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A Transmission and its transformation : the Liqujing shibahui mantuluo in Daigoji

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Citation

Hunter, H. J. (2018, September 26). *A Transmission and its transformation : the Liqujing shibahui mantuluo in Daigoji*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/65999>

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Issue Date: 2018-09-26

CHAPTER FOUR: AMOGHAVAJRA'S TRANSMISSION

INTRODUCTION

Comparison between text and image makes it plain that the *Liqushi*'s exposition and mandala prescriptions do not explain those iconographic features of the Daigoji exemplar that derive from the Chinese version of the matrix mandala (the Shingon school's *Genzu taizōkai mandara*). On the contrary, as we saw in Chapter One, these sections of the *Liqushi* show clear influence from the Amoghavajra's translation of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* (T.865). Moreover, as the analysis in Chapter Three reveals, the Daigoji exemplar's iconography draws on both the Shingon school's Mandalas of the Adamantine and Matrix Realms (*Genzu kongōkai mandara* and *Genzu taizōkai mandara*).

Any link between the mandalas that Amoghavajra describes in the *Liqushi* and the Shingon concept of the nonduality of the realities and mandalas of the adamantine realm and matrix 金胎不二 (*J. kontai funi*) is tenuous at best. Nevertheless, Shingon monks and scholars have insisted on just such a connection when analyzing the *Liqujing* and the *Liqushi*. In Chapter Two, I discussed several interpretations of the *Liqujing mantuluo* along these lines that were made by the Shingon monks Ningai (995–1046), Shinkaku (1117–1180), Kōzen (1120–1203) and Dōhō (1214–1281).

Ōmura Seigai 大村西崖 (1868–1927), one of the first to study the transmissions of the Shingon patriarchs, labelled certain ritual manuals by Amoghavajra as works that combine the rites of the matrix and the adamantine realm 合法 (*J. gōhō*).¹ Contemporary scholars following in Ōmura's footsteps — Osabe Kazuo, Onozuka Ikusumi and Ishida Hisatōyō, for example — also contend that Amoghavajra deliberately amalgamated the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra* and *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* traditions. In proof, they cite ritual manuals that display this intermingling of elements.² Recently, in his study of the *Liqujing*, Ian Astley-Kristensen has presented the interpretations of modern Shingon exegetes who also regard the teachings of the *Liqujing* and the *Liqushi* as embodying this amalgamation.³

In this chapter, I further examine Amoghavajra's transmission of the *Liqujing* and its related works. First, I take up the sources for the *Liqushi*'s mandala prescriptions. Amoghavajra was doctrinally consistent, and his sources confirm his use of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* (T.865) teachings and mandalas. Nevertheless, the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* was not Amoghavajra's sole source of inspiration. According to his own account, he consulted works belonging to a larger corpus he called the *Jingangding yuqie shibahui* 金剛頂瑜伽十八會 (hereafter, Eighteen Assemblies of Yoga of the Adamantine Crown).

Second, I present Amoghavajra's concerns as a practitioner, teacher and translator. Throughout his religious career he championed a distinct path that he described in memorials to the Chinese emperors he served. I briefly examine these memorials and this path, whose contents he recorded in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* 金剛頂瑜伽十八會指歸 (Guide to the Eighteen Assemblies of Yoga of the Adamantine Crown).⁴ The *Liqujing* and its related materials belonged to this path of teachings. Moreover, I establish that Amoghavajra's *Liqujing*-related translations and compositions cannot be regarded as examples of combinatory practice. Amoghavajra's ritual manuals do indeed exhibit features drawn from differing Esoteric Buddhist systems, but their aim in so doing is to maintain the coherence of the ritual procedure and not to

consolidate the teachings of the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra* and *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* into a single tradition.

Third, I note the significant changes that his disciples made in their biographies to their master's transmission after his death. The result is a new iconography that would influence the ninth-century prototype of the Daigoji exemplar of the *Liqujing mandara*.

COMMENTARIES ON THE *LIQUJING* AND THE SOURCES FOR THE ICONOGRAPHY OF MANDALAS

An examination of the *Liqujing* and *Liqushi* discloses that Amoghavajra furnishes information that allows us to identify the reference system for the iconography of the mandalas. As I have demonstrated in Chapter One, the first chapter of his *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* (T.865), as well as other chapters of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, constitute the reference system for the iconography of the mandalas prescribed in *Liqushi* 1, 2, 3 and 7.⁵ Other mandalas, whose iconography is based on the four chapters of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, can be added to this list.⁶

Additionally, Amoghavajra furnishes in his *Liqujing*-related commentaries information about mandalas in other ways. For instance, he names some of his sources in the *Liqushi* and the *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu*, his commentary on the mandala of the seventeen deities, who symbolize the seventeen epithets of purity 清淨句 that are presented in *Liqujing* 1.⁷ Further, in the *Liqushi* he refers the practitioner to “extended” scriptures 廣經 and yogas 廣瑜伽 for more detailed information. Amoghavajra also makes in the *Liqushi* a number of references to forms of deities in ritual manuals that he does not name.⁸ Below we will examine examples from Amoghavajra's three methods of referencing his sources.

References to Specific Sources

Amoghavajra refers in his *Liqushi*⁹ and the *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu* to specific works that belong to the corpus of the Eighteen Assemblies of Yoga of the Adamantine Crown, which he outlined in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*, as well as to the *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* itself. There are five references in all.¹⁰ Here we will focus on the iconography of the mandalas described in *Liqushi* 1, 16 and 17. I will discuss the references given in *Liqushi* 1, 16 and 17, and in the *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu*.¹¹

In the opening of the *Liqujing* seventeen epithets of purity present a state of blissful enlightenment and they do so from seventeen different aspects. In *Liqushi* 1 Amoghavajra not only equates the *Liqujing*'s seventeen epithets of purity to seventeen bodhisattvas, whose meditative concentrations (*samādhis*) illustrate this state of enlightenment,¹² but he allocates to each bodhisattva a seed letter. The result, when the seed letters are put together, is a seventeen-letter mantra addressed to Vajrasattva:

oṃ mahāsukha vajrasattva jaḥ hūṃ baṃ hoḥ suratastvṃ
oṃ Great Bliss! Vajrasattva! jaḥ hūṃ baṃ hoḥ You are exquisite joy!¹³

Amoghavajra declares that this mantra forms the basis of the four kinds of mandalic configurations by which the seventeen figures, and so this state of enlightenment, can be depicted.¹⁴ Following this explanation in *Liqushi* 1 are prescriptions for installing these seventeen

bodhisattvas into a mandala¹⁵ and a brief description of ritual steps for a yogic practice 本尊瑜伽 that centers on the deities in this mandala.¹⁶

The Buddhologist Fukuda Ryōsei 福田亮成 claims the originality of Amoghavajra's thought in the construction of this seventeen-figure mandala which derives from the seventeen-letter mantra *oṃ mahāsukha vajrasattva jaḥ hūṃ baṃ hoḥ suratastavāṃ*.¹⁷ However, in his *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu* Amoghavajra concludes a discussion of the mandala that is composed of these seventeen figures, embodiments of the *Liqujing*'s seventeen epithets of purity, by citing his source. He records that the *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu* presents the gist of the teachings of the Thirteenth of the Eighteen Assemblies of Yoga of Adamantine Crown. This assembly is called the *Dasanmeiye zhenshi yuqie* 大三昧耶眞實瑜伽 (Yoga of the Reality of the Great Pledge).¹⁸

Amoghavajra provides in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* information on the themes of this Thirteenth Assembly:

The Thirteenth Assembly is called *Dasanmeiye zhenshi yuqie*. It is expounded in the sacred site of the Mandala of the Adamantine Realm. [There] all the Buddhas of the ten directions join voices and entreat Vajrasattva [as follows]. “We beg you to explain the method and teaching of the Reality of the Pledge 三昧耶眞實教法. We ourselves have already received this [teaching], and only wish that you, Vajrasattva, explain [this teaching] for the sake of the many bodhisattvas.” And so, accepting the entreaties [of all the Buddhas, Vajrasattva] explains Bodhisattva Samantabhadra's seventeen-letter mantra,¹⁹ as well as the mandala of rapture and infallibility 適悅不空曼荼羅 that has seventeen [figures]. He also explains the four types of mandalas and the one hundred and eight pledges of the path. [Moreover,] he explains the mundane and supramundane attainments that are to be sought after. After each of the bodhisattvas and the gods of the Outer Vajra Family have explained their fundamental mandalas, fundamental mantras and fundamental hand gestures, Bodhisattva Samantabhadra [further] explains, among the secrets, [this] mandala and its arrangement of seventeen Venerables and [how] each [deity] enters the body of the fundamental Venerable again, collectively forming the five Venerables who dwell on a single lotus dais...²⁰

Vajrasattva thus explains in the Thirteenth Assembly of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown a seventeen-letter mantra and a seventeen-figure mandala of rapture and infallibility and, further, as Samantabhadra, elucidates the conflation of the seventeen figures of this mandala into a pentad seated upon a single lotus. These themes and their mandalic configurations are identical to those presented in *Liqushi* 1 (the seventeen-letter mantra and its allocation to the deities in a seventeen-figure mandala) and 17 (the Five Mysteries mandala).²¹

We can reconstruct the iconography of the seventeen-figure mandala that Bodhisattva Samantabhadra explains in the Thirteen Assembly by looking at Amoghavajra's *Liqushi* and *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu*. In *Liqushi* 1 Amoghavajra correlates the first of the *Liqujing*'s seventeen epithets of purity, “the purity of exquisite bliss is the stage of a bodhisattva,” with a deity: “Exquisite Bliss is ... Vajrasattva.” He correlates the second epithet, “the purity of the arrow of desire,” with Desire, the third, “the purity of touching,” with Touch, and so on.²² Amoghavajra's assignments result in a mandala with seventeen figures who personify the

seventeen epithets of purity expounded in *Liqujing* 1. Further, in *Liqushi* 1 he instructs the practitioner as to the correct positioning of the deities in this seventeen-figure mandala, providing a specified order of installation and expressly designated positions.²³ The five figures of the Five Mysteries pentad are this mandala's focus.²⁴

