correspond naturally to the great mind of enlightenment of Samantabhadra. The innate syllable *A* is the essence, the object contemplated. The originally unborn wisdom is the essence, the subject contemplating. Subject and object are of one essence, and the mind is a single pure realm. To realize the originally unborn principle is to sever the path of speech. To realize the originally unborn principle is to obtain freedom from all offenses. To realize the originally unborn principle is [to know] that karmic causes are incomprehensible. To realize the originally unborn principle is [to know] that equality with space is incomprehensible. When one realizes the principle of *sūnyatā*—that subject and object are of one essence, that is, that the subject of contemplation is the undivided mind of causes and that the object of contemplation is the single sphere of

the syllable's features — then one attains Buddhahood in the present body. This is called the *samādhi* of one of great faculties and broad contemplation.

Those of great faculties but dull talents eventually enter the *samādhi* of the *dharmadhātu* essence and contemplate the seed-syllables of the five innate *cakras*. These five syllables are the fifteen types of *vajra samādhis* (T. 18: 911a). One syllable is fifteen syllables and fifteen syllables are one syllable. One syllable is five syllables. In this syllable contemplate eight teachings. One syllable embraces many teachings. Many syllables unite in one teaching. One syllable clarifies many teachings. Many syllables clarify one teaching. One syllable perfects many teachings. Many syllables perfect one teaching. One syllable destroys many teachings. Many syllables destroy one teaching. If they practice this successive contemplation twelve times in the twelve sequences, each syllable contemplated is consumed in the source of samsara. If they practice [twelve times] a reverse contemplation in the twelve reversals, each syllable contemplated reaches the principle of nirvana. This principle is the fundamentally unborn. By entering the fifteen *vajra samādhis*, they can contemplate the fundamentally unborn absolute principle, and subject and object alike are extinguished. Because the syllable *A* is fundamentally unborn, the speech of the syllable *va* is incomprehensible. Since linguistic expression is impossible, the impurity and purity of the syllable *ra* is incomprehensible. Since freedom is attained, the karmic causes of the syllable *ha* are incomprehensible. Since no-self is obtained, the equality with space of the syllable *kha* is incomprehensible. When the head and the tail alike cease and one realizes the innate mind, Buddhahood is attained in the present body. This is called a gradual contemplation. The above alike are faculties of the Lord of the Mind.

22a The keen-witted with small faculties follow different objects of worship, which represent mental attributes. Briefly interpreted, in reference to the *yogin* of Avalokiteśvara, the nine types of innate *hriḥ* syllables are the seed-syllables of the innate Avalokiteśvara of all living beings. Based on the principle that shame

is incomprehensible, they believe in an innate, pure, unstained, and wonderful lotus and realize the lotus flower. During the four periods they do not cease cultivation of the three mysteries. Dwelling on the *mudrā* of opening the lotus flower and chanting the mantra *oṃ vajra dharma hrīḥ*, they dwell on the principle that shame is incomprehensible and realize the innate enlightened lotus. This is called attainment of Buddhahood in the present body by those who contemplate with small faculties.

The dull-witted with small faculties enter the lotus *samādhi* and contemplate the four syllables *ha*, *ra*, *ī*, and *aḥ*. During the four periods in such a superior *samādhi* they must not neglect even momentarily these four kinds of majestic [syllables]. In this life they gradually traverse the sixteen great bodhisattva stages; develop the humble and pure mind of enlightenment; traverse the stages of Vajrasattva, Vajrarāja, Vajrarāga, and Vajrasādhu; contemplate the meaning of the thought of enlightenment—*ha*, *ra*, *ī*, and *aḥ*; and realize these four types of stages. Next, they cultivate the four types of enlightened practices. They traverse the stages of Vajratatna, Vajrateja, Vajraketu, and Vajrahāsa and realize the principles of the syllables *ha*, *ra*, *ī*, and *aḥ*. Next, they cultivate four kinds of wisdom. They traverse the stages of Vajradharma, Vajratikṣṇa, Vajrahetu, and Vajrabhāṣa and attain the wisdom of the syllables *ha*, *ra*, *ī*, and *aḥ*. Next, they cultivate four kinds of vigor. They traverse the states of Vajrakarma, Vajrarakṣa, Vajrayakṣa, and Vajrasandhi and attain four actions. In sixteen lives they manifest the innate lotus of the mind. First they realize the lotus *samādhi* and then they exercise expedient means, that is, they become Mahāvairocana Buddha. The other deities are also treated just as Avalokiteśvara has been discussed.

*Question:* In considering the conventional Shingon *yogin* as well as the pious and the reciter [of mantras], they are not all necessarily born in the Pure Land. How should we use the mind hereafter so as to fulfill the vow to be born in the Pure Land? You have explained already that chanting one [time] or ten [times] is the

immediate cause for birth in the Pure Land. For a man or woman with a mind, what stops the thought to be born in the Pure Land?

*Answer:* There are many direct and indirect causes [for birth in the Pure Land]. One should use the mind skillfully. Some cultivate Shingon practice. Others succeed merely by chanting the Buddha's name. They consider other people seeing and hearing [the Buddha] but lack faith in the wisdom of the Buddha. This practice is not a direct cause [for birth in the Pure Land]. Some seek the respect of other people and undergo painful practices for the future. This also is not a direct cause. Others, for wealth and honor, chant the *Lotus Sutra* and so on. This also is not a direct cause. Others, for fame, abide by the precepts, but again this is not a direct cause. Some maintain that they are right and others wrong. This also is not a direct cause. Some learned persons say (T. 31: 408c, 103b), "The direct causes of ten chants are the intention of a different time." One should realize that this is the same as slandering the Vaipulya sutras and again is not a direct cause. Some adopt for themselves but not for others exoteric or esoteric practices, but this is not a direct cause. *Yogins* of Amitābha and Maitreya are antagonistic to each other. This is the karmic cause for falling into hell. This is like the bodhisattvas who discuss the two truths (provisional and absolute). If one knows such uses of the mind, who is not born in the Pure Land?

22b

The great master [Kūkai] said, "Ignorance and enlightenment exist in me. Nothing is grasped or attained" (*Jūjūshinron*, *Kōbō Daishi zenshū* 1:129).

## Chapter X

### Giving Questions and Answers and Resolving Doubts

*Question:* Based on the teaching of the five *cakras*, how many types of talented individuals are there?

*Answer:* There are two kinds of talented individuals. The first are those of superior ability and wisdom who anticipate attaining Buddhahood in the present body. The second merely have faith and superficial practice and anticipate being born in the Pure Land immediately after death. In reference to these practitioners also there are many types. They truly dwell in the Pure Land Adorned with Mysteries. Altogether, they hope for the pure lands in the ten directions.

*Question:* Why does chanting [the] Mahāvairocana [mantra] become the immediate cause for [birth into] the pure lands in the ten directions?

*Answer:* This mantra of five syllables is the *dhāraṇī* of all the Buddhas in the ten directions. It is the heart of beings in the three times. Thus by chanting this mantra, in accord with one's thoughts one attains birth in the pure lands in the ten directions as well as in Maitreya's abode and the caverns of the *asuras* and so on. Likewise, the mantra practitioner of the nine syllables, in the phrase *namo amitābhāya buddhāya*, does not conceive superficial or fleeting thoughts. When one enters the Shingon teaching, all words are mantras. How much more so [the word] Amida (Amitābha)? Those who utter this, by the practice of these three syllables, encompass all practices. In brief, the three families (i.e., Buddha, Lotus, and Vajra Families) are encompassed, causing knowledge of all deities.

*A, ā, aṃ, aḥ.* The first syllable is enlightenment, which forms the cause. The next two syllables are great compassion, which form the root. The final syllable is expedient means, which forms the ultimate purpose.

*Ma, mā, maṃ, maḥ.* The first syllable forms the cause. The next two syllables form the root. The final syllable forms the ultimate purpose.

*Va, vā, vaṃ, vaḥ.* This is divided into three parts as above. All of these are the basic seed-syllables of all Buddhas, bodhisattvas, *vajradharas*, *devas*, and so on. Since these syllables have four variations (cause, practice, realization, and entrance into nirvana), they also have three parts. These immeasurable three parts are all the direct cause for birth in the Pure Land immediately after death.

*Question:* All teachings also make birth in the Pure Land dependent on the cultivation of the three acts [of body, speech, and mind]. What is the meaning of being endowed with the three mysteries in this Dharma?

