

# An Annotated Translation of Kūkai's *Dainichikyō kaidai* (*Hōkai jōshin*)

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## Introduction

The group of texts by Kōbō Daishi Kūkai (弘法大師空海, 774–835) titled *kaidai* (開題) were probably composed as texts or outlines for oral delivery during lectures or Buddhist ceremonies. The general feature of this group of texts is to introduce and discuss the esoteric meanings and significances of various *sūtras*—both of the exoteric and esoteric groups—using in part the method of analyzing the words of their titles.

The term *kaidai* in general literally suggests an “expansion on or analysis of the title” of such a *sūtra* leading to a general understanding of the meaning and significance of the text, based on the idea that understanding the words of a title is the key to understanding the overall meaning of a text.<sup>1</sup> However, these texts of Kūkai are not exclusively analyses of the words of the titles. As one of Kūkai's *Dainichikyō kaidai* begins, “To comment on this *sūtra* now, there are in brief three gates: first the general meaning, second a commentary on the title, and third commentary on passages in the text.”<sup>2</sup> Kūkai's *kaidai* texts do not offer an extended or comprehensive commentary, but rather focus on selected passages aiming at an overall esoteric understanding of a particular text. For esoteric texts like the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* or *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* those esoteric meanings are more fully revealed, while for exoteric texts such as the *Heart Sūtra*, *Lotus Sūtra*, *Diamond Sūtra*, and so on they are concealed yet, according to Kūkai, still discernable to the knowing eye.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Jizang (549–623) writes in his commentary on the *Amitāyus Visualization Sūtra* (*Guan Wuliangshou-jing yishu*, T 1752:37.237b):

無量壽爲果觀爲因。今對宗爲題用題爲宗。經中廣明因果。東因果宗爲經題。亦開題爲經宗。言東宗爲題者。如摩訶般若經。品雖九十皆明般若。只東九十章爲般若題。開略題爲廣宗。東廣宗爲略題。如般若既然。一切經皆然。

Amitāyus is the fruit and visualization is the cause. Now, the title [of this text] refers to the teaching, and the title is used as the teaching. The *sūtra* discourses at length on the cause and fruit. The teaching of the cause and fruit is summarized in the title of the *sūtra*, and expanding that title gives the teaching of the *sūtra*. In other words, summarizing the teaching [of a text] into a title is like with [Kumārajīva's translation of] the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*. Although there are ninety chapters, all explain the *Prajñāpāramitā*. The title simply summarizes those ninety chapters. Expanding the title as an abbreviation gives the teaching in detail. Summarizing the detailed teaching gives the title as an abbreviation, just as with the *Prajñāpāramitā*. All the *sūtras* are the same as this.

<sup>2</sup> TKZ 4.24 (今釋此經); (今釋此經略用三門謂第一述大意第二釋題目第三入文判釋). Similar sentences appear in several of Kūkai's *kaidai* texts.

<sup>3</sup> See DREITLEIN 2011 for a fuller discussion on this point.

Seven *kaidai* texts on the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, or *Dainichikyō kaidai* texts, by Kūkai are known, more than for any other Buddhist text by him. Japanese scholars traditionally distinguish these seven texts by their opening line as follows.

1. 法界淨心 “The pure mind of the *dharmadhātu*” (TKZ 4.3–13)
2. 衆生狂迷 “Beings are insanely confused” (TKZ 4.14–23)
3. 今釋此經 “To comment on this *sūtra* now” (TKZ 4.24–30)
4. 大毗盧遮那 “Mahāvairocana” (TKZ 4.31–37)
5. 隆崇頂不見 “So grand and lofty, its summit cannot be seen” (TKZ 4.38–51)
6. 三密法輪 “The Dharma-wheel of the three mysteries” (TKZ 4.52–57)
7. 關以受自樂 “[Remove the layered] barriers to the personal experience of bliss”<sup>4</sup> (TKZ 4.58–63)

The first of the above texts is translated here. It is a text so rich in allusions and dense in layered meanings that one marvels that an audience would be able to fully appreciate it as a lecture. This text is the only one of the seven for which there is some idea of a possible date,<sup>5</sup> and has been traditionally treated as the most significant of the seven, to the extent that it is the only one for which traditional commentaries exist.<sup>6</sup>

Kūkai often repeats phrases and themes throughout his several *Dainichikyō kaidai* texts. These texts are very much alike in thought, and since they were originally lecture notes or texts to be used on various separate occasions and not definitive treatises, it seems only natural that they would resemble one another in a number of ways and have passages in common. These texts also share a particular emphasis on several key topics as noted below.<sup>7</sup>

### 1. The *Sūtra* is the direct teaching of the inner realization of Mahāvairocana

Kūkai explains in many places that the esoteric texts directly present Mahāvairocana's inner own-realization (自內證), or the direct and unmediated experience of his awakening. In *Kan'en no sho* Kūkai quotes the words of his teacher Huiguo:<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> This phrase also occurs in the present text, §II below.

<sup>5</sup> A text in the seventh fascicle of *Shōryō shū* (TKZ 8.113) titled “In dedication of a *Mahā-maṇḍala* made for the sake of the late mother of the [Third Minister of the Ministry of Ceremonies] Kasa Taifu (Kasa Shikibu no jō Nakamori 笠式部丞仲守)” (笠大夫奉爲先妣造大曼荼羅願文) has this passage: “On the twenty-second day of the first winter month of 824 (Tenchō 1.10.22), according to the wish of the late mother [of Kasa no Nakamori], ... I lectured on the *dharmajñānamudrā* of Mahāvairocana (the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*),” (謹以天長元年孟冬二十二日爲遂先妣本願...講演大日法智印). The Ninna-ji manuscript of the *Dainichikyō kaidai* text translated here has the notation, “The text of the lecture for the late mother of Kasa no Nakamori” (爲笠仲守先妣講文). Accordingly, the text translated here may have been written by Kūkai for a lecture he gave in 824, at the age of 51. This information is provided in the TKZ appendix (TKZ 4 408–409), along with various theories about the relative age of the seven texts titled *Dainichikyō kaidai*. Other *Shōryō shū* texts mention lectures by Kūkai on the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, such as one in 826 (Tenchō 3.10.8; TKZ 8.135, 天長三年十月八日...演說大日經) and another in 827 (Tenchō 4.5.22; TKZ 8.130, 天長四年五月二十二日...講大日經), but it is difficult to link any such reference to a particular *kaidai* text. The text beginning with 衆生狂迷 opens with a long quote from *Himitsu mandara jūjūshin ron*, submitted to the court in 830, so that text was perhaps written at roughly that time.

<sup>6</sup> The TKZ appendix (TKZ 4.422) lists nine extant commentaries for the *Dainichikyō kaidai* texts, all for the text translated here.

<sup>7</sup> See ONOZUKA for a detailed study of the themes of the *Dainichikyō kaidai* texts.

<sup>8</sup> TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 316 (TKZ 8.175: 欲得大覺應當學諸佛自證之教。自證教者。所謂金剛頂十萬偈。及大毗盧遮那十萬偈經是也。此經則淨妙法身大毗盧遮那佛。與自眷屬法佛。住法界祕密心殿中。常恆所演說。自受法樂之教也)。

If you wish to attain great awakening, you must study the teachings of the own-realization of the buddhas. The teachings of own-realization are the 100,000-verse *Vajraśekhara*<sup>9</sup> and the 100,000-verse *Mahāvairocana*.<sup>10</sup> These *sūtras* are the teachings of the pure and sublime Dharmakāya, the buddha Mahāvairocana, eternally given to his own retinue of *dharmakāyas* where he resides in the secret mind-palace of the *dharmadhātu*. These *sūtras* are the teachings of his own blissful enjoyment of the Dharma.

In a *Dainichikyō kaidai* Kūkai writes, “The sublime words of [Mahāvairocana’s] inner awakening are written down in these seven fascicles [of the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*].”<sup>11</sup> In yet another *Dainichikyō kaidai* text he writes, “This *Sūtra* is the fundamental secret treasury of all the *tathāgatas* and the realm of the wisdom of inner awakening of the own-essence of the Dharmakāya (*svabhāvakāya*).”<sup>12</sup> These esoteric texts, and the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* in particular, are therefore directly the esoteric teachings of Mahāvairocana. Esoteric Buddhism is based on them, and therefore, as Kūkai writes in *Kan’en no sho*, “The esoteric is the teaching of the inherent three mysteries. It specifically discusses the truth of own-realization. It is the speech of suchness and the teaching of final truth.”<sup>13</sup> Kūkai says in this text (§II), “The *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-vikurvītādhiṣṭhāna-sūtra* is the great secret of the *tathāgatas* and the highest excellence of beings. The *sambhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya* buddhas keep it secret and do not discuss it.”

## 2. Inherent awakening and identity with the Buddha

The teaching of inherent awakening (本覺) has a prominent place in many of Kūkai’s texts,<sup>14</sup> and in his *Dainichikyō kaidai* texts in particular. In another *Dainichikyō kaidai* Kūkai uses a lotus as a metaphor for inherent awakening, which is the attainment of the fruit of inner, original buddhahood.<sup>15</sup>

[Śākya]muni, the Sugata, rides on the cart of the five superpowers to guide us. Mahāvairocana opens the lotus of inherent awakening to sit on it, [demonstrating to us that] without fail we will attain the fruit of buddhahood that is the self, identical with [one’s own] mind.

In the opening of the text translated here (§I), Kūkai writes,

The pure mind of the *dharmadhātu* transcends the ten *bhūmis*: it is beyond, beyond. The inherent awakening of the single suchness bears within itself the three bodies: it is apart, apart.

<sup>9</sup> The full extent of both these text is said to consist of 100,000 verses. The *Jingangding jing yujia shibahui zhigui* explains “The yoga of the Vajraśekhara has 100,000 verses in eighteen assemblies. ... The teachings of yoga in eighteen assemblies are [each] given in 4,000, 5,000, or 7,000 verses, and all of them together make up the 100,000 verses,” (金剛頂經。瑜伽有十萬偈十八會。... 瑜伽教十八會。或四千頌或五千頌或七千頌。都成十萬頌, T 869:18.284c, 287c). Not all of those texts are extant.

<sup>10</sup> See notes 47 and 66.

<sup>11</sup> TKZ 4.39 (隆崇頂不見); (留內證微言書七軸真典).

<sup>12</sup> TKZ 4.18 (衆生狂迷); (今此經者一切如來根本祕藏自性法身內證智境也).

<sup>13</sup> TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 310 (TKZ 8.174: 密則本有三密爲教具說自證理如義語眞實說者也).

<sup>14</sup> See KATSUMATA 1973 and 1974 for detailed studies of this and related theories in Kūkai’s writings.

<sup>15</sup> TKZ 4.42 (隆崇頂不見); (牟尼善逝乘神通之輿以引導。大日世尊開本覺之蓮而上居。必證即心自佛之果).

The “pure mind of the *dharmadhātu*” is the mind of Mahāvairocana, and his awakening is the “inherent awakening of the single suchness.” It transcends what the bodhisattvas on the exoteric path can perceive. Yet, because of its inherency, it does not require three *asaṃkhyeya-kalpas* to realize.