In his *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu* Amoghavajra furnishes the attributes and attitudes 相 of the seventeen figures of this mandala. For example, Desire holds an arrow in his hand 手持是箭, and Touch resides in the attitude of embracing 住抱持相.²⁵

Despite the brevity of the description of the themes of the Thirteenth Assembly in Amoghavajra's *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*, there are correspondences between this passage in this guide and the contents of a Song Dynasty work called the *Bimi sanmei dajiaowang jing* 祕密三昧大教王經 (Scripture of the King of Great Teachings on the Secret Pledge) which scholars consider to be a translation of the Thirteenth Assembly of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown.²⁶ The focus of the *Bimi sanmei dajiaowang jing* is "the method of the great bliss of Vajrasattva" 金剛薩埵大樂法, whose special mantra, mandala and ritual steps are explained.²⁷ The mantra for this rite is the seventeen-letter mantra *om mahā sukha vajrasattva joḥ hūṃ baṃ hoḥ suratas tvam*.²⁸ This same mantra is presented in *Liqushi* 1.²⁹ In the Song text this mantra is called "the great mantra [that expresses] the reality of the great pledge" 大三昧耶真實大明.³⁰ This mantra's importance is reflected in the in-text title of this Song Dynasty work: the *Zuishang bimi dasanmei zhenshi yigui* 最上祕密大三昧耶真實議軌 (Ritual Manual about the Reality of the Great Pledge that is Secret and Sublime).³¹ There is clearly a resemblance between the title of this ritual manual and that of the Thirteenth Assembly (*Dasanmeiye zhenshi yuqie* 大三昧耶真實瑜伽) given in Amoghavajra's *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*. The mandala prescribed in the *Bimi sanmei dajiaowang jing* for this rite of Vajrasattva's great bliss is a mandala with seventeen figures, called the "mandala of adamantine, wondrous bliss" 金剛妙樂曼荼羅.³² The Five Mysteries pentad is in the center of this mandala.³³

In short, the main contents of the *Bimi sanmei dajiaowang jing* — a seventeen-letter mantra and a seventeen-figure mandala of adamantine, wondrous bliss, whose focus is the Five Mysteries pentad — match the main themes of the Thirteenth Assembly as recorded in Amoghavajra's *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*, and they are the themes of *Liqushi* 1 and 17.³⁴

Reference to a different text in the corpus of the Eighteen Assemblies of Yoga of Adamantine Crown is given in *Liqushi* 16. This is another example of Amoghavajra's reference to a specific text that enables us to reconstruct the iconography of this chapter's mandala.³⁵ In this chapter Amoghavajra allocates each line of the *Liqujing*'s teachings to the mandalas of the families of the Vajra, Ratna (Gem), Padma (Lotus) and Karma (Action).³⁶ For example, the line — "Because the perfection of wisdom is unquantifiable, all the Tathāgatas are unquantifiable"³⁷ — represents the five families in the mandala of the Vajra Family. Each of the four families of the Vajra, Ratna, Padma and Karma has a mandala that consists of five families.³⁸ Amoghavajra continues his description of this mandala of the five families as follows:

The mandala [of these families] is vast, and is identical to what is explained in the *Yiqie jiaoji yuqie jing* 一切教集瑜伽經 (Scripture on the Yoga of the Collection of All Teachings). This is the Master of Jianfu[si] 薦福[寺]'s mandala [for the practice of] yoga [that is composed] of gold-on-[purple]-mud 金泥瑜伽曼荼羅. The reason I will not explain the heart mantras is because in that [master's]

teaching each one of the sacred assembly has his own heart mantra of one letter. I cannot record them in detail. Now, I will abbreviate [this], and I will refer to a corner [of this large mandala].³⁹

In this chapter of the *Liqushi*, Amoghavajra directs the practitioner's attention to an extant, large-scale mandala that his master Vajrabodhi 金剛智 (671–741) had drawn on the wall of Jianfusi in the Chinese capital Chang'an. He does not furnish a description of the iconography of this mandala, but he does give its textual source. This is the third example of a named source that we are investigating. It is the *Yiqie jiaoji yuqie jing* and, according to his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*, it is the Third Assembly of the Eighteen Assemblies of Yoga of Adamantine Crown.

Amoghavajra provides in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* the following brief description of this Third Assembly:

Next, the Third Assembly is explained. It is called the *Yiqie jiaoji yuqie* 一切教集瑜伽 (Yoga on the Collection of All Teachings)⁴⁰ and it is expounded in the Palace of the Dharma Realm 法界宮殿. All the Tathāgatas in unison question Bodhisattva Vajrasattva[, asking him] one hundred and eight questions. Bodhisattva Vajrasattva answers each question, one by one. [Also,] in this scripture a great mandala 大曼荼羅 (*mahāmaṇḍala*) is explained. [This mandala] has five families, and each family has five mandalas with thirty-seven [figures]. All [the families] together form one large great mandala. [Moreover,] each Venerable explains his/her four seals; namely, the great seal 大印, symbolic seal 三昧耶印, seed letter seal 法印 and action seal 羯磨印. [Also,] each explains his/her rite of accomplishment 成就法. [Further,] in this scripture one hundred and twenty-five kinds of hearths for *homa* [rites] are explained, and what [the practitioner] seeks [in the rite] at [each] hearth differs accordingly.⁴¹

The large mandala of the five families that is described in the Third Assembly developed after the mandalas in the First Assembly (*Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*).⁴² Mandalas for four families are separately prescribed in the four chapters of the First Assembly: the Chapter of the Adamantine Realm and the Tathāgata Family, the Chapter on the Conqueror of the Three Worlds and the Vajra Family, the Chapter on Universal Submission and the Lotus Family, the Chapter on the Accomplishment of All Objectives and the Gem Family. The Third Assembly's single large mandala is composed of the anthropomorphic forms of the members of five families, namely, the four families from the four chapters of the First Assembly and the Action Family, present in the mandalas delineated in the First Assembly but not doctrinally nor iconographically regarded as an independent family in this text.

The Japanese scholar Sakai Shinten has identified a text in the Tibetan canon that is a translation of a lost Sanskrit original called the *Vajraśekhara-mahāguhya-yoga tantra* (Tantra on the Extensive Secret Yoga of the Adamantine Crown).⁴³ Its contents can be divided into two parts, and the first part is titled *Sarvakalpa-samuccaya* (Collection of All Kalpas [Ritual Manuals]).⁴⁴ The main themes of the Third Assembly that Amoghavajra briefly presents in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*, that is the questions and answers between All the Tathāgatas and

Vajrasattva and the large mandala of the five families, can be found in the first part, the *Sarvakalpa-samuccaya*, of the *Vajraśekhara-mahāguhya-yoga tantra*.⁴⁵ Chapter 2 of the *Sarvakalpa-samuccaya* furnishes instructions for the creation of this large mandala of five families. This mandala has a square outer court with gateways and a large circular inner court 一大圓輪, or central palace 內宮, within which are five large circles 大五輪壇. Inside these five large circles are five medium-sized circles 中五輪壇, and within these five circles the five tathāgatas and four attendant bodhisattvas of each family sit inside their own small circles 小輪壇.⁴⁶

The Daigoji set of the *Liqujing mantuluo* contains a mandala entitled *Wubu juhui* 五部具會 (Assembly of the Five Families, fig. 6, *T. Zuzō*, vol. 5, 3044, p. 792, No. 17).⁴⁷ The composition of this mandala is incomplete, and the figures of the deities are not depicted. The formula of a series of circles inside circles placed in the four cardinal directions within a great circle is based on the composition of the First Assembly's (*Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*) Great Mandala of the Adamantine Realm. This Mandala of the Adamantine Realm represents *only* the five families of the Tathāgata Family; inside one large circle are five medium-sized circles and within these circles the members of each family sit inside their own individual circles.⁴⁸ In the Daigoji's Assembly of the Five Families, there is a great circle inside of which are five medium-sized circles. The members of the Tathāgata Family's five families sit inside individual circles within the central, medium-sized circle, the Vajra Family with its five families is in the medium-sized circle in the east, the Ratna Family with its five families is in the southern medium-sized circle, and so on.

The above passage from *Liqushi* 16 — according to the *Yiqie jiaoji yuqie jing*, each of the four families of the Vajra, Ratna, Padma and Karma has a mandala that consists of five families — indicates that Amoghavajra, like his master Vajrabodhi, was well aware of a system of five families, and of textual and ritual traditions that belonged to a larger corpus they called the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown.⁴⁹

Liqushi 16 closes with Amoghavajra's declaration that he will look at a corner of the mandala that is described in the *Yiqie jiaoji yuqie jing*.⁵⁰ This is the Five Mysteries Mandala of the Vajra Family, which he describes in *Liqushi* 17. Amoghavajra states in this chapter of the *Liqushi*:

Now I will explain the figures of the practice mandala. [They are] seated on a common lotus flower and are within a common circle of light. In the center draw Bodhisattva Vajrasattva. At his right side draw his two consorts, each in her fundamental form, and at his left side, too, draw two [consorts]. In detail [they] resemble the figures of the south-east corner of the gold-on-[purple]-mud mandala.⁵¹

The theme of *Liqujing* 17 is the bodhisattva-practitioner who incarnates the seventeen epithets of purity given in *Liqujing* 1.⁵² The position of perfection described in *Liqujing* 17 is the culmination of the text's teachings and practices. It is symbolized by the Five Mysteries Mandala that Amoghavajra prescribes in *Liqushi* 17.⁵³ Amoghavajra does not furnish in this chapter such details as the colors, mudrās and attributes of the figures of this mandala. For that sort of information he refers the practitioner to a pictorial source: the southeast corner of the Jianfusi's Mandala of the Five Families.⁵⁴

