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The Importance of *Kōden* in the Establishment of Identity: The Title of the *Dainichikyō* in the Opening Sequence of the *Hizōki*

HENNY VAN DER VEERE

Shingonshū 真言宗 is a generic term used by a large number of independent organisations based on ritual lineages, each with their specific ideas and their training, and education system. Nowadays, the best known of these organisations is arguably the Kongōbuji-ha 金剛峯寺派 through their headquarters on Mt. Kōya; a century ago that would have been the Tōji-ha 東寺派 located in the old capital, Kyoto. The ritual organisations which employ the name Shingonshū do so because they share a heritage from the past, hold on to training courses for their ritual specialists which have many similarities, and, of course, claim to have their foundation and inspiration in the (alleged) works of Kōbō Daishi Kūkai 弘法大師空海 (774–835). They recognize to a certain extent each other's permits and qualifications, but at the same time show a variety of differences in the performance of ritual and the interpretation of their authoritative works.

In scholarship, especially in contributions by priests belonging to those organisations, a variety of issues, tenets, and ritual practices are taken up from a perspective based on the similarities that keep the concept of Shingonshū together. This is also the general atmosphere in most works by Western academics, many of which concern doctrinal ideas (*kyōsō* 教相). On the contrary, in the field of ritual studies and studies of practice (*jissō* 実相 and *jissen* 実践), these organisations and ritual lineages emphasize what separates them and discern various differences, certainly in respect to the efficacy of altar rituals and in the way their bridge to unification with the absolute world is built. Moreover, research on matters pertaining to "Shingonshū" customarily takes the form of a diachronic approach in which most, if not everything, is traced back to Kūkai as originator, or supposes a continuity in the development from the founder Kūkai until the present situation.

I see a number of problems in the above-mentioned approach. Firstly, I am not convinced that everything can be traced back to Kūkai and his successors or that descriptions that start from the works of Kūkai will yield a historically correct picture of the developments in Japanese history. Further, I think that research into the contemporary situation in Japan, its ritual networks, services, and position in society would become more revealing and fruitful when we consider existing practices without this compulsory connection with the vicissitudes in the long history of ritual practice. We can easily discern organisations in contemporary Japan which, although they screen themselves off from the public eye to a certain extent by professing to have eso-

teric knowledge which is not available to laics or uninitiated, possess a system of training their priests which is very much their own in the emphases they place on certain aspects traditionally linked with the concept of Shingonshū. During the training and general education of their members in as far as they aspire to become ritual specialists, these organisations, whether they boast a long history or not, are supposed to present a coherent picture of their ideas on ritual in a doctrinal setting, or at least an epistemic for the performance of ritual, its efficacy, and its relationship with the needs of the clients, that is defensible and coherent.

It follows that one path to an understanding of how the ritual specialists organize their lore and cater to their clients, and one way to discover the actual differences between the schools, is to investigate the contents of those education models. Such a line of inquiry would provide insights in the way the various schools define themselves and build their identity, and would show us the systematics and tools of their universe. In other words, instead of approaching the ritual expert from a framework defined from outside the tradition itself, whether that be from Western perspectives on the Japanese religious situation or buddhological approaches informed by nineteenth-century constructions of the East, I prefer to investigate the insider perspective of the priests and the organisation they belong to in present-day Japan. I believe that an analysis of the contents of the transmission system, and especially the initiation lectures called *kōden* 講伝 will reveal what certain organisations hold most dear, what sets them apart from each other, and, in addition, may bring to light new topics which may have escaped the eye of the observer and remained under the radar otherwise.

In the present article I would like to show how such a study of the workings of the education system may yield some interesting data and focus on the points that are considered unique by a certain organisation through an example taken from the *kōden* initiation lectures, for my purpose here from the *Hizōki kōden* 秘蔵記講伝, the lectures on the *Hizōki* 秘蔵記, a basic text for many and possibly all ritual lineages.[1] This one example will support my claim, I hope, that the actual identity and characteristics of contemporary lineages is (re)defined during these sessions, always under the guise of the perpetuation of tradition. At the same time, my discussion will show some of the ramifications of the explanations which contribute to a more general build-up of lore about the universe of the priest.

The first line of the *Hizōki*[2] consists of just the title of the *Dainichikyō* 大日経 (Mahāvairocana sutra)[3] and over the centuries much time and effort was spent to interpret this fact. This is the topic I lift from the transmission system to clarify my position. The questions I keep in mind when discussing this example are influenced by an interest in the contemporary situation and in the way the identities that are strengthened during the transmissions and trainings lead to competition and a tendency of monopolizing the truth, while at the same time the overall identity of the Shingonshū construct is sought or accommodated.

Before I go into a detailed discussion of how this topic is treated in the training of ritual specialists and how their "universe" is constructed, I will first describe the general course of the training of the Shingon priest. I then continue with a discussion of the position of *kōden*, the initiation lectures that provide the priests with information on both ritual and doctrine, usually in an integrated form. I hope to show that often and maybe only in these lectures the ideas, the way the organisations define themselves, and matters important for their identity, come to the fore and can become the subject of research when the records of these *kōden* are used as sources.

After sketching these environments, I discuss the *Hizōki kōden*, the initiation lectures on one of the basic texts for the ritual framework and doctrinal exegesis of the Shingonshū. I select from these *kōden* my main example to illustrate the workings of the various education systems, namely the problem of why this authoritative text opens with the title of the *Dainichikyō*. The exegesis on this riddle has so many ramifications that I will have to limit myself here, but I hope to convince the reader that the discussions on what may seem a minor problem to outsiders to the tradition are instrumental to arrive at some understanding at least about what this kind of education is about. In the process the discussion also demonstrates how such an issue as in my

1 An extensive discussion about the meaning of the title can be found in the commentaries, but "Notes on the Secret Store" may be vague enough to accommodate the majority of interpretations.

2 *Kōbō Daishi zenshū* (Osaka: Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo 1965–68) II: 1–73, hereafter KDZ; and *Shingonshū zensho* (Wakayama: Kōyasan Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2004) IX: 9–39, hereafter SZ.

3 T 18, 848; Ch. *Dari jing*.

example can be expanded to define a number of basic assumptions that lie at the core of the lineage or organisation that provides this information in their training.

1. Education and the Transmission of Lore

All the various organisations that share the Shingonshū heritage and are active in contemporary Japan show similarities in recruitment and training. Summarily, in order to become a qualified priest the aspirant or novice (*jusha* 受者) first has to seek acceptance by a master (*shishō* 師匠), take the tonsure (*tokudo* 得度), and then start his ritual training called *shido kegyō* 四度加行. In this cumulative practice a number of levels are distinguished related to templates for rituals. The position of the *goma* 護摩 fire-ritual in the build-up varies according to schools, but in the Shingonshū the Kongōkai 金剛界 practice, dedicated to the acquirement of the wisdom to discriminate between correct or wrong insights, always precedes the Taizōkai 台蔵界 practice, which entails the actualisation of wisdom in the use of helpful means. This order of practice is a major distinction with Taimitsu 台密 ritual lineages.

The student learns a number of templates through repeated practice in the context of the details and finesses of his ritual lineage (*ryū* 流), from the "reading" or chanting of sutras and *darani* 陀羅尼, preparing the altar, cutting the flowers, to mixing the incense and handling a brush to write wooden plaques (*fuda* 札), all skills learnt in order to familiarize himself with the tools of his trade.

Depending on the qualified instructor (*ajari* 阿闍利) who is the master of ritual, the content of this training may be basic ritual or may include the specific definitions of the ritual lineage, the *hiketsu* 秘決, which I translate as 'esoteric definitions', definitions of matters pertaining to the esoteric tradition. The information is conveyed to the novice in the form of *denju* 伝授, transmission of ritual matters (*jissō*). There is no doctrinal training involved in this stage.

Although the term *shido kegyō* suggests that we have to do with four stages, actually there are more and *shido kegyō* can be treated as a period of seclusion during which the daily round of ritual duties is mastered by imitation, including the veneration of the main deity of a *ryū*. The morning and evening rituals are repeatedly performed too. The ritual manuals differ depending on the school, on the legendary background, and so on. Although information on *shido kegyō* and translations of the manuals into English are now easily obtainable, I find that hardly any allowance is made in these works for the differences between the schools.[4] The intricacies of one lineage, such as the Chūin-ryū 中院流, are often treated as if they are the general model for all lineages that bear Shingonshū in their name.