[*Answer:*] The three mysteries of the *dharmakāya* Buddha are extremely profound and subtle. Even the wonderfully enlightened of Exoteric Buddhism do not know these. The six elements of the wisdom body are extremely mysterious and vast. The perfectly enlightened of the Esoteric school alone can realize these. The Buddha of calm illumination of the uncreated single path frightens, exhorts, and abandons speech. The deity with Indra's jeweled net, originally enlightened regarding the three natures (in the Kegon school: essence, characteristic, and function), shows respect, abandons its realization, and seeks for true enlightenment. The *saṃbhogakāya* Buddha Tathāgata is silent and does not answer. The *nirmāṇakāya* Sugata keeps the secret and does not talk. The enlightened who occupy the abode of a future Buddha are perplexed by this realm. The bearer of the light of the teaching (Mahākāśyapa) also is distant from this realm. [As] the substance of forms is the mystery of the body, active and still postures are the secret *mudrās*. [As] the sounds of the voice are all the mystery of speech, coarse

and trifling words are mantras. [As] all impure and pure mental perceptions are the mystery of the mind, all deluded and enlightened discriminations are wisdoms. [As] spoken and silent feelings and thoughts are also the mystery of thoughts, they are endowed with a complete *maṇḍala* that encompasses the *dharmadhātu*. [As] phenomena and noumena fundamentally are not two, improper and proper contemplations are *samādhis*. [As] form and mind themselves do not differ, they are completely fused and interpenetrate like empty space. The esoteric practices are not meant to be seen and heard [by all]. The secret teachings must not be transmitted recklessly. Superficial wisdom overflows and is expressed because it lacks blessings. Inferior wisdom, similarly, is disputed because it has faults. [For those] without faculties the [treasure] chest is hidden at the bottom of the spring. Since the lack of faith certainly is the cause for the destruction of truth, [for those] without ability speech is locked in the throat. The birth of doubts always is the cause for falling into hell, so it is not that I selfishly wish to keep the proverbial sword from the child, but fear and erroneous thoughts injure life. Do not conceal *yoga* from the exoteric person. Without unbiased faith, one only invites calamities. Do not neglect and do not make light of the gems of the three families. One should respect and honor the value of the three mysteries. The power to take refuge is to enter deeply into the ocean of the lotus of the mind. To have great faith is to look up mysteriously at the enlightened moon in the sky.

[End of] *The Illuminating Secret Commentary*  
*on the Five Cakras and the Nine Syllables*  
 in one *chüan* (fascicle)

The above text contains many references to initiations. Those not initiated, if apprenticed to a teacher, may be shown these. Among these, the secret meaning of the five organs is a great topic. Study this well and cultivate [the practices].

Now, after recording this secret commentary, I entered *samādhi*. Suddenly Hōshōbō (Ācārya Kyōjin) appeared and said:

Once Mount K'un-lun crumbled and became a single gold stone. The visualizations of Vairocana and Amitābha, and of the common person and the wise person, are not two. I am the ancient companion of the Golden World (Mañjuśrī's Pure Land), and you also are the newcomer in the Pure Land Adorned with Mysteries. When you enter this tall and fragrant forest, which has a different odor?

Then the speaker disappeared like an illusion.

Then, without understanding why, I shed copious tears and felt much ashamed. When suddenly seeking the outlines of the [Pure] Land Adorned with Mysteries I realized the end of samsara.

## Glossary

*Note: The Japanese equivalents of technical terms are given in the form used by Kūkai and/or Kakuban; the titles of texts are also given in the form used by these authors and may differ from the full or standard titles.*

*ācārya* (Jp.: *ajari*): A teacher or master, especially one versed in Esoteric Buddhism. *See also* Esoteric Buddhism.

*Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* (T. 865; Skt.: \**Vajraśekhara-sūtra*; Ch.: *Chin-kang-ting ching*; Jp.: *Kongōchōgyō*): In its narrowest sense, this corresponds to the *Sutra of the Great King of Teachings*, but it is often used by Kūkai to refer to sutra(s) considered by him to belong or be related to a corpus of works which, according to Sino-Japanese traditions, originally consisted of one hundred thousand verses and eighteen assemblies. *See also* *Sutra of the Great King of Teachings*.

*Adamantine Realm* (Skt.: *Vajradhātu*; Jp.: *Kongōkai*): The name of the *maṇḍala* described in the *Sutra of the Great King of Teachings*. *See also* *maṇḍala*; *Sutra of the Great King of Teachings*.

*Adamantine Samādhi Sutra* (T. 273; Skt.: \**Vajrasamādhi-sūtra*; Ch.: *Chin-kang san-mei ching*; Jp.: *Kongōsanmaikyō*): A Mahayana sutra. *See also* Mahayana.

*Akṣobhya* (“Immovable One”): *See* Five Buddhas.

*Amitāyus*: (“Infinite Life”): *See* Five Buddhas.

*Amoghasiddhi* (“Infallible Success”): *See* Five Buddhas.

*Amoghavajra* (705–774): An Indian Buddhist monk who translated many texts of Esoteric Buddhism into Chinese, especially those of the corpus of works collectively known as the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra*, and actively engaged in the proselytization of Esoteric Buddhism in China. *See also* *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra*; Esoteric Buddhism.

*arhat*: One who has freed himself from the bonds of samsaric existence by eliminating all passions. The highest spiritual ideal of the Hinayana. *See also* Hinayana.

## Glossary

*asamkhyeya* (Jp.: *asōgi*): “Incalculable”; a very high number.

Asaṅga (ca. fourth century C.E.): An Indian Buddhist monk; founder, with his brother Vasubandhu, of the Yogācāra school. *See also* Vasubandhu; Yogācāra.

Aśvaghōṣa (ca. first–second centuries C.E.): An Indian poet and Mahayana philosopher, author of several important Mahayana works. *See also* Mahayana.

Avalokiteśvara: The bodhisattva who represents great compassion. *See also* bodhisattva.

*bodhi*-mind (Skt.: *bodhicitta*; Jp.: *bodai shin*): Aspiration for enlightenment.

bodhisattva (“enlightenment being”): One who has engendered the profound aspiration to achieve perfect enlightenment (*bodhi*-mind, or *bodhicitta*) on behalf of all sentient beings. The spiritual ideal of the Mahayana. *See also* *bodhi*-mind; Mahayana.

*Bodhi-site Sutra* (T. 950; Ch.: *P’u-t’i-ch’ang ching*; Jp.: *Bodaijōkyō*): An Esoteric sutra describing rites associated with Ekākṣaroṣṇiṣacakravartin. *See also* Ekākṣaroṣṇiṣacakravartin; Esoteric Buddhism.

Buddha Family: One of the three or five groups or families into which Esoteric Buddhist deities are organized. *See also* Esoteric Buddhism; Five Families; Lotus Family; Vajra Family.

Chih-i (538–597): Principal founder of the T’ien-t’ai (Jp.: Tendai) school. *See also* Tendai.

*Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise* (T. 1668; Ch.: *Shih mo-ho-yen lun* / *Shih ta-yen lun*; Jp.: *Shakumakaenron* / *Shakudaienron*): A commentary on the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* traditionally attributed to Nāgārjuna, but now generally believed to have been composed around the seventh or eighth century in China or Korea. *See also* Mahayana; Nāgārjuna; *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*.

dependent recompense (Jp.: *ehō*): The objective world or physical circumstances upon which one’s existence depends, representing the secondary recompense in this life for past actions. *See also* recompense proper.

*dhāraṇī* (Jp.: *darani* / *sōji*): A mystic spell; similar in meaning to *vidyā* and mantra, although these may be differentiated in accordance with their content or use. *See also* mantra; *vidyā*.