The Tibetan version of the *Sarvakalpa-samuccaya* instructs that each family has a Five Mysteries Mandala. These mandalas are located in the four intermediate corners of the large circular inner court of the Mandala of the Five Families, and that of the Vajra Family is located in the southeast corner.⁵⁵ In the Daigoji's Assembly of the Five Families (fig. 6), for instance, there are inside the great circle four empty circles in the four intermediate directions. These circles are for the Five Mysteries pentad that belongs to each family. The iconography for the Vajra Family's Five Mysteries Mandala given in the Tibetan translation of the Third Assembly corresponds with that prescribed in *Liqushi* 17: five figures sit on a single lotus flower within a single lunar disc; two consorts sit at Vajrasattva's right side and two at his left side.⁵⁶

In sum, an examination of Amoghavajra's references to specific sources in his two commentaries on the *Liqujing* provide concrete evidence that *Liqushi* 1's seventeen-figure mandala, whose focus is the Five Mysteries pentad, and the Five Mysteries Mandala prescribed in *Liqushi* 17 are also taught in a number of assemblies of a corpus he calls in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* the Eighteen Assemblies of Yoga of the Adamantine Crown. A seventeen-figure mandala centered upon the Five Mysteries, as described in both *Liqushi* 1 and the *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu*, appears in the Thirteenth Assembly, along with the deities' seventeen-letter mantra. The Song Dynasty *Bimi sanmei dajiaowang jing* corroborates Amoghavajra's description of this Thirteenth Assembly in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*. This seventeen-figure mandala also features in Amoghavajra's ritual manuals for the rites of Bodhisattva Samamtabhadra/Vajrasattva. The titles of these manuals confirm that the materials have been extracted from yogas belonging to the system of the Adamantine Crown.⁵⁷

Further, Amoghavajra records in *Liqushi* 16 that the Five Mysteries pentad is a component part of the large Mandala of the Five Families described in the Third Assembly of his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* and painted on the wall of Jianfusi. The Tibetan version of the *Sarvakalpa-samuccaya*, whose content corresponds to the Third Assembly that Amoghavajra outlines in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*, confirms the existence of such a comprehensive Mandala of the Five Families. Moreover, the title of Amoghavajra's manual for the Five Mysteries rite, the *Jingangding yuqie wubimi xiuxing yigui*, also verifies that the ritual practice for the Five Mysteries, as well as the iconography for the mandala, derives from the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown.⁵⁸

References to Extended Scriptures and Yogas

The Eight Great Bodhisattvas and the subjugated Hindu gods, who symbolize the practitioner's conquered inner demons, and their mandalas are the themes of *Liqujing* and *Liqushi* 3 to 10⁵⁹ and 11 to 15, respectively. In a number of these sections in the *Liqushi* Amoghavajra refers to extended scriptures and yogas.⁶⁰ He uses such terms as “extended yoga scripture” 廣瑜伽經, “extended yoga” 廣瑜伽, “extended scripture” 廣經, “extended book” 廣本 and “extended chapter of the yoga” 瑜伽廣品.⁶¹ He states that in these extended works the practitioner can obtain more detailed information about such topics as rites of subjugation by wrathful means, ritual prescriptions and benefits, the secret meaning of a visualization, the powers of a seed letter, the meaning of the term “fist”, as well as the iconography of figures in mandalas.

Instances where Amoghavajra refers the practitioner to extended works occur, for example, in the *Liqushi*'s sections on Trailokyavijaya,⁶² Avalokiteśvara,⁶³ and Vajramuṣṭi,⁶⁴ three of the Eight Great Bodhisattvas. The group of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, which is enumerated in the

opening of the *Liqujing* and which forms the opening Mandala of Mahāvairocana and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas that is given in *Liqushi* 1, is a distinctive theme in other assemblies of this Yoga of the Adamantine Crown. For example, according to Amoghavajra's *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*, this group of Bodhisattvas figures in the Fourth Assembly of this corpus. In his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* Amoghavajra describes the theme of the Fourth Assembly as follows:

Next, the Fourth Assembly is explained. [This Assembly] is called the *Jiangsanshi jingang yuqie* 降三世金剛瑜伽 (Adamantine Yoga of the Conqueror of the Three Worlds) and it is expounded on the summit of Sumeru. [There] Vajragarbha [Ākāśagarbha]⁶⁵ and the other Eight Great Bodhisattvas each explain respectively four kinds of mandalas. The First Assembly [has already] explained the subjugation of Maheśvara, as well as the entry of the many gods into the mandala where they were granted positions and duties and given names. The four kinds of mandalas [explained in this Fourth Assembly] are, namely, the great mandala, the symbol mandala, the seed letter mandala and the action mandala. Further, each Venerable explains ritual [prescriptions] for drawing disciples into [the mandalas] and rites of accomplishments. Lastly, procedures for forming the seals (*mudrās*) of the pledges of the Venerables, as well as secret prohibitory precepts and secret practices are all explained.⁶⁶

Further corroborating evidence for the Fourth Assembly's theme of the Eight Great Bodhisattvas and their expounding of their fundamental mantras and fourfold mandalas is found in both the Chinese and Tibetan Canons. The Chinese works are the *Jingangding Jiangsanshi dayigui fawang jiao zhong Guanzizai pusa xinzhenyuan yiqie rulai lianhua damantuluo pin* 金剛頂降三世大儀軌法王教中觀自在菩薩心真言一切如來蓮花大曼荼羅品 (Chapter on the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara's Heart Mantra and Great Mandala [representing] All the Tathāgata's Lotus [Family] excerpted from the Teachings on the King of Methods [in] the Extensive Kalpa for the Conqueror of the Three Worlds (Trailokyavijaya) [in the Yoga of] the Adamantine Crown, hereafter *Jingangding Jiangsanshi dayigui fawang jiao*) and the *Jingangding yuqie Wenshushili pusa jing* 金剛頂瑜伽文殊師利菩薩經 (Scripture on Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī [from] the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown). The former is attributed to Amoghavajra and is listed in Yuanzhao's *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*, evidence that his disciples continued to translate texts related to the lineage of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown that their master championed. The latter appears in Amoghavajra's list of translations and compositions he submitted to the Chinese emperor in 771.⁶⁷

These manuals focus on the mantras and four types of mandalas for the rites of Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī, two of the Eight Great Bodhisattvas.⁶⁸ A text in the Tibetan Canon, whose Sanskrit title can be reconstructed as *Trailokyavijaya-mahākalpa-rāja* (King of [the Teachings in] the Extensive Kalpa for the Conqueror of the Three Worlds), also contains a chapter on each of the Eight Great Bodhisattvas.⁶⁹ The themes of the *Trailokyavijaya-mahākalpa-rāja*'s chapters 3 to 10 are the explanations of the mantras and the fourfold mandalas that each of the Eight Great Bodhisattvas gives in turn.⁷⁰ *Liqujing* 3 to 10 also relate the Eight Great Bodhisattvas' specific teachings, attainments and mantras. And, as we have noted, the *Liqushi* elaborates on these figures in its corresponding chapters, expounding on the meaning of these Bodhisattvas'

seed letters, prescribing their mandalas and rites that focus on these mandalas, as well as enumerating resultant boons (*siddhi*).

We cannot specify the “extended” works that Amoghavajra refers to in his *Liqushi*, nor can we pinpoint a single source for these references. For instance, information about Trailokyavijaya’s subjugation of the Hindu gods is found not only in the Fourth Assembly,⁷¹ but also in the First⁷² and Second⁷³ Assemblies. Moreover, scholars cannot identify a single reference for “the secret meaning” of a visualization on Avalokiteśvara stipulated in *Liqushi* 4,⁷⁴ nor for the meditative concentration of Bodhisattva Vajramuṣṭi in *Liqushi* 6.⁷⁵ We can, however, specify the source of the iconography of the mandala for Trailokyavijaya in *Liqushi* 3, for example.

The iconography Amoghavajra stipulates in *Liqushi* 3 for the Mandala of Trailokyavijaya corresponds to the iconography for the Mandala of Vajrahūmkāra/Trailokyavijaya, which is a part of the comprehensive Mandala of the Five Families that was painted on the walls of Jianfusi in Chang’an in accordance with instructions given in the Third Assembly, that is, the *Yiqie jiaoji yuqie jing*.⁷⁶ The Tibetan copy of the *Sarvakalpa-samuccaya* describes the figure of Vajrahūmkāra as eight-armed and four-faced, whose faces have slightly protruding fangs and angry scowls, and who treads with his left foot on Maheśvara and with his right on Umā’s breasts. Further, he is surrounded by four wrathful Bodhisattvas: Krodhasattva, Krodhavajra, Krodharāga and Krodhasādu. In fact, in the *Sarvakalpa-samuccaya* all members of the Vajra Family are wrathful, including its parent-Buddha, Akṣobhya.⁷⁷ This wrathful appearance, along with their wrathful seed letter *hūṃ*,⁷⁸ symbolizes this Family’s power to vanquish the practitioner’s inner and outer demons by means of rites of wrathful subjugation.⁷⁹

The iconography of the Mandala of the Vajra Family that is given in the Third Assembly, although based upon that of the Great Mandala prescribed in the First Assembly (*Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*)’s second Chapter on Trailokyavijaya, exhibits changes indicative of later religious developments, as we have mentioned above. Amoghavajra clearly knew of these changes because he also prescribes the same iconography — a wrathful, four-faced, eight-armed figure who tramples on Maheśvara and Umā — for Trailokyavijaya in a number of his ritual manuals.⁸⁰ Further, he records that these manuals are based on the *Jingangding yuqie jing* 依金剛頂瑜伽經 (Scripture on the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown)⁸¹ and on the *Jingangding yuqie* 金剛頂瑜伽 (Yoga of the Adamantine Crown).⁸²

Directives to Unnamed Ritual Manuals

Amoghavajra states in the *Liqushi* that some of the deities are to be depicted according to their “fundamental ritual forms” 本儀形 or “fundamental forms” 本形.⁸³ This occurs, for example, in mandala prescriptions for the central figures of Avalokiteśvara⁸⁴ and Ākāśagarbha in *Liqushi* 4 and 5.⁸⁵ Further, he instructs that Avalokiteśvara and Ākāśagarbha are encircled by the four main bodhisattvas of the Lotus and Gem Families, whose names are prefixed with the epithet “Adamantine” (*Vajra*). This information provides a clue to his source.