In Kūkai's system of thought, the inherent (本有) quality of *bodhi*, or inherent awakening (本覺), is half of the teaching describing the path to fully realizing *bodhi*, and essentially describes *what* is realized. The teaching of attaining or realizing *bodhi* through cultivation (修生) is the sustained effort toward realizing for the first time (始覺) what was (to the deluded mind) not there before.<sup>16</sup> This describes the process, or the *how*, of realizing what was already there but concealed due to our manifold delusions and obscurations.<sup>17</sup> *Bodhicitta* thus has a twofold significance: it is both the inherent and already-awakened mind and the aspiration, put into practice by continued efforts, to attain supreme and perfect *bodhi* for the sake of all beings. The inherency of *bodhi* is represented by the Dharmakāya of Truth (理法身), and the attainment of *bodhi* through cultivation is the Dharmakāya of Wisdom (智法身). In this text Kūkai says that, among the fourfold Dharmakāya, the former is “the own-essence of the Dharmakāya (*svabhāvakāya*), which is the intrinsic truth-body of inherent awakening” (§IV.1, 自性法身即本有本覺理身), and the latter is both forms of *saṃbhogakāya* for which “attainment through cultivation is the wisdom-body of awakening initiated and attained through cultivation” (修得即始覺智身). The Dharmakāya of Truth is *dharmakāya* as absolute truth and reality itself, and is Mahāvairocana as he is known through the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*. The Dharmakāya of Wisdom is Mahāvairocana of the *Vajrasekhara* texts, and these are the two inseparable aspects of reality.

The teaching of inherent awakening in the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* is most famously presented in the following dialogue, known as the “three-phrase Dharma-gate” (三句法門).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Hakeda (2006: 44) calls this last “the process of actualization of enlightenment,” which he explains as literally meaning the “inception of enlightenment.” The terms 本有, 修生, 本覺, and 始覺 are not found in the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*. Only 本有 is found in the *Darjīng shu*. The paired terms 本有 and 修生, and 本覺 and 始覺, are often found in various Chinese commentaries, particularly on the *Avataṃsaka* and on the *Awakening of Faith*. The *Awakening of Faith* itself introduces the terms 本覺 and 始覺 (HAKEDA 2006: 43–44):

The one [without any second, i.e. the absolute] aspect of the World of Reality (*dharma-dhātu*) is none other than the undifferentiated Dharmakāya, the “Essence-body” of the Tathāgata. [Since the essence of Mind is] grounded on the Dharmakāya, it is to be called the original enlightenment (本覺). Why? Because “original enlightenment” indicates [the essence of Mind (*a priori*)] in contradistinction to [the essence of Mind in] the process of actualization of enlightenment (始覺); the process of actualization of enlightenment is none other than [the process of integrating] the identity with the original enlightenment. (See T 1666:32.576b: 法界一相即是如來平等法身。依此法身說名本覺。何以故。本覺義者對始覺義說。以始覺者即同本覺。)

<sup>17</sup> In his *Sanmayakai jo* Kūkai writes (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 366–367; TKZ 5.8):

大毗盧遮那四種法身四種曼荼羅。皆是一切衆生本來平等共有。雖然被五障之覆弊。依三妄之雲翳不得覺悟。

Mahāvairocana's fourfold Dharmakāya and the four maṇḍalas are equally and originally possessed by all beings. Because those beings are covered over by the five hindrances and clouded by coarse, fine, and extremely fine delusions, they [as yet] cannot realize this.

<sup>18</sup> See TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 183–184, 398–399, also note 37. (T 848:18.1b–c: 世尊如是智慧。以何爲因。云何爲根。云何究竟。... 佛言菩提心爲因。悲爲根本。方便爲究竟。祕密主云何菩提。謂如實知自心。祕密主是阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。). The *Darjīng shu* comments (T 1796:39.587b) on this passage:

“World-honored One, what is the cause, what is the root, and what is the ultimate goal of such wisdom?” ... The Buddha answered, “*Bodhicitta* is the cause, [universal] compassion is the root, and [the practice of] skillful means is the ultimate goal. [Vajrapāṇi,] Lord of the Secret Ones, what is *bodhi*? It is knowing one’s own mind just as it really is. Lord of the Secret Ones, this is supreme and perfect *bodhi*.”

“Knowing one’s own mind as it really is” means knowing the inherency of *bodhi*. Therefore, awakening is nothing other than a direct perception of what was there all along. Inherent awakening is expressed as *bodhicitta* being the cause (*bodhicitta-hetu*)<sup>19</sup> of the following two phrases, and indeed of the entire Mahāyāna path. Extensive cultivation rooted in compassion (*karuṇā-mūla*) is then needed, finally leading to skillful activities (*upāya-paryavasāna*) for the liberation of all beings as the ultimate expression of *bodhi* and the goal of the path. Inherent awakening and awakening through cultivation are thus two sides of the same coin, together having the goal of the liberation of all other beings. On the basis of the above and similar passages, the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* has been long understood as emphasizing the aspect of inherent awakening. Thus, it is quite natural for Kūkai to stress the teachings of inherent awakening in his lectures on the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, as recorded in his various *Dainichikyō kaidai* texts.

Deeply related to the teaching of the inherency of *bodhi* is Kūkai’s pervasive emphasis on the identity of beings with the buddha,<sup>20</sup> and both these topics receive extensive treatment in the text here translated. In this text Kūkai writes (§III.3.7), “In this way, the *dharmakāya* mutually interpenetrates [with all] just like the horizontal and vertical threads of a silk fabric are mutually interwoven without disarray or disorder.”

又淨菩提心者。猶如真金。本性明潔離諸過患。大悲如習學工巧。以諸藥物種種鍊治。乃至鏡徹柔軟屈申自在。方便如巧藝成就。...經云。祕密主云何菩提。謂如實知自心。卽是開示如來功德寶所也。如人雖聞寶藏發意勤求。若不知其所在無由進趣。

The pure mind of awakening is like pure gold, whose essence is bright and pure and free from faults. [Training in] great compassion is like training in how to competently process [raw gold]. Using various chemicals and refining it in many ways, in the end [the gold] becomes as brilliant as a mirror and so malleable that it can be bent and stretched freely. Skillful means are like the completion of the [gold-making] process. ... The *Sūtra* has, “Lord of the Secret Ones, what is *bodhi*? It is knowing one’s own mind just as it really is.” This reveals the location of the treasury of the virtues of the Tathāgata. Even though a person may hear of [the existence of] such a treasury, desires it, and makes efforts to find it, if he does not know where it is he will have no clue about where to look.

<sup>19</sup> “*Bodhicitta* is the cause” is interpreted as meaning both the thought or aspiration to realize *bodhi* (“the *bodhicitta* that is pursued” 所求菩提心) and the mind that is itself *bodhi* pursuing the path (“the *bodhicitta* that pursues” 能求菩提心). The later is inherent awakening, see MATSUNAGA: 133. In both cases, *bodhicitta* is the primary cause that enables the rest of the path.

<sup>20</sup> In its full expression, this is the identity of self, all beings, and the Buddha, a teaching that Kūkai says he received directly from Huiguo. Kūkai writes in his *Kan’en no sho* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 316, TKZ 8.175):

和尚告曰。若知自心卽知佛心。知佛心卽知衆生心。知三心平等卽名大覺。

Master Huiguo told me, “If you know your own mind [just as it really is], you know the Buddha’s mind. If you know the Buddha’s mind you know the minds of all beings. Knowing the identity of these three minds is called great awakening.

This teaching is probably ultimately derived from a famous verse in the *Avataṃsaka* (T 278:9.465c–466a, see also T 279:10.102a):

如心佛亦爾 如佛衆生然 心佛及衆生 是三無差別  
As is the mind, so is the Buddha; as is the Buddha, so are beings.  
The mind, the Buddha, beings: these three are not different.

## 3. The immediate attainment of buddhahood

Interconnected with the teaching of inherent awakening is Kūkai's teaching of the immediate attainment of buddhahood (即身成佛), particularly well-known from his *Sokushin jōbutsu gi*. In the present text Kūkai repeats his famous stanzas on the immediate attainment of buddhahood (§III.3.6). He gives a unique analysis of the word used to translate *adhiṣṭhāna* (*kaji*, 加持) in terms similar to those he used in *Sokushin jōbutsu gi*, mentions the net of Indra (§III.3.6, 3.8), and provides other passages deeply reminiscent of that text. He also repeats some quotes from the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* that he used in *Sokushin jōbutsu gi*.

Kūkai typically treats the teachings of inherent awakening and the immediate attainment of buddhahood together. This is, of course, because the truth of inherent awakening is in fact the reason why Kūkai can claim that buddhahood can be attained immediately and in this body: it was there all along and need only be discovered in an instant of insight. Thus, three *asaṃkhyeya-kalpas* are not needed to attain enlightenment in Kūkai's teaching, as discussed at length in *Sokushin jōbutsu gi*.

Kūkai writes in another *Dainichikyō kaidai*, mentioning the phrase “the immediate attainment of buddhahood”:<sup>21</sup>

The Dharma-wheel of the three mysteries is unceasing and turns eternally. The marvelous awakening of the single mind: could there be anyone without it? ... For that reason Dharma King Vairocana abides in the Dharmadhātu Palace, opens the secret treasury of adornments, and turns the Dharma-wheel of the three mysteries. On the day of the immediate attainment of buddhahood there is a thundering, and at the time when [you realize that] you are indeed the Dharmakāya the lion roars. ... If there is someone of superior roots and superior wisdom, who can put their confidence in [this teaching] and who can cultivate it, then that person will immediately transcend the ten *bhūmis* to immediately enter the stage of a buddha.

For Kūkai in these *Dainichikyō kaidai* texts, the main points of the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* are the interrelated teachings of inherent awakening, the mutual identity of beings and the Buddha, and the attainment of buddhahood immediately and in this body (§II):

Without arising from your seat, the vajra is itself your mind. Without passing through three *kalpas*, the *dharmakāya* is identical with your body. The deities of the three families are perfectly possessed [by beings]. The many hindrances [caused by] the three kinds of false discrimination disappear in an instant. ... Might this perhaps be the gist of the *Sūtra* and the main point of its teaching?

Indeed, the central themes of both the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* as Kūkai sees it and his *Dainichikyō kaidai* may be summarized as expanding on the teaching of “knowing one's own mind as it really is.”

<sup>21</sup> TKZ 4.52, 53 (三密法輪); (夫三密法輪不斷常轉。一心妙覺何者不有。...是故遍照法王安住法界宮。開莊嚴之祕藏。轉三密之法輪。即身成佛是日雷震。我則法身是時師吼。...若有上根上智能信能修。則頓超十地頓入佛地)。

## 大日經開題 (法界淨心)

*Dainichikyō kaidai (Hōkai jōshin)*On the Title of the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*(Version beginning with the words “Pure mind of the *Dharmadhātu*”)[I. Introductory prose-verse]<sup>22</sup>

夫法界淨心超十地以絕絕。一如本覺孕三身而離離。

The pure mind of the *dharmadhātu*<sup>23</sup> transcends the ten *bhūmis*: it is beyond, beyond.<sup>24</sup>The inherent awakening of the single suchness<sup>25</sup> bears within<sup>26</sup> itself the three bodies:<sup>27</sup> it is apart, apart.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The bracketed divisions into sections and the section headings are the additions of the translator. Kūkai's original Chinese text has no such sections or paragraph divisions. The Chinese text given here is based on TKZ 4.1–13, adjusted as noted in the following. This introductory section is in a parallel but unrhymed prose style, here adapted into stanzas.

<sup>23</sup> This is the pure, awakened mind that is merged with Mahāvairocana, pervading the *dharmadhātu* to engage in the salvific activities of a buddha. The *Darījing shu* (T 1796:39.706b) has:

行者內觀具足純熟見阿字時。其光從心中四散。普遍十方一切佛刹。此光從頂至足。周匝環繞行者之身。不可以喻言也。...然此光從心遍此之時。即能普遍一切世界一切衆生應度之者。皆現其前。以其所喜見身。赴機演說妙法令其得度。皆實不虛矣。如世明鏡中現種種形。然有所不照不能普現。淨心之鏡則不如是。十方無礙圓現法界。但借以爲譬。然實不可爲比也。行者見圓明阿字時。能遍諸方而行佛事。然亦寂然無所動作。

When a yogin whose meditation is complete and mature visualizes the letter *a*, its radiance emerges from the heart in all directions, pervading all buddha-fields in the ten directions. This radiance encircles and envelops the yogin's body from crown to foot. There is nothing to compare with it. ... When this radiance extends [everywhere] from the heart, it reaches all worlds and all beings that should be liberated, appearing before all of them in [whatever] form is pleasing to them, and preaching the subtle Dharmā to them, according to their capacities, to liberate them. This is real and not false. It is like a mundane mirror reflecting all forms. However, in dark places nothing can manifest in [a mundane mirror]. The mirror of the pure mind is not like that. In the ten directions nothing hinders it, and in it the *dharmadhātu* is perfectly manifested. [The idea of a mirror] is simply borrowed as a metaphor, but in reality nothing can compare with this. When the yogin sees the perfect brilliance of the letter *a*, in all places he can engage in buddha activities, but yet remains in stillness without any activity.