- Dharma body (Skt.: *dharmakāya*; Jp.: *hosshin*): One of the three bodies of a Buddha, equated with ultimate reality. *See also* fourfold Dharma body; three bodies.
- Dharma-Buddha (Jp.: *hōbutsu*): An alternative term for the Dharma body. *See also* Dharma body.
- dharmadhātu*. *See* Dharma realm.
- dharmakāya*. *See* Dharma body; three bodies.
- Dharma realm (*dharmadhātu*): Literally, the objects (*dharmas*) of the mind in general. It also means the entire universe, or the fundamental spiritual reality underlying the phenomenal world.
- distinct teaching (Jp.: *bekkyō*): One of the two divisions of the perfect teaching; it corresponds to the teachings of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*, considered to be quite distinct from the three vehicles. *See also* *Flower Ornament Sutra*; perfect teaching; three vehicles.
- eight abandonments (Jp.: *hachihai*): An alternative term for the eight liberations. *See also* eight liberations.
- eight classes (Jp.: *hachibu*): Eight categories of gods and demigods—1) *devas* (gods or heavenly beings), 2) *nāgas* (dragons or serpents), 3) *yakṣas* (a type of demon), 4) *gandharvas* (celestial musicians), 5) *asuras* (demigods), 6) *garuḍas* (mythical birds), 7) *kiṃnaras* (gods of song), and 8) *mahoragas* (mythical snakes).
- eighteen realms (Skt.: *aṣṭādaśa dhātavaḥ*; Jp.: *jūhakkai*): The twelve sense fields and the six consciousnesses. *See also* six consciousnesses; twelve sense fields.
- Eightfold Noble Path (Skt.: *āryāṣṭāṅgamārga*; Jp.: *hasshō[dō]*): The practices taught by the Buddha in the fourth of the Four Noble Truths as the method through which suffering can be ended—1) right view, 2) right thought, 3) right speech, 4) right action, 5) right livelihood, 6) right effort, 7) right mindfulness, and 8) right meditation. *See also* Four Noble Truths.
- eight liberations (Skt.: *aṣṭāvimokṣa*; Jp.: *hachige / hachigedatsu*): Eight kinds of meditation for attaining liberation from mental afflictions.
- eight negations (Jp.: *happu*): The characterization of all dependently arisen existents as being devoid of arising and cessation, annihilation and eternality, identity and difference, coming and going; regarded as

an expression of ultimate truth by the Sanron school. *See also* Sanron school.

eight sufferings (Jp.: *hakku*): 1) birth, 2) old age, 3) sickness, 4) death, 5) the suffering of having to part from those whom one loves, 6) the suffering of having to meet with those whom one hates, 7) the suffering of being unable to obtain what one seeks, and 8) the suffering associated with the five aggregates. *See also* five aggregates.

Ekākṣaroṣṇīṣacakravartin (Jp.: Ichijichōrinnō): Lit., "One-Syllable Crown Wheel[-turning] King"; a deity personifying the single syllable *bhrūṃ* and belonging to a class of deities believed to be personifications of the protuberance (*uṣṇīṣa*) on the crown of the Buddha's head.

enjoyment body (Skt.: *saṃbhogakāya*; Jp.: *juyūshin*): One of the three bodies of a Buddha and one aspect of the fourfold Dharma body; the body acquired by a Buddha as a reward or recompense for his attainment of enlightenment, also known as the recompense body. Sometimes a distinction is made between the self-enjoyment body and the other-enjoyment body. *See also* fourfold Dharma body; other-enjoyment body; recompense body; self-enjoyment body; three bodies.

equal enlightenment (Jp.: *tōgaku*): A state of enlightenment achieved by a bodhisattva that is equal to that of the Buddha, corresponding to the forty-first of the forty-two levels or the fifty-first of the fifty-two levels. *See also* fifty-two levels; forty-two levels.

Esoteric Buddhism: A form of Buddhism that evolved through the blending of the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism with the techniques for realization described in texts called *tantras*, involving the extensive use of mantras, *mudrās*, *maṇḍalas*, and ritual. *See also* mantra; Mahayana; *maṇḍala*; *mudrā*.

*Essay on the Five Teachings of the Hua-yen* (T. 1866; Ch.: *Hua-yen wu-chiao chang*; Jp.: *Kegongokyōshō*): An introduction not only to Hua-yen (Jp.: Kegon) doctrine, but also to Buddhism as a whole by Fa-tsang. *See also* Fa-tsang; Kegon.

*Essays on the Garden of Dharma and the Grove of Meaning in the Mahayana* (T. 1861; Ch.: *Ta-ch'eng fa-yüan i-lin chang*; Jp.: *Daijōhōngirinjō*): A collection of essays by K'uei-chi of the Fa-hsiang (Jp.: Hossō) school. *See also* Hossō; K'uei-chi.

*Explanatory Sutra on the Guiding Principle* (T. 1003; Ch.: *Li-ch'ü shih-ching*; Jp.: *Rishushakukyō*): A commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitānaya-sūtra*

(Ch.: *Li-ch'ü ching*; Jp.: *Rishukyō*) translated or possibly composed by Amoghavajra; because its standing in the Shingon sect is on a par with the sutras, it is referred to as the "*Explanatory Sutra*." See also Amoghavajra.

Fa-hsiang. See Hossō.

Fa-tsang (643–712): The third patriarch of the Hua-yen (Kegon) school. See also Kegon.

fifty-two levels (Jp.: *gojūni'i*): The fifty-two levels or stages of the path leading from the state of an ordinary person to enlightenment; formulated by Chih-i by adding ten levels of faith before the forty-two levels. See also Chih-i; forty-two levels.

first abode (Jp.: *shōjū*): The first of the ten abodes in the forty-two levels and fifty-two levels. See also fifty-two levels; forty-two levels.

first stage (Skt.: *prathamabhūmi / ādibhūmi*; Jp.: *shōji*): The first of the ten stages; also called the stage of joy. See also stage of joy; ten stages.

five aggregates (Skt.: *pañcaskandha*; Jp.: *goun / go'on*): The five constituent elements that make up individual existence—1) form (or matter), 2) perception (or sensation), 3) ideation, 4) volition, and 5) consciousness.

Five Buddhas (Skt.: *pañcabuddha*; Jp.: *gobutsu*): The five chief Buddhas of Esoteric Buddhism; in the Adamantine Realm they are 1) Vairocana (center), 2) Akṣobhya (east), 3) Ratnasambhava (south), 4) Amitāyus (west), and 5) Amoghasiddhi (north). See also Adamantine Realm; Esoteric Buddhism; Vairocana.

five defilements (Skt.: *pañcakaṣāya*; Jp.: *gojoku*): Five defilements or impurities of 1) the eon, 2) views, 3) mental afflictions, 4) sentient beings, and 5) life that characterizes an evil age.

five desires (Skt.: *pañcakāma*; Jp.: *goyoku*): The five desires that arise through contact with the five sense objects (form, sound, smell, taste, and tangible objects). See also six sense objects.

five destinies (Skt.: *pañcagati*; Jp.: *goshu*): The five states of transmigratory existence—1) hell, 2) hungry ghosts, 3) animals, 4) humans, and 5) gods. See also six paths.

five elements (Skt.: *pañcabhūta*; Jp.: *godai*): 1) earth, 2) water, 3) fire, 4) wind, and 5) space.

- five extremes (Jp.: *gohen*): Attachment to any one of the four propositions or to the proposition that something is neither non-A nor not non-A. *See also* four propositions.
- Five Families (Skt.: *pañcakula*; Jp.: *gobu*): The five groups or “families” into which the deities of the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra* are organized: 1) Buddha Family, 2) Vajra Family, 3) Gem (Ratna) Family, 4) Lotus (Padma) Family, and 5) Karma Family. *See also* Buddha Family; Lotus Family; Vajra Family.
- five meditations for settling the mind (Jp.: *gojōshinkan*): 1) meditating on impurities as an antidote to greed, 2) meditating on compassion as an antidote to anger or hatred, 3) meditating on dependent arising as an antidote to stupidity, 4) meditating on the constituent elements of existence as an antidote to the erroneous view of substantialism, and 5) meditating on the breath as an antidote to distraction.
- Five Mysteries Sutra* (T. 1125; Ch.: *Wu pi-mi ching*; Jp.: *Gohimitsukyō*): A ritual manual devoted to the “Five Mysteries,” i.e., Vajrasattva and his four consorts (Desire, Touch, Love, and Pride).
- five precepts (Skt.: *pañcaśīla*; Jp.: *gokai*): The five basic precepts to be observed by laypeople—1) not to kill, 2) not to steal, 3) not to commit adultery, 4) not to lie, and 5) not to ingest intoxicants.
- five rebellious offenses (Skt.: *pañcānantariyāṇi*; Jp.: *gogyaku*): The five grave sins said to bring immediate retribution in the form of rebirth in the Avīci Hell—1) patricide, 2) matricide, 3) killing an arhat, 4) causing a Buddha’s body to bleed, and 5) causing disunity in the monastic community (*sangha*).
- five stages of attaining enlightenment (Skt.: *pañcākārābhisambodhikrama*; Jp.: *gosōjōshingan*): A visualization practice, based on the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, introduced by Kūkai and established as a hallmark of Shingon practice.
- five supernatural faculties (Skt.: *pañcābhijñā*; Jp.: *gojinzū*): The five supernatural powers—1) supernatural vision, 2) supernatural hearing, 3) the ability to know others’ thoughts, 4) the ability to know former lives, and 5) the ability to perform miracles such as appearing anywhere at will. *See also* six faculties.
- five teachings (Jp.: *gokyō*): The five categories into which the Buddhist teachings are classified in the Kegon school, in order of increasing depth—1) the Hinayana teaching, 2) the elementary teaching of the Mahayana,