As we have noted, prescriptions for the Mandala of Trailokyavijaya in *Liqushi* 3 (T.1003:611b27-c3) require that all the figure’s names are prefixed with “Wrathful” (*Krodha*). This is because Amoghavajra refers to directives given in the First Assembly’s second Chapter on Trailokyavijaya, whose focus is the wrathful Vajra Family. The Lotus and Gem Families govern the First Assembly’s third Chapter on Universal Submission and fourth Chapter of the Accomplishment of All Objectives, respectively. Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Ākāśagarbha

play central roles in all the mandalas in these two chapters, because the figures of these mandalas are transformations of these two bodhisattvas. The names of the figures in these chapters' mandalas are prefixed with "Lotus" (*Padma*) and "Gem" (*Ratna*).⁸⁶ However, Amoghavajra's instructions in *Liqushi* 4 and 5 direct the mandala-maker, not to the First Assembly's third and fourth chapters, but to the First Assembly's first Chapter of the Adamantine Realm and its Great Mandala of the Adamantine Realm.

Amoghavajra stipulates the iconography for Avalokiteśvara in the mandala delineated in *Liqushi* 2, as we have seen.⁸⁷ This figure holds a lotus in his left hand and with his right hand forms the action of opening its petals. In *Liqushi* 4 Amoghavajra allocates this chapter of the *Liqujing*'s teachings to the family of Tathāgata Avalokiteśvara-rāja/Amitāyus in the west of his *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*'s Great Mandala of the Adamantine Realm.⁸⁸ And, as we have also noted earlier, in his *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, the figure of Avalokiteśvara, a manifestation from Mahāvairocana's heart mantra *vajradharma*, holds a lotus as if to unfold its petals.⁸⁹ This is, in fact, the iconography that Amoghavajra prescribes in a number of his rituals manuals for Avalokiteśvara that belong to the lineage of the Adamantine Realm. All instruct that Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara hold a lotus in his left hand and form with his right hand the hand gesture of opening its petals.⁹⁰

In *Liqushi* 2 Amoghavajra directs that Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha hold an adamantine gem in his right hand and form with his left hand the gesture of granting wishes.⁹¹ In *Liqushi* 5 Amoghavajra allocates the *Liqujing*'s teachings on charity to the practices of meditative concentration on the four bodhisattvas of Tathāgata Ratnasambhava's family, who appear in the south of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* (T.865)'s Great Mandala of the Adamantine Realm.⁹² Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha is known as Bodhisattva Vajraratna (Adamantine Gem) in this Great Mandala of the Adamantine Realm.⁹³

Moreover, according to the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, the fundament of Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha is the matrix of empty space from which arises a great adamantine gem.⁹⁴ Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha/Vajraratna's role (T.865:220b28, 221b6-7, 221c2, 222a29-b1) is to sacralize, using the gem, the practitioner's entry into the realm of the Buddhas. This role of granting consecration into the realm of the Buddhas through the use of the gem is also described in Amoghavajra's commentary on the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. The *Jingangding yuqie sanshiqi fenbie shengwei famen* 金剛頂瑜伽三十七尊分別聖位法門 states (T.870:289a15-18) that Mahāvairocana, having inwardly obtained the knowledge of the *samādhi* of the consecration of Vajraratna, emits from this knowledge a light composed of adamantine gems, and this light, illuminating everywhere the worlds in the ten directions, sprinkles the top of the heads of all living beings, causing them to attain the bodhisattva rank of non-retrogression.

Further, because of empowerment with Bodhisattva Vajraratna (T.870:291a28-29), the practitioner realizes wisdom without stain 無染智, vast and perfect like empty space. In the mandala system delineated in the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, the gem is the emblematic form of this Bodhisattva in the symbolic (*samaya*) mandala.⁹⁵

Amoghavajra's *Daxukongzang pusa niansong fa* 大虛空藏菩薩念誦法 (Method of Contemplation and Recitation on Great Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha), which is based upon the *Yuqie Jingangding jing* 瑜伽金剛頂經 (Scripture of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown),⁹⁶ further substantiates that Ākāśagarbha would hold an adamantine gem in one hand and form with his other hand the gesture of granting wishes as seen in the *Liqushi* 5 mandala. Although Amoghavajra does not provide a description of the physical features of Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha

in this ritual manual, directions given in this text for the action and pledge mudrās performed in the rite of union with Ākāśagharba show that this bodhisattva is clearly associated with the gem and its wish-fulfilling property. For example, this manual directs the practitioner to form the action mudrā wherein his left hand makes the shape of a gem, and his right hand that of the attitude of granting wishes.⁹⁷ The pledge mudrā is also based on the shape of a gem.⁹⁸ In short, the ritual lineage of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* stipulates that Bodhisattva Ākāśagharba hold a gem, not a sword, as seen in the Daigoji exemplar (*T. Zuzō*, vol. 5, 3044, p. 781, No. 6). The sword is the attribute of Bodhisattva Ākāśagharba in the mandalas prescribed in the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*.⁹⁹

To sum up, in this section, I have shown that the form and content of the mandalas described in Amoghavajra's *Liqushi* derive exclusively from the Eighteen Assemblies of Yoga of the Adamantine Crown. For instance, Amoghavajra specifically cites the mandalas in the four chapters of the First Assembly and the mandalas in *Liqushi* 1 to 11,¹⁰⁰ 16 and 17 clearly derive their themes from the Third, the Fourth and the Thirteenth Assemblies. The “extended yoga scripture” and the “extended scripture” that Amoghavajra refers to throughout the *Liqushi*, and especially in the Stages of Trailokyavijaya (3) and Avalokiteśvara (4), probably indicates Sanskrit works in this corpus of the Eighteen Assemblies of Yoga of the Adamantine Crown, summaries of which he would have made during his trip to India.¹⁰¹ And, although it is only speculation at this point because the iconographical source has not been established, the directive to an unnamed text for the iconography of Maheśvara in *Liqushi* 12,¹⁰² and to the “extended scripture” referenced in *Liqushi* 13, 14 and 15 for iconography of the Mandalas of the Seven Mothers, the Three Brothers and the Four Sisters could also refer to this Sanskrit corpus of works.¹⁰³ Amoghavajra's numerous references to the teachings and mandalas in the Eighteen Assemblies of Yoga of the Adamantine Crown in the *Liqushi* and the *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu* indicate that he clearly considered the system of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown more authoritative as an iconographical and iconological source than that of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*.

THE METHODS OF YOGA OF THE ADAMANTINE CROWN

Amoghavajra spent his religious career practicing and elucidating doctrines that he referred to as “gateway to the methods of yoga” 瑜伽法門. Connected with this, he knew of a larger cycle of rituals and deities associated with an Indian Esoteric Buddhist corpus in eighteen assemblies that he referred to in a number of different ways in his translations, compositions and letters.

In this section, I will first examine what he himself records about these yoga methods in his memorials to the Chinese emperors, focusing especially upon the memorial he sent to Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762-779) in 771.¹⁰⁴ There is ample evidence that Amoghavajra consciously practiced and propagated a distinct path of yoga teachings and its practices. He did not, however, found a new, independent school, that is a sectarian denomination with a particular lineage, doctrine and practice.¹⁰⁵ Second, I will investigate the contents of the yoga methods summarized in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*. My purpose is to demonstrate that the system of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown constituted the core of Amoghavajra's transmission, and that the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* was not an essential element in his religious legacy. He provides no evidence that he specifically promoted the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* or a system that merged this text and his translation of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. There is a difference too great

to ignore between what Amoghavajra records was the focus of his religious career and what his disciples claim as their master's transmission.

Memorial to the Chinese Emperor Dated 771

In a memorial to Emperor Daizong, dated the twelfth day of the tenth month of the sixth year of Dali 大曆六年十月十二日 (771), Amoghavajra specifies this yoga path as “the gateway to the methods of Yoga of the Vajroṣṇīṣa (Adamantine Crown)” 金剛頂瑜伽法門.¹⁰⁶ He also calls it “the methods and teachings of the Yoga of the Adamantine Vehicle” 瑜伽金剛乘教法 in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* and *Liqushi*.¹⁰⁷

In this memorial that dates to three years before his death, which took place in the ninth year of Dali 大曆九年 (774), Amoghavajra summarizes the activities he carried out under the patronage of the Tang Emperors Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756), Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756–762) and Daizong (r. 762–779), beginning in the fifth year of Tianbao 天寶五年 (746) after his return from India, and continuing until the date of this memorial.