These lines of Kūkai are reminiscent of the following in *Ben kenmitsu nikyō ron* (TKZ 3.79–80, quoting the *Shi moheyān lun*, T 1668:32.637c):

清淨之心不能清淨。絕絕離離。...一法界心。非百非背千是。...玄玄又玄。遠遠又遠。

The pure mind cannot conceive of purity. It is beyond, beyond, and apart, apart. ... The mind of the single-*dharmadhātu* is not [concerned with] a hundred negations and turns away from a thousand affirmations. ... This is mysterious, mysterious, and yet again mysterious. It is profound, profound, and yet again profound.

The phrasing in both the *Shi moheyān lun* and Kūkai's text also seems to echo the first chapter of the *Daode jīng* (道德經) of Laozi (老子), “Being the same they are called mysteries, mystery upon mystery—the gateway of the manifold secrets” (LAU: 57; 同謂之玄。玄之又玄。衆妙之門).

<sup>24</sup> The pure mind of Mahāvairocana pervading the *dharmadhātu* is completely beyond the ken of the bodhisattvas on exoteric path of the ten *bhūmis*. Although at the completion of the ten *bhūmis* bodhisattvas are at the verge of attaining buddhahood, nevertheless the *bhūmis* are still causal stages for approaching realization, and not realization itself. Kūkai writes below (§III.3.3) that attainment “does not arise due to causes and conditions.” In *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 56–57, TKZ 3.18) Kūkai writes, “The three mysteries of the Dharmakāya Buddha are exceedingly profound and subtle, and even the most advanced and almost completely enlightened bodhisattvas or those bodhisattvas in the ten bodhisattva stages (the *bhūmis*) are unable to see or hear them.” (法佛三密甚深微細等覺十地不能見聞).

況復曼荼羅性佛圓圓之又圓。大我真言本有之又本。

Would not the [own]-nature Buddha<sup>29</sup> of the [four] maṇḍa[las]<sup>30</sup> be perfect, perfect, and yet again perfect?

The mantra of the great-self (Mahāvairocana)<sup>31</sup> is inherently possessed, and yet again inherent.

<sup>25</sup> Inherent awakening means the awakened state identical to the buddhas, possessed by all beings intrinsically but obscured by defilements and thus unrecognized by ordinary beings. Suchness is “single” because it pertains to the one-mind (一心) that is the pure mind of the *dharmadhātu*. Compare with the *Awakening of Faith* (HAKEDA 2006: 46–47).

<sup>26</sup> The character 孕 (read in Japanese as *harumu*) literally means to be pregnant with a child. All buddhas rely on this suchness, thus the three bodies are said to be borne within it.

<sup>27</sup> The *trikāya* of the Buddha, or the *nirmāṇakāya*, *saṃbhogakāya*, and *dharmakāya*.

<sup>28</sup> In another *Dainichikyō kaidai* (衆生狂迷, TKZ 4.15) Kūkai writes, “Mahāvairocana, the Mind-King, bears within himself the three bodies: [he is] perfect, perfect, and perfect again. The [four] maṇḍa[las]—the mental events—go beyond the ten *bhūmis*: [they are] inherent and yet again inherent,” (心王大日孕三身而圓圓之又圓。心數曼荼羅超十地以本有之又本).

<sup>29</sup> The “[own]-nature Buddha” (性佛) is the Dharmakāya. Yūkai (NDZ 14.373a) explains this as a term meaning the “buddhas of the oceanic [vastness] of the fruits of the virtues possessed by nature” (性德果海諸佛), in opposition to the exoteric idea of the “ocean of causes achieved through cultivation” (顯家修行種因海).

<sup>30</sup> In *Shō-ji-jissō gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 82, TKZ 3.35) Kūkai writes, “What we call sound, letters, and reality are the equally-shared three mysteries of the Dharmakāya Buddha, and the inherent *maṇḍa* (essence) of ordinary beings,” (所謂聲字實相者即是法佛平等之三密。衆生本有之曼荼也)。Maṇḍa means essence or pith in Sanskrit, where it also has the meaning of “cream” and so on.

However, Kūkai also uses the abbreviation *maṇḍa* (曼荼) for *maṇḍala* (曼荼羅), notably in the main verse section of *Sokushin jōbutsu gi*. Kūkai uses *maṇḍa* to mean *maṇḍala* below (at the end of this section and in §III.3.8), and the commentators typically take *maṇḍa* in this passage to mean *maṇḍala*. Ryōken (NDZ 14.342b) agrees, and goes on to say that it may also be understood as *mantra* (眞言, note that Kūkai perceives a connection between the words mantra and maṇḍala in his *Himitsu mandara jūjūshin ron*; TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 99, TKZ 3.308: “True words” [mantra]. This name is provisionally applied according to the mystery of speech. To be specific, it is derived from the Sanskrit word *maṇḍala*, 曼荼羅謂眞言者且就語密得名。若具據梵語名曼荼羅), or as “spell” (呪), as a maṇḍala-altar (壇), as having absolute perfection (輪圓具足), as a thing (i.e. cream) of incomparable taste (無比過上味), and so on. See the explanation of the four maṇḍalas in TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 363–364.

<sup>31</sup> The “great-self” is identified with Mahāvairocana by Kūkai in this text (毗盧遮那則名大我, §IV.4.1) and also in his *Bonmōkyō kaidai* (TKZ 4.226), described as the “great-self of no-self,” indicating that he sees Mahāvairocana as ultimate emptiness going beyond negation and affirmation.

如來說法爲令衆生離妄計我證無我大我。...行者若能入中觀早得無我大我。大我則毗盧遮那之別名。於自心鏡中觀眞言大我。

The Tathāgata preaches so that beings will be led away from an imaginary self to attain the great-self of no-self. ... If the yogin can realize the middle view (no-self), he will rapidly attain the great-self of no-self. Great-self is another name for Vairocana. In the mirror of your own mind visualize the great-self of mantra.

In his *Kongōchōgyō kaidai* (TKZ 4.67) Kūkai also writes, “the great-self of the fivefold wisdom possessing a sublime appearance sits on the sublime [lotus] seat” (五智大我滿妙相以坐靈臺).

The “mantra of the great-self” is the mantra-preaching of the Dharmakāya Mahāvairocana. Because Mahāvairocana realizes the “great-self within non-self” all beings also possess it intrinsically, and those who realize it are also Mahāvairocana, as Kūkai writes in *Unji gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 168, TKZ 3.65):

一切世間雖計我而未證實義。唯有大日如來於無我中得大我也。心王如來既至如是地。塵數難思心所眷屬誰不得此大我之身。是則表德之實義。

In all worlds, beings conjecture about the selfness of the person and dharmas, but they have not yet realized the true meaning. The Tathāgata Mahāvairocana alone attains the great-self within non-self. The Mind-King Tathāgata (Mahāvairocana) has already realized this state. Which among his retinue of inconceivably numerous mental events (all beings) does not also attain the body of great-self? This is the true meaning through revealing virtues.

Ryōken (NDZ 14.342b–343a) observes that there are three kinds of self: an imaginary self taken to be truly existent by unawakened beings (凡夫所計實我), the provisional self of the five skandhas discussed in the Hinayāna (小乘所談五蘊假我), and the great-self of no-self taught in the Mahāyāna (大乘所談無我大我).



風水之龍不得動其波瀾。業轉之霧不能蔽其赫日。

The dragon [that spews forth] the wind and water [of arising and ceasing] is incapable of moving even the waves and billows [of the sea of suchness].<sup>32</sup>

The activating [mind], the evolving [mind, and the other deluded mental states<sup>33</sup>] are [like] a mist that is powerless to obscure the brilliance of the disc of the sun [of Mahāvairocana].<sup>34</sup>

恆沙眷屬鎮住自心之宮。無盡莊嚴優遊本初之殿。

[Mahāvairocana's] retinue,<sup>35</sup> [as numberless as] the sands of the Ganges, abides in stillness in his palace<sup>36</sup> of own-mind;<sup>37</sup>

Inexhaustible adornments<sup>38</sup> surpassingly array that primordial court.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Phenomenal arising and ceasing cannot disturb suchness. Compare this passage to the *Awakening of Faith* (HAKEDA 2006: 46–47). Also see HAKEDA 1972: 214, who comments that in the *Shi moheyan lun* there is “a story about a dragon king named ‘Spewing forth wind and water,’ who is described as spewing forth water from his head and wind from his tail. The perpetual waves of the sea are due to the workings of this dragon.” (See T 1668:32.603b: 譬如大海中有大龍王。名曰出生風水。從其頭頂出生澄水。從其尾末出生標嵐。由是龍王故大海水。風常恆相續無有斷絕。)

<sup>33</sup> 業轉 abbreviates the first two of the five aspects of the unawakened mind given in the *Awakening of Faith* (see HAKEDA 2006: 52–53). Hakeda translates these as the activating mind (業識), evolving mind (轉識), reproducing mind (現識), analytical mind (智識), and continuing mind (相續識)。

<sup>34</sup> The *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.579a) explains how the sun is used to illustrate the virtue of Mahāvairocana, see note 87. The *Busiyi shu* (T 1797:39.794b) also has, “Within the sun of great wisdom (Mahāvairocana), there is no birth and death, and no distinctions of day or night,” (大慧日輪中無生死晝夜別。)

<sup>35</sup> In the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* (T 848:18.1a) Mahāvairocana is accompanied by a retinue of *vajradharas* in number as the motes of dust in ten buddha-fields (十佛刹微塵數等持金剛眾俱)。Kūkai writes in *Bonmōkyō kaidai* (TKZ 4.228):

一一佛各各則塵數眷屬。是則諸佛萬德也。衆生之三密。故法華稱諸佛智慧甚深無量。大日數無盡莊嚴。Each buddha has a retinue as numerous as the motes of dust: these are the myriad virtues of the buddhas and the three mysteries of beings. That is what the *Lotus Sūtra* calls, “the profound infinitude of the wisdom of the buddhas” (T 262:9.5b). The *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* praises this as “inexhaustible adornments.”

<sup>36</sup> Another of Kūkai's *Dainichikyō kaidai* (隆崇頂不見, TKZ 4.50) has “the primordial palace of the letter *a*” (阿字本宮) as a description of Mahāvairocana's palace. See note 39.

<sup>37</sup> In the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, there is the famous passage, “Lord of the Secret Ones, what is *bodhi*? It is knowing one's own mind just as it really is. Lord of the Secret Ones, this is supreme and perfect *bodhi*,” (祕密主云何菩提。謂如實知自心。祕密主是阿耨多羅三藐三菩提, see also note 18). “Own-mind” is not the falsely conceptualized and imaginary self of delusion; it is Mahāvairocana's mind, characterized by nonarising and nonceasing, inherently shared by all beings. The *Busiyi shu* (T 1797:39.794b) has:

自心平等者無妄想也。又自心者妄想自心也。平等者妄想自心本不生也。

The identity of own-mind is not false conceptualization. The own-mind [grasped at by beings] is the own-mind of false conceptualization. Identity means that the falsely conceptualized own-mind fundamentally does not arise.