3) the final teaching of the Mahayana, 4) the sudden teaching of the Mahayana, and 5) the perfect teaching. *See also* Hinayana; Kegon; Mahayana; perfect teaching.

five vehicles (Skt.: *pañcayāna*; Jp.: *gojō*): The five types of teachings or paths, for 1) humans, 2) gods, 3) *śrāvakas*, 4) *pratyekabuddhas*, and 5) bodhisattvas. *See also* bodhisattva; *pratyekabuddha*; *śrāvaka*.

five wisdoms (Skt.: *pañcajñāna*; Jp.: *gochi*): 1) great perfect mirrorlike wisdom, which reflects all things as they are, like a clear mirror; 2) the wisdom of equality (or sameness), which sees that all things are ultimately the same in nature; 3) the wisdom of wondrous observation (also called discriminative wisdom), which discerns the distinctive features of all things; 4) the wisdom of accomplishing what is to be done (also called duty-fulfillment wisdom); and 5) the wisdom of the essential nature of the Dharma realm (also called intrinsic *dharmadhātu* wisdom), which perceives the quintessence of all things. *See also* Dharma realm.

*Flower Ornament Sutra* (T. 279; Skt.: *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*; Ch.: *Hua-yen ching*; Jp.: *Kegongyō*): An important Mahayana sutra that provided the inspiration for the doctrines of the Kegon school. *See also* Kegon; Mahayana.

forty-two levels (Jp.: *shijūni'i*): The forty-two levels of the path leading from the state of an ordinary person to enlightenment; described in the *Necklace Sutra*, they form the basis of the fifty-two stages and consist of the ten abodes, the ten practices, the ten levels of merit transference, the ten stages, the stage of equal enlightenment, and the stage of wondrous enlightenment.

forty-two stages (Jp.: *shijūniji*): An alternative term for the forty-two levels. *See* forty-two levels.

four attributes of nirvana (Jp.: *shitoku*): 1) permanence (or eternity), 2) bliss, 3) self, and 4) purity.

four bodies (Jp.: *shishin*): An alternative term for the fourfold Dharma body. *See also* fourfold Dharma body.

four debts of gratitude (Jp.: *shion*): Debts owed to 1) one's parents, 2) all sentient beings, 3) the ruler, and 4) the Three Jewels.

four demons (Skt.: *caturmāra*; Jp.: *shima*): The four causes of suffering and obstacles to practice—1) mental afflictions (*klesamāra*), 2) the five aggregates (*skandhamāra*), 3) death (*mṛtyumāra*), and 4) the king of demons (*devaputramāra*) (Pāpiyas) in the Paranirmitavaśavartin Heaven.

## Glossary

- four *dhyānas* (Skt.: *caturdhyāna*; Jp.: *shizen*): The four levels of meditation that lead to rebirth in the realm of form. *See also* three realms.
- four elements (Skt.: *catvāri mahābhūtāni*; Jp.: *shidai*): 1) earth, 2) water, 3) fire, and 4) wind.
- fourfold Dharma body (Jp.: *shishu hosshin*): The basic formulation of the Buddha-body theory in the Shingon sect—1) the own-nature body, 2) the enjoyment body, 3) the transformation body, and 4) the homogeneous body; although representing a development of the traditional Mahayana theory of three bodies, a fundamental difference is that all four bodies are considered to be in essence identical with the Dharma body. *See also* enjoyment body; homogeneous body; Mahayana; own-nature body; three bodies; transformation body.
- four groups of believers (Skt.: *catuṣpariśad*; Jp.: *shishu*): The four categories of Buddhist followers—1) monks (*bhikṣus*), 2) nuns (*bhikṣuṇīs*), 3) laymen (*upāsakas*), and 4) laywomen (*upāsikās*).
- four modes of birth (Skt.: *catasro yonayah*; Jp.: *shishō*): 1) birth from a womb, 2) birth from an egg, 3) birth from moisture, and 4) birth by transformation.
- four phases of existence (Skt.: *catvāri lakṣaṇāni*; Jp.: *shisō*): 1) birth, 2) duration, 3) change or decay, and 4) extinction or death.
- four propositions (Skt.: *catuṣkoṭi*; Jp.: *shiku*): Four propositions that may be linked either conjunctively or disjunctively—1) A, 2) non-A, 3) both A and non-A, and 4) neither A nor non-A; a.k.a. tetralemma.
- Four Noble Truths (Skt.: *catvāry āryasatyāni*; Jp.: *shitai*): The four fundamental truths taught by the Buddha—1) the truth of suffering, i.e., that life entails suffering; 2) the truth of the origination of suffering, i.e., that craving is the cause of suffering; 3) the truth of the cessation of suffering, i.e., that craving, and thereby suffering, can be brought to an end; and 4) the truth of the path, i.e., that there is a way that leads to the cessation of suffering, namely the Eightfold Noble Path. *See also* Eightfold Noble Path.
- four wisdoms (Skt.: *catvāri jñānāni*; Jp.: *shichi*): The first four of the five wisdoms. *See also* five wisdoms.
- Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala: The common designation of the *maṇḍala* described in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*, the full name of which is the Mahākaruṇā-garbhodbhava Maṇḍala, or “Maṇḍala Born of the Matrix of Great Compassion.” *See also* *maṇḍala*; *Mahāvairocana Sutra*.

*Great Calming and Contemplation* (T. 1911; Ch.: *Mo-ho chih-kuan*; Jp.: *Makashikan*): A comprehensive exposition of the theory and practice of meditation, based on lectures delivered by Chih-i of the T'ien-t'ai (Tendai) school and recorded by his disciple Kuan-ting. *See also* Chih-i; Tendai.

*Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise* (T. 1509; Skt.: \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*; Ch.: *Ta chih-tu lun*; Jp.: *Daichidoron*): An extensive commentary on the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* extant only in Chinese and attributed to Nāgārjuna, although its authorship is the subject of some debate. *See also* Nāgārjuna.

*gumonji*: A secret practice that seeks (*gu*) to remember (*ji*) what is heard (*mon*), i.e., a practice seeking the remembrance and realization of that which is observed, experienced, read, or known (i.e., a Buddhist text); a secret practice for realizing the *dharmakāya* (Dharma body) Mahāvairocana's universal presence. *See also* Dharma body; Mahāvairocana.

Hinayana: ("Lesser Vehicle"): A term used by Mahayanists to describe the teachings of early Buddhism, which had as its spiritual ideal the arhat. The two types of Hinayana followers, *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, are known as followers of the two vehicles. *See also* arhat; *pratyekabuddha*; *śrāvaka*; two vehicles.

homogeneous body (Skt.: \**niṣyandakāya*; Jp.: *tōrushin*): One aspect of the fourfold Dharma body, whereby the Dharma body manifests itself in forms homogeneous with different types of sentient beings. *See also* fourfold Dharma body.

Hossō (Ch.: Fa-hsiang): The name of a Buddhist school founded in China on the basis of Indian Yogācāra doctrine; one of the Six Schools. *See also* Six Schools; Yogācāra.

Hsüan-tsang (600–664): A monk-scholar and translator, founder of the Fa-hsiang (Hossō) school. *See also* Hossō.

identical teaching (Jp.: *dōkyō*): One of the two divisions of the perfect teaching; it corresponds to the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*, which embraces the three vehicles. *See also* *Lotus Sutra*; perfect teaching; three vehicles.