When the practice of *shido kegyō* is concluded, the novice can apply for the initiation called *denbō kanjō* 伝法潅頂. This initiation provides the trainee with the basic qualification to work as a ritual specialist and sometimes earns him the title of *ajari*. He is now permitted to perform various kinds of rituals for the benefit of clients, the laics (*zaike* 在家). Moreover, he has access to literature and texts which are meant for the eyes of the initiated only, and he is allowed to attend the sessions for further instruction which I will discuss hereafter.

At this point in his career the priest has probably studied Buddhism and the historical background of his lineage in courses at university but may not have been instructed about the specific doctrinal position and ritual points of his own lineage and about his own lineage in contradistinction to other groups, even though he considers himself to be part of a certain lineage. The level of *ajari* gives him access to the continued teaching of his school or that of other schools. For ritual and practical matters, the priest continues his studies through *denju*, transmissions, among them the most important being the *ichiryū denju* 一流伝授. This transmission concerns the complete know-how of one ritual lineage. The student is informed about the contents of the *origami* 折紙,[5] folded papers with basic ritual information such as the *shingon* 真言 (*mantra*) and *in* 印 (*mudrā* hand postures) to be used during specific

4 Taisen Miyata, *Handbook on the Four Stages of Prayoga; Chūin Branch of Shingon Tradition* (Wakayama: Kōyasan Shingonshū Kyōgakubu, 1988) contains a partial translation of the manuals used on Mt. Kōya for foreigners; Richard Payne, *The Tantric Ritual of Japan: Feeding the Gods: The Shingon Fire Ritual* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture & Aditya Prakashan, 1991) focuses on the *goma*-ritual but provides information on the Mt. Kōya set of manuals as well. Robert Sharf, "Thinking Through Shingon Ritual," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 26, no. 1 (2003): 51–96 has probably the most extensive discussion on the contents of *shido kegyō*, heavily influenced by the Daigoji tradition, it would seem, but although referring to the differences (see note 18 in Sharf's article) between the organizations, holds on to a concept of an over-arching Shingonshū.

5 These are called *kirigami* 切紙 in other (later) Buddhist groups.

rituals, and receives a signed example of these documents. Among these we also find the document which shows his place in the *kechimyaku* 血脈, the bloodline of his lineage. Besides access to these *denju*, the priest is also permitted after *denbō kanjō* to attend the lectures in which instruction in both *kyōsō* and *jissō* in integrated form is given, the *kōden* sessions.

In the words of an influential *dentō-ajari* 伝統阿砂利 (an *ajari* who continues the transmissions) from Mt. Kōya, Ōyama Kōjun:

> About the understanding of *kōden* (*kōden no kokoroe* 講伝の心得): doctrinal instruction (*kyōsō*) is open to all people, regardless of whether they have received *kanjō* or not; however, instruction on practical matters (*jissō*) is limited to those who are initiated, and this is the same for [participation in] *kōden*. The instructions in the *kōden* cover both *kyōsō* and *jissō* and reveal profound issues; among them the said *Hizōki* belongs to [the category of] *kōden*.[6]

Ōyama then explains that in the case of *kōden* a "permissive initiation" (*koka kanjō* 許可潅頂) is necessary and that in his lineage (Chūin-ryū) the most abbreviated form is chosen.

There is agreement that in the discussions during the *kōden* the doctrinal and practical ritual lore is combined. *Kōden* have eminent scholar-priests as instructor and are supposed to imitate the original Shingon myth of Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来 instructing Kongōsatta 金剛薩埵 in the sense that the instructor, the Dai-ajari, is to be considered by the listener as Dainichi Nyorai and the recipient as Kongōsatta. These attitudes and the way the sessions are carried out, the *sahō* 作法, are based on a text with some short notes attributed to Kūkai,[7] and worked out in the various lineages. Often, the ritual format of such transmissions and the added visualisations are already explained in the first part of the *shido kegyō*. The provenance of the template in Kūkai's works explains the similarity we find between the schools in the format.

Since the instructions of the *kōden* concern the Taizōkai and the Kongōkai aspects of reality, the question may be raised which preliminary visualisation is suited for the recipient Kongōsatta. According to the Chizan-ha 智山派 scholar Nasu Seiryū it is general practice in Tōmitsu 東密 that after the initial body purification (*goshinbō* 護身法) the Kongōkai visualisation on the stupa and on the syllable BAN is most appropriate.[8]

Ueda Reijō states in the introduction of his *kōden* on *Rishukyō* 理趣経 (Naya Sutra, Sutra Giving Guidance towards the Truth)[9] like many other records of these transmissions: "*Kōden* are held on a number of topics such as *Rishukyō*, *Mandarashō* 曼荼羅抄, *Dainichikyōsho* (*Oku no sho*) 大日経疏 (奥ノ疏) and *Hizōki*." Here we find a number of categories which touch on the core of the rituals, the exegesis and the tenets of the various lineages that associate with the concept of Shingonshū. This doesn't necessarily mean that all ritual specialists, priests from minor temples and so on, have all attended these sessions. There is no compulsory system for further study after the *denbō kanjō*, although pressure from the various headquarters or even peer pressure allows for a high turn-out for these instructions.

I believe the actual system of lore and knowledge is not only transmitted in these sessions but also determined by the speakers/transmitters. What is more salient here is my claim that, more than a study of doctrinal works by itself, the discussions in the *kōden* indicate what is important for the identity of a ritual lineage and how the so-called heritage of Kūkai is unpacked at every single confrontation with seemingly divergent views. The approach is by no means based on a binary heterodox versus orthodox or heteropraxis versus orthopraxis discussion, which is also illustrated by the fact that priests from different lineages may attend the lectures of famous *ajari*-instructors. From experience I know that, having received *denbō kanjō* as a Buzan-ha 豊山派 priest, an organisation that uses the *Daidenbōin* 大伝法院 lineage, I could attend *denju* and *kōden* in a variety of lineages, from the Chūin-ryū lineage to Saidaiji 西大寺 lineages.

6 Ōyama Kōjun, "Hizōki kōden," vol. 2 of *Ōyama Kōjun Sentoku Kakigiki shūsei: Kōdenmon* (Osaka: Tōhō Shuppan, 1995): 173–234.

7 *Shingon denju sahō* in KDZ IV: 417–24.

8 For a more detailed explanation please refer to Nasu's *kōdenroku*. Nasu Seiryū, "Hizōki kōden," vol. 7 of *Nasu Seiryū chosakushū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1997), 3, for the mental preparation of the student.

9 Ueda Reijō, *Rishukyō kōroku* (Kyoto: Dōmeisha, 2002), 6.

2. *Hizōki Kōden*

My intention here is to illustrate how fruitful a study of *kōden* and exegetical literature can be for a fuller understanding of the way the different lineages view themselves and to emphasize that there is no one Shingonshū but a variety of lineages who together adhere to this concept. Because the lineages hold on to their own interpretations of basic texts and tenets, a mere translation of any sentence tells us preciously little about the meanings that are contained in the systems of the lineages nor does it inform us about the salient points within the overall architecture.

When I take up my example from the *Hizōki* I am fully aware of the discussions about the date of composition and the unresolved problems in manuscript study, the actual number of its volumes (one or two) or chapters. The composition of the original text is dated by scholars such as Mukai Ryūken[10] to after the introduction of the *Shōmuge-kyō* 摂無碍経[11] in 986 while the conclusions drawn by Ōzawa Shōkan,[12] a date before 878, are serious enough to warrant further research.[13] It is hard to pin the composition to an exact date or year but it seems most likely that both the *Hizōki* and the twenty-five-article testament (see below) came to the fore in the time of Kangen 観賢 (853–925) who was instrumental in the awarding of Kūkai's posthumous name of Kōbō Daishi.

The Shingon schools consider the *Hizōki* to be a collection of notes made by Kūkai during the instruction he received in China under Huiguo 惠果 (Jp. Keika, 746–805). The Tendai 天台 (Miidera 三井寺) view is mostly that these were the notes Huiguo took when he studied under Amoghavajra (Ch. Bukong 不空, Jp. Fukū, 705–74). There is no autograph by Kūkai nor is there an extant definitive version. In a manuscript from 1313 it is recorded that Gahō 我法 (Jishō shōnin 自性上人, ?–1317) tells his students that in the days of Raijo 頼助 (1246–97) an effort was made to reconstitute the original text by comparing all manuscripts but this ended in failure.[14]

Putting the problems with the manuscripts aside for now, I think it is better to speak of a meta-text, an idea about what the *Hizōki* is and means, and the divergences we can discern among the lineages do not harm the authority of the text as an idea. The text in *Shingonshū zensho* is a compromise text which can be divided, depending on the school, in a number of chapters, from ninety to a hundred depending on the commentator.