This memorial is significant for a number of reasons. First, its autobiographical content not only reminds Emperor Daizong of Amoghavajra's long service to three Tang emperors, it also discloses that throughout his career, he focused on the teachings of the methods Yoga of the Adamantine Crown. The translations, construction of ritual arenas, and ritual performances that he carried out under imperial patronage were done to practice and propagate this path.¹⁰⁸

A second reason for the significance of this document is that it describes for the Emperor the doctrines that Amoghavajra felt he had championed, as well as a list of scriptures he had translated and works that he had composed, requesting to have them entered into the Imperial canon.¹⁰⁹ He categorizes the translations he has presented to the Emperor as scriptures on mantras and the Great Vehicle (Mahāyāna) 真言及大乘經典¹¹⁰ and specifies two categories of mantras: those of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown and those from other sources. The first category is most important because, he writes:

[T]he Gateway to the Methods of Yoga of the Adamantine Crown 金剛頂瑜伽法門 that I have translated is the fast path to becoming a buddha 成佛速疾之路. Its practitioners can without fail suddenly transcend the state of the unenlightened and reach the other shore. The mantras of the other categories are the expedient means of the Buddhas 余部真言佛方便, and their followers are not united [in their doctrines or practices]. As for the various scriptures of the Great Vehicle that I have translated, all those [listed] above will aid the state [by] averting calamities and [ensuring that] the heavenly bodies do not disturb the regular course of the winds and rains.¹¹¹

The fast path Amoghavajra proclaims here is the ritualized yogic method of attaining enlightenment that is revealed in his translation of first part of the first chapter of the *Sarvathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, which is the first text in the yoga system of the Adamantine Crown.¹¹² This yoga method was thus a distinct tradition: it alone offered a quick path to buddhahood, the result of sudden transcendence from the unenlightened to the enlightened state.¹¹³ Such mantra techniques are also described in two earlier memorials, wherein Amoghavajra

petitioned the Chinese emperors to erect sites to practice and propagate them. Its main characteristics were said to be that it is accessed by means of consecration 灌頂 (*abhiṣeka*) and it is the path of the bodhisattvas, who received this consecration.¹¹⁴

Thus, in Amoghavajra's order of rank, such scriptures as the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* belonged with "the mantras of the other categories" which he regarded as skillful strategies the buddhas and bodhisattvas provisionally employ to compassionately and appropriately guide beings who are unable to comprehend the fundamental truth of the teachings along paths that will lead eventually to enlightenment.¹¹⁵ He implies here, then, that his fast path is the best route to buddhahood, one that is followed only by practitioners with the spiritual capabilities of bodhisattvas. Amoghavajra extolls the methods of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown as the fast lane to salvation, and its works constitute a major portion of the translations and compositions listed in this memorial.

A final reason for examining this memorial is because the included list of works enables us to reconstruct the contents of this yoga path that Amoghavajra championed. First, I will briefly discuss the significance of his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*, which documents Esoteric Buddhist doctrine, praxis and iconography of mid-eighth-century India. Then, I will demonstrate that Amoghavajra's translation, editorial and compositional activities centered on two of the eighteen assemblies in this work, although he drew on materials from a number of other assemblies as well. We will see that the *Liqujing* and its related materials had a significant place within this system Yoga of the Adamantine Crown.

Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui

Although the *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* itself is among the seventy-one translations listed in this memorial, this work is not a translation but one of Amoghavajra's own compositions.¹¹⁶ It is a digest of an extensive Indian Esoteric Buddhist yoga system current during his sojourn in India from 741 to 746.¹¹⁷ Sakai Shinten, using the *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* as his guide, has identified works in the later Tibetan and Chinese canons whose contents, albeit in much more developed forms because they belong to a much later dispensation of Esoteric Buddhism, correspond to some of the assemblies Amoghavajra outlined.

Sakai worked out the method of textual development from assembly to assembly. There is a root, or foundational text (*mūla-tantra*), for example, the First Assembly (*Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*). This is supplemented by an appendix on the root text (*uttara-tantra*), a supplement to the appendix (*uttarottara-tantra*), an explanatory tantra (*vyākhyātantra*), commentaries (*upadeśas*) and ritual works (*kalpas*, lengthy ritual manuals, and *vidhis*, more focused ritual manuals) that describe in greater detail the performance of consecration rites (*abhiṣeka-vidhis*), meditational generation and identification with the deities and the resultant supernatural powers (*sādhanas*), and the making of mandalas (*maṇḍala-vidhis*). These became the contents of the Second and Third Assemblies.¹¹⁸ Tanaka Kimiaki has substantiated correspondences between Amoghavajra's description of the Ninth Assembly, the *Yiqiefo jihui Najini jiewang yuqie* 一切佛集會拏吉尼戒網瑜伽 (Yoga of the Net of Dākinī Precepts of the Assembly of All the Buddhas), and the contents of works related to the *Sarvabuddha-samāyoga-ḍākinī-jālasaṃvara tantra*, extant in the Tibetan canon and in the collection of tantras of the Tibetan Ancient School (Rnying ma pa). Clearly, there existed during Amoghavajra's sojourn in India some early form of the contents of the

Sarvabuddha-samāyoga-dākinī-jālasaṃvara tantra, matrix of the later mother (*yoginī*, or wisdom, *prajñā*) tantras in the present Tibetan canon.¹¹⁹

Correspondences between other assemblies in Amoghavajra's *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* and extant works in the Tibetan and Chinese canons have also been established.¹²⁰ These provide evidence that this yoga path summarized in Amoghavajra's *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* was not a figment of the imagination, but rather a record of contemporaneous Esoteric Buddhist activity in eighth-century India that was systematized according to the teachings of masters he encountered there and/or according to his own understanding of a contemporary Indian system of textual and ritual development.¹²¹ Thus, scholars point to Amoghavajra's *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* as an excellent example of an early Esoteric Buddhist canon.¹²²

The list of seventy-one translations and compositions in the 771 memorial begins with Amoghavajra placing his translation of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and the *Liqujing* first and second, respectively.¹²³ This arrangement testifies to the importance of these two scriptures to the yoga outlined in the *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*. The *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* became the First Assembly of these eighteen.¹²⁴ The *Liqujing* and *Liquishi* have been extracted from a text called *Dale jingang bukong zhenshi sanmoye jing* 大樂金剛不空真實三麼耶經 (Scripture on the Pledge of Reality of [He who is] Infallible, Adamantine [and generates] Great Bliss).¹²⁵ Amoghavajra gives this very same title for the Sixth Assembly in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*.¹²⁶

In this 771 memorial, then, the two foundation scriptures and their commentaries are listed, as well as manuals for the performance of rites related to the practices, deities and mandalas expounded in these scriptures. An arrangement of these works into a table is as follows.¹²⁷

Group 1: First Assembly

- *Jingangding yuqie zhenshi dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂瑜伽真實大教王經 (Scripture on the King of the Great Teachings of the Reality of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown) (*Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* = first part of first chapter of foundation text)
- *Jingangding yuqie sanshiqi fenbie shengwei famen* 金剛頂瑜伽三十七尊分別聖位法門 (Gateway to the Methods for Differentiating the Sacred Positions of the Thirty-Seven Venerables in the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown)
- *Jingangding lianhuabuxin niansong fa* 金剛頂蓮華部心念誦法 (Method of Contemplation and Recitation on the Essence of the Lotus Family of the Adamantine Crown)¹²⁸
- *Yuqie nianzhu jing* 瑜伽念珠經 (Scripture on [the Merit of Telling] Beads [for Recitation] of the Yoga [of the Adamantine Crown])¹²⁹
- *Jingangding yuqie sanshiqizun li* 金剛頂瑜伽三十七尊禮 (Revering the Thirty-Seven Venerables of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown)

Group 2: Sixth–Eighth Assemblies

- *Jingangding yuqie banruoliqu jing* 金剛頂瑜伽般若理趣經 (Scripture on the Guiding Principle to Insight¹³⁰ [from] the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown) (Sixth Assembly = foundation text, *Liqujing*)

- *Liqu banruo shi* 理趣般若釋 (Explanation on the Insight of the Guiding Principle)
- *Damantuluo shiqizun shi* 大曼荼羅十七尊釋¹³¹ (Explanation on the Great Mandala of the Seventeen Venerables (Thirteenth Assembly))
- *Jingangding shengchu yuqie Puxian pusa niansong fa* 金剛頂勝初瑜伽普賢菩薩念誦法 (Method of Contemplation and Recitation on Bodhisattva Samantabhadra [taken from the] Supreme First Yoga of the Adamantine Crown)¹³² (Eighth Assembly)
- *Jingangwang pusa niansong fa* 金剛王菩薩念誦法 (Method of Contemplation and Recitation on Bodhisattva Vajrarāja)¹³³
- *Puxian Jingangsaduo niansong fa* 普賢金剛薩埵念誦法 (Method of Contemplation and Recitation on Samantabhadra/Vajrasattva)¹³⁴
- *Jingangding yuqie wubimi xiuxing yigui* 金剛頂瑜伽五祕密修行儀軌 (Manual for the Practice of the Five Mysteries of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown)¹³⁵

This table discloses that Amoghavajra gives the greatest emphasis to works on either the First or Sixth through Eighth Assemblies.

There are doctrinal, thematic and iconographic connections between these assemblies. Examples are the *Liqujing*'s seventeen epithets of purity and the Thirteenth Assembly and the *Liqushi*'s Five Mysteries and the Third Assembly.¹³⁶ Further, just as Sakai clarified a systematic development in the teachings and practices from the First to the Third Assemblies, Tanaka has demonstrated such a development from the Sixth to the Ninth Assemblies.¹³⁷

Evidence of this evolution is the *Jingangding shengchu yuqie Puxian pusa niansong fa*. The title of this ritual manual indicates that it is an excerpt from the Eighth Assembly, called the *Shengchu yuqie* 勝初瑜伽 (*Paramādyā yoga*) in Amoghavajra's *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*.¹³⁸ Its content, that is the mantras and seventeen-figured mandala of Vajrasattva and his family retinue, whose focal members are the Five Mysteries pentad, is based upon an early Indian tantra called the *Paramādyā tantra* 勝初瑜伽經. The contents of this root tantra survive only in the works of Amoghavajra and the later Tibetan and Chinese translators of the extended versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā-naya sūtra* (*Liqujing*), thus providing evidence of the spread and importance of this early tantra in India. Content fundamental to the *Prajñāpāramitā-naya sūtra* (*Liqujing*), that is, its seventeen epithets of purity, and that of the lost *Paramādyā tantra*, for example its prescriptions for a seventeen-deity mandala that centered on the Five Mysteries and its rite, constituted the teachings of the Sixth (*Prajñāpāramitā-naya sūtra/Liqujing*), Seventh and Eighth (*Paramādyā*) Assemblies, respectively, of the system of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown.¹³⁹ And, as Tanaka has shown, this content influenced that of the Ninth Assembly, wherein Vajrasattva and his retinue have acquired the status of a separate family in this assembly's mandalas of six families.

