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

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CONCLUSION

This study's contribution to the field of Esoteric Buddhism of the eighth and ninth centuries in China and Japan is threefold. One, it has been the first to focus on the type of mandala known as the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo* and its ritual tradition in the Japanese Shingon school, and in particular on the Daigoji exemplar of the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo*, whose iconography the Shingon tradition claims is based on Amoghavajra's (705–774) commentary on his translation of the *Liqujing*, the *Liqushi*. Two, this study has reconsidered Amoghavajra's transmission, demonstrating that his religious priority was to propagate the Esoteric Buddhist system of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown, which he outlined in his *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui*. Three, this study is the first to present in some detail the transmission of the ninth-century Chinese master Faquan (ca. 800–870). I have argued that the iconography of the Daigoji exemplar was a product of the concerns of ninth-century Chinese Esoteric Buddhists and, in particular, I have assigned to Faquan the responsibility for the iconographical and iconological changes seen in the Daigoji exemplar.

A mixing of Esoteric Buddhist systems of iconography characterizes the Daigoji exemplar of the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo*. As I have demonstrated in Chapters One and Four of this dissertation, the iconography of the Daigoji exemplar does not match the content of the teachings that Amoghavajra presents in his *Liqujing*, nor the exposition and mandala prescriptions in his *Liqushi* and *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu*. Instead, as Chapters One and Three show, the iconography of the Daigoji exemplar derives from a model whose iconography was identical to the Shingon school's Matrix Realm Mandala (*Genzu taizōkai mandara*) and the Mandala of the Adamantine Realm (*Genzu kongōkai mandara*, also known as the *Jingangjie jiuhui damantuluo* [Great Mandala of the Nine Assemblies of the Adamantine Realm]). The Chinese prototypes of these Shingon mandalas postdate Amoghavajra, although I have argued in Chapter Four that his translation activity produced the template for the *Jingangjie jiuhui damantuluo*.

My documentation in Chapter Four of Amoghavajra's numerous references to the teachings and mandalas in the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown in his *Liqushi* and *Shiqisheng damantuluo yishu* clearly indicate that the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo* belongs to this Esoteric Buddhist system. Amoghavajra's translation activities focused on specific assemblies of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown, in particular those of the First (*Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*) through Fourth, the Sixth through Eighth, and Thirteenth Assemblies. Teachings and practices from these assemblies constitute the contents of the *Liqujing* and its related materials.

These findings corroborate those of such previous scholars as Sakai Shinten and Tanaka Kimiaki, who championed the importance of Amoghavajra's *Jingangding yuqie shibahui zhigui* as a source for recreating aspects of the Esoteric Buddhism of his time in India. Moreover, comparing the contents of Amoghavajra's translations and compositions related to the *Liqujing* and *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* to contemporary Indian works and later Tibetan translations that these scholars introduced has enabled me to redefine his transmission, one that highlights the importance of the *Liqujing*, its commentaries and their mandalas.

Two works that attest the significance of the *Liqujing*'s doctrine and practices and their dissemination beyond the Chinese capital of Chang'an after Amoghavajra's death are the Ishiyamadera exemplar of the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo* and the *Jingangjie jiuhui damantuluo*. The seventh mandala of the *Jingangjie jiuhui damantuluo*'s nine-mandala iconographic program is

that of the *Liquhui* (Assembly of the Guiding Principle). Both the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo* and the *Jingangjie jihui damantuluo's Liquhui* are guides for the practice of the teachings of the *Liqujing*, that is to attain in this body entry into the realm of great bliss because of one's understanding of the purity of all factors of existence. These doctrines are fundamental to a number of assemblies (Sixth through Eighth Assemblies and Thirteenth Assembly) in the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown.

In this study, I have also demonstrated that, even when Amoghavajra mixed elements from differing Esoteric Buddhist traditions in his ritual manuals, his intent was not to re-present the teachings and practices of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* and the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, independent Esoteric Buddhist scriptures in India, as a paired unit. This was an interpretative strategy undertaken by the post-Kūkai Shingon school in Japan to construct their doctrine and identity and a method of critical analysis employed by past and present Shingon scholars to shape their view of Amoghavajra's transmission. The *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* and its mandala were elements of his transmission, but they did not perform the role they do in the Shingon school's articulation of his transmission.