The *Hizōki kōden* can be traced from the thirteenth century on, although not always in complete form. The oldest extant record of a *Hizōki kōden*, the *Hizōshō* 秘蔵抄 (Commentary on the Hizō[ki]), is dated 1222 and was written by the Daigoji priest Shinken 深賢 (?–1261) who attended the explanations by Jōken 成賢 (1162–1231) in sessions that took place on Mt. Kōya.[15] A comparison of recent records (*kōdenroku* 広伝録) shows that the various lineages, although recognizing the value of many older records, place emphasis on works that contain the essentials for their tradition. For Daigoji Sanbōin 醍醐寺三宝院 lineages scholar-priests such as Gōhō 果宝 (1306–62) are authorities, in the Chūin-ryū the records of the instructions by Dōhan 道範 (1178–1252) and Yūkai 宥快 (1345–1416) are paramount.

The template of the records and commentaries often resembles a syllabus. They contain an outline followed by the order of the discussions and of the points that the *ajari* introduces. They may be in the form of summary notations of the main subjects under discussion, or again more elaborate texts with discussions on all points of the instruction. At times these notes were recorded by the instructor himself, but we find many

10 Mukai Ryūken "Fukūyaku *Shōmugekyō* to *Hizōki* to no kankei ni tsuite," *Buzan kyōgaku taikai kiyō* 9 (1981): 13–24; and "Hizōki seiritsu kō," *Mikkyōgaku kenkyū* 15 (1983): 53–67.

11 T 20, 1067. I use the conventional abbreviated name because the full title is exceptionally long. See Mikkyō Jiten Hensankai, ed., *Mikkyō daijiten* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1991), 1205.

12 Ōzawa Shōkan, "Hizōki no ikkōsatsu," *Taishō Daigaku Daigakuin kenkyū ronshū* 1 (1977): 95–108 and "Hizōki no senjutsu nendai ni tsuite," *Mikkyogaku kenkyū* 24 (1992): 47–61 draw attention to the fact that *Hizōki* is mentioned five times in *Rokutsū jōki* 六通貞記 (Six Messages Recorded by the Abbot of the Jōkanji [Shinga]), an important text for the Nishinoin-ryū 西院流. This text is dated 878, so our text must have been composed earlier. I am not convinced of this date and its ascription to Shinga 真雅 (801–79) for several reasons. For one, the text cites the *Goyuigō* 御遺告 (Final Instructions), which I think dates from the beginning of the tenth century. More research is needed in this case as well.

13 Ueda Reijō, *Hizōki kōden* (Kyoto: Dōmeisha, 2002), 12.

14 See Nakagawa Zenkyō, "Hizōki ni tsuite no josetsu," *Mikkyōgaku kenkyū* 1 (March 1969): 42.

15 The *Hizōshō* (1 *kan*) is often referred to as the (*Zōchū*) *Yakinshō* (蔵中)冶金抄. It mentions as instructor Henchiin Jōken and as recorder Shinken 深賢 (?–1261), who was the founder of the Daigo Jizōin 醍醐地蔵院. The transmission took place in Jōō 貞応 1 (1222) in Ōjōin Rengenotani 往生院蓮花谷 of Mt. Kōya. The text is included in vol. 15 of *Zoku Shingonshū zensho* (Wakayama: Kōyasan Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2008), hereafter ZSZ.

instances of notes taken by a listener and approved afterwards by the *ajari*. These collections are generically called *kōdenroku*.

There are a number of quite recent *kōdenroku* of the *Hizōki* available,[16] but for my exposition here I limit myself to the *kōdenroku* of Oda Jishū and Ōyama Kojun, Nasu Seiryū, and Ueda Reijō, the first two belonging to the Chūin-ryū, the third to the Chizan-ha, and the last to the Daigoji Sanbōin Dosen-ryū. These records are structured along the same patterns we can discover in older commentaries; they can be viewed as the continuation of tradition. Many of these older records show the number of days the full instruction took, and an order similar to contemporary sessions of the problems they discuss, starting with authorship, the authoritative commentaries for the lineage, and so on.

The usual *kōden* starts off, after the *ajari* relates how he was himself instructed, with a discussion of the manuscripts, the main commentators of the lineage and references to writers from other lineages, and so on. For my purpose, an illustration of the wide-ranging meanings exegetes found in just the first sentence of the *Hizōki*, I mention here the important role of the commentaries by Dōhan and Yūkai for the Chūin-ryū and Gōhō and Ryūyu 隆瑜 (1773–1850) for Daigoji and Chizan-ha.

3. The First Line of the *Hizōki*

The oldest manuscripts of the *Hizōki* have no chapter titles. Ueda Reijō[17] uses the titles from the manuscript owned by commentator Gōhō for the discussion and in transmission. Ōyama prefers writers from the Mt. Kōya lines, starting with the oldest in existence, Shinken's, and subsequent commentaries. The editor of the text in *Shingonshū zensho* says: "the division in chapters of this present [*Hizō*]*ki* is made on the basis of the *Hizōki shūyōki* 拾要記 [1842 by Ryūyu] and the *Hizōshō* [7 *kan*; 1283, author unknown]."[18]

There are *Hizōki* manuscripts with a title on the cover, a title on the first page, or without any title, but all manuscripts, as far as I know, have as the first entry the title of the *Dainichikyō*. Some lineages and commentators count this as a chapter in itself, others as a mere opening. The first thing I can say is that a mere translation of this title will do no justice to what the traditions have to say about this sentence in this specific context. Every sentence or character is supposed to be there for a reason.

In the commentarial tradition and the *kōdenroku*, the problem of the first sentence is referred to as "Title of the *Dainichikyō*."[19] It is counted as a separate chapter by Ueda Reijō but not by Oda Jishu and Ōyama Kōjun, an initial difference between Daigoiji and Mt. Kōya lineages, although admittedly not a major one. Such qualifications of divisions within the text lead to divergences in the number of chapters the commentators give, from eighty-seven to a hundred.[20]

This opening sentence runs:

> 摩訶毘盧遮那尾三菩提美紀梨儞地瑟他蘇多覽
> Makabirushana. bisanbōji. bikirini{ta}. chishuta. sotaran.

The first line thus contains no more than the Sanskrit title of the *Dainichikyō* written in Chinese characters used phonetically.

In the Taishō canon[21] the title of the translation from the Sanskrit by Śubhakarasiṃha (Ch. Shanwuwei 善無畏, Jp. Zenmui; 637–735) and Yi Xing 一行 (Jp. Ichigyō, 683–727) is *Daibirushana jōbutsu jinpen kaji kyō* 大毘盧遮那成仏神変加持経. Ueda Reijō and Oda Jishu follow the old commentaries who refer for the reconstruction of the Sanskrit title to Kūkai's commentaries[22]

16 Nakagawa, "Hizōki ni tsuite no josetsu," 42 however, states that there are no recent ones for the *Hizōki*, probably because he does not allow for the fact that there may be several decennia in between *kōden*, as was the case before the twenty-first-century *kōden* of Ueda Reijō.

17 Ueda Reijō, *Hizōki kōden*, 2002, prepared for the *kōden* at Shuchiin Daigaku from 2002 until 2004.

18 SZ IX: 9. Not to be confused with Shinken's work with the same title from 1222.

19 Oda Jishu, "Hizōki kōden kiyō," in vol. 2 of *Oda Jishu kōdenroku* (Osaka: Tōhō Shuppan, 1990). Gōhō's chapter in his *Hizōki shishō,* is titled "Makabirusha no koto." Gōhō, *Hizōki shishō,* in *Shūtenbu Shingonshū jissō shōsho*, vol. 85 of *Nihon daizōkyō* (hereafter *Nichizō*) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1976), 109. Likewise Shinnichi (?–1309), author of *Hizōki kanmon* 秘蔵記勘文, has a chapter, titled "*Dainichikyō* no koto." ZSZ XVI.

20 Interestingly, Gōhō remarks that he opts for a hundred chapters because of the "fullness of the number." *Hizōki shishō*, in *Nichizō* 115.