The *Liqujing* was, then, a crucial text within a grouping of assemblies of this system of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown.

Template for the *Jingangjie jiuhui mantuluo*

Historical evidence shows that the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and *Renwang jing* 仁王經 (Scripture for Humane Kings) were the foundation for Amoghavajra's proselytizing aims and political activities.¹⁴⁰ While there is no corroborating written documentation of Amoghavajra's

actual use of the *Liqujing* materials, we do have important visual evidence from the Tang Dynasty that confirms that these works were critical to his proselytizing. These are the *Jingangjie jiuwei mantuluo* 金剛界九會曼荼羅 (Mandala of the Nine Assemblies of the Adamantine Realm, known also in the Shingon school as the *Genzu kongōkai mandara*), an icon that Kūkai records in his *Shōrai mokuroku*,¹⁴¹ and the Ishiyamadera exemplar of the *Liqujing mantuluo*, whose inscription tallies with the travels of the pilgrim-monk Shūei. We have linked Amoghavajra's commentaries and translations to the iconographic program of the Ishiyamadera exemplar of the *Liqujing mantuluo*.¹⁴² The iconographic program of the *Jingangjie jiuwei mantuluo* can be reconstructed from the works Amoghavajra lists in his 771 memorial for the First and Sixth through Eighth Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown. This type of mandala of the adamantine realm consists of the six mandalas expounded in the First Assembly (*Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*)'s first Chapter on the Adamantine Realm,¹⁴³ the *Liquhui* 理趣會 (Guiding Principle Assembly),¹⁴⁴ which is based on works in the *Liqujing* lineage, and two mandalas from the First Assembly's second Chapter on Trailokyavijaya.¹⁴⁵

Incorporated into the program of the *Jingangjie jiuwei mantuluo* is the mandala called the *Liquhui*, which presents the doctrine fundamental to the *Liqujing*, that of the purity of all elements of existence. This doctrine is again expressed and reaffirmed in the Seventh through Eighth Assemblies, as well as in the Thirteenth Assembly of the Eighteen in the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown, as summarized in Amoghavajra's *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu*.

There are a number of reasons to support the contention that Amoghavajra's *Jingangding shengchu yuqie Puxian pusa niansong fa* and *Puxian Jingangsaduo niansong fa* could have served as one of the sources for the iconography of the *Liquhui*'s seventeen-figure mandala whose focus is the Five Mysteries.¹⁴⁶ First, prescriptions for the iconography of the Five Mysteries pentad in these manuals correspond to these figures in the *Liquhui*.¹⁴⁷ Second, common to both manuals are the Inner Offering Bodhisattvas who hold the attributes of flower, censer, lamp and unguent,¹⁴⁸ and the names and attributes of the Outer Offering Bodhisattvas. In these manuals, the Inner Offering Bodhisattvas hold the attributes of the Outer Offering Bodhisattvas in the First Assembly (*Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*)'s Great Mandala of the Adamantine Realm¹⁴⁹ and the Outer Offering Bodhisattvas correspond to the Inner Offering Bodhisattvas depicted in the Great Mandala of the Adamantine Realm.¹⁵⁰ This reversal of the positions of the groups of Inner and Outer Offering Bodhisattvas seen in these manuals also characterizes the iconography of the *Liquhui*.¹⁵¹

Discrepancies between text and image have been "tweaked" in the *Liquhui* to make it better conform to the mandala prescriptions for the First Assembly's Great Mandala of the Adamantine Realm. The positions of the Inner Offering Bodhisattvas Flower and Incense that are given the manuals have been changed in the *Liquhui*, with Incense in the southeast corner and Flower in the south-west corner of this mandala's inner court. The Outer Offering Bodhisattva Smile, who in these two manuals makes a mudrā appropriate to her name, has been replaced in the *Liquhui* with Bodhisattva Garland who holds a lotus garland.

Amoghavajra's disciples continued to translate manuals belonging to the *Liqujing*'s ritual lineage after their master's death.¹⁵² For instance, the ritual outlined in *Jingangding yuqie Tahuazizaitian liquhui puxian xiuxing niansong yigui* 金剛頂瑜伽他化自在天理趣會 普賢 修行念誦儀軌 (Ritual Manual for Contemplation and Recitation in the Universal Practice on the Guiding Principle Assembly in the Paranirmita-vaśavartin of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown) furnishes evidence that Amoghavajra's disciples practiced the teachings of the *Liqujing* lineage in

tandem with those of the lineage of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. This rite is closely modeled on Amoghavajra's *Jingangding lianhuabuxin niansong fa*, his translation of, or composition for, the performance of the rite of the adamantine realm. It contains far more ritual acts from this source than Amoghavajra's *Jingangding shengchu yuqie Puxian pusa niansong fa* and *Puxian Jingsangsaduo niansong fa*,¹⁵³ and its focus is a mandala of seventeen figures whose names and attributes match those given in the *Liqushi* and *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu*.¹⁵⁴

The *Jingangjie jiuhui mantuluo* transmitted today, a copy with which Kūkai returned in 806, is dated to the latter half of the eighth century. I contend that Amoghavajra's manuals provided a blueprint for the thematic program of this mandala,¹⁵⁵ and that his disciples were instrumental in finalizing its iconography.

Methods of Yoga of the Adamantine Crown and Esoteric Buddhism in Eighth-Century India

Amoghavajra's translations of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃghra* and *Liqujing* and their related materials presented his Chinese practitioners with the most recent of ritualized yogic technologies from India for the new, fast path to buddhahood. We can surmise that for his most advanced disciples, both monastic and lay, Amoghavajra must have taught both the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*'s Mahāyānic doctrine of the nonduality of conditioned existence (*samsāra*) and its transcendence (*nirvāṇa*), embodied by means of the manipulation of mantras and symbols in the quick five-stepped method of attaining enlightenment, as well as the path to great bliss 大樂 (*mahāsukha*) that is expounded in the *Liqujing* and its related commentaries, ritual manuals and mandalas. This path, whose yogic practices and mantras centered on Samantabhadra/Vajrasattva of the Five Mysteries, effects a transformation of the practitioner's faculty of insight, leading to the understanding that, from the perspective of nonduality, the base, impure elements of one's personality (the four consorts Desire, Touch, Love and Pride) are in fact an expression of pure, blissful enlightenment (Vajrasattva).¹⁵⁶

These translations and compositions reveal a knowledge of Esoteric Buddhist materials current in eighth-century India, which Amoghavajra visited from 741–746 to further his study of these Buddhist yoga teachings.¹⁵⁷ His concerns as a translator and teacher can be compared, for example, to those of the Indian monk Buddhaguhya, an exegete and teacher who was active from the middle to the late years of the eighth century.¹⁵⁸

Buddhaguhya presents in his *Tantrārthāvatāra*, a commentary on the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃghra* that survives only in the Tibetan canon, prescriptions for three types of ritual accomplishments 三種の悉地議軌 geared to practitioners who are categorized as superior, middling and inferior. Yoga practitioners with superior capabilities and knowledge 上根上智の瑜伽行者 are to concentrate on rites with internal, meditative visualizations 勸想 (*bhāvanā*) of self-transformation by means of the four seals 四印, for attaining the [buddha] body in five steps 五相成身勸 and for a union with Vajrasattva 金剛薩埵瑜伽. These yogic practices are taught in Amoghavajra's translation of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃghra* and in his *Liqushi*. The activities of the practitioners with middling capabilities and knowledge 中根中智の瑜伽行者 focus on contemplation and recitation 念誦. They do such acts as recite mantras, form mudrās and contemplate the deities with aspects 有相念誦 and without aspects 無相念誦. The practitioners with inferior capabilities and knowledge 下根下智の瑜伽行者 are given instructions for

performing rites of fire oblations 護摩作法 and for drawing a symbolic 三摩耶 mandala for the fire (*homa*) hearth.¹⁵⁹

Buddhaguhya records the use of specific texts for these three types of practitioners and their ritual activities. He cites material that came to be incorporated into the later Tibetan *Śrīparamādyā tantra* most frequently but *only* for the superior practitioners. This work expounds the repetition of a ritual act without suffering 非勤苦性, an act that is linked to the concepts of the quick path to enlightenment that is devoid of strenuous efforts, as expounded in the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, and to the path of great bliss, the fundamental theme of the *Prajñāpāramitā-naya sūtra/Liqujing* and the *Paramādyā tantra*. Amoghavajra knew of teachings and practices belonging to early versions of these works.¹⁶⁰

The most frequently cited sources for the three categories of practitioners in the *Tantrārthāvatāra* are, first, the *Vajraśekhara-mahāguhya-yoga tantra*, an explanatory tantra on the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, and, second, the *Trailokyavijaya-mahākālpa-rāja*, a work whose contents correspond to Amoghavajra's description of the Fourth Assembly in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* and considered in the Tibetan Canon to be the explanatory tantra on the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*'s Chapter of Trailokyavijaya. Buddhaguhya's *Tantrārthāvatāra* thus reveals the importance of the *Vajraśekhara-mahāguhya-yoga tantra* and the *Trailokyavijaya-mahākālpa-rāja* for his own commentarial work.¹⁶¹ We have noted that works that would later be amalgamated into these two texts, in whatever form during Amoghavajra's journey to India in the mid-eighth century, were also important in his *Liqushi*.¹⁶²

Buddhaguhya thus presents in his *Tantrārthāvatāra* a system of ritual practice that correlates with his classification of the Indian Buddhist tantras. The superior practitioner performs techniques of internal yoga; that is, the practitioner's body is the site for the ritual performance. In contrast, the inferior practitioner engages in external methods of ritual performance and worship, while the middling practitioners perform a bit of both these methods of internal and external practice and worship. This system is in keeping with Buddhaguhya's classification of the tantras into two categories, the inward Yoga tantras and the outward Kriyā (action) tantras that he put forth in his commentary on the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi tantra*. The *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and its related Yoga tantras, for example, the *Śrīparamādyā tantra*, wherein ritual practice was internalized and the practitioner envisioned himself as the deity, were contrasted with the Kriyā tantras, for instance the *Susiddhikāra tantra*, wherein the deities were worshipped as external objects in shrines or as visualizations. Buddhaguhya considered the practices expounded in the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi tantra* to be those of both categories (*ubhayā*).¹⁶³

Buddhaguhya set up a classification of the current tantras of his time, and his criteria were the types of ritual practice, their accomplishments, and the capabilities of the practitioners. We have no evidence that Buddhaguhya viewed the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi* and *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* as having complementary or associated systems, an interpretation that defines the Japanese Shingon school and an assumption they employed in their understanding and construction of Amoghavajra's transmission. As mentioned above, in his 771 memorial Amoghavajra specified two categories of mantras: those of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown and those from other sources. His order of ranking, like that of Buddhaguhya, gave the highest position to a system of Yoga, which he qualified with the descriptive "Adamantine Crown," that was geared to practitioners with bodhisattva-like capabilities.