The retinue here are the dwellers, and the palace of own-mind is the dwelling, but on the other hand the palace of own-mind is both the dwelling and the dweller: it is the palace of the virtues of the single mind possessed by nature (Yūkai, NDZ 14.374b, 能住所住共一心性德故云自心宮)。

<sup>38</sup> The inexhaustible adornments are the adornments of Mahāvairocana's three mysteries. The *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.583b) explains:

所謂莊嚴者。謂從一平等身。普現一切威儀。如是威儀。無非密印。從一平等語。普現一切音聲。如是音聲。無非真言。從一平等心。普現一切本尊。如是本尊。無非三昧。然此一三業差別之相。皆無邊際不可度量。故名無盡莊嚴也。

然非輪王之性金剛之種。誰能見三密之曼荼。聞四印之神祕。

However, if not of the capacity of a *cakravartin*<sup>40</sup> or of the predisposition to Vajra[yāna], who would be able to see the [four] maṇḍa[las] of the three mysteries,<sup>41</sup> or hear the secret mystery of the four [wisdom] seals?<sup>42</sup>

## [II. General introduction to the *Sūtra*]

所謂大毗盧遮那成佛神變加持經者。是則諸佛之大祕衆生之極妙。報應諸佛祕而不談。變化如去默而不答。補處大士不識其一人。飲光薩埵不聞彼逗留。

The *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-vikurvitādhiṣṭhāna-sūtra* is the great secret of the *tathāgatas* and the highest excellence of beings. The *sambhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya* buddhas keep it secret and do not discuss it.<sup>43</sup> The *nirmāṇakāya* Tathāgata (Śākyamuni) remained silent and did not answer.<sup>44</sup> [It

“Adornments” means that from the one identical body all activities are manifested everywhere. There is no activity among these that is not a secret mudrā. From the one identical sound all sounds are manifested everywhere. There is no activity among these that is not mantra. From the one identical mind all deities are manifested everywhere. There is no deity among these that is not *samādhi*. However, the differing aspects of every one of these three activities are all limitless and immeasurable. This is called the inexhaustible adornments.

The *Darījing shu* (T 1796:39.619a) also comments, “Vairocana’s body of inexhaustible adornments pervades the *dharmadhātu*. All the *tathāgatas* in the ten directions and the three times are the same: each of their bodies of inexhaustible adornments pervades the *dharmadhātu*,” (毗盧遮那無盡莊嚴身周遍法界。十方三世一切如來。亦復如是。一一無盡莊嚴身周遍法界)。

<sup>39</sup> The “primordial court” is the state of primordial nonarising revealed by the letter *a* (Yūkai, NDZ 14.374b, 阿字本初不生殿), or the place of the “inherent inner-realization of own-nature” (Ryōken, NDZ 14.344b, 本有內證自性會場也). The *Darījing shu* (T 1796:39.676c) has “[The letter] *a* has the meaning of “primordial” (*ādi*),” (阿是本初義)。

<sup>40</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.374b) says that *cakravartin* here means Mahāvairocana as a *cakravartin* (輪王者大日輪王也). Ryōken (NDZ 14.345a) gives two meanings: superficially *cakravartin* indicates a person who realizes awakening immediately (即身成佛人) by having the capacity for the mantra path, and profoundly that since these teachings deal with the inherent aspects of all beings, it is the truth of the realization of immediate awakening itself (是即身成佛義也)。

<sup>41</sup> See the explanation of the three mysteries (*triguhyā*) in TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 397–398.

<sup>42</sup> See the explanation of the four wisdom seals (*jñānamudrā*) in TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 365–366.

<sup>43</sup> The *Putixin lun* has (T 1665:32.572c, quoted by Kūkai in *Sokushin jōbutsu gi*, TKZ 3.18; see TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 34–35), “Only in the mantra method can buddhahood be perfected immediately and in this body, therefore this method of *samādhi* is taught. In the various [exoteric] teachings this [method of *samādhi*] is omitted, and not written down,” (真言法中即身成佛故是說三摩地法。於諸教中闕而不書)。

The *sambhogakāyas* are the teachers of the bodhisattvas on the ten *bhūmis*, and the *nirmāṇakāyas* teach those before the *bhūmis*. Thus they preach exoteric Buddhism. The *dharmakāya* preaches his inner own-realization, which is esoteric Buddhism. Thus the esoteric teachings are not overtly discussed in the exoteric *sūtras*. See Kūkai’s *Kan’en no sho* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 310–314, TKZ 8.178):

所謂顯教者。報應化身之經是也。密藏者。法身如來之說是也。顯則以因果六度爲宗。是則。菩薩行。隨他語方便門也。密則本有三密爲教。具說自證理。如義語真實說者也。...上從應化經。下至論章疏。雖自證而不說。隨他病以垂訓。雖云稀有甚深。而是權非實。傳法聖者。非不知祕而傳顯。知而相讓。良有以也。

What we call exoteric Buddhism is the *sūtras* of the *sambhogakāyas* and *nirmāṇakāyas*. Esoteric Buddhism is the teaching of the Dharmakāya Tathāgata. The exoteric teaches a progression through stages achieved as the result of practice and the six perfections: these are the training of the bodhisattvas. It is speech adjusted to others, and the practice of skillful means. The esoteric is the teaching of the inherent three mysteries. It specifically discusses the truth of own-realization. It is the speech of suchness and the teaching of final truth. ... From the *nirmāṇakāya*’s *sūtras* above to the treatises and commentaries below, all contain but none explicitly discuss a buddha’s own-realization. They prescribe teachings according to the illnesses of others. Those teachings are precious and profound; nevertheless, they are provisional and not final. It is not the case that those *ārya* teachers of the Dharma did not know [the inner realization of a buddha] when they taught exoteric Buddhism. They knew it, but chose to teach the provisional until the conditions were right. There was a good reason for what they did.

is like Maitreya,] the great *mahāsattva* and next Buddha, who [said he] did not know “even a single person,”<sup>45</sup> or [like the Buddha] when he did not address Mahākāśyapa Bodhisattva’s question.<sup>46</sup>

如法界宮中祕主扣寂之日。自在殿內密王開庫之朝。發心殿而示珍財。除重關以受自樂。

When a day<sup>47</sup> comes like that when the Lord of the Secret Ones<sup>48</sup> interrupts the stillness (*samādhi*)<sup>49</sup> [of Mahāvairocana] within the Dharmadhātu Palace,<sup>50</sup> or a morning<sup>51</sup> [comes like]

Kūkai discusses the idea of “secret” regarding esoteric Buddhism in *Ben kenmitsu nikyō ron* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 391, TKZ 3.109):

衆生以無明妄想覆蔽本性眞覺故曰衆生自祕。應化說法逗機施藥言不虛故。所以他受用身祕內證而不說其境也。則等覺希夷十地離絕。是名如來祕密。

Ordinary beings cover over and conceal the true awakening of their fundamental nature through ignorance and delusions. This is called “self-concealed by beings.” The teachings of the *nirmānakāya* are adapted to what is needed, like giving the most appropriate and effective medicine. The *parasambhogakāya* manifested for the liberation of others conceals his inner realization, and does not directly teach it. It is unseen and unheard of by the bodhisattvas at the stage of awakening equal with the buddhas, and completely beyond the bodhisattvas on the ten stages. This is called “concealed by the *tathāgatas*.”

<sup>44</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.375b) says this passage is based on the *Laikāvātāra-sūtra*, where Mahāmāti asks 108 questions of the Buddha, who responds that “the wisdom of inner-realization in my vehicle is not the realm of conceptualization and discrimination,” (Bodhiruci tr., Ƨ 671:16.569a20, 我乘內證智 妄覺非境界). Although the Buddha in the *Laikāvātāra* answers Mahāmāti’s questions, he nonetheless does not teach his inner own-realization. Bodhiruci’s text has this passage (Ƨ 671:16.524a, also Ƨ 670:16.485a):

如是種種說 隨事實不實 爲此人故說 於彼爲非說 彼彼諸病人 良醫隨處藥  
如來爲衆生 唯心應器說 妄想非境界 聲聞亦非分 諸如來世尊 自覺境界說

Thus I have given many explanations, but those are adjusted truths and not the [final] truth, Because for a certain person I teach a certain way, and for another I do not teach [the same way]. All [beings] are sick, [and need] good medicine appropriate [to their condition]. For the sake of those beings, the Tathāgata teaches only according to their mental capacities. Neither the realm of false conceptualization, nor the realm of the *śrāvakas*: The teaching of the Tathāgatas, the World-honored ones, is the realm of own-realization.

<sup>45</sup> Maitreya says he does not know the many transformation bodhisattvas the Buddha causes to spring from the earth in Chapter Fifteen of the *Lotus Sūtra*: “I have traveled around in many lands, but have never seen such a thing as this. In all of this multitude there is not one that I know,” (REEVES: 284; see Ƨ 262:9.40c26–27: 我常遊諸國 未曾見是衆 我於此衆中 乃不識一人).

<sup>46</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.375b) says that this refers to the *Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra*, where a bodhisattva named Mahākāśyapa asks the Buddha, “How do we gain a long life, the vajra-indestructible body? Again, by what causes and conditions do we attain a great and solid power?” (Ƨ 374:12.379c, Ƨ 375:12.619b; 云何得長壽 金剛不壞身 復以何因緣 得大堅固力). Yūkai says this question is asking about how to attain “the eternal and indestructible inner-realization of the *dharma-kāya*” (法身常恆不壞內證). The Tathāgata in that text did not answer this question from the esoteric viewpoint (不作祕密答說). For this reason Kūkai says here that the Buddha did not attend to the question. Ryōken (NDZ 14.346b) suggests that 逗留 means 句.

<sup>47</sup> A “day” of the Tathāgata means eternal time. The *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* says that “through the empowerment of a day of the Tathāgata that transcends the three times (past, present, and future), [Mahāvairocana] preaches the Dharma called the Dharma-gate of the identity of body, speech, and mind,” (Ƨ 848:18.1a, 演說法越三時如來之日加持故身語意平等句法門). The *Darjīng shu* comments on this (Ƨ 1796:39.583a):

此經流布閻浮提。略有十萬偈。若十佛剎微塵大衆。各各廣演身口意差別法門。則無限量。此說法時分。復當云何。故結集者云。爾時住於佛日而演說法者也。如世間時分。則有過去未來現在。長短劫量種種不同。且約日行四天下。一周晝夜各有初中後分。乃至三十時等。剎那不住代謝相推。以淨眼觀之。三際之相了不可得。無終無始亦無去來。即此實相之日。圓明常住湛若虛空。無有時分修短之異。然以佛神力故。令瑜伽行者於無量劫。謂如食頃。或演食頃以爲無量劫。延促自在咸適衆機。無定相可得。故云如來日也。

The *[Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi]-sūtra* circulating in Jambudvīpa is an abbreviated version in 100,000 verses. If [the members of] a great assembly as numerous as the grains of dust in ten buddha-fields were to each expound this Dharma-gate in the full details of body, speech, and mind, that [preaching] would be infinite in amount. And how then for the time needed to so preach? Therefore, those gathered there abide in a day of the Buddha to preach. Time in the world has a past, a future, and a present. There are long and short *kalpas* of varying and different lengths. The time the sun takes to

when the Esoteric King<sup>52</sup> opens the treasury<sup>53</sup> in the Palace of Maheśvara,<sup>54</sup> then the Mind-Palace will open to display its rare treasures, removing the layered barriers to the personal experience of bliss.<sup>55</sup>

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transit the four heavens is one day and night, with a beginning, middle, and end, and over [a normal day's length of] thirty hours (c.f. *Dazhidu lun* for this measurement, 1509:25.409b26), time always goes forward without abiding for even an instant. [However, when] seeing [time] with the pure sight, no concept of the three times (past, future, and present) is graspable. [Time] is endless, beginningless, and without coming or going. Thus this day of suchness is perfect, eternal, clear like empty space, and without differences in lengths of time. The Buddha, through his superpowers, causes the yogin to perceive infinite *kalpas* as a brief time, or having preached for a short time [makes that seem like] infinite *kalpas*. [Time] is expanded at will, entirely to conform with the many inclinations [of beings]. There is no fixed aspect, therefore it is called the "day of the Tathāgata."