*Indications of the Goals of the Eighteen Assemblies* (T. 869; Ch.: *Shih-pa-hui chih-kuei*; Jp.: *Jūhatteshiki*): An inventory (translated or possibly composed by Amoghavajra) of eighteen works purported to constitute a scriptural corpus collectively known as the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra*. *See also* *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra*; Amoghavajra.

Indra's net (Skt.: *indrajalā*; Jp.: *taimō*): A metaphor for infinite interde-

pendence and interpenetration; according to the *Flower Ornament Sutra*, in Indra's palace hangs a net whose strands are joined together by gems, each of which reflects not only the entire cosmos but also everything reflected in every other gem. *See also Flower Ornament Sutra*.

Kegon (Ch.: Hua-yen): The name of a Buddhist school founded in China on the basis of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*; one of the Six Schools. *See also Flower Ornament Sutra*; Six Schools.

*koji* (Jp.: *kutei*): A high number, a crore.

K'uei-chi (a.k.a. Tz'u-en; 632–682): The chief disciple and successor of the monk-scholar and translator Hsüan-tsang; after the latter's death K'uei-chi systematized the teachings of the Fa-hsiang (Hossō) school. *See also Hossō*; Hsüan-tsang.

*Lamp of Prajñā Treatise* (T. 1566; Skt.: *Prajñāpradīpa*; Ch.: *Pan-jo teng lun*; Jp.: *Hannyatōron*): A commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Middle Treatise* by Bhāviveka (a.k.a. Bhāvaviveka or Bhavya). *See also Middle Treatise*; Nāgārjuna.

*Laṅkā Sutra* (T. 671; Skt.: *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*; Ch.: *Leng-ch'ieh ching*; Jp.: *Ryōgakyō*): An important Mahayana sutra. *See also Mahayana*.

Lotus Family: One of the three or five groups or families into which Esoteric Buddhist deities are organized. *See also Buddha Family*; Esoteric Buddhism; Five Families; Vajra Family.

*Lotus Sutra* (T. 262; Skt.: *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*; Ch.: *Fa-hua ching*; Jp.: *Hokekyō*): An important Mahayana sutra on which the doctrines of the Tendai school are based. *See also Mahayana*; Tendai.

Mādhyamika: One of the major Mahayana schools of Buddhism, established by Nāgārjuna and his followers. Its tenets are mainly based on the Prajñāpāramitā sutras. *See also Mahayana*; Nāgārjuna; Prajñāpāramitā sutras.

*Mahāsātyanirgranthaputravyākaraṇa Sutra* (T. 272; Ch.: *Sa-che ching*; Jp.: *Sasshakyō*): A Mahayana sutra. *See also Mahayana*.

Mahāvairocana (Jp.: Dainichi): The chief Buddha of Esoteric Buddhism, identified with the Dharma body. *See also Dharma body*; Esoteric Buddhism; Vairocana.

*Mahāvairocana Sutra* (T. 848; Skt.: *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*; Ch.: *Ta-jih ching*; Jp.: *Dainichikyō*): One of the two (or three) basic texts of Sino-Japanese Esoteric Buddhism, standing on a par with the *Sutra of the*

*Great King of Teachings* in importance. *See also* Esoteric Buddhism; *Sutra of the Great King of Teachings*.

**Mahayana**: ("Great Vehicle"): A form of Buddhism that developed in India around 100 B.C.E. and which exalts as its religious ideal the bodhisattva, great beings who aspire to enlightenment on behalf of all sentient beings. *See also* bodhisattva.

**Maitreya**: The future Buddha, currently still a bodhisattva. *See also* bodhisattva.

**maṇḍala** ("circle"): In Esoteric Buddhism, a square or circular site in which deity images, etc., are installed for the performance of rituals. It also came to refer to pictorial representations of these arrangements of deities. *See also* Esoteric Buddhism.

**Mañjuśrī**: The bodhisattva who represents wisdom. *See also* bodhisattva.

**mantra**: A mystic or incantatory formula used in the rituals of Esoteric Buddhism. *See also* dhāraṇī; Esoteric Buddhism.

**māra**: Originally this term meant "death"; it also came to signify the personification of death or the Evil One (Māra). In Buddhism four types of māras, or demons, are distinguished. *See also* four demons.

**Middle Path** (Skt.: *madhyamā pratipat*; Jp.: *chūdō*): Also "Middle Way"; the spiritual path as embodied in the Eightfold Noble Path, which avoids the two extremes of self-indulgence in pleasure and ascetic self-torture; also, the philosophical standpoint which eschews the two extremes of eternalism and annihilationism. *See also* Eightfold Noble Path.

**Middle Treatise** (T. 1564; Skt.: *Madhyamaka-kārikā*; Ch.: *Chung-lun*; Jp.: *Chūron*): An exposition of the Middle Path by Nāgārjuna which became the basic text of the Mādhyamika school in India and the San-lun (Sanron) school in China and Japan; the Chinese translation is accompanied by a commentary. *See also* Mādhyamika; Middle Path; Nāgārjuna; Sanron.

**mind-king** (Skt.: *cittarāja*; Jp.: *shinnō*): The mind as opposed to mental functions, which are likened to retainers attending upon a king.

**mudrā** ("seal"): Generally, a ritualistic hand gesture used in the rituals of Esoteric Buddhism. Sometimes four types are distinguished: 1) *mahā-mudrā* ("great seal")—images of deities as they are visualized in their physical form; 2) *samaya-mudrā* ("pledge seal")—hand gestures; 3) *dharmamudrā* ("dharma seal")—incantatory phrases (mantras or dhāraṇīs) or

seed-syllables representing the verbal counterparts of the deities; and 4) *karma-mudrā* (“action seal”)—activities characteristic of each deity. *See also dhāraṇī*; Esoteric Buddhism; mantra; seed-syllable.

*Nāgārjuna*: (ca. second century C.E.): A well-known Mahayana monk-scholar, founder of the Mādhyamika school. Several commentarial works are attributed to him, including the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise*, the *Middle Treatise*, and the *Treatise on the Ten Abodes*. *See also Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise*; Mādhyamika; Mahayana; *Middle Treatise*; *Treatise on the Ten Abodes*.

*nayuta* (Jp.: *nayuta*): A large number.

*Necklace Sutra* (Ch.: *Ying-lo ching*; Jp.: *Yōrakukyō*): 1. (T. 656): a sutra describing many aspects of the practices of the bodhisattva; 2. (T. 1485): a sutra, thought by some to have been composed in China, that deals with the stages and precepts of the bodhisattva. *See also* bodhisattva.

*nirmāṇakāya*. *See* three bodies; transformation body.

nirvana (Skt.: *nirvāṇa*; Jp.: *nehan*): The final goal of Buddhist aspiration and practice, a state in which the passions are extinguished and the highest wisdom attained.

*Nirvana Sutra* (T. 374; Ch.: *Nieh-p'an ching*; Jp.: *Nehangyō*): An important Mahayana sutra dealing with the teachings purported to have been given by Śākyamuni shortly before his entrance into nirvana. *See also* Mahayana; nirvana; Śākyamuni.

ocean-seal *samādhi* (Skt.: *sāgaramudrā-samādhi*; Jp.: *kaiin zanmai*): A state of mental absorption (*samādhi*) in which all things are perceived as they really are, just as the surface of a vast and serene body of water reflects all things without distortion; the Buddha Vairocana is said to have entered this *samādhi* before expounding the *Flower Ornament Sutra*. *See also* *Flower Ornament Sutra*; *samādhi*; Vairocana.

other-enjoyment body (Skt.: *\*parasambhogakāya*; Jp.: *tajuyūshin*): One aspect of the enjoyment body, whereby a Buddha allows others to partake of the fruits of his enlightenment. *See also* enjoyment body.

own-nature body (Skt.: *svabhāvakāya*; Jp.: *jishōshin*): One aspect of the fourfold Dharma body. *See also* fourfold Dharma body.

perfect teaching (Jp.: *engyō*): The fifth of the five teachings, divided into the identical teaching and the distinct teaching. *See also* distinct teaching; five teachings; identical teaching.

*prajñā*: Nondiscriminating or transcendental wisdom, the apprehension of ultimate reality. One of the six perfections. *See also* six perfections.

*Prajñāpāramitā* ("Perfection of Wisdom") sutras: The name of a body of Mahayana scriptures that emphasize the doctrine of emptiness, and which served as the fundamental texts for a number of important Buddhist schools, including Mādhyamika. *See also* Mādhyamika; Mahayana.