The Sinification of Indian Esoteric Buddhist teachings continued in the late eighth among Amoghavajra's disciples and accelerated throughout the ninth century of the Tang Dynasty (618–907). Several strategies were used in this process of adapting Indian teachings to Chinese understanding and needs. Amoghavajra's disciples purposely constructed a spiritual lineage and specified the contents of his transmission, including elements that their master did not focus on. Kūkai (774–835), whom the Japanese Shingon school regards as its founder, introduced to Japan a dual form of the Esoteric Buddhist teachings that he said he inherited from his Chinese master Huiguo (746–805), one of Amoghavajra's eight disciples who headed the circle of Esoteric Buddhist masters in Chang'an in 804–806. As I have demonstrated in Chapter Three, these teachings present a pairing of the scriptural and ritual traditions of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* and the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* in a two-part unit, each with its separate significance as is reflected in the dual Mandalas of the Matrix Realm and the Adamantine Realm. Kūkai's *Shōrai mokuroku* provides the earliest documentation of these mandalas as a set.

The Mandalas of Buddhālocanā (fig. 8) and Vikīrṇoṣṇīṣa (fig. 9) that are appended to the Daigoji exemplar of the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo* are the products of Esoteric Buddhist practices in ninth-century China, and their sources, the *Jingangjixiang dachengjiu pin* and the *Zunsheng foding xiuyuqiefafa guiyi*, respectively, were first recorded in the inventories of the ninth-century pilgrim-monks Engyō (in China 838–839), Eun (in China 842–847), Ennin (in China 838–847) and Shūei (in China 862–865). I have shown in Chapter Six how the deliberate mixing of disparate Esoteric Buddhist systems in the late eighth-century *Jingangjixiang dachengjiu pin* and the early ninth-century *Zunsheng foding xiuyuqiefafa guiyi* exhibit express correlations between the variant systems of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*, the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, and the earlier *Buddhoṣṇīṣa* scriptures. This is another unique feature in the ninth-century Sinification of Indian Esoteric Buddhism. Buddhālocanā, a deity originally from the earlier esoteric systems of the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa*, for example, the *Susiddhikara sūtra*, and the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*, was incorporated into the *Yuqijing's* system of the Adamantine Realm, a system that differed from that which Amoghavajra presented in his translation of the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, and given the power to effectuate the rites and mantras from both the Matrix and the Adamantine Realm.

The correlations between the Esoteric Buddhist systems of the Matrix and the Adamantine Realm that were made in the preface of the *Zunsheng foding xiuyuqiefafa guiyi*, also a ritual manual

for a deity of the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa* system, are illustrated in the Daigoji Mandala of Vikīrṇoṣṇīṣa. There Mahāvairocana forms the Mudrā of Contemplation on the Dharma Realm, which is the mudrā made by this deity in the Chinese matrix mandalas. And yet, the *Zunsheng foding xiuyuqiefu guiyi*'s instructs that Mahāvairocana is to make the Mudrā of the Dharma Realm, that is the Mudrā of the Wisdom Fist, which is the mudrā made by Mahāvairocana in the Chinese mandalas of the adamantine realm. Documentation in the Shingon ritual compendia that harkens back to Tang China provides additional evidence of the correlations made between of the two ritual traditions of the Matrix and the Adamantine Realm in the performance of the rite of Vikīrṇoṣṇīṣa.