<sup>48</sup> The Lord of the Secret Ones (*guhyakādhipati*) is Vajrapāṇi (1509:18.1a, 金剛手祕密主), the interlocutor of the *Mahāvairocanaṅbhīṣambodhi-sūtra*. The Secret Ones (*guhyakas*) are the *vajradharas* introduced in the *Sūtra*.

<sup>49</sup> Ryōken (NDZ 14.347b).

<sup>50</sup> In the *Mahāvairocanaṅbhīṣambodhi-sūtra*, Vajrapāṇi receives the teachings of esoteric Buddhism from Mahāvairocana in the Vajra Dharmadhātu Palace (金剛法界宮). Kūkai writes in *Shōrai mokuroku* referring to this (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 208, TKZ .118), "Long ago, Vajrasattva received these teachings directly from the *tathāgata* Vairocana," (昔金剛薩埵親受遍照如來, with Vajrasattva being the same as Vajrapāṇi). The opening line of the *Mahāvairocanaṅbhīṣambodhi-sūtra* is, "Thus have I heard. Once the Lord was dwelling in the great and vast Vajra Dharmadhātu Palace empowered by the *tathāgatas*," (1509:18.1a, 如是我聞。一時薄伽梵。住如來加持廣大金剛法界宮). The *Darjīng shu* (1796:39.580a, 580a–b, c) comments:

大謂無邊際故。廣謂不可數量故。金剛喻實相智。過一切語言心行道。適無所依。不示諸法。無初中後。不盡不壞。離諸過罪。不可變易。不可破毀。故名金剛。...法界者。廣大金剛智體也。此智體者。所謂如來實相智身。以加持故。即是真實功德所莊嚴處。妙住之境心王所都。故曰宮也。此宮是古佛成菩提處。所謂摩訶首羅天宮。...今此宗明義。以自在加持神心所宅故。名曰自在天王宮也。謂隨如來有應之處。無非此宮。不獨在三界之表也。一切持金剛者皆悉集會。...金剛法界宮。即是如來身。

"Great" means limitless. "Vast" means of incalculable size. "Vajra" is an analogy for the wisdom of reality, which transcends all language and mental activity, and is indeed without any reliance. It manifests no dharmas, and has no beginning, middle, or end. It is inexhaustible and indestructible, and free from all afflictions. It is incorruptible and immutable: that is why the word vajra is used. ... *Dharmadhātu* is the wisdom-essence of the vast and great vajra. This wisdom-essence may be called the wisdom-body of suchness of the *tathāgatas*. The place adorned through *adhiṣṭhāna* with these virtues of reality is where [Vairocana] marvelously dwells, and is the capital of the Mind-King. Thus it is called a palace. This palace is where the ancient buddhas attained *bodhi*. It is called the Palace of Maheśvara. ... To give now the teaching of this school, because this is where the mind that is sovereign in *adhiṣṭhāna* dwells, it is called the Great Sovereign Deva-Rāja Palace. There is no place where the Tathāgata responds [to beings] that is not this palace. It is not isolated outside the triple world. All the *vajradharas* gather in assembly there. ... The Vajra Dharmadhātu Palace is itself the body of the Tathāgata.

<sup>51</sup> Ryōken says that "morning" means the same as "day" in the previous line, but, added to the idea of opening the treasury, it includes the nuance of doing so for the first time (朝者與日義同。但對開庫表為初義故云朝也).

<sup>52</sup> Ryōken (NDZ 14.347b) says that this is Mahāvairocana, who is called the Esoteric King because he is the preacher of esoteric Buddhism and the Mind-King Tathāgata (密王者大日也。密教教主心王如來故云密王). The *Darjīng shu* has "the Mind-King is the spontaneous enlightenment perfected by Vairocana" (1796:39.580b, 心王毗盧遮那成自然覺, c.f. TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 378). See also note 31.

<sup>53</sup> Ryōken (NDZ 14.347b) says that opening the treasury means opening the inexhaustible treasury of one's own mind, where the treasure of *bodhicitta* (inherent awakening) is stored (菩提心之寶處開自心之無盡藏). It may also be thought of in this context as the time when Mahāvairocana offered the teachings to Vajrapāṇi in the Dharmadhātu Palace. The *Darjīng shu* says, "it is like the great treasury of a king which, when opened to a person, reveals to him everything arrayed within without restriction. Therefore it is called the treasury of adornments," (1796:39.583c, 又如國王有大庫藏。若須示人。則自在開發而陳布之。故曰莊嚴藏也). "Opening the treasury" is similar to the teaching of knowing the mind as it really is (see note 37).

<sup>54</sup> See note 50.

<sup>55</sup> Ryōken (NDZ 14.347b–348a) says that to open the Mind-Palace is to open the secret treasury of *bodhicitta* to display the treasures of virtue. The "layered barriers" are the three grades of false discriminations (三妄執, Skt. *vikalpa*, see DREITLEIN 2011 footnote 87, these are gross, subtle, and very subtle). Because they are three they are called layered, and because they obstruct the path to *bodhi* they are called barriers. The "personal experience of bliss" means to oneself

三等之理彼此無異。五智之覺人我同得。不起于座金剛即是我心。不經三劫法身即是我身。

In the truth of the identity of the three [mysteries],<sup>56</sup> there is no difference between this and that. We attain awakening identical with the fivefold wisdom.<sup>57</sup> Without arising from your seat,<sup>58</sup> the vajra is itself your mind.<sup>59</sup> Without passing through three *kalpas*, the *dharmakāya* is identical with your body.<sup>60</sup>

三部諸尊宛然而具。三妄衆障忽爾不現。無量福智不求自備。無邊通力不營本得。

The deities of the three families<sup>61</sup> are perfectly possessed [by beings]. The many hindrances [caused by] the three kinds of false discrimination<sup>62</sup> disappear in an instant. Immeasurable merits and wisdom are spontaneously possessed without seeking them. Limitless superpowers are inherently realized without working at them.

跛驢不得比滅沒之迹。疲車誰能角神通之行。經之大意教之大綱蓋如此乎。

The lame mule [of exoteric Buddhism hobbling along] is no comparison with the [esoteric vehicle, which has already raced ahead and] vanished without a trace. Could a broken-down cart ever compare with the progress [made by the vehicle] of the superpowers?<sup>63</sup> Might this perhaps be the gist of the *Sūtra* and the main point of its teaching?<sup>64</sup>

enjoy the bliss of Dharma (自受法樂). This passage (slightly abbreviated) and the following lines appear at the beginning of another *Dainichikyō kaidai* (關以受自樂, TKZ 4.58).

<sup>56</sup> The three are the three mysteries of body, speech, and mind as mentioned above in note 47. The *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.583a) text quoted in that footnote continues in this way:

如此時中佛說何法。即是身語意三平等法門。言如來種種三業。皆至第一實際妙極之境。身等於語。語等於心。猶如大海遍一切處同一鹹味。故云平等也。

Within such time (the eternal day of the Tathāgata) what does the Buddha preach? [He preaches] the Dharma-gate of the threefold identity of body, speech, and mind. That is to say, the various forms of the three activities of the Tathāgata all attain the highest reality, the marvelous and ultimate realm. Body is identical with speech, and speech is identical with mind. It is just like the great sea, which has the same salty taste everywhere. Therefore, they are said to be identical.

<sup>57</sup> For an explanation of the fivefold wisdom see TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 361–362.

<sup>58</sup> This suggests immediacy, as in the *Putixin lun*, “By cultivating according to the [esoteric] teachings, without arising from your seat you will immediately attain *samādhi*,” (T 1665:32.574c, 如教修行不起于座三摩地現前).

<sup>59</sup> Ryōken (NDZ 14.348a) says that because the vajra of the fivefold wisdom is the essence of *bodhicitta*, the above expression is used (五智金剛即菩提心體故云爾也).

<sup>60</sup> Ryōken (NDZ 14.348a) comments that esoteric Buddhism teaches that the ten exoteric *bhūmis* are established as the three grades of false discrimination. The first *bhūmi* in esoteric Buddhism is identical with the ultimate state (see TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 29–31), and when it is attained one’s own body is itself the Dharmakāya Mahāvairocana. Three great *asamkhyeya-kalpas* are transcended in a single thought of the letter *a*. In the exoteric teachings, a *kalpa* is taken as a length of time. Esoteric Buddhism teaches the immediacy of buddhahood without needing to go through the three *kalpas* of time as taught in exoteric Buddhism. (自宗十地三劫上建立之。達初地即極之時悟自身即大日法身故云爾。越三大僧祇於一念阿字者此義也。劫餘教翻自分。故如餘教不經三祇長時而速疾成佛也。) Although exoteric Buddhism teaches three *asamkhyeya-kalpas* as the length of time needed for attaining buddhahood, esoteric Buddhism understands the three *kalpas* as three grades of false discrimination (*vikalpas*), and thus the attainment of buddhahood has no requirement of *time* but rather of *quality* alone, as it were, and so may be instantaneous. See also note 55.

<sup>61</sup> The *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* teaches the Buddha, Lotus, and Vajra families. The five families, with the addition of the Jewel and Action families, typically appear in Vajraśekhara texts.

<sup>62</sup> The gross, subtle, and very subtle false discriminations (麤妄執, 細妄執, 極細妄執) discussed in the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, see notes 55 and 60.

<sup>63</sup> Kūkai often refers to esoteric Buddhism with phrases like the “vehicle of the superpowers” in his writings, usually in the sense of the great swiftness and power of esoteric Buddhism. In *Kan’en no sho* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 314–315, TKZ 8.175) Kūkai says, “I received from [Huiguō] these secret and highest teachings of Vajrayāna [immediately] leading to the superpowers (buddhahood)” (受學此祕密神通最上金剛乘教).

[III. Title of the *Sūtra*][III.1. The three versions of the *Sūtra*]

經題 此經惣有三本。一法爾常恆本。諸佛法曼荼羅是也。二分流廣本。龍猛所誦傳十萬頌經是也。三略本。有三千餘頌。雖頌文三千經卷七軸。然猶以略攝廣以少持多。一字中含無邊義。一點內吞塵數理。何況百字字輪具說此經。三千餘偈何理不顯。廣略雖殊理致是一。

The title of the *Sūtra*. This *sūtra* has in total three versions. One is the eternal text of suchness. It is the *dharma-maṇḍala*<sup>65</sup> of the buddhas. The second is the large text that circulated in the world. It is the *sūtra* in 100,000 verses transmitted by Nāgārjuna. The third is an abridged text in 3,000-odd verses.<sup>66</sup> Although it is in 3,000 verses [in Sanskrit] and seven fascicles [in the Chinese translation],<sup>67</sup> in its abridged form it fully encompasses the large text: the smaller fully holds the larger.<sup>68</sup> One letter contains limitless meanings, and one dot holds infinite truths.<sup>69</sup> Would not the

Kūkai also often compares the slowness of exoteric Buddhism to a lame mule, as in *Shōrai mokuroku* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 210, TKZ 1.18–19):

又夫顯教則談三大之遠劫密藏則期十六之大生。遲速勝劣猶如神通跛驢。

Exoteric Buddhism speaks of three great incalculable *kalpas* [required to attain buddhahood], but the secret treasury needs only the generation [of the *samādhis*] of the sixteen great [bodhisattvas in this lifetime]. The differences in slow or rapid [attainment of enlightenment], or in inferiority or superiority [of the exoteric and esoteric], are the same as the difference between the superpowers [of the Buddha] and a lame mule.

<sup>64</sup> Another *Dainichikyō kaidai* (衆生狂迷, TKZ 4.19) has:

若得內心國界安樂則得外器城郭皆泰然。淨心王國界安心數眷屬。此經大意蓋如是歟。

By attaining the world of peace in your inner mind, everything in the citadel of the outer container world will be calm. Purify the world of the Mind-King, and you calm its retinue of the mental events. Might the gist of this *Sūtra* perhaps be such as this?