*pratyekabuddha* ("individually enlightened one"): A sage who has attained enlightenment without the guidance of a teacher, and who intends neither to guide nor teach others.

Pure Land: Generally, a Buddha land, a world or realm in which a particular Buddha dwells. In the teachings of the Pure Land school, the term refers to *Sukhāvātī* ("Land of Bliss," also called the Western Paradise) in the western quarter, which was produced by the bodhisattva Dharma-mā-kara who became Amitābha Buddha upon fulfillment of forty-eight vows. *See also* Pure Land school.

Pure Land school: A school of Mahayana Buddhism founded in the fifth century in China and later established in Japan. The salvific goal of this school centers on attaining rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land. *See also* Mahayana; Pure Land.

*Ratnasambhava* ("Jewel-born One"): *See* Five Buddhas.

recompense body (Skt.: *saṃbhogakāya*; Jp.: *hōjin*): An alternative term for the enjoyment body. *See also* enjoyment body.

recompense proper (Jp.: *shōbō*): The body and mind, representing the principal recompense in this life for past actions. *See also* dependent recompense.

response body (Jp.: *ōjin*): The body of a Buddha manifested in order to respond to the different needs and capacities of sentient beings; equivalent to either the enjoyment body or the transformation body. *See also* enjoyment body; transformation body.

Saichō (767–822): Japanese monk who brought the teachings of China's T'ien-t'ai school to Japan, and established the Tendai monastic center at Mount Hiei. *See also* Tendai.

Śākyamuni: The historical Buddha who lived in India in the fifth century B.C.E., and whose life and teachings form the basis of Buddhism.

*samādhi* (Jp.: *sanmai*): A state of mental absorption or meditation.

Samantabhadra (“Universally Good”): A bodhisattva who represents the ultimate principle, meditation, and the practice of all Buddhas. The embodiment of adherence to vows of great compassion. *See also* bodhisattva.

*samaya* (Jp.: *sanmaya*): This term has several meanings, including “coming together” and “pledge,” but in Sino-Japanese Esoteric Buddhism it is traditionally considered to have four meanings: 1) “equality” between the Buddha and sentient beings; 2) the “original vow” of the Buddha; 3) “removing hindrances” from sentient beings; and 4) “awakening” sentient beings from delusion.

*sambhogakāya*. *See* enjoyment body; recompense body; three bodies.

Sanron (Ch.: San-lun; lit., “Three Treatises”): The name of a school of Buddhism founded in China on the basis of three Mādhyamika treatises written by Nāgārjuna and his disciple Āryadeva, namely, the *Madhyamaka-kārikā* (*Middle Treatise*), the \**Dvādaśamukha-sāstra*, and the *Sata-sāstra*; one of the Six Schools. *See also* Mādhyamika; *Middle Treatise*; Nāgārjuna; Six Schools.

seed-syllable (Skt.: *bīja*; Jp.: *shuji*): A Sanskrit syllable believed to encapsulate the essence of a deity or element, etc.

self-enjoyment body (Skt.: \**svasambhogakāya*; Jp.: *jijuyūshin*): One aspect of the enjoyment body, whereby a Buddha enjoys the fruits of his enlightenment. *See also* enjoyment body.

seven expedient means (Jp.: *shichihōben*): Seven levels in the initial stages of practice prior to entering the stage of arhatship—1) five meditations for settling the mind, 2) specific mindfulness, 3) general mindfulness, 4) warmth, 5) summit, 6) endurance, and 7) state foremost in the world.

*siddhi* (Jp.: *shiji/shitchi*): Lit., “accomplishment,” “success”; spiritual accomplishments or attainments, of which many different types are enumerated in Esoteric Buddhist sutras.

six consciousnesses (Skt.: *ṣaḍvijñāna*; Jp.: *rokushiki*): The consciousnesses that arise from the contact of each of the six sense organs with their respective objects—1) eye (visual) consciousness, 2) ear (auditory) consciousness, 3) nose (olfactory) consciousness, 4) tongue (gustatory) consciousness, 5) body (tactile) consciousness, and 6) mind (mental) consciousness. *See also* six sense objects; six sense organs.

six destinies (Jp.: *rokushu*): An alternative term for the six paths. *See also* six paths.

- six elements (Jp.: *rokudai*): 1) earth, 2) water, 3) fire, 4) wind, 5) space, and 6) consciousness.
- six faculties (Skt.: *ṣaḍabhijñā*; Jp.: *rokutsū*): Six supernatural powers consisting of the five supernatural faculties plus the ability to eradicate defilements. *See also* five supernatural faculties.
- Six Pāramitās Sutra* (T. 261; Ch.: *Liu po-lo-mi ching*; Jp.: *Rokuharamitsukyō*): A sutra that sets out the six perfections in great detail, but also contains elements of Esoteric Buddhism. *See also* Esoteric Buddhism; six perfections.
- six paths (Skt.: *ṣaḍgati*; Jp.: *rokudō*): The six states of transmigratory existence—1) hell, 2) hungry ghosts (*pretas*), 3) animals, 4) demigods (*asuras*), 5) humans, and 6) gods (*devas*). *See also* five destinies.
- six perfections (Skt.: *ṣaṭpāramitā*; Jp.: *rokudo*): The perfection (*pāramitā*) of six qualities practiced by the bodhisattva on the way to complete enlightenment—1) giving or generosity (*dāna*), 2) morality or keeping the precepts (*sīla*), 3) forbearance or patience (*kṣānti*), 4) effort (*vīrya*), 5) meditation (*dhyāna*), and 6) wisdom (*prajñā*). *See also* bodhisattva.
- Six Schools: The first six schools of Buddhism established in Japan—Kusha (Ch.: Chū-she), Jōjitsu (Ch.: Ch'eng-shih), Hossō, Sanron, Ritsu (Ch.: Lü), and Kegon. *See also* Hossō; Kegon; Sanron.
- six sense objects (Skt.: *ṣaḍviśaya*; Jp.: *rokujin*): The objects of perception associated with each of the six sense organs—1) form (or matter), 2) sound, 3) smell, 4) taste, 5) tangible objects, and 6) mental objects. *See also* six consciousnesses; six sense organs.
- six sense organs (Skt.: *ṣaḍindriya*; Jp.: *rokkon*): 1) eyes, 2) ears, 3) nose, 4) tongue, 5) body, and 6) mind. *See also* six consciousnesses; six sense objects.
- Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas (Jp.: *jūroku daibosatsu*): Four groups of four attendant bodhisattvas around each of the four directional Buddhas in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, who surround the central Buddha Vairocana (the four directional Buddhas and Vairocana are collectively known as the Five Buddhas). The attendant bodhisattvas of each of the four Buddhas are: Akṣobhya (east)—Vajrasattva, Vajrarāja, Vajrarāga, and Vajrasādhū; Ratnasambhava (south)—Vajraratna, Vajrateja, Vajraketu, and Vajrahāsa; Amitāyus (west)—Vajradharma, Vajratikṣṇa, Vajrahetu, and Vajrabhāṣa; and Amoghasiddhi (north)—Vajrakarma, Vajrarakṣa, Vajrayakṣa, and Vajrasandhi. *See also* Five Buddhas; Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.