The translations, redactions and compositions enumerated in Amoghavajra's memorial of 771 are scriptures and manuals that focus on ritual practice for deities in the new system of the

Yoga of the Adamantine Crown,¹⁶⁴ and for the contemporaneous *Uṣṇīṣa* and *dhāraṇī* cults.¹⁶⁵ Following the interpretations of earlier Shingon scholar-monks, Japanese scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have claimed that Amoghavajra's scriptures and ritual handbooks exhibit an express intent to amalgamate the traditions of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* and the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*.¹⁶⁶

An examination of the *Liqujing*-related works that are listed in this 771 memorial, as well as some other manuals whose rites these scholars also label “combinatory practices” 合行議軌, discloses that his materials do contain elements from differing sources.¹⁶⁷ Despite this, both the structure and the content of the rites of Samantabhadra/Vajrasattva and the Five Mysteries are based on the *Jingangding lianhuabuxin niansong fa*, his manual for the rite of the adamantine realm.¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, the ritual procedure prescribed in such works as his *Achu rulai niansong fa*, as well as his ritual manuals for Ekākṣarabuddhoṣṇīṣa-cakravartī-rāja, and the Renwang, for example, while employing elements and ritual acts from the rites of the adamantine realm and the matrix, present a structure and content derived from a rite for offering outlined in the *Susiddhikara sūtra*.¹⁶⁹

Analysis establishes that Amoghavajra's aim was to create a coherent blueprint of the ritual procedure that his disciples could follow easily, and not the fusion of separate esoteric traditions that defines the identity and doctrine of the post-Kūkai Shingon school.

To sum up, Amoghavajra championed the teachings on the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown in his 771 memorial and in other memorials to the Chinese emperors, as well as in his last testament and his farewell letter to Emperor Daizong. It was these teachings that he had received from his master Vajrabodhi,¹⁷⁰ whose scriptures and practices he studied and collected while traveling in India¹⁷¹ and propagated among the elite and populace of the Chinese capital and provinces.¹⁷² Further, the methods of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown constituted a significant portion of the works he translated and composed, as I have demonstrated, and the transmission that he bequeathed to his most advanced disciples.¹⁷³ Finally, these teachings were the legacy he left in the Chinese Court and to his disciples to continue to practice and propagate.¹⁷⁴

How did the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* fit into Amoghavajra's transmission? There is among the works enumerated in the 771 memorial, for instance, a manual for a rite for Avalokiteśvara that belongs to the yoga system of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*.¹⁷⁵ The *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* is discussed in the *Zhubu tuoluoni mu* 諸部陀羅尼目 (Entries on Dhāraṇī of Various Categories), a problematical work that is also included in this memorial.¹⁷⁶ Further, a statement in his last testament — “To those who have not fully mastered the Five Families, if they study and focus on one deity, this will be sufficient for attaining buddhahood” — suggests that Amoghavajra did not limit his teachings to those of the methods of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown but, providing what his disciples needed in accordance with their capabilities, taught ritual practices from other scriptural traditions, including the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*.¹⁷⁷

Yuanzhao attributes to his master two ritual manuals for the matrix rite in his *Datang zhenyuan xu kaiyuan shijiao lu* 大唐貞元續開元釋教錄 and *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Amoghavajra does not mention the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* or its matrix mandala in the transmission he granted his most prominent disciples, nor does he discuss this scripture in any of the memorials or documents that Yuanzhao collected in the *Daizongchao zeng Sikong Dabianzheng Guangzhi sanzang heshang biao zhiji*.¹⁷⁹

The memorials and letters that I have investigated, as well as his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*, attest to the importance of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown for Amoghavajra.

CONCERNS OF AMOGHAVAJRA'S DISCIPLES: CONSTRUCTION OF A SPIRITUAL LINEAGE AND THE REFORMULATION OF THEIR MASTER'S TRANSMISSION

Two significant changes can be seen in the documentation of Amoghavajra's transmission by his disciples after his death.¹⁸⁰ These changes reflect the disciples' responses to pressures from other Buddhist circles in the Chinese capitals.

The first is the presentation of an Esoteric Buddhist lineage. There is no documentation of such a lineage in Amoghavajra's own writings. A lineage appears in three of his disciples' works. Its earliest appearance is in Yan Ying's eulogy and preface to accompany Amoghavajra's portrait, the *Datang Daguangzhi sanzang heshang yingzan bing xu*, an undated composition that heads the funerary eulogies in Yuanzhao's *Daizongchao zeng Sikong Dabianzheng Guangzhi sanzang heshang biao zhiji*.¹⁸¹ This lineage also appears in Yan Ying's stele biography, the *Tang Daxingshansi gudade Dabianzheng Guangzhi sanzang heshang beiming bing xu*, which is dated to the fifteenth day of the eleventh month of the second year of Jianzhong 建中二年十一月十五日 (December 4, 781),¹⁸² and it is described again in Zhao Qian's *Datang gudade zeng Sikong Dabianzheng Guangzhi Bukong sanzang xingzhuang*, an undated work that scholars assign to the late eighth century.¹⁸³

These three works present a lineage of six patriarchs that begins with Mahāvairocana, and includes Vajrasattva, Nāgārjuna, Nāgajñāna, Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra.¹⁸⁴ There is general agreement on the details of this transmission, which Yan Ying's eulogy records as "the Teachings of Yoga of the Supreme, Secret and Greatest Vehicle."¹⁸⁵ Yan Ying also relates the transmission that Amoghavajra received from Ācārya Nāgajñāna, whom he studied under during his travels westward from 741–746.¹⁸⁶ These teachings center on "the methods of the Eighteen Assemblies of Yoga and the secret repository of the Five Families of the Adamantine Realm."¹⁸⁷ Yan Ying's stele biography states that "the import of the Superlative Vehicle of Yoga" was transmitted to each of the six patriarchs.¹⁸⁸ This "Superlative Vehicle of Yoga" can be identified as that of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Adamantine Crown because Yan Ying reports in this passage of his stele biography that "Our Teacher again travelled westward to countries such as India and Sri Lanka (Siṃhala) and [during his travels] he visited Ācārya Nāgajñāna. [There] he recorded a summary of the methods of the Eighteen Assemblies. [In this way,] the transmission [of the Superlative Vehicle of Yoga] was handed down from master to disciple. [Thus,] from Tathāgata [Mahāvairocana to our Teacher there were in all six petals [generations]."¹⁸⁹ In Zhao Qian's biography the transmission of the six patriarchs consists of "the seals [mudrās], methods and mantras in the King of the Secret Teachings on the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown."¹⁹⁰

Yan Ying's account of the contents and character of Amoghavajra's transmission matches Amoghavajra's own description of his teachings. The Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown and the Five Families of the Adamantine Realm figure solely in these sources, constituting the fast path to buddhahood.¹⁹¹ The documentation of the contents of their master's transmission differs in Feixi's biography, a composition that was to be inscribed on a stele and is dated to the sixth day of the seventh month of the ninth year of Dali 大曆九年七月六日 (August 18, 774), a month after Amoghavajra's death,¹⁹² as well as in Zhao Qian's work. This is the second

change evident in the biographies. They record specific scriptures that Amoghavajra did not single out in his accounts of his activities or list in his 771 memorial.

Feixi's biography cites the Yoga of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Adamantine Crown and the mandala of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* as the prominent components of the transmission that Amoghavajra received from his Sri Lankan master Samantabhadra.¹⁹³

Zhao Qian, using information taken from the earlier biographies of Feixi and Yan Ying,¹⁹⁴ presents the most extensive version of Amoghavajra's transmission. Further, his recording reveals a discrepancy between the transmissions of Mahāvairocana and Amoghavajra, one that is somewhat tempered in another work that dates to his time of activity, as we shall discuss below.¹⁹⁵ Zhao Qian describes the transmission of this lineage of patriarchs as that of the "Secret Teachings of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown," but for the transmissions of Vajrabodhi and the Sri Lankan Ācārya Samantabhadra he cites elements from three major Indian Esoteric Buddhist works that had been translated into Chinese by Śubhākarasiṃha and Vajrabodhi. Vajrabodhi's transmission contained, in addition to "the methods of the Five Families of the Adamantine Realm, teachings for a master (*ācārya*) on consecration and fire oblation (*homa*), the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*, manuals on *susiddhi* (accomplishments) and many mantra practices for the Family of Buddhōṣṇīśas."¹⁹⁶ In Sri Lanka, according to Zhao Qian, Amoghavajra requested that Ācārya Samantabhadra instruct him on "the teachings of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown in Eighteen Assemblies, Vairocana's Matrix Repository of Great Compassion and methods for constructing [mandalic] altars."¹⁹⁷ He closes his biography with a summary of the contents of Amoghavajra's teachings: it contained "the category of various mantras and the scriptures of the *Vajroṣṇīśa*, *Vairocana* and *Susiddhi*."¹⁹⁸

In these biographies, then, Amoghavajra's disciples purposely construct a spiritual lineage and clearly stipulate and so redefine the contents of their master's teachings. These alterations indicate a first step in his disciples' attempt to distinguish themselves from other Buddhist groups in the Chinese capitals by proclaiming religious expertise in specific scriptures, practices and iconography.¹⁹⁹ Their purpose was to advertise the uniqueness of their group's origins and practices in order to secure religious authority and patronage.