<sup>65</sup> In *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 54, TKZ 3.24–25) Kūkai writes (see also DREITLEIN 2011, Introduction):

法曼荼羅本尊種子真言。若其種子字各書本位是。又法身三摩地及一切契經文義等皆是。亦名法智印。

A *dharma-maṇḍala* is the *bija*-mantra of a deity. Writing those *bija*-letters each in their proper position is a *dharma-maṇḍala*. It is also the *samādhi* of the Dharmakāya, and all the words, meanings, and so on of all the *sūtras*. It is also known as the *dharma-jñānamudrā*.

<sup>66</sup> The third text mentioned is the only extant text, and the text known to Kūkai. The *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.579c, also TKZ 4.27) has, “The large text of the *Vairocana* has 100,000 verses. It is vast and difficult to hold. The *āryas* who transmitted the text extracted the most important teachings from it in 3,000-odd verses,” (毗盧遮那大本。有十萬偈。以浩廣難持故。傳法聖者。採其宗要凡三千餘頌)。

<sup>67</sup> The main text of the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* (comparable to the Tibetan translation) is contained in the first six fascicles of the Chinese translation, with the seventh fascicle being an appended but related *sādhana*. Since the *Sūtra* itself is contained in the first six fascicles in Chinese translation, Yūkai (NDZ 14.378b) wonders if the “3,000 odd verses” in the Sanskrit text might not mean only those six, but decides that since Kūkai does clearly say “seven fascicles” that further debate is not necessary.

<sup>68</sup> In *Unji gi* Kūkai states, “the one can be the many, and the small may contain the large” (一而能多小而含大, TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 172, TKZ 3.66). He goes on to explain how the single letter *hūṃ* can contain all the teachings of Buddhism (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 184–185, TKZ 3.70):

次明以此一字通攝諸經論等。所明理者且大日經及金剛頂經所明皆不過此菩提提爲因大悲爲根方便爲究竟之三句。若攝廣就略攝未歸本則一切教義不過此三句。束此三句以爲一吽字。廣而不亂略而不漏。此則如來不思議力法然加持之所爲也。雖千經萬論亦不出此三句一字。其一字中所開因行果等准前思之。非只吽字攝如是義所餘一字門亦復如是。

Next, I will discuss how this one letter [*hūṃ*] encompasses the truths taught in all the Buddhist *sūtras* and treatises. All the teachings of the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* and Vajraśekhara texts are exhausted by the three phrases, “*bodhi*[*citta*] is the cause, universal compassion is the root, and [the practice of] skillful means is the ultimate goal.” If the expansive is rendered into the concise, or we return from the branches to the root, then all teachings are exhausted by these three phrases. These three phrases can be further compacted into the letter *hūṃ*. Expanding them, there is no disarray. Condensing them, nothing is left out. This is because of the Tathāgata’s inconceivable power, the *adhiṣṭhāna* of suchness. Although there may be a thousand Buddhist *sūtras* and ten thousand treatises,

letter-wheels with one hundred letters<sup>70</sup> provide the detailed teachings of this *sūtra* all the more? What truths might those 3,000-odd verses be unable to reveal? Although [the texts] are different [in length, being] full or abbreviated, the excellent teachings is but one.

### [III.2. The three sections of the *Sūtra*]

諸家釋經者皆三分判經。今此經且約三部而釋。初如是等序分者當身密。即爲佛部。示身無盡藏故。次爾時世尊至囑累終是語密。即爲蓮華部。現語無盡藏故。信受等文是意密。即爲金剛部。示意無盡藏故。序正雖殊祕妙是一。身語不同平等不異。

The various [exoteric] commentators all analyze a *sūtra* by dividing it into three parts.<sup>71</sup> From the point of view of this *Sūtra*, [I will] now comment on it according to the three families. The beginning from “thus [have I heard]” is the Introduction, and corresponds to the mystery of body.

all are fully contained in these three phrases and one letter [*hūm*]. The cause, training, fruit, and so on of the path can be expanded from that one letter as discussed above. These meanings are not exclusive to the letter *hūm* alone. Each of the other letter-gates are exactly the same.

<sup>69</sup> Kūkai often mentions the idea that all truths or teachings can be contained within a single letter. In *Bonji shittan jimo narabi ni shakugi* Kūkai writes, (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 280–281, 286–287, TKZ 5.102, 104–105)

一字中總攝無量教文於一法中任持一切法於一義中攝持一切義於一聲中攝藏無量功德。...如是無量智悉含一字中一切衆生皆悉具足如是無量佛智。

Within a single letter infinite teachings are encompassed, within a single dharma all dharmas are held, within a single meaning all meanings are contained, and within a single sound all virtues are stored. ... This infinite-fold wisdom is completely encompassed in a single letter, and all beings completely possess that infinite-fold buddha wisdom.

Kūkai understands the infinite layers of meaning to be found in a single letter as the true esoteric significance of *sūtras*, whether they are in the narrow sense classified as exoteric or esoteric *sūtras*. In his *Bonmōkyō kaidai* (TKZ 4.222) he writes:

准大日經一切經必具二種義。謂淺略深祕。淺略則以多名句顯其一義。深祕一文字具無量義。

According to the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, all *sūtras* invariably have two levels of meaning: the superficial and the profound. The superficial sense is to use many words and phrases to express a single idea. The profound is that each individual letter possesses limitless meanings.

Of the letters in the mantra of the *Heart Sutra* Kūkai writes (*Hannya-shingyō hiken*, DREITLEIN 2011: §II.6, TKZ 3.11):

眞言不思議 觀誦無明除 一字含千理 卽身證法如

The mantra [of the *Heart Sūtra*] is inconceivable.

Meditate on it and recite it, and ignorance is removed.

Each of its letters contains a thousand truths.

Immediately and in this body realize Dharma and suchness.

Kūkai also poetically gives his vision of the totality of the mutually-interpenetrating universe as a great “*sūtra*” in which all dharmas are contained even in a single dot. Kūkai writes in *Shōryō shū* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 13, TKZ 8.10):

山毫點溟墨 乾坤經籍箱 萬象含一點 六塵閱縑緗

Inscribed with the brush of Mt. Sumeru and the ink of the seas,

Heaven-and-earth itself is the *sūtra* book.

All phenomena are encompassed in even a single dot therein,

And the six sense objects are all included within its covers.

<sup>70</sup> This esoteric meditation is discussed in a series of five brief chapters in the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* (fascicle six of the Chinese translation): “On the Arising of the Hundred Letters” (Chapter 19, 說百字生品), “Uniting with the Fruit of the Hundred Letters” (Chapter 20, 百字果相應品), “Accomplishing the Positioning of the Hundred Letters” (Chapter 21, 百字位成品), “Recitation for Accomplishing the Hundred Letters” (Chapter 22, 百字成就持誦品), and “The Hundred-Letter Mantra Method” (Chapter 23, 百字眞言法品). The hundred letters are positioned in concentric circles of *mātrkā* with the letter *am* in the center (“the king of a hundred lights shining everywhere” 百光遍照王).

<sup>71</sup> Discussions of Buddhist *sūtras* typically divide the content into an introduction (序分), the main teaching or the body of the text (正宗分), and a conclusion (流通分). Kūkai gives that division an esoteric significance by adding to it the three mysteries and three families.

This is the Buddha Family, because it reveals the inexhaustible treasury of body. Next, from “at that time the Lord”<sup>72</sup> to the end of the [final] Transmission [Chapter]<sup>73</sup> is the mystery of speech. This is the Lotus Family, because it reveals the inexhaustible treasury of speech. The text including “accepted it with conviction”<sup>74</sup> is the mystery of mind. This is the Vajra Family, because it demonstrates the inexhaustible treasury of mind. Although the introduction and the main body [of the *Sūtra*] are distinguished, their secret excellence is but one. Body and speech are not the same, yet are identical and not different.

### [III.3. General explanation of the title of the *Sūtra*]

大毗盧遮那成佛神變加持經因陀羅王者。此則梵漢和雜翻也。大成神變加持經王者唐言也。餘是梵言。若悉翻漢語者。曰大日除暗遍明成正覺者神變加持經帝釋王。若據具梵本名  $\text{महेश्वरविक्रमसुवर्णसूत्र}$ 。

[The Chinese translation of the *Sūtra* title,] *Da Piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing Yintuoluo wang*<sup>75</sup> is a mixed rendering containing both Sanskrit and Chinese words. “Great” (*da*, 大), “attain” (*cheng*, 成), “miraculous transformation” (*shenbian*, 神變), “empowerment” (*jiachi*, 加持), “classic” (*jing*, 經), and “king” (*wang*, 王) are Chinese words, and the remaining words are Sanskrit.<sup>76</sup> If the title were to be [fully] translated into Chinese [without using any Sanskrit], it would be “the miraculously transformative (*vikurvita*) empowerment (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the great sun that dispels darkness and brings light everywhere (Mahāvairocana),<sup>77</sup> who attains perfect awakening (*abhisambodhi*), a classic [supreme like Indra, who is] the Lord of the Gods (*sūtreन्द्रa-rāja*).”<sup>78</sup> To express the title fully in Sanskrit, it is be *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-vikurvītādhiṣṭhāna-sūtreन्द्रa-rāja*.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Referring to “at that time Vajrapāṇi, Lord of the Secret Ones” (爾時執金剛祕密主) at the beginning of the *Sūtra*, where that phrase begins the body of the *Sūtra* with the questions of Vajrapāṇi.

<sup>73</sup> The concluding Transmission Chapter (囑累品, T 848:18.44c) of the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, Chapter 31 at the end of the sixth fascicle, is meant.

<sup>74</sup> The very last sentence of the Transmission Chapter (T 848:18.44c) of the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*:

時佛說此經已。一切持金剛者。及普賢等上首諸菩薩。聞佛所說。皆大歡喜。信受奉行。

When the Buddha had finished preaching this *sūtra*, all the *vajradharas* and the bodhisattvas led by Samantabhadra and others, having heard what the Buddha had preached, were all greatly delighted, and received it with conviction and practiced it.

<sup>75</sup> “The Miraculously Transformative *Adhiṣṭhāna* of Mahāvairocana’s Attainment of Buddhahood, a *Sūtra* [as supreme as] King Indra.”

<sup>76</sup> In the Chinese title *Piluzhena* (Vairocana), *fo* (buddha), and *Yintuoluo* (Indra) are transliterations of Indian words using Chinese characters, with the remaining words being translations into Chinese as noted above.

<sup>77</sup> In another *Dainichikyō kaidai* (衆生狂迷, TKZ 4.19), Kūkai says, “The Sanskrit Mahāvairocana is translated [into Chinese] as ‘dispelling darkness and bringing light everywhere’” (大毗盧遮那者應梵音云  $\text{महेश्वरविक्रमसुवर्ण}$  此翻云除暗遍明). This appears in the opening of the *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.579a), see note 87.

<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, at the risk of being pedantic, 釋 seems to be a partial transliteration of Śakra, so this title is still not a translation using only Chinese words.

<sup>79</sup> The Siddham script in Kūkai’s text in TKZ reading \**Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-vikrmitādhiṣṭhi-sutrām-indra-rāja* seems to be corrupted with copying errors, and has been adjusted here to conform with the Sanskrit title known from the Tibetan translation.