21 See also Paul Demiéville, Hubert Durt, and Anna Seidel, eds., *Répertoire du canon bouddhique Sino-Japonais: Edition de Taishō. Hōbōgirin*, appendix volume (Paris: L'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Institut de France, 1978), 78.

22 Kūkai wrote seven introductions to this text (*kaidai* 解題). See, for example KDZ IV: 3.

where the title appears in *shittan* script: *Mahā vairocanābhisaṃbodhi vikṛnitādhiṣṭi sūtraṃ indrarāja*.[23]

It is tempting to enter the discussion here about whether the text should be classified as a sutra, the Japanese view, or as a *tantra*, the Indian and Tibetan classification. I would stray too far from my purpose here, the working of the *kōden*, when I would introduce into the discussion commentaries on this text that were not used and/or known by the exegetes of Japan. I think that this is a defensible choice since references to Indian commentaries such as Buddhaguhya's[24] (*fl.* eighth century) are not found in the commentaries I use.

Kūkai wrote a number of treatises in which he presents his interpretations of the ideas and ritual directions recorded in the *Dainichikyō*. For him, this text was pivotal to the defence of his ideas on, for example, the stages of the mind's development and the nature of insight as *nyojitsu chijishin* 如実知自心 ("jitsu no gotoku jishin o shire") as well as the main practice of the five-syllable *shingon*. He considered the way this text treats the nature of the absolute Buddha (*hosshin* 法身) and its preaching (*A-ji honpushō* 阿字本不生) as the culmination of doctrinal thinking and used it to confirm his paramount position relative to other (non-tantric) schools, as here was the profoundest insight into the Dharma. Kūkai's substitution of causation from the six great elements (*rokudai engi* 六大縁起) for causation from *honpushō* (*honpushō engi* 本不生縁起) is discussed in later parts of the *kōden* but not here in relation to the title.

3A. THE EXPLANATION OF PHRASES (*KUGI* 句義)

In the exegetical literature of the Shingon schools the commentators address as many issues as they can find, it would seem, but the determination of the category to which the issue under discussion belongs is considered a sine qua non in many cases. All language constructs can be explained on various levels, from the meanings in the everyday world to the most profound embedded meanings. A certain *shingon* may be explained from the meanings of the words it contains or from the meanings attributed to the individual syllables. The first discussion is therefore often about the meanings of the phrases (*ku* 句) of a sentence, of a *shingon*, or of a statement. The *kugi* thus opens many an explanation and I follow the convention here.

In the *Dainichikyō kaidai (Hokkaijōshin)*[25] 大日経解題 (法界浄心) (Introduction to the Mahāvairocana Sutra: The Pure Mind of the Dharma-World), Kūkai gives as the full title of the *Dainichikyō*: *Daibirushana jōbutsu jinpen kaji kyō indaraō*. In the ensuing discussion of the parts of this title he distinguishes between original Sanskrit words (birushana, butsu, ind[a]ra) and Chinese words (dai, jō, jinpen, kaji, kyō and ō). A full translation of the Sanskrit words into Chinese characters and Japanese pronunciation would yield *Dainichi* 大日 *joan henmyō* 除暗遍明 *jōshō gakusha* 成正覚者 *jinpen kaji* 神変加持 *kyō* 経 *Taishaku* 帝釈-*ō* 王. 'Mahā', which is written in *shittan*-script, means 'great' (*dai*); 'Birushana (Vairocana)' means 'the sun, the darkness removing, expanding light' (Birushana); [a]bhisaṃbodhi' means 'having reached complete insight' (*jōbutsu*); 'vikṛnita' means 'mystic changes' (*jinpen*); '[a]dhiṣṭi' means 'unification (*kaji*)'; 'sotaran' means 'sutra' (*kyō* 経); 'Indrārajā' means 'Taishaku-ō'.

It did not escape the attention of commentators[26] that the Indian deity Indra is lacking in the versions of the text in current use as well as in the title here. Actually, the *Dainichikyōsho* 大日経疏, the commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sutra compiled between 725 and 727, the basic commentary in the Shingon schools, mentions this addition as part of the Sanskrit version.[27] There is also a difference between 'vikṛṇita' and the more common 'vikṛvita/vikurvita,' but I have found no comment on this as yet.

3B. ESOTERIC READINGS

Shingon exegesis frequently uses a further method, specific to their transmissions, as a tool to discover and explain esoteric meanings and content of texts. This approach is found appended to doctrinal explanations, or at times as the main concern of the commentator. In this case as well it is possible to read

23 Also known as *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi vikurvitādhiṣṭhāna sūtraṃ Indrarāja*.

24 For one view on those continental traditions, see Stephan Hodge, trans., *The Mahā-vairocana-abhisaṃbodhi tantra: With Buddhaguhya's Commentary* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003). This work does not account for the specific Japanese interpretations, notably the development of *bodaishin* through three stages, and is therefore of not much use for the present study.

25 KDZ IV: 3.

26 Gōhō, *Hizōki shishō*, in *Nichizō*, 115.

27 T 39, 1796: 0579b13. This is the *Daibirushanajōbutsukyōsho* 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏, the Great Commentary, which, according to tradition, contains the explanations of the *Dainichikyō* provided by Zenmui and recorded by Yi Xing.

esoteric lore in the title itself, applying the concept that the ideal world of realization is integrated in all thought, matter, and language of the world of the senses. Esoteric Buddhist concepts can be discovered as submerged meanings, or can be projected and distributed over any appearance, becoming their superior attribute.

I already introduced Shinken as the author of the earliest extant *kōden* record, the *Hizōshō* of 1222. In this work, he interpreted the title as a concise statement about real existence in four aspects: its essence, nature, function and appearance. This real, or absolute, existence is comprehensively described by the three bodies and the five wisdoms of Dainichi Nyorai. The three bodies are *Makabirushana* = *hosshin*; *jōbutsu* 成仏 = *hōjin* 報身; *jinpen kaji* 神変加持 = *ōjin* 応身. In a similar way the five kinds of wisdom are distributed over the parts of the title: the *hosshin* comprises the wisdom of *daienkyō-chi* 大円鏡智, *byōdōshō-chi* 平等性智, and *hokkaitaishō-chi* 法界体性智; *jōbutsu* corresponds to *myōkansat-chi* 妙観察智; while *jinpen kaji* stands for *jōsosa-chi* 成所作智. This explanation may have been transmitted as part of the *kuketsu* of certain lineages since neither Ueda Reijō's *kōden* nor the commentators from this lineage refer to it, as far as I have been able to discover.

The unknown author of the *Hizōshō* from 1283 explains, similar to Kūkai's explanations in the aforementioned *Kaidai*, that 'Maka' stands for 'Dai', which refers to the *rokudai hosshin*, Birushana for the sun, and *bisanboji* for *jōbutsu*.[28] In the form of a dialogue, he compares the specific *shingon* meanings with Taimitsu interpretations, which are different.

The focus of his discussion is on the difference in meaning of the term *jōbutsu* since the Taimitsu scholar Annen 安然 (?841–?915) uses the same phrase, *jōbutsu*. To elucidate, the unknown author pulls the card of exoteric-esoteric division and explains that the meanings are not the same as there is a difference between *kengyō* 顕教 and *mikkyō* 密教, between a shallow and profound level of analysis. He postulates that the *jōbutsu* in the title of the sutra refers to *hōni no jōbutsu* 法爾成仏, the Buddha-hood as the inherent absolute in itself and by itself, and not *hōni zuien jōbutsu* 法爾従縁成仏, the attained Buddha-hood reached through conditional progress starting out from the inherent absolute. The *Rishushaku-kyō* 理趣釈経[29] is quoted to show that the complex under discussion here is the wondrous body of all the various Nyorai in their unshared reality. From this complex mentioned in the title, represented by the syllable UN (Sk. hūṃ), everything, both man and the five great elements come forth. Basically, he continues, the eight schools (*kengyō*) differentiate between man and dharma, while a basic Shingon tenet is that Man is Dharma (*jin soku hō* 人即法) and Dharma is Man (*hō soku jin* 法即人). The absolute inherent in all is Dainichi in essence, substance, action, etc.; in other words, *h*ōni jōbutsu. Thus, the commentator writes, "*jōsanboji*" in the title refers to the Dharma, and Annen's *jōbutsu* is the term for Man.