As I have presented in Chapters Three and Seven, there was in the early decades of the ninth century the reclassification of the Chinese Esoteric Buddhist doctrine as “the great teachings in three categories” with a special significance and function given to the accomplishment (*susiddhi*) category of teachings. This development represents another aspect of the Sinification of the Indian Esoteric Buddhist teachings in the ninth century. The concept of the Esoteric Buddhist teachings in three categories does not appear in the *Bizangji*, an oral record most likely transmitted by one of Huiguo's second-generation Chinese disciples. Thus, concomitant with the oral transmission recorded in the *Bizangji*, which focuses on the tenet of the nonduality of Principle and Wisdom 理智不二 and its visual manifestation in the dual Mandalas of the Matrix Realm and the Adamantine Realm respectively, and also contains numerous entries describing these two scriptures and their mandalas as a single unit composed of two interrelated categories 兩部不二, a new, tripartite interpretation of the Esoteric Buddhist doctrine was being propagated. It was this system of interpretation that Haiyun, a contemporary of Faquan, recorded in 834 in his *Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi fufa ji*. Although Tang Esoteric Buddhist masters promoted particular systems of interpretation of the Esoteric Buddhist teachings, it seems that they were free to interpret the Esoteric Buddhist doctrine as they saw fit: one master might emphasize a text, a tenet or a rite which another master might not consider important at all.

I have demonstrated in Chapter Seven that Faquan considered the Esoteric Buddhist teachings to be tripartite and that he gave a special significance to the accomplishment category and its mantra of the supreme grade of accomplishment. I have presented the writings of Faquan's Japanese disciples Ennin and Enchin and Shūei wherein they document their Chinese master's propagation of this tripartite system and their recordings of the relevant scriptures, ritual manuals and religious paraphernalia of this category in their inventories, as well as brief accounts in their own transmissions wherein this category is mentioned.

Within the tripartite Esoteric Buddhist system that he promoted, Faquan gave priority in his own writings to Śubhākarasiṃha's (637–735) lineage of translations, that is the *Subāhupariṣcchā*, *Susiddhikara* and *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtras*. Our analysis of Faquan's matrix manuals discloses his endeavor to produce a more accessible handbook for practitioners, clarifying this rite by carefully elucidating its method as stipulated in Śubhākarasiṃha's translation of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* and in the matrix manuals attributed to him. We can speak of Faquan's use of a specific canon of scriptures that were translated into Chinese by this early eighth-century Indian master. It is this reliance on Śubhākarasiṃha's *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra* and its ritual lineage as presented in Faquan's manuals that his Japanese disciples Ennin, Enchin and Shūei faithfully transmitted in their own ritual manuals. Moreover, according to tradition, Faquan authored new manuals for the fire rite and the rite of offerings to the directional gods. As I have demonstrated in Chapter Six, these works exhibit a mixing of variant Esoteric Buddhist

systems mainly from the contents of the eighth-century translations of Śubhākarasiṃha and, to a lesser extent, those of Amoghavajra. Despite the fact that Amoghavajra had translated a rite for fire oblations, Faquan (or a close disciple) felt the need to produce a new fire rite. This was because Amoghavajra's earlier rite followed the instructions given in his *Jingangding lianhuabuxin niansong fa*. In contrast, the *Jianli mantuluo humo yigui* adheres to ritual prescriptions stipulated in the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*.

Faquan also referenced a specific “canon of icons.” He employed for the consecrations of his disciples and their instruction mandalas whose iconography matches that of the Shingon school's Matrix Realm Mandala (*Genzu taižōkai mandara*) and Mandala of the Adamantine Realm (*Genzu kongōkai mandara*), whose iconographic program contains the *Liquhui*, the mandala most representative of the teachings of the *Liqujing*, as I have mentioned above. The late Tang Dynasty was characterized by such religious upheavals as the persecution of Buddhism during the years 841–845 and its subsequent restoration during the reign of Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 846–859). The loss of iconographic materials during the persecution of Buddhism may have contributed to the iconography of these mandalas becoming the most authoritative iconography in Chang'an's Esoteric Buddhist circles during Faquan's time. His Japanese disciples recorded in their inventories copies of these mandalas and the materials required for their study, as well as copies of the *Liqujing* and its accompanying commentaries, ritual manuals and oral transmissions.