- śrāvaka* ("listener"): Originally, a disciple of the historical Buddha, one who directly heard his teachings. Later used as a general term for followers of early Buddhism (Hinayana), to distinguish them from adherents of Mahayana and Esoteric Buddhism. *See also* Esoteric Buddhism; Hinayana; Mahayana.
- stage of joy (Skt.: *pramuditā bhūmiḥ*; Jp.: *kangiji*): The first of the ten stages. *See also* ten stages.
- Subhākarasiṃha (637–735): An Indian Buddhist monk who translated some of the basic texts of Esoteric Buddhism into Chinese, including the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*. *See also* Esoteric Buddhism; *Mahāvairocana Sutra*.
- Sutra for Benevolent Kings* (T. 246; Skt.: \**Kāruṇikarājaprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*; Ch.: *Jen-wang ching*; Jp.: *Ninnōgyō*): A sutra dealing with the protection and security of the state.
- Sutra of All Yogins* (T. 867; Ch.: *I-chieh yü-ch'i ching*; Jp.: *Issaiyugikyō*): An Esoteric sutra highly valued in the Shingon sect. *See also* Esoteric Buddhism.
- Sutra of the Adamantine Guardian of Secrets* (T. 310 [No. 3]; Skt.: *Tathāgatā-cintyaguḥya-nirdeśa*; Ch.: *Mi-chi chin-kang li-shih ching*; Jp.: *Misshakukongōrikishikyō*): One of the forty-nine sutras comprising the *Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra*.
- Sutra of the Correct Theory for the Laws of the King* (T. 524; Ch.: *Wang-fa cheng-lun ching*; Jp.: *Ōbōshōrongyō*): A sutra said to have been expounded for the king of Khotan.
- Sutra of the Dhāraṇī for Protecting State Rulers* (T. 997; Ch.: *Shou-hu kuo-chieh-chu t'o-lo-ni ching*; Jp.: *Shugokokkaishudaranikyō*): An Esoteric sutra. *See also* Esoteric Buddhism.
- Sutra of the Great King of Teachings* (T. 865; Ch.: *Ta chiao-wang ching*; Jp.: *Daikyōkyō*): One of the two (or three) basic texts of Sino-Japanese Esoteric Buddhism, standing on a par with the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*; it corresponds to the first chapter of Part 1 of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*, the basic text of the corpus of works collectively known as the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra*. *See also* *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra*; Esoteric Buddhism; *Mahāvairocana Sutra*.
- Sutra on Differentiating the Positions of the Deities* (T. 870; Fen-pieh sheng-wei ching; Jp.: *Funbetsushōikyō*): A work dealing primarily with the epiphany of the thirty-seven deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. *See also* Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.

**Taoism:** An indigenous Chinese religious philosophy based on the teachings of the legendary sixth-century B.C.E. figure Lao-tzu, collected in the *Tao te ching*. Taoism is based on belief in the invisible, underlying principle of the universe called the "Tao" (Way), and the balance of *yin* and *yang*. It exerted enormous influence in Chinese culture, and some of its ideas, particularly in regard to the composition of the natural world and the body, were incorporated into Buddhism in China and Japan, which is reflected in Kakuban's *Illuminating Secret Commentary*.

**Tathāgata:** An epithet for a Buddha.

**Ten Buddhas (Jp.: *jūbutsu*):** In his capacity as expositor of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*, Vairocana is said to pervade the threefold world in the form of ten "bodies," also referred to as the Ten Buddhas; they are the bodies of sentient beings, lands, karmic retribution, *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, bodhisattvas, Tathāgatas, wisdom, Dharma, and empty space. *See also Flower Ornament Sutra*; threefold world; Vairocana.

**Tendai (Ch.: T'ien-t'ai):** The name of a school of Buddhism founded in China chiefly on the basis of the *Lotus Sutra* and introduced to Japan by Saichō. *See also Lotus Sutra*; Saichō.

**ten directions (Skt.: *daśadīś*; Jp.: *jippō*):** The four cardinal points, the four intermediate directions, the zenith, and the nadir; a term used to mean "in all directions," "everywhere."

**ten evil deeds (Skt.: *daśāsubhāḥ*; Jp.: *jūaku*):** 1) killing, 2) stealing, 3) adultery, 4) lying, 5) harsh speech, 6) calumny, 7) frivolous chatter, 8) covetousness, 9) malice, and 10) wrong views.

**tenfold freedom (Skt.: *daśavaśitā*; Jp.: *jūjizai*):** Ten kinds of supernatural power with which a person seeking enlightenment is said to be endowed—freedom in 1) longevity, 2) mind, 3) adornments (or possessions), 4) action, 5) birth, 6) liberation (or faith-and-understanding), 7) vow, 8) supernatural faculties, 9) Dharma, and 10) knowledge.

**ten levels of faith (Jp.: *jisshin / jusshin*):** The first ten levels of the fifty-two levels. *See also* fifty-two levels.

**ten realms of sentient beings (Jp.: *jikkai*):** The realms of 1) hell (*naraka*), 2) hungry ghosts (*pretas*), 3) animals, 4) demigods (*asuras*), 5) humans, 6) gods (*devas*), 7) *śrāvakas*, (8) *pratyekabuddhas*, 9) bodhisattvas, and 10) Buddhas.

**ten stages (Skt.: *daśabhūmi*; Jp.: *jūji*):** The ten stages in the career of a bodhisattva, corresponding to the thirty-first to fortieth levels of the forty-two

- levels and the forty-first to fiftieth levels of the fifty-two levels. *See also* bodhisattva; fifty-two levels; forty-two levels.
- ten stages of the mind (Jp.: *jūjūshin*): Ten states of mind or stages distinguished by Kūkai in the religious development of the mind; they are described in *The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*.
- Ten Wheels Sutra* (T. 411; Ch.: *Shih-lun ching*; Jp.: *Jūringyō*): A Mahayana sutra.
- thirty-seven deities (Jp.: *sanjūshichison*): The thirty-seven central deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, consisting of the Five Buddhas, the Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas, the Four Pāramitās, the Eight Offering Goddesses, and the Four Gatekeepers. *See also* Five Buddhas; Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas; Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.
- thirty-seven factors of enlightenment (Skt.: *saptatṛiṃśad bodhipakṣikā dharmāḥ*; Jp.: *sanjūshichihon*): A scheme of thirty-seven practices conducive to enlightenment divided into seven groups—1) the four fields of mindfulness, 2) the four right efforts, 3) the four bases of supernatural power, 4) the five faculties, 5) the five powers, 6) the seven limbs of enlightenment, and 7) the Eightfold Noble Path. *See also* Eightfold Noble Path.
- three ages (Skt.: *tryadhvan*; Jp.: *sanze*): Past, present, and future.
- three bodies (Skt.: *trikāya*; Jp.: *sanshin*): The three bodies of the Buddha—1) the Dharma body (*dharmakāya*), 2) the enjoyment body or recompense body (*saṃbhogakāya*), and 3) the transformation body (*nirmāṇakāya*). *See also* Dharma body; enjoyment body; recompense body; transformation body.
- three bonds (Jp.: *sankō*): The bonds between 1) ruler and subjects, 2) parents and children, and 3) husband and wife.
- three disciplines (Skt.: *tisraḥ śikṣāḥ*; Jp.: *sangaku*): 1) morality (*śīla*), 2) meditation (*samādhi*), and 3) wisdom (*prajñā*).
- threefold world (Jp.: *sanshu seken*): 1) the world of enlightened beings, 2) the world of non-enlightened sentient beings, and 3) the physical world (lit., “receptacle world”).
- three knowledges (Skt.: *tisro vidyāḥ*; Jp.: *sanmyō*): Three of the five or six supernatural faculties—1) the ability to know former lives, 2) supernatural vision, and 3) the ability to eradicate defilements.

three mysteries (Jp.: *sanmitsu*): 1) the mystery of the body, 2) the mystery of speech, and 3) the mystery of mind. In a narrow sense they refer to the hand gestures (*mudrās*), mantras, and visualizations employed in the meditative practices of Esoteric Buddhism, whereby the practitioner seeks to attune his acts of body, speech, and mind to those of a particular deity, but on a universal plane everything is regarded as a manifestation of the three mysteries of Mahāvairocana. *See also* Esoteric Buddhism; Mahāvairocana.

three paths (Jp.: *sanzu*): The first three of the six paths. *See also* six paths.

three periods: The periods marking the gradual decline of Buddhism after the Buddha's lifetime: 1) the five hundred-year period of the True Dharma, during which the Buddhist teaching is properly practiced and enlightenment is possible; 2) the thousand-year period of the Imitative Dharma, during which the teaching is practiced but enlightenment is no longer possible; and 3) the ten thousand-year period of the Latter Dharma (*mappō*), during which the teaching exists but correct practice and enlightenment are no longer possible.

three poisons (Skt.: *tridoṣa*; Jp.: *sandoku*): The three basic mental afflictions—1) desire or greed, 2) hatred or anger, and 3) ignorance or delusion.

three realms (Skt.: *tridhātu*; Jp.: *sangai*): The three spheres of transmigratory existence—1) the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*), i.e., the world of everyday consciousness accompanied by desires; 2) the realm of form (*rūpadhātu*), in which desires have been eliminated but the physical body remains; and 3) the realm of non-form (*ārūpyadhātu*), in which the physical body no longer exists. Each of these realms has various levels of heavens: six heavens of the realm of desire; eighteen heavens of the realm of form, which are divided between the four *dhyāna* heavens; and four heavens of the realm of non-form. *See also* four *dhyānas*.

three truths (Jp.: *santai/sandai*): Three aspects of reality differentiated in the Tendai school—1) the truth of emptiness, i.e., that all things are empty of independent self-existence; 2) the truth of provisionality, i.e., that all things, although empty, have provisional reality due to causes and conditions; and 3) the truth of the middle, i.e., that the absolute reality of all things cannot be explained in either negative or positive terms. *See also* Tendai.

three vehicles (Skt.: *triyāna*; Jp.: *sanjō*): The three types of Buddhist teachings or paths, for 1) *śrāvakas*, 2) *pratyekabuddhas*, and 3) bodhisattvas. *See also* bodhisattva; *pratyekabuddha*; *śrāvaka*.