To follow our unknown writer somewhat further to get an idea of the exegetical atmosphere, the next explanation in this commentary concerns the term "Vikirini" which is explained as "mysterious transformations" (*shinpen* 神変). These function in four ways: when flowing downwards, retrogressively, it indicates a causal history of transformation leading back to the source, original enlightenment (*hongaku no engi* 本覚縁起); upwards, progressively, it leads to the pinnacle of initial enlightenment (*shigaku no jōten* 始覚上転); when the transformations work sometimes up and then down, we notice the working of the five wisdoms and the four bodies; when there is no transformation upwards nor downwards, the term refers to all sentient and non-sentient beings and all constructed and non-constructed (*sanskṛta* and *asanskṛta*) dharmas, which are essentially represented by the syllable A of non-production.

When the *kōden* thus discuss the opening line, they introduce the topics of the commentators not only as historical precedents but also in order to distinguish the general Shingon thought from other groups and in addition they add to the store of the audience's knowledge while wielding the analytical tools that are characteristic for their organization.

28 *Hizōshō*, SZ IX: 41. This commentary is also known as *Hizōki shimonsho* 秘蔵記私聞書 (Personal Notes Regarding [Aural Instruction into] the *Hizōki*). It contains the record of a transmission that took place in Kōan 弘安 6 (1283) in Kamakura Sazame no tani 鎌倉佐々目谷.

29 Sutra Explaining the Guidance towards the Truth, a work attributed to Amoghavajra. T 19, 1003.

4. Why Does the Text Open with the Title (Only)?

The *kōden* then explain that commentators propose various reasons, historical and doctrinal, as to why the *Hizōki* opens with the title of *Dainichikyō*. Since the writer is supposed to be Kūkai, historical reasons are sought in Kūkai's life and the known biographies. Raihō 頼宝 (1279–1330), for example, assumes that Kūkai placed the title of the sutra at the beginning, and thus accorded it prime place, as a result of the major role this sutra played in the course of his public career and his private life.[30] There is general agreement that Kūkai's initial motive to go to China was to learn the full meaning of this sutra after he discovered it, as the story goes in many biographies, under the pagoda of Kumedera 久米寺, acting upon a revelation in a dream or in meditation. I turn, in the company of the exegetes, to one of the basic texts of the Shingon traditions, the *Goyuigō* 御遺告 (Final Instructions), to situate this event and highlight the importance of the *Dainichikyō* for Kūkai's career in the framework of accepted lore of the Shingon school. During the *kōden* this becomes an opportunity to ascertain the importance of this text and to instruct the listeners in its contents.

4A. THE "FINAL INSTRUCTIONS"

It may come as no surprise that Kūkai's final instructions to his disciples before his death carry great weight for all those who consider themselves keepers of his heritage. These instructions, of which there are several redactions and versions under the name (*go*)*yuigō* or (*go*)*yuikai* 御遺戒. The version of *Goyuigō* that would become one of the most influential texts for the Shingon traditions, the so-called "Final Instructions in Twenty-five Chapters" (*Goyuigō nijūgokajō* 御遺告二十五箇条),[31] in all probability dates from the tenth century.[32] In the same way as the *Hizōki* is the backbone for the ritual practice of most Hirosawa-ryū 広沢流 schools, this "Testament," as it is called by some translators,[33] contains basic lore for the Ono-ryū 小野流 schools and contains indispensable information for some of their major rituals.

A few words may be necessary on the position of both the *Hizōki* and the *Goyuigō* as well as their use in esoteric Buddhism. The division in lineages that can be traced back to Hirosawa 広沢 pond or the Mandaraji 曼荼羅寺 in Ono 小野 continues to the present day due to basic differing interpretations in ritual and exegesis thereof, although many of the contemporary lineages are the result of cross-fertilisation and ever-newer interpretations by leading ritualists. There are also lineages belonging to none of the above two, such as Kojima-ryū 小島流. Although ritual transmissions make their own selection to create a curriculum for the study of both theory and practice, they are not exclusive in the sense that initiated priests from other lineages are not admitted to *denju* and *kōden* sessions as described above. Depending on circumstances and teachers, such lineages are changing continuously by combining the contents of various transmissions while preserving their distinguishing elements brought to the fore by the founder; at least that is the pretension.

In the present case as well, all schools make use of both texts and freely cite from them. The precise interpretations of the contents of these texts and their esoteric definitions, such as the *hiketsu*, are transmitted in ritual settings, *kōden* for the *Hizōki*, and *denju*, often part of the *ichiryū denju*, for the *Goyuigō*.

The first chapter of the *Goyuigō* has effectively become the approved biography of Kūkai, although historians have highlighted a number of problems and fabrications. This biographical chapter relates that at one time Kūkai implored the buddhas to reveal to him the ultimate truth of Buddhism, which he had not been able to discover even after wide-ranging studies. The young Kūkai then received a revelation in which a person appeared who informed him about the existence of the *Dainichikyō* which could be found in Kumedera: "That is the text you need."[34] The *Goyuigō* describes how Kūkai got hold of the *Dainichikyō* and ascribes Kūkai's problems to understand the text fully to a lack

30 *Hizōki kikigaki* from 1309, ZSZ XV: 62a. The lecturer was Jishō Shōnin Gahō.

31 KDZ II, *kan* 7: 781–808.

32 See, for example, Takagi Shingen, *Kūkai: Shōgai to sono shūhen* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1997) for biographical details and Ueyama Shunpei, *Kūkai* (Tokyo: Asahi Shuppansha, 1992 [2002(3)]), 133–55 for the impossibility of Kūkai as the author of the various testaments. For the tenth-century theory both writers propose, I refer also to my forthcoming study on the place of the *Goyuigō* in the construction of the Shingon tradition as derived from Kūkai.

33 "Abschiedsworte" in Herman Bohner, "Kobo Daishi," *Monumenta Nipponica* 6, no. 1 (1943): 281.

34 KDZ II, *kan* 7: 783.

of esoteric specialists in Japan able to explain the Sanskrit parts that appear in this sutra; at least, that is one way to read the text.

The exegetes Dōhan and Gōhō quote the relevant passage from the *Goyuigō*.[35] *Dōhan states*: "this sutra was the reason why Kūkai wanted to study in the Qinglongsi (Jp. Seiryūji 青龍寺) and therefore he placed it ['s title] at the beginning of this work." Gōhō puts this in dialogue form. "Question: Why is the orally transmitted definition (*kuketsu* 口訣) of the *Dainichikyō* placed first? The basic motive for Kōso Daishi [Kūkai] to go to China in search of the Dharma stems from the mystical revelation (*kantoku* 感得) he received about this sutra."[36] Gōhō writes that according to such works as the *Goyuigō* and the *Kumedera ryūki* 久米寺流記 (Historical Account of the Kumedera) the first thing Kūkai asked after he met his teacher Huiguo in China were his definitions (*ketsu* 訣) on points that were unclear to him.

4B. *KUMEDERA RYŪKI*

Kumedera ryūki[37] is the legendary history of Kumedera, the temple where Kūkai read the *Dainichikyō* for the first time. The question how the sutra came to be there becomes a matter for investigation and consequently the information in the historical account of this temple as well. The commentators are familiar with this text and drag it into the explanations, especially because this record contains a tale involving the translator of the sutra, Zenmui, and the vicissitudes of the sutra. Zenmui, a prince, had come from India to China in 716 and became highly favoured by the Emperor who appreciated him for his knowledge of Buddhist matters. The tale relates how Zenmui then travelled from China to Japan; he is depicted as a travelling man in the time he worked in India as well, but once arrived in Japan, he found nobody spiritually developed enough to understand his teachings, whereupon he hid the scrolls of the *Dainichikyō* under the support pillar of the East stupa of Kumedera. Whether the text was translated already from Sanskrit into Chinese[38] is discussed below.

At this point, the commentators run into the problem of reconciling the mythology that had developed around the famous masters with the historical facts as they knew them. Of course, we can leave the fiction of Zenmui actually coming to Japan for what it is, a tale, but in view of the importance of correct transmission and out of respect of the past, this was impossible for the commentators, who looked for a perfect reconstruction. A description of the way they handled this problem also provides insights in the logic that structured the debate, although this formed no part of the transmission.