[III.3.1. Explanation of *mahā* or “great”]

且就初名釋。初釋名者。豎橫無邊際故大。數量過刹塵故大。最勝最上故大。故文云大樓閣寶王高無中邊。又云十佛刹微塵數等。曼荼羅者無比味無過上等。樓閣寶王者即如來三昧耶身。三昧耶身遍十方虛空界無所不至。住其中大曼荼羅身亦復如是。法羯二身可知亦爾。

I will now explain the first word [of the title] (*mahā*<sup>80</sup>). To first explain this word, when there is no limit vertically or horizontally, that is [called] “great.” When number or quantity exceeds that of the particles of dust in the world, that is [also called] “great.” When a thing is superior or supreme, that is [also called] “great.” Therefore, the text says “the great palace [of Mahāvairocana], [like] a royal jewel, was lofty and without a center or edges.”<sup>81</sup> Again, it says [the number of *vajradharas* was] “equal to the number of particles of dust in ten buddha-fields.”<sup>82</sup> Maṇḍala is explained as being “of incomparable taste, and of unsurpassable quality.”<sup>83</sup> The “palace, [like] a royal jewel” is identical with the *samaya*-[maṇḍala] body of the Tathāgata. This *samaya* body pervades the realm of empty space in the ten directions, and there is nowhere it does not reach. The *mahā*-maṇḍala body residing in the center [of the palace] is also the same. The *dharma*-[maṇḍala] and *karma*-[maṇḍala] bodies too should be known as the same.

又云毗盧遮那佛身口意業遍虛空等。如是等文表如來四種法身四種曼荼羅身三密業用遍滿一切處。故初舉大言讚塵數之德。大日四種身其數過塵數。此大名亦復如是。

Again, there are passages like “Vairocana Buddha, whose activities of body, speech, and mind pervade empty space.”<sup>84</sup> Such passages reveal that the fourfold Dharmakāya,<sup>85</sup> the bodies of the four maṇḍalas,<sup>86</sup> and the functions of the three mysteries pervade all places. Therefore, the word “great” is first mentioned in praise of [the Buddha’s] infinite virtues. The fourfold bodies of Mahāvairocana (the fourfold Dharmakāya) are more numerous than the particles of dust. The word “great” is also that.

[III.3.2. Explanation of *Vairocana*]

毗盧遮那者。或云日之別名除暗遍照為義。或云光明遍照或說高顯廣博。竝皆得其義。

Vairocana is “another name for the sun, and means to dispel darkness and illuminate all.”<sup>87</sup>

<sup>80</sup> In *Hannya-shingyō hiken* (DREITLEIN 2011: §II.1, TKZ 3.5) Kūkai writes, “the next two [Siddham] letters (*mahā*) have the meanings of large, many, or excellent. (次二字就大多勝立義). This is also found in other *Dainichikyō kaidai* (TKZ 4.20, 44, 58). This explanation is found in the *Dazhidu lun* (T 1509:25.79b). Kūkai addresses this three-part meaning in the following sentences.

<sup>81</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.1a. This is greatness in size.

<sup>82</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.1a. This is greatness in quantity.

<sup>83</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.5b. This is greatness as excellence. See note 30.

<sup>84</sup> This is from the first line of the opening verse of the *Jingangding-jing yujia xiuxi Piluzhena sanmodi fa* (T 876:18.327a26), a Vajraśekhara text. A similar passage from the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.1b is:

毗盧遮那一切身業一切語業一切意業一切處一切時於有情界宣說眞言道句法。

All of Vairocana’s actions of body, all his actions of speech, and all his actions of mind in all times and all places proclaim in worlds of sentient beings the words of the Dharma of the mantra-path.

<sup>85</sup> See note 133.

<sup>86</sup> For an explanation of the four maṇḍalas see TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 363–364.

<sup>87</sup> Paraphrasing the opening of the *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.579a; also quoted in another *Dainichikyō kaidai*, 今釋此經, TKZ 4.25; see also TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 121, footnote 40):

[Vairocana] is also called “the radiance that illuminates all,”<sup>88</sup> or “high and clear vastness.”<sup>89</sup> All these together are the meanings [of Vairocana].

此大名普被下諸字。

[Note that the meaning of] the word “great” extends to each of the subsequent words.

### [III.3.3. Explanation of “attainment”]

成者不壞故不斷故不生故不滅故常恆故堅固故清淨故無始故無終故。此則法爾所成非因緣所生故。

The “attainment [of buddhahood]” [once achieved] is never lost, is never eliminated, does not arise, does not cease, is eternal, firm, pure, beginningless, and endless. Therefore, it is naturally perfected in suchness, and does not arise due to causes and conditions.

文云願識心勝自然智生說。

The text has,<sup>90</sup>

I pray you to preach the arising of the cognizing mind, the mind,  
And supreme spontaneous wisdom.

又我覺本不生。出過語言道。諸過得解脫。遠離於因緣。知空等虛空。

Again,<sup>91</sup>

梵音毗盧遮那者。是日之別名。即除暗遍明之義也。然世間日則有方分。若照其外不能及內。明在一邊不至一處。又唯在晝光不燭夜。如來智慧日光則不如是。遍一切處作大照明矣。無有內外方所晝夜之別。復次日行闍浮提。一切卉木叢林。隨其性分各得增長。世間衆務因之得成。如來日光遍照法界。亦能平等開發無量衆生種種善根。乃至世間出世間殊勝事業。莫不由之而得成辦。又如重陰昏蔽日輪隱沒。亦非壞滅。猛風吹雲日光顯照。亦非始生。佛心之日亦復如是。雖爲無明煩惱戲論重雲之所覆障。而無所滅。究竟諸法實相三昧圓明無際。而無所增。以如是等種種因緣。世間之日不可爲喻。但取其小分相似故。加以大名。曰摩訶毗盧遮那也。

In Sanskrit, the word Vairocana is another name for the sun, and means to dispel darkness and bring light everywhere. However, the physical sun is limited in time and space. It illuminates exterior surfaces but cannot reach the interior. It shines in one place but not in another. It shines only in the day and not at night. The light of the sun of the Tathāgata's wisdom is different. It extends to all places and gives great illumination, making no distinctions of interior or exterior, direction or place, or day or night. Also, as the [physical] sun travels over Jambudvīpa, all the plants, trees, thickets, and groves are nourished, each according to its particular needs. All worldly needs are fulfilled through the sun. However, the light of the sun of the Tathāgata extends throughout the *dharmadhātu*. It has the ability to universally and without discrimination develop all the good roots of infinite beings, and perfect all superior activities both worldly and transcendent. Thick clouds may cover and block the [physical] sun, but the sun has not been destroyed. Strong winds may scatter the clouds and the sunlight shines forth again brightly, but the sun has not been made anew. The sun of the buddha-mind is the same. Even though it may be covered and blocked by deep clouds of ignorance, delusions, and useless conceptual proliferation, it is not diminished. When the *samādhi* of the true characteristics of dharmas is perfected, [the sun of the buddha-mind] becomes perfect, round, brilliant, and limitless. Yet nothing has increased. For such reasons as these, the ordinary sun is not an adequate enough metaphor [for Mahāvairocana]. Since the sun bears only some degree of resemblance [to Mahāvairocana], the word “great” is added to it to make the name of Mahāvairocana.

<sup>88</sup> *Da Piluzhena fo shuo yaolie niansong jing* (T 849:18.58a), a ritual manual closely related to the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*.

<sup>89</sup> Perhaps referring to the *Jingangding-jing da yujia mimi xindi famen yijue* (T 1798:39.815a16), the oldest commentary on the Vajraśekhara, which has “the Sanskrit [word] Vairocana is translated [into Chinese] as the highest, clear, and vast eye-treasury Tathāgata.” (梵云毗盧遮那此翻最高顯廣眼藏如來).

<sup>90</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.2a.

<sup>91</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.9b. Also quoted by Kūkai in *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 38–39, TKZ 3.19).

I awaken to fundamental nonarising,  
 Transcend the limitations of ordinary speech,  
 Am liberated from all faults,  
 Am free from causes and conditions,  
 And know emptiness identical with empty space.

又云當知真言果。悉離於因業。

Again it has,<sup>92</sup>

Know that the fruits of mantra  
 Are all beyond cause and effect.

又云普賢法身遍一切。能爲世間自在主。無始無終無生滅。性相常住等虛空。

Again, [another text] has,<sup>93</sup>

The Dharmakāya Samantabhadra pervades all,  
 And is the sovereign lord of the world.  
 Beginningless, endless, without arising or ceasing,  
 In nature and characteristics eternally abiding, and identical with empty  
 space.

又云其性常堅固。知彼菩提生。不染污常住。諸法不能動。

Again it has,<sup>94</sup>

In nature eternally firm,  
 Know that *bodhi* has arisen.<sup>95</sup>  
 Unstained, it abides eternally.  
 Dharmas cannot affect it.<sup>96</sup>

圓滿如是無量無邊之德義故曰成。此成承上大字故。卽是大成就之成也。非小成之成。

“Attainment” is used because one perfects immeasurable and limitless merits and benefits. Therefore, the word “great” appears before the word “attain.” This is thus the attainment of the great accomplishment (full buddhahood). It is not the attainment of some minor accomplishment.

#### [III.3.4. Explanation of “buddhahood”]

佛者梵語之略也。具云沒馱翻云覺者。言覺者不眠名覺開敷爲義。又常明故照了故如實知見故。賢聖一切凡夫各有分覺。然未究竟。如來兩覺圓滿洞達故曰大覺。此覺亦非因緣所生法然所得。故文云法佛自然智已離一切暗。

<sup>92</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.19b. Also quoted by Kūkai in *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 70–71, TKZ 3.29).

<sup>93</sup> *Jingangding yujia zhong lüechu niansong jing*, T 866:18.250b, a Vajraśekhara text.

<sup>94</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.2a.

<sup>95</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* adds the line here “immeasurable like empty space” (無量如虛空).

<sup>96</sup> The *Sūtra* follows this with “it is originally still and markless” (本來寂無相).

The word “bu[ddha]” (*fo*) is an abbreviation. In full it is “buddha,”<sup>97</sup> which is translated as “awakened one.” To be awake is not to be asleep, and this word means a full opening. It is also eternal radiance, perfect illumination, and knowing and seeing things as they really are. Therefore, virtuous and noble beings, and all ordinary people, each have some partial degree of awakening, which remains, however, still incomplete. Because the Tathāgata perfectly penetrates the two aspects of awakening,<sup>98</sup> [what he attains] is called great awakening.<sup>99</sup> Again, that awakening does not arise due to causes and conditions: it is naturally attained in suchness. Therefore, the text says that the spontaneous wisdom of the Dharmakāya “is already free from all darkness.”<sup>100</sup>

又云此真言相非一切諸佛所作。不令他作亦不隨喜。何以故以是諸法法如是故。若諸如來出現若諸如來不出。諸法法爾如是住。謂諸真言法法爾故。

Again it has,<sup>101</sup>

The buddhas do not create the characteristics of mantras, nor do they cause others to create them. Furthermore, [supposing they were creatable by someone,] that would not please the buddhas. Why? Because all dharmas are in themselves suchness. Whether or not a buddha appears in the world, all dharmas abide in suchness. Therefore, all mantras are mantras of suchness.

解云。真言者蓮華覺智。相者佛部即如來身也。金剛部即心也。此文舉兩并一。祕意可知。

To explain this, mantras are the awakened wisdom of the Lotus Family. The “characteristics [of mantras]” correspond to the Buddha Family, which is the body of the Tathāgata. The Vajra Family is the mind. This passage brings up the [former] two, and the [latter] one is included therein.<sup>102</sup> The secret meaning can [thus] be known.

### [III.3.5. Explanation of *vikurvita* or “miraculous transformation”]

神變者不測曰神異常名變。即是心之業用。始終難知。三種凡夫不能識知。十地聖者未知其邊。唯佛能知能作故曰大神變。

Regarding “miraculous transformation” (*vikurvita*), that which is unfathomable is called “miraculous,” and that which is exceptional is called a “transformation.” This is thus the activity

<sup>97</sup> The character 佛 (*fo*) is an abbreviation for the full term 佛陀 (*fo-tuo*), transliterating the word “buddha.” Kūkai gives here 沒駄 (*motuo*), a transliteration of the word buddha sometimes appearing in the opening phrase of refuge (歸命句) of mantras related to the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, “*namaḥ samanta-buddhānām*.”