- transformation body (Skt.: *nirmāṇakāya*; Jp.: *keshin / hengeshin*): One of the three bodies and one aspect of the fourfold Dharma body; refers in particular to the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. *See also* fourfold Dharma body; Śākyamuni; three bodies.
- Treatise on Buddha-nature* (T. 1610; Ch.: *Fo-hsing lun*; Jp.: *Busshōron*): A systematic exposition of Buddha-nature by Vasubandhu. *See also* Vasubandhu.
- Treatise on Jewel Nature* (T. 1611; Skt.: *Ratnagotravibhāgamahāyānottara-tantra-sāstra*; Ch.: *Pao-hsing lun*; Jp.: *Hōshōron*): A Mahayana treatise which gives a systematic exposition of the view that all sentient beings are endowed with Buddha-nature or the innate potential to become a Buddha.
- Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* (T. 1666; Skt.: *\*Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda-sāstra*; Ch.: *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun*; Jp.: *Daijō-kishinron*): A concise synopsis of the central ideas of Mahayana Buddhism that has exerted enormous influence on Chinese and Japanese Buddhism; although attributed to Aśvaghōṣa, questions remain concerning its authorship and place of composition. *See also* Aśvaghōṣa; Mahayana.
- Treatise on the Bodhi-mind* (T. 1665; Ch.: *P'u-t'i-hsin lun*; Jp.: *Bodaishinron*): A treatise dealing with the generation of the *bodhi*-mind which is held in high regard in the Shingon sect; although attributed by Kūkai to Nāgārjuna, internal evidence indicates that the Mādhyamika philosopher Nāgārjuna could not have composed this work. *See also* Mādhyamika; Nāgārjuna.
- Treatise on the Establishment of Consciousness-only* (T. 1585; Skt.: *\*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi-sāstra*; Ch.: *Ch'eng wei-shih lun*; Jp.: *Jōyuishikiron*): A commentary on Vasubandhu's *Triṃśikā* based on ten Indian commentaries and translated by Hsüan-tsang; it became the basic text of the Fa-hsiang (Hossō) school in China and Japan. *See also* Hossō; Hsüan-tsang.
- Treatise on the Generation of the Bodhi-mind* (Ch.: *Fa p'u-t'i-hsin lun*; Jp.: *Hotsubodaishinron*): Alternative name for the *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind*. *See also* *Treatise on the Bodhi-mind*.
- Treatise on the Ten Abodes* (T. 1521; Skt.: *\*Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā-sāstra*; Ch.: *Shih-chu lun*; Jp.: *Jūjūron*): A commentary (traditionally attributed to Nāgārjuna) on the *Ten Stages Sutra* (*Daśabhūmika-sūtra*), which forms part of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*. *See also* *Flower Ornament Sutra*; Nāgārjuna.
- Treatise on the Ten Stages* (T. 1522; Skt.: *\*Daśabhūmika-sūtra-sāstra*; Ch.: *Shih-ti-ching lun*; Jp.: *Jūjikyōron*): A commentary by Vasubandhu on

the *Ten Stages Sutra* (*Daśabhūmika-sūtra*), which forms part of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*. See also *Flower Ornament Sutra*; Vasubandhu.

twelve sense fields (Skt.: *dvādaśa āyatanāni*; Jp.: *jūnisho*): The six sense organs and their corresponding six sense objects. See also six sense objects; six sense organs.

two hindrances (Skt.: *āvāraṇadvaya*; Jp.: *nishō*): Two obstacles to the attainment of enlightenment—1) mental afflictions and 2) false knowledge.

two truths (Skt.: *satyadvaya*; Jp.: *nitai*): 1) conventional or provisional truth and 2) ultimate or absolute truth.

two vehicles (Skt.: *yānadvaya*; Jp.: *nijō*): Two types of Buddhist teachings or paths, for *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*. See also *śrāvaka*; *pratyekabuddha*.

Tz'u-en. See K'uei-chi.

Vairocana (Jp.: *Birushana/Henjō/Dainichi*): One of the five chief Buddhas of Esoteric Buddhism and the expositor of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*, the *Mahāvairocana Sutra*, and the *Sutra of the Great King of Teachings*; he corresponds to the enjoyment body, as opposed to Mahāvairocana, who represents the Dharma body. See also Dharma body; enjoyment body; Esoteric Buddhism; Five Buddhas; Mahāvairocana.

*vajra* (Jp.: *kongō*): A diamond and, by extension, anything hard and indestructible; a ritual implement shaped like a bolt having one, three, or five prongs at each end.

Vajra Family: One of the three or five groups or families into which Esoteric Buddhist deities are organized. See also Buddha Family; Esoteric Buddhism; Five Families; Lotus Family.

Vajradhātu Maṇḍala: The *maṇḍala* described in the *Sutra of the Great King of Teachings*. See Adamantine Realm; *maṇḍala*; *Sutra of the Great King of Teachings*.

Vajrapāṇi ("Vajra-in-Hand"): A bodhisattva who in Esoteric Buddhism is generally associated with Vajrasattva. See also bodhisattva; Esoteric Buddhism; Vajrasattva.

Vajrasattva ("Adamantine Being"): A bodhisattva associated with the awakening of the *bodhi*-mind (*bodhicitta*), the aspiration for enlightenment; considered to epitomize the ideals of Esoteric Buddhism. See also *bodhi*-mind; bodhisattva; Esoteric Buddhism.

- Vasubandhu (ca. fourth century C.E.): An Indian Buddhist monk-scholar who, with his brother Asaṅga, established the Yogācāra school. *See also* Asaṅga; Yogācāra.
- Victorious Garland Sutra* (T. 353; Skt.: *Śrīmālādevisiṃhanāda-sūtra*; Ch.: *Sheng-man ching*; Jp.: *Shōmangyō*): A Mahayana sutra in which the chief protagonist is Queen Śrīmālā (“Victorious Garland”), the daughter of King Prasenajit of Śrāvastī. *See also* Mahayana.
- vidyā* (Jp.: *myō*): The primary meaning of this term is “knowledge” or “science,” but it also came to mean “magical power” or “spell.” *See also* *dhāraṇī*.
- vidyārāja*, *vidyārājñī* (Jp.: , *myōō*, *myōhi*): Lit., “spell-king” and “spell-consort” respectively; the personification in male and female form of an especially potent spell (*vidyā*). *See also* *vidyā*.
- Western Paradise: A reference to the Pure Land of Amitābha. *See* Pure Land.
- wondrous enlightenment (Jp.: *myōgaku*): The enlightenment of a Buddha, corresponding to the last of the forty-two levels and fifty-two levels. *See also* fifty-two levels; forty-two levels.
- yoga*: Lit., “yoking”; a Sanskrit term that in general refers to any practice or path that leads to a mystical experience of spiritual union. In Esoteric Buddhism it refers to various meditative and visualization practices, such as deity *yoga*.
- Yogācāra: A major philosophical school of Mahayana Buddhism, founded by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu in the fourth century C.E., which advocates the doctrine of “cognition-only” (*vijñāpti-mātra*). *See also* Asaṅga; Mahayana; Vasubandhu.
- Yoga Treatise* (T. 1579; Skt.: *Yogācārabhūmi*; Ch.: *Yü-ch'ieh lun*; Jp.: *Yugaron*): The basic text of the Indian Yogācāra school. *See also* Yogācāra.
- yogin*: A practitioner of *yoga*. *See also* *yoga*.

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*Ch.*: Chinese  
*Skt.*: Sanskrit  
*Jp.*: Japanese  
*Eng.*: Published title  
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