That Amoghavajra's disciples sought recognition and imperial financial support is substantiated by the activities they undertook after his death. Orzech has clarified the political propaganda motives underlying Yuanzhao's *Daizongchao zeng Sikong Dabianzheng Guangzhi sanzang heshang biao zhiji*, *Datang Zhenyuan xu Kaiyuan shijiao lu* and *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*. The first work displays an attempt to seek the patronage of Emperor Tezong 德宗 (r. 780–805) by suggesting that the Emperor establish with Huilang the ruler-preceptor relationship that Amoghavajra had had with Emperors Suzong and Daizong. The organization of his materials implies that Amoghavajra's vision of esoteric polity, which centered on protection of the imperial family and the nation, was successful during those reigns.²⁰⁰ Yan Ying's eulogy and preface to accompany Amoghavajra's portrait and his stele inscription, recording a lineage of patriarchs beginning with Mahāvairocana, and Feixi's biography, describing the contents of a transmission that differed from Amoghavajra's accounts, were also foregrounded in this collection of documents.

Yuanzhao's *Datang Zhenyuan xu Kaiyuan shijiao lu* and *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*, commissioned by Emperor Daizong, document the translation activities of the most recent scholar-monks from India. Both compilations give the greatest focus to the career and translations of Amoghavajra, in particular to his new recension of the *Renwang jing* and its reception by Emperor

Daizong and his Court.²⁰¹ Competition for recognition and patronage, especially imperial, also dominated the activities of Chan circles during the eighth and early ninth centuries. They too sought to define a spiritual genealogy with a special transmission as a strategy of legitimation.²⁰² We can view in this light Feixi's and Zhao Qian's alteration of Amoghavajra's transmission, whereby they claimed fields of specialities that their master himself did not acknowledge.²⁰³

Kūkai's *Shōrai mokuroku*, which was presented to the court of Emperor Heisei and the Nara Buddhist establishment (Sōgō 僧綱 Office of Priestly Affairs) in 806, includes examples of texts and icons that attest to the efforts of Amoghavajra's Chinese disciples to further particularize a unique lineage and transmission.

The first example is the *Jingangding yuqie bimi xindi famen yijue* (Arcana [concerning] the Gateway to the Methods on the Secret Mental Ground of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown) 金剛頂瑜伽祕密心地法門義訣, a work listed in Kūkai's *Shōrai mokuroku* under the rubric of "treatises, commentaries, documents, etcetera" 論疏章等.²⁰⁴ This is the earliest work that relates the story of the origins of the Esoteric Buddhist transmission in an iron tower in South India. The narrative focuses on the drama of a great worthy who enters this iron stūpa and receives instructions from buddhas and bodhisattvas on the methods that come to be contained in the extensive version of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* in one hundred thousand verses.²⁰⁵ The narrative then moves into a more recent historical realm when Vajrabodhi himself recounts how, to save his ship during a terrific storm that came up while on route to China, the extensive version was thrown overboard. He saved the abbreviated version, translating it in the seventh year of Kaiyuan (721) into Chinese with the help of Ísvāra. The meditation master Yixing and others did the transcription.²⁰⁶

There are two interesting points in this account. First, the great worthy, whose spiritual expertise (which may or may not be linked to the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* ritual lineage) allowed him to enter the iron stupa and acquire the teachings that are the focus of this special transmission, is unnamed. Yan Ying and Zhao Qian have names for all the patriarchs in their biographies and Kūkai calls this great worthy Nāgārjuna in his later histories of the patriarchs of Esoteric Buddhism, which were composed by means of his skillful manipulation of the *Jingangding yuqie bimi xindi famen yijue*, as well as Yuanzhao's *Daizongchao zeng Sikong Dabianzheng Guangzhi sanzang heshang biao zhiji* and *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*, to name but a few of his sources.²⁰⁷ The second significant point is that Yixing, Śubhākarasiṃha's disciple and collaborator in the translation of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* and its commentary,²⁰⁸ is named and so figures prominently in the story of the Chinese translation of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, the scripture fundamental to this transmission.²⁰⁹ We see here the express intent to stress the spiritual link between Vajrabodhi and Yixing, representatives of the traditions of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*, respectively.

Icons enumerated under the heading of "buddha images, etcetera" 佛像等 in the *Shōrai mokuroku* further confirm the intent of Amoghavajra's Chinese disciples to incorporate the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* lineage of practices and iconography into their master's transmission.²¹⁰ Five portraits are listed under this rubric.²¹¹ The inclusion of the portraits of Śubhākarasiṃha and Yixing acknowledge the significance of their work as transmitter (Śubhākarasiṃha) and interpreter (Yixing) of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* tradition. They have become as important as Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, who hold these positions for the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. The key figure is Huiguo who, according to his disciples' accounts, propagated a transmission consisting of both traditions.²¹²

The listing of the Great Mandalas of the Matrix Realm and the Nine Assemblies of the Adamantine Realm (*Jingangjie jiuhui mantuluo*) also under the rubric “buddha images, etcetera” constitute another example of the Chinese reconfiguration of Amoghavajra’s transmission. The materials and sizes that Kūkai notes for these two mandalas imply that the two paintings could have either been hung side by side or faced each other within the same ritual arena.²¹³ We have noted that Amoghavajra and his disciples record only his use of the Mandala of the Adamantine Realm. Kūkai’s descriptions of the consecrations he received from Huiguo, as well as Wuyin’s account of his master illustrating these two mandalas on the walls of a Consecration Hall and Stūpa of the Buddha in Qinglongsi verify Huiguo’s use of both mandalas in his religious activities.²¹⁴

Finally, the *Jingangfeng louke yiqieyuqie yuqi jing* 金剛峰樓閣一切瑜伽瑜祇經, listed in Kūkai’s *Shōrai mokuroku* under the rubric “[new] translations not yet included in [Yuanzhao’s] *Zhenyuan [xinding shijiao] mulu*” 已下未載貞元目錄,²¹⁵ is an example of a scripture wherein rituals and iconography from differing Esoteric Buddhist traditions have been mixed. The system underlying this scripture is the Adamantine Realm, although it differs markedly from that in Amoghavajra’s *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*. Present in this scripture are deities and ritual practices whose Indian origins have not been identified, and whose cults in China remain as yet undiscovered, but whose sources belong to the lineage of the Adamantine Realm.²¹⁶ Elements from the earlier *Buddhoṣṇīṣa* tradition, as well as those from the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* and *Liqujing* have been incorporated into this system.²¹⁷ The *Jingangfeng louke yiqieyuqie yuqi jing*, which I will discuss in Chapter Six of this dissertation, represents another phase, one that postdates Amoghavajra, in the translation and creation of works for Chinese Esoteric Buddhist practitioners.

CONCLUSION

Amoghavajra received from his masters the transmissions of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, *Vairocanābhisambodhi* and *Susiddhikara sūtras*, as well as many other transmissions that constituted the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna vehicles of his time. Evidence of his knowledge of these Indian Esoteric Buddhist scriptures is seen in his translations and compositions, especially, for example, in the *Zhubu tuoluoni mu* and the ritual manuals whose structure and contents are based upon his translation of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, as well as the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* and *Susiddhikara sūtras*. My investigation confirms, however, that Amoghavajra’s description of his transmission focused on the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown, which he received from Vajrabodhi and Indian masters, and outlined in the *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*. The *Liqujing* and its materials belonged to this esoteric system. Corroborating evidence is, for example, the iconography of the mandalas prescribed in the *Liqushi*, diagramed in the Ishiyamadera exemplar of the *Liqujing mantuluo*, as well as the iconographic program of the *Jingangjie jiuhui mantuluo*.

In Feixi’s and Zhao Qian’s biographies the textual and ritual traditions of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* and *Susiddhikara sūtras* are accorded equal footing with the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, in contrast to Yan Ying’s documentation of his master’s focus on the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown, which accords with the privilege given this new and latest yoga in Amoghavajra’s memorials, translations, writings and iconographic materials. Yan Ying, however, records a lineage in which Amoghavajra was the sixth patriarch of the Esoteric Buddhist transmission. The changes documented in Amoghavajra’s biographies reveal the new concerns of

his disciples to establish a lineage of patriarchs with a unique transmission and to specify their master's field of expertise as including the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* and *Susiddhikara sūtras*, a specification that Amoghavajra himself did not make. Further, Kūkai's *Shōrai mokuroku* contains texts and icons whose themes further evince the disciples' efforts to purposely link together the traditions of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*. These efforts took place during Huiguo's religious career.

This reformulation of Amoghavajra's transmission also resulted in new iconography. One example was the pairing of the mandalic realities introduced in the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*. As I have demonstrated in Chapter Three of this dissertation, it is the iconography of such a set of mandalas (an example of which was recorded in Kūkai's *Shōrai mokuroku*) that influenced the iconography of the Daigoji exemplar of the *Liqujing mantuluo*.

In the following chapters I will address two problems. First, I will examine the reliability of the historical sources that record the importation of the iconography of the *Liqujing mantuluo* from China to Japan. Second, I will investigate works by Chinese and Japanese scholar-monks wherein an eclectic co-mingling of the traditions of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* and the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* and *Susiddhikara sūtras* is evident. I will demonstrate that the prototype of the iconography of the Daigoji *Liqujing mantuluo* dates to the time of Faquan, said to be expert in these three Esoteric Buddhist traditions.