Gōhō lifts the story from the *Kumedera ryūki* and relates that Zenmui brought the text with him to the land of "Ubō-matai" 烏卯馬台.[39] "Ubō" is one of the old names for Japan,[40] "Matai" can be short for "Yamatai." Gōhō explains that when Zenmui looked for a place to enshrine his scrolls, he came to Takechi 高市 in the province of Yamato, written 大日本国. Some three years later, he built a hall near the East stupa here, setting up a "precious shrine" using three grains of *busshari* 仏舎利, relics of the Buddha-body. The set of seven scrolls of the *Dainichikyō* is used as support for the central pillar. Gōhō's text then explains the correspondences and metaphors it discovers: the stupa (*datō* 駄塔) is the remnant/residue of the body that emanated in our world as Shaka, while the lord of the sutra, Birushana, is the complete complex of all emanations, *shana*. "However, the great potential of this small country was not ripe yet [for esoteric Buddhism]."[41] Zenmui left the text behind and returned to China. Later Kūkai obtained this sutra.

Gōhō digs up an intricate web of allusions and metaphors in this tale, constructed, we may assume, in the course of the historical development of the transmissions. In fact, his method is a model of esoteric exegesis, which makes it worthwhile to dwell on this great example of esoteric reasoning somewhat longer.

The question Gōhō and his fellow-commentators

35 *Hizōkishō*, ZSZ XV: 37a. This commentary contains the explanations by Jōhen 静遍 (1165–1223) which were recorded by Dōhan. Gōhō's remark is found in his *Hizōki shishō*, in *Nichizō*, 115.

36 *Hizōki shishō*, in *Nichizō*, 115.

37 In *Shakkebu*, vol. 27 of *Zoku gunsho ruiju* and *Jishibu* 3, vol. 85 of *Dainihon bukkyō zensho* (Tokyo: Bussho Kankōkai, 1912–22). The manuscripts go back to at least Genkō 3 (1333).

38 It is thought that Prajñadeva (Ch. Wujing 無行 (630–?) brought the main body of the Sanskrit version, the first six scrolls, to China, and Zenmui noted down the content of the seventh scroll based on the revelations he experienced. With his assistant Yi Xing he translated all into Chinese, a total of seven scrolls.

39 *Hizōki shishō*, in *Nichizō*, 115–16.

40 *Chibu*, vol. 1 of *Kojiruien*, Kojiruien Kankōkai, ed. (Kyoto: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1927–30), 12.

41 *Hizōki shishō*, in *Nichizō*, 116.

faced concerns the reason why Zenmui left the text at Kumedera and why this was a suitable place. His explanatory logic works on the basis of standard esoteric metaphors and symbols within an extended network of parallel meanings, paronomasia, similarities and set associations discovered in both pronunciation and meanings of certain characters, especially around the character for Sun 日 as in Sun-Buddha and as in Dainichi.

The first part of the explanation introduces the location as a *reijō* 霊場, a place of extraordinary spiritual value. The said location is thus suited to enshrine the major text, in this case as a concrete fundament of the supporting central pillar of the stupa. What is more, the place itself must have been considered receptive for the teachings of Zenmui's esoterism by prior association found in its name, which already shows that this province (*kuni* 国) is a region where the *jishō hosshin hōni* 自性法身法爾 (the unconstructed dharma state in itself of the dharma body in its own nature), (a qualification of the nature of) the lord of the sutra (the great sun = Dainichi), was already present. In other words, Gōhō wants to say that the ideal conditions were there because the characteristics of the place were those of reality in its basic subsumed form. That is precisely the reason why the province is called 大日本国. This concept (of spiritual presence) corresponds to the *kami* Ōhirume no mikoto 大日霊貴尊, he adds.

Gōhō then argues:[42]

> The province also goes by the name of 烏卯馬台. 烏 is used in the text to refer to the sun-disc,[43] 卯 stands for the moon but [the combination Ubō] also means the [land in the] east because that is where the sun rises. The name Matai 馬台 (horse-stand) refers to Nittenshi 日天子, who rode a horse-cart with eight horses over the course of the sun. Now, the virtuous qualities of the [subsumed] truth (*ritoku* 理徳) which are "framed" by the Taizō mandara, are under the control of the sun-disc, while the qualities of wisdom as presented in the Kongōkai have the form of [= appear on] the moon-disc. Western India is called Gesshi 月氏, the eastern region is called Japan. The Shingon (sic) patriarch Ryūju (Nāgārjuna) belonged to the Gesshi (Yuezhi) tribe and he was the one who opened the Iron stupa in South India to spread the teachings contained in the *Kongōchōgyō* 金剛頂経 [cycle]. Kōso Daishi was born in Japan and had a revelation about the *Dainichikyō* [stored] in the East-Stupa of Kumedera.

Gōhō basically says that the Iron stupa in the west reveals the *Kongōchōgyō* cycle while the Kumedera East stupa produces the *Dainichikyō*. In this way, although a bit between the lines, the writer compares Kūkai with Ryūju, eventually both patriarchs, and connects the Japanese patriarch with the mythical opening of the Iron stupa in India, which is a metaphorical image for reaching insight in itself anyway. The patriarchs are linked in transmission and in their relationship to the sutras. Although I cannot be sure, it may be that Gōhō also intends to do away with the historical and causal categories in these associations and treats the matter under discussion with the tools of the Shingon approach from the domain of realization, in a sense breaking down time and space.

I suppose Gōhō was aware of Kūkai's idea in the *Fuhōden* 付法伝[44] that both the Taizō- (*Dainichikyō*) and *Kongōchōgyō* practices were transmitted by Nāgārjuna from the Iron stupa to mankind, and he may also have been aware of the different, and historically later, division of the bloodlines (*kechimyaku*) from these sources made in Taimitsu since Ennin 円仁 (794–864) and Enchin 円珍 (814–91). I will leave this problem to another opportunity.

The author then unfolds the esoteric geography of the world. He continues with an explanation of the dual system of sutras, directions, and locations arguing that:

> Iron in the system of correspondences between the five elements (*gyō/jing* 行) governs the western direction and refers to the *mandara*[45] hung on the western wall of a Buddhist hall, i.e. the Kongōkai *mandara*. [As a projection] the height of this stupa

42 Ibid.

43 The first character of Ubō may refer to the three-legged crow in the sun and the second to the hare in the moon, meanings that are important for Gōhō's handling of a supposed sub-text.

44 The full title of this work is *Himitsu mandarakyō fuhōden* 秘密曼荼羅教附法伝. KDZ I, *kan* 1: 1–50.

45 I prefer to use the Japanese word *mandara* instead of *maṇḍala* to avoid misinterpretation; *mandara* in Shingon exegesis does not only mean "domain" but has the added meaning of the ways in which Dainichi Nyorai pervasively displays the universe as an act of compassion. In this fragment, the pictoral *maṇḍala* is meant as well.

> is sixteen *jō* 丈,[46] reflecting the sixteen bodhisattvas of the Kongōkai. This [Kume-dera] pagoda governs the eastern direction and stands for the *mandara* [hung in] the east. Its height is eight *jō* expressing the eight lotus petals of the [central Hall of the] Taizō *mandara*. He who abides in India [Ryūju] in the west spreads [the transmission of] the Kongōkai, the man in the east [Kūkai] the Taizōkai. That is the true working of the unconditioned dharma domain (*hōni dōri* 法爾道理). This all is not the result of conditional [karmic] activity. Of the eight patriarchs, Ryūju is [still] placed to the west of the altar, Kōbō Daishi to the east of the altar. Isn't this the reason here [why the title appears as the opening of the texts]?[47]

4C. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Following these discussions, commentators such as Gōhō scrutinized the historical information. He explains that according to "a certain text" Zenmui came to China in Kaiyuan 開元 4 (716) and the following year he translated the *Gumonji-hō* 求聞持法 (Ritual Practice for Perfect Memorization). Thereafter, he set about translating the Sanskrit text of the *Dainichikyō*, which was finished in Kaiyuan 12 (724). He came to Japan in Kaiyuan 5 (717) and left this translation in Kumedera. Gōhō wondered if there might be a mistake in the sources, because this chronology would imply that the translation was not finished in 717.

When Kūkai eventually found his master in China, he first inquired about points obscure to him in the *Dainichikyō*. Gōhō, and others with him, then wondered: Why is it then that only the title is given and not the orally transmitted definitions (*kuketsu*)? The answer is that the *kuketsu* concern the complete sutra in seven scrolls and are rather extensive (*kōhaku* 広博 or broad learning) and, since a commentary by Zenmui exists, the title is placed first as a reference that the *kuketsu* must be consulted.