In sum, I have demonstrated that Faquan's propagation of the tripartite system of the Esoteric Buddhist teachings with its accomplishment category reinterpreted as a third, integrating principle that united the categories of the matrix and the adamantine realm, his preference for referencing the eighth-century Chinese translations of Śubhākarasiṃha, especially his translation of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*, and his use of mandalas whose iconography matched that of the Shingon school's Matrix Realm Mandala (*Genzu taižōkai mandara*) and Mandala of the Adamantine Realm (*Genzu kongōkai mandara*) attest to a ninth-century date for the production of the Chinese prototype of the iconography of the Daigoji exemplar of the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo*. I have argued in this chapter that Faquan's religious contributions — that is his reinterpretation of the accomplishment category as a third, integrating principle and the power of its mantra of the supreme grade of accomplishment to conflate within its syllables the essence of the esoteric systems of the *Susiddhikara* and *Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtras* and the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* — would allow for the dissolution of distinctions between the scriptures and mandalas in the three categories of the matrix, the adamantine realm and accomplishment. The deities from one system (*Vairocanābhisambodhi sūtra*) could appear in another system (the Sixth Assembly, that is the *Liqujing*, of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Crown), a feature that is seen in the iconography of the Daigoji exemplar of the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo*.

My focus upon Esoteric Buddhism in ninth-century China demonstrates that it did not stagnate, becoming a dormant or frozen tradition after Amoghavajra, as claimed by Shingon scholars, but continued to evolve and to contribute to the developing Japanese Esoteric Buddhist schools. In particular, my analysis of Faquan's transmission calls into question the received view of the Japanese Shingon school that there was *only* a Chinese Esoteric Buddhist system of two categories. I have supplied evidence that Esoteric Buddhism during Huiguo's time was not as sanitized as Kūkai, who used the concept of the “dual categories” of the Adamantine and Matrix Realms to define the transmission he received from his Chinese master, and the post-Kūkai

Shingon school, who uses this concept to describe its identity and doctrine, would have us believe.¹ I have demonstrated that the origin of the tripartite interpretation of the Esoteric Buddhist system was in Tang China. However, for documentation that elucidates the practices and icons of this tripartite pattern of the Chinese Esoteric Buddhist system, we must investigate the ritual lineages of Ennin, Enchin and Shūei, for example, who introduced Faquan's transmission to Japan.

Moreover, in this study I have presented the Shingon school's official account concerning the Daigoji exemplar of the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo*. I have dealt with the problems of ascription to Shūei in Chapter One and the reliability of Annen's attribution in Chapter Five. In Chapter Two I have examined the revisions and reinterpretations that the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo* underwent, demonstrating that, despite changes due to "correction" of the iconography of the set that Shūei introduced (Daigoji exemplar) and to Shingon doctrinal interpretations, there has been a continuous transmission of the iconography of the Daigoji exemplar in the Shingon school from the late twelfth to the eighteenth centuries.

However, contemporary scholarship has shown that works long been considered Chinese are in fact Japanese compositions made to legitimize sectarian claims.² The iconography of the Daigoji exemplar could have been produced in Japan. There is much more material on the topic of the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo* to investigate. I have not been able to find in the Shingon and Tendai sources that I examined a reference to this set that dates after the time of Annen's recording in 902 of its introduction by Shūei and Ennin until the Shingon master Ningai 仁海 (951-1046) recorded in his *Atsuzōshi* 敦造紙 his interpretation of the iconography of this set of mandalas that he used as a ritual focus.³ Thus, there is lacuna of perhaps some ninety years or so in the Shingon historical sources that needs to be filled.

Another problem requiring investigation is the history of the *Liqujing*, its related commentaries and ritual manuals and the iconography of the mandalas in the Japanese Tendai Esoteric school. The Tendai pilgrim-monk Enchin provides evidence that this set of mandalas originated in China. He records in his *Sasagimon*, for example, questions for his Chinese master Zhihuilun concerning the iconography of these mandalas.⁴ However, I have not examined in any depth Tendai materials after Enchin and Annen to ascertain whether the doctrine and practice of the *Liqujing* became important in the Tendai Esoteric school.

Further examination of Shingon and Tendai materials, both published and unpublished, concerning the *Liqujing shibahui mantuluo* would confirm and expand the conclusion of this study — that the prototype of the iconography of the Daigoji exemplar was made in ninth-century China.