4D. WAS THE SUTRA IN SANSKRIT OR CHINESE?

Another point that worried the commentators was that the presumed author of the *Hizōki* had a choice between the Sanskrit and the Chinese titles to open his text, so why is the title in Sanskrit, although written in Chinese characters that were used phonetically? Some are of the opinion that the text left in Japan by Zenmui was in Sanskrit and, therefore, an Indian manuscript. To corroborate this solution they refer to volume six of the *Fusō ryakki* 扶桑略記 (Brief History of Japan, late Heian period) which reads: "according to a certain record the Tripiṭaka master (*sanzō* 三蔵) Zenmui of the great Tang came to Japan in Yōrō 1 (717)."[48] The commentators omit the following remark that no textual corroboration could be found by the compilers of the *Fusō ryakki*. This year corresponds to Kaiyuan 5 (717) and, as mentioned above, the translation was finished (only) in Kaiyuan 12 (724). Thus, holding on to the idea that Zenmui came to Japan in 717, some exegetes conclude that he must have left the Sanskrit manuscripts behind. Kūkai would have asked his teacher in China first about this Sanskrit version and that is why the *Hizōki*, the record of his discussions with his teachers, commences with its title.

Gōhō then offers his personal opinion. He asserts, numbering his arguments as follows, that the sutra brought to Japan and found by Kūkai must have been the Chinese translation because:[49]

"Zenmui brought the *Dainichikyō* to benefit the sentient beings in the eastern realm. This region [Japan] has no practice and use of Sanskrit. How could this be a Sanskrit book?"

"The *Goyuigō* says: a certain person announced [in a dream/meditation to Kūkai]: [in Kumedera there] is a sutra by the name of the *Daibirushanakyō*. This revelation in Kūkai's dream already used the title of the Chinese text. How could that be a book in Sanskrit?"

"The same text tells us that Kūkai "loosened the cords and browsed the text, but the meanings of many places remained abstruse for him." The phrases (*bunsei* 文勢) that were legible or intelligible must have been in Chinese."

Further, the *Dainichikyō* is not listed in Kūkai's *Go-*

46 One *jō* (ten *shaku* 尺) may mean a length of around 3 meters, which would yield a height of forty-eight meters or may mean the height of a grown man, often said to be 1.7 meter but people were somewhat smaller in the fourteenth century. The general idea is sixteen or eight times the length of a grown man.

47 *Hizōki shishō*, in *Nichizō*, 116.

48 Entry under Empress Genshō 元正 (r. 715–24) added to the remark that Dōji hōshi 道慈法師 returned from the Tang. Dōji (?–744) learned the *Gumonjihō* from Zenmui in Chang'an and after his return came to live in the Daianji 大安寺, a temple also known as Takechiji 高市寺; later he moved to Nara.

49 *Hizōki shishō*, in *Nichizō*, 117. The numbering of the arguments is by Gōhō; parts between quotation marks are translations by the author, other parts are paraphrases.

shorai mokuroku 御請来目録 (Catalogue of Imported Items)[50] from which we may conclude that Zenmui brought it and Kūkai was not the first to import it.[51] If the text brought by Zenmui would have been in Sanskrit, Kūkai would definitely have brought a copy in Chinese with him; it is after all a crucial text for his form of Buddhism, and it would have been in his list.

The *Kumedera ryūki* says that he deposited seven scrolls. The *Tobu yōmoku* 都部 要目 (List of [Darani for the] Heads of the [Mandara] Divisions)[52] says that the short version from the Tang is in seven *kan*; therefore this must have been the translation.

Gōhō does not find the story in the *Fusō ryakki* plausible; "Zenmui finished the translation in Kaiyuan 13 (725)[53] and died in Kaiyuan 23 (735). However, the mysterious changes of the great saint and his virtue are unimaginable." Is Gōhō being ironic?

Gōhō concludes his lists of arguments with two references, one to a text related to Kashima Daimyōjin 鹿島大明神 and one to the famous Taima maṇḍala 当麻曼荼羅 which shows influences of the Chinese text. These needn't concern us here.

This list of arguments appears time and again in the commentaries. Gōhō himself ends this part of his explanation by saying that there must be no doubt that this is the text which encouraged Kūkai to go and study in China and, further, that this fact is the traditional *kuketsu*, the oral definition of the reason why the Sanskrit title is placed here opening the text. Actual *kuketsu* on the sentence are either found in the text itself or in the Great Commentary.

5. Doctrinal Framework

Yūsen 雄仟 (dates unknown), writing in 1668, takes the discussion away from the mere historical orientation and supposes an overall doctrinal framework as an underlying structure in the *Hizōki*, pointing out that while the text opens with the *Dainichikyō*, it concludes with the *Ekō darani* 回向陀羅尼 from the *Shugo(kokkai-shudarani)-kyō* 守護國界陀羅尼経.[54] The *Dainichikyō* is placed at the head of the text because it represents the world of compassion in the Womb-store (*Taizō-bu*) and concerns the virtues attached to the causes leading to realization (*intoku* 因徳). The above-mentioned *Shugo-kyō*, on the other hand, reasons from the world of the pinnacle of wisdom (*Kongōchō-bu*), and expresses the virtues attached to the domain of result (*katoku* 果徳) in the Kongōkai. He writes: "You should understand that in a process of development from the cause to the result, *Dainichikyō* is placed at the beginning of the work and *Shugokyō* last."[55]

6. Conclusion

In the discussion above I have tried to make clear that a study of the transmission and education system particular to certain lineages may inform us about the present-day situation of Shingonshū lineages, the way they frame their identity, and the concepts and tools that are important to them. I have taken up the *kōden* sessions because they offer an integrated form of ritual and doctrinal explanations. The actual explanations delve into the past for an authorization of their tenets and esoteric definitions, searching for confirmation and corroboration in the works of Kūkai and later exegetes, but the actual synthesis of the past and present is made on the spot.

The tasks of the teachers in such cases are not only a historical reconstruction and perpetuation of the past. The major point seems to be to explain what is important for the profession of today's priests. For the identity of the lineage itself, they devise and construct a consistent system of lore analysed in depth following both age-old conventions and an inherent logic derived from the basic perspective on reality and the state of man in it and as part of it. For the education of the priests, reference is made to the accepted explanations concerning the biography of the founder, the necessities for the ritual performance, the basic view that the universe appears as a combination of various *mandara* which can be used as maps showing the distribution of meanings, and as many of the dogmas and tenets that the *ajari* chooses to present. It is outside my scope here

50 KDZ I: 69-104. This is Kūkai's list of materials he brought with him from China; it was a list for official use.

51 Actually, Dōji 道慈 (?-744) would be more obvious since he studied under Zenmui and also brought texts on the *Gumonjihō* to Japan.

52 *Tobu darani moku* 都部陀羅尼目, T 18, 903.

53 This is a mistake in the text, made by Gōḥō or a copyist.

54 *Hizōki shiyōshō*, ZSZ XVI: 371–72. The sutra is T 19, 997.

55 Ibid., 372.

to compare the qualities of individual teachers; for the Shingon priest they are all Dainichi Nyorai anyway.

One example, in this case from the *Hizōki kōden*, is taken to illustrate that exegetes as well as the *ajari* distribute their explanations within an overall scheme of inherited meanings and redefined concepts which has grown over the centuries, a scheme that sets boundaries to the discussion. The first thing that is clear from the example of the title of the *Dainichikyō* is that a mere translation does no justice to the way this line is treated by a particular lineage nor does it reveal the interpretation in contemporary Japan. It follows that to rely on a certain edition of a text, for instance taken from the *Kōbō Daishi zenshū*, is no guarantee for insight into other lineages than the one of the editors of this collection.[56]

Secondly, when I compare the various explanations, the accents placed by different teachers on a varying number of inherited "truths" appear to be important for the lineages to frame their identity and distinguish them from other lineages. As I showed, the first line or chapter of the *Hizōki* spawned a number of discussions among the exegetes, and I could easily extend this discussion and show particularities in the following chapters of this text or discuss other texts where such particularities of interpretation show the emphasis of the ritual linage. As a matter of fact, the chapter following our example here is about the integrated *mandara* (*ryōbu mandara* 両部曼荼羅). Some readers conclude from the sparse information in the text that this concerns a *genzu mandara* 現図曼荼羅, a *mandara* displaying the appearances of its inhabitants, others that this *ryōbu mandara* is lifted from the collections of the original *Kongōchōgyō*-cycle.

From a reading of the commentaries, independently or in the setting of the *kōden*, it becomes clear that besides conventional argumentation other methods and tools are employed to confront the problems; in fact, the exegetes have their own strategies to solve questions. In this discussion of the first "Chapter", I have shown some of the tools they can wield. The quasi-historical approaches, the lore, and the textual evidence that can be brought to the discussion, do not differ from commentators from non-esoteric schools. However, their ploy of using the constructed esoteric world of meanings differs from other networks of meanings as we can find, for example, in the Taimitsu tradition. A study of a selected system of one specific lineage will reveal additional meanings again in abundance, all presumed to be included in Kūkai's insights in "reality," but will also yield meanings that set the lineage apart from others.

In my example I showed a number of ramifications and included subjects which may appear to digress from the central argument. However, I find that in order to show the actual working of this kind of education it is not my task to weed out certain parts of the contents. I had to make choices, but the topics presented here are the actual content considered important for the teachers of the *kōden*.

What the inquiry into the *kōden* also shows, I think, is that a study of the debates and commentaries may bring to light how the various schools deal with their heritage, hold on to their identities as separate traditions, and, moreover, what they find important in their own architecture of lore. The results of such studies augment our understanding of these ritual schools over mere translation. Moreover, even though we cannot acquire the esoteric information in its entirety, we can deduce from the discussions in the sources available to us what the real foundation is of each of the views and attitudes that are often just heaped together as Shingonshū. In this case as well the contemporary debates presented in the education system may be the best starting point to understand the role and identity the professional priests see for themselves in present-day Japan.

I must add in conclusion that I was fortunate to receive instruction from highly respected *ajari*. In the case of the *Hizōki kōden* I received *kōka kanjō* from Ueda Reijō and attended his sessions over a three-year period from 2002–04. I am well aware that this path and these opportunities are not open to all. The *denjuroku* and the commentaries, however, are easily obtainable nowadays, and these texts provide excellent explanations in themselves for the study of the ritual networks that carry Shingonshū in their titles or their heritage.

In the *denju* and *kōden* transmissions we find the basic formulation of the present temple activities, not in the doctrinal works by Kūkai; of importance is how interesting these may be in themselves. Gōhō's *Shishō*

56 In Roger Goepper, "Maṇḍala Speculation in Shingon Buddhism Based on the *Hizōki* and its Commentaries," in *Embodying Wisdom, Art, Text and Interpretation in the History of Esoteric Buddhism*, Robert Linrothe and Henrik H. Sorensen, eds. (Copenhagen: The Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 2001), 37–56, a study of the *maṇḍala* view presented in the *Hizōki*, I miss this realization that Mt. Kōya does not equal Shingonshū.

has an *okugaki* 奥書, postscript, which says that the *denjuroku* contains the "esoteric definitions that have been passed on in the lineage" (*sōshōhiketsu* 相承秘決) which he transmitted to Kenbō 賢宝(1333–98). This instruction is then called "a profound secret which is found on the bottom of a box." The manuscript concludes with: "don't show this to others!"[57] To truly understand the world of the Shingon priest it is best to consider the education he has received and investigate the explanations these texts prefer to keep from us.

Chronological List of Most Important Commentaries

1222 *Hizōshō* 秘蔵抄 (1 *kan*), often called *Zōchū Yakin-shō* 蔵中冶金抄. The instructor was Henchiin Jōken 成賢 and the notes are by Shinken 深賢 (?–1261), the founder of the Daigo Jizōin 醍醐地蔵院. The transmission took place in Jōō 貞応 1 (1222) in Ōjōin Rengenotani of Mt. Kōya 高野山往生院蓮花谷. ZSZ vol. XV. The text is mentioned by Gōhō.

Hizōkishō 秘蔵記鈔//抄 (1 *kan*), also called *Hisōdenshō* 非相伝抄. Transmission by Jōhen 静遍, recorded by Shōchi-in Dōhan 道範 (1178–1252). ZSZ vol. XV: 35–58.

1283 *Hizōshō* 秘蔵抄 (7 *kan*). The title inside is *Hizōki shimonsho* 秘蔵記私聞書; the author is unknown. The transmission took place in Kōan 弘安 6 (1283) from the 24th day of the third month and was recorded in Kamakura Sazame no tani 鎌倉佐々目谷. SZ IX: 41– 133.

Hizōki shiki 秘蔵記私記 (4 or 5 *kan*). The title inside is *Hizōki shi nikki* 禾草言私日記, the author is unknown. Ōyama mentions that "one tradition" attributes the text to Raiyu.

Before 1309 *Hizōki kanmon* 秘蔵記勘文 (3 *kan*), composed or copied by Shinnichi 信日, who died Engyō 延慶 2 (1309). ZSZ vol. XVI. The *okugaki* says: Karyaku 嘉暦 3/4/28 (1325/4/28) copied by Kongōbusshi Junjin 純臣.

1309 *Hizōki kikigaki* 秘蔵記聞書 (6 *kan*), also called *Hizōki himonshō* 秘蔵記秘聞鈔 but this text is in 3 *kan*. The lecturer was Jishō Shōnin Gahō 自性上人我宝 and the transmission was recorded by Raihō 頼宝. The last day of the transmission was on the 29th day of the eighth month of Engyō 延慶 2 (1309). ZSZ vol. XV.

1314–42 *Hizōki zōkanshō* 秘蔵記蔵勘(肝)抄 (5 *kan*). As above, the lecturer was Gahō, but now the instruction was noted down by Shōmudōin Dōga 聖無動院道我. The transmission took place in Shōwa 正和 3 (1314), five years after the sessions recorded by Raihō, but the text was only completed in Ryakuō 暦応 5 (1342). ZSZ vol. XV. The sessions were held in a place called Sendō gosho 仙洞御所.

1352 *Hizōki shishō* 秘蔵記私鈔 (10 *kan*). This is the influential commentary composed by Gōhō 果宝 (1306–62) in Kannō 観応 3 (1352). *Nihon Daizōkyō Shingonshū jissō shōsho* 日本大蔵経真言宗事相章疏.

1371 *Hizōki gusō* 秘蔵記愚草 (5 *kan*). Title inside *Hizōki kikigaki* 秘蔵記聞書. The transmission of Kenbō 賢宝 recorded by Shōjun 清俊 in Ōan 応安 4 (1371). ZSZ vol. XV.

1413 *Hizōki zōdanshō* 秘蔵記蔵談抄 (2 *kan*). Titles inside are *Hizōki denjushō* 秘蔵記伝授抄 as well as *Zōmonshō* 雑聞鈔. This is the transmission from Yūkai 宥快 (1345–1416) recorded by Kaizen 快全 in Ōei 応永 2 (1413). ZSZ vol. XVI. A later copy from Mt. Kōya's Shinnōin 親王院 is discussed in *Gyōei bunko* 堯榮文庫 3.

1635 *Hizōki h*ōshōgōki 秘蔵記宝性合記 (10 *kan*). Recorded by Kenkai 建海 in Kan'ei 寛永 12 (1635). ZSZ vol. XVI.

1668 *Hizōki shiyōshō* 秘蔵記旨要抄 (5 *kan*) by Yōchiin Yūsen 桜池院雄仟 from Kanbun 寛文 8 (1668). ZSZ vol. XVI.

1842 *Hizōki shūyōki* 秘蔵記拾要記 (9 *kan*) by the Chizan prelate Ryūyū 智山能化隆瑜 from Tenpo 天保 3 (1842). SZ vol. IX.

57 *Hizōki shishō*, in *Nichizō*, 351.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DNBZ = *Dainihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本仏教全書. 150 vols. Edited by Bussho Kankōkai 仏書刊行会. Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku, 2007.

KDZ = *Kōbō Daishi zenshū* 弘法大師全集. 8 vols. Edited by Hase Hōshu 長谷宝秀. Osaka: Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo 1965–68.

Nichizō = *Nihon daizōkyō* 日本大蔵経. 51 vols. Edited by Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧 et al. Tokyo: Nihon Daizōkyō Hensankai, 1914–19.

SZ = *Shingonshū zensho* 真言宗全書. 44 vols. Edited by Shingonshū Zensho Kankōkai 眞言宗全書刊行會. Wakayama: Kōyasan Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2004.

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