<sup>98</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.357b) explains that the two aspects of awakening are the realization of inherent awakening (本覺) and awakening initiated and achieved through cultivation (始覺), see Introduction.

<sup>99</sup> In *Konshō-kyō himitsu kada* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 271, TKZ 4.251) Kūkai writes:

如如亦空空亦空 空空大空即大覺  
Suchness is suchness and itself empty; emptiness is also empty.  
Emptiness is empty, and ultimate emptiness is great awakening.

<sup>100</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.9b.

<sup>101</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.10a. Paraphrased in *Bonji shittan jimo narabi ni shakugi*, see TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 278–279.

<sup>102</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.385b) says that taken in those terms the passage mentions only the two, the Buddha and Lotus families, and that the one, the Vajra Family, is not mentioned but implied.

of mind.<sup>103</sup> From beginning to end, this is difficult to know. The three kinds of ordinary beings<sup>104</sup> are unable to perceive this, and the noble beings on the ten *bhūmis* (bodhisattvas) still do not know its extent.<sup>105</sup> Because only a buddha can know and practice this, it is called the great miraculous transformation.

[III.3.5.1. The four kinds of “miraculous transformation”]

此神變無量無邊。分爲四。一下轉神變。二上轉神變。三亦上亦下。四非上非下。

These miraculous transformations are immeasurable and limitless. They can be divided into four kinds: first, downward-turning miraculous transformations; second, upward-turning miraculous transformations; third, both upward and downward; and fourth, neither upward nor downward.

[III.3.5.1.1. Downward-turning miraculous transformations]

下轉者從本覺神心隨緣流轉作六道之神變。又聲聞緣覺等分作神通變化。竝是迷少之神變。法佛如來從大悲大定能作難思之事業。驚覺聾聵之耳目。如是等事下轉神變。

“Downward-turning” means that [one enters into] conditioned cyclical existence [for the sake of beings] to perform miraculous transformations in the six rebirth states through the mind of inherent awakening. The *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* also perform transformations through their superpowers to some partial degree, but both are still [subject to] confusion and [so those] are minor transformations. The Dharmakāya Tathāgata is able to engage in inconceivable activities through great compassion and great *samādhi*. He does this to abruptly awaken the deaf ears and slumbering eyes [of suffering beings]. These sorts of things are downward miraculous transformations.<sup>106</sup>

[III.3.5.1.2. Upward-turning miraculous transformations]

上轉神變者。若有衆生發菩提心修行自乘教理昇進。證本覺一心則能轉變迷識神心證得自乘覺智。一切難思妙業隨心能作。卽是上轉神變。

An “upward-turning” miraculous transformation is when a being raises *bodhicitta*, cultivates the teachings of his vehicle, and makes progress upward. By realizing the one-mind of inherent awakening, he then is able to transform his confused mind, and realize the awakening and

<sup>103</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.386a) notes that because “the transformations through the superpowers are performed in *samādhi*, they are mental transformations,” (神通變化定中心變作也)。

<sup>104</sup> *Prthagjanas* (ordinary beings or worldlings) are those before any of the noble states, who are subject to birth and death. In Mahāyāna these are sometimes explained as beings who have not yet reached the first of the ten bodhisattva *bhūmis*. The “three kinds” are those ordinary beings before any of the fifty-two bodhisattva stages (凡夫), those on the ten stages of faith (十信, these are also called “outer worldlings” 外凡), those on the three stages of virtue (三賢: the ten stages of abiding 十住, the ten stages of practice 十行, and ten stages of dedication 十廻向, these are also called “inner worldlings” 內凡). Yūkai (NDZ 14.386a) also suggests this phrase may mean those of the first three of Kūkai’s ten stages of mind.

<sup>105</sup> See note 24.

<sup>106</sup> “Downward” thus means skillful actions directed from the enlightened state toward beings suffering in *samsāra*. Compare the often-quoted phrase in Shingon Buddhism: “above, pursue *bodhi*; below liberate beings” (上求菩提下化衆生), appearing with many variations in a wide range of Buddhist texts. Yūkai (NDZ 14.387a) says that “because of his ancient vows of great compassion, by abiding in the *samādhi* of *adhiṣṭhāna*, [Vairocana] manifests the excellent signs of the three [mysteries that are] inexhaustibly arrayed to abruptly awaken the many slumbering beings,” (往昔大悲願故住加持三昧現三無盡莊嚴瑞相驚覺群眠也)。

wisdom of his vehicle. All inconceivably wonderful activities will be accomplished according to his thoughts. This is the upward miraculous transformation.<sup>107</sup>

[III.3.5.1.3. Both upward- and downward-turning miraculous transformations]

亦上亦下者。法界身雲恆沙性德。無形不形無像不像。以一切形像爲一切法性塔。是則臨上則下。臨下則上。竝皆具四種身起大神通故云亦上亦下神變。

“Both upward- and downward-[turning miraculous transformation]” means that bodies within the *dharmadhātu* are [as infinite as] the clouds, and virtues are [as infinite as] the sands of the Ganges.<sup>108</sup> There is no [phenomenal] shape that is not a shape [of suchness], and no [phenomenal] quality that is not a quality [of suchness].<sup>109</sup> All forms and qualities [together] make up the entirety of the *stūpa* of suchness.<sup>110</sup> This means that to face up is [to face] down, and to face down is [to face] up.<sup>111</sup> All [intrinsicly] possess the fourfold Dharmakāya, and achieve the great superpowers [through cultivation]. Therefore, this is called “both upward and downward.”

[III.3.5.1.4. Neither upward- nor downward-turning miraculous transformations]

非上非下神變者。非有爲非無爲一心本法及不二之中之不二本法。越諸戲論絕諸相待。難思之本變化之源。故云非上非下神變。

“Miraculous transformations that are neither upward nor downward” means that the root *dharmakāya* of one-mind and the nondual root *dharmakāya* within nonduality—which are neither conditioned nor unconditioned<sup>112</sup>—transcend useless conceptual proliferation, and eliminate relativism. That inconceivable root is the source of the transformations. Therefore, this is called the “neither upward nor downward miraculous transformations.”

[III.3.6. Explanation of *adhiṣṭhāna* or “empowerment”]

加持者。古云佛所護念又云加被。然未得委悉。加以往來涉入爲名。持以攝而不散漏立義。卽入我我入是也。

<sup>107</sup> “Upward” thus means the desire to escape *samsāra* by achieving the enlightened state. Yūkai (NDZ 14.387a) says that this paragraph describes “awakening initiated and achieved through cultivation, a turning upward” (始覺轉昇義).

<sup>108</sup> Ryōken (NDZ 14.360b) says that “*dharmadhātu* means each of the phenomena in the phenomenal *dharmadhātu*,” (法界事法界一一事法也).

<sup>109</sup> Ryōken (NDZ 14.360b) remarks “the first [word] form means the forms of phenomenal dharmas, and the second form is suchness. ‘No quality that is not a quality’ follows that pattern. Outside of suchness there is no phenomenal dharma. The essence of phenomenal dharmas is real and identical, thus it is named suchness” (無形不形等者上形事法下形眞如也。無像不像可準之。眞如外非有事法。事法當體眞實平等故名眞如也). Yūkai (NDZ 14.387b) says that the infinite bodies and virtues means “all phenomena” (萬法). He says, “there is no shape, whether square, round, or other, that is not the shape of suchness” (方圓等形相無非法性形相). He explains that 形 are shapes like round or square while 像 are qualities like “good or evil, or coarse and fine.”

<sup>110</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.387b) comments, “the *stūpa* of suchness is the *stūpa* of the suchness of the six great elements” (法性塔者六大法性塔義也).

<sup>111</sup> Ryōken (NDZ 14.360b) says, “the dharmas in the *dharmadhātu* are all suchness and identical, therefore absolutely none are superior or inferior. Yet ... their highness and lowness, or superiority and baseness are not lost. Because they are relative, a particular dharma can be either high or low (depending on the reference point)” (法界諸法悉眞如平等故全無優劣。然而又...不壞上下尊卑也。隨相望一法成上成下也).

<sup>112</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.387b) says that this expresses neither upward nor downward. The absolute *dharmakāya* is here discussed, which is beyond any dualistic expression like conditioned or unconditioned.

“Empowerment” (*adhiṣṭhāna*) was formerly called the “protection of the Buddha” or “adding and covering.”<sup>113</sup> But these terms were not yet precise [in expressing the meaning<sup>114</sup>]. [To explain the meaning using the two Chinese characters for *adhiṣṭhāna* in the title of the *Sūtra*, meaning “to add” and “to hold,”) “to add” is a word used for interpenetration from both directions. “To hold” means to [mutually] encompass without disarray or loss. This is indeed mutual interpenetration.<sup>115</sup>

阿等六字者法界之體性。四種法身十界依正皆是所造之相。六字則能造之體。能造阿等遍法界而相應。所造依正比帝網而無礙。雖此不往彼不來。然猶法爾瑜伽故無能所而能所。

A and the other six letters<sup>116</sup> [which are the *bījas* of the six great elements] are the essence of the *dharmadhātu*. The fourfold Dharmakāya, the tenfold world, and beings and their worlds are all produced by them. The six letters are the essence that produces.<sup>117</sup> The producers, the letter *a* and the others, pervade the *dharmadhātu* and interpenetrate. The beings and their worlds that are produced are [mutually] unobstructed,<sup>118</sup> like the net of Indra.<sup>119</sup> Although this does not abide and

<sup>113</sup> Such expressions appear in the *Avataṃsaka*, *Large Prajñāpāramitā*, *Lotus Sūtra*, *Mahāratnakūṭa*, various tantras, and so on. However, the *Mahāvairocanaṅghisaṃbodhi-sūtra* and *Darījīng shu* most often use the term 加持.

<sup>114</sup> Imprecise because those terms indicate only the Buddha’s action towards the practitioner, but not the practitioner’s reciprocal action towards the Buddha. In *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 66, TKZ 3.28) Kūkai famously writes,

加持者表如來大悲與衆生信心。佛日之影現衆生心水日加。行者心水能感佛日名持。行者若能觀念此理趣三密相應故。現身速疾顯現證得本有三身故名速疾顯。

The word *adhiṣṭhāna* [expressed in Chinese with two characters meaning “adding and holding”] demonstrates the universal compassion of [“added” by] the *tathāgatas* and the mind of faith [held by] beings. “To add” means that the radiance of the Buddha reflects in the minds of beings, as the sun reflects on water. “To hold” is when the practitioner perceives the radiance of the Buddha in his mind as though reflected on water. A practitioner who meditates using this path to truth will integrate the three mysteries [of the practitioner and of the Buddha], and will thereby immediately realize in his present body the inherent three bodies of the Buddha. Therefore, this is called “immediately manifested.”

<sup>115</sup> Literally “[you] enter me, and I enter [you]” (入我我入, Jpn. *nyūga-ga’nyū*), this term is used for a major meditation practice to achieve that state within the *shidai* (次第) used in the Shingon tradition. This term does not appear in any of the ritual manuals (儀軌) translated into Chinese, so might be a coinage of Huiguō or Kūkai. Kūkai otherwise uses the term 涉入 in this text, also translated as interpenetration.

<sup>116</sup> The five *bīja*-letters appear in the *Mahāvairocanaṅghisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, and are *a* (earth), *va* (water), *ra* (fire), *ha* (wind), and *kha* (space). Kūkai gives the sixth letter *hūṃ*, for the element of consciousness, in his *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (see TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 40ff, and 393–394 for a discussion).

<sup>117</sup> See a similar passage in *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 50–51, TKZ 3.23).

<sup>118</sup> Regarding unobstructedness, Kūkai writes in *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 52, TKZ 3.23–24):

如是六大法界體性所成之身。無障無礙互相涉入相應。常住不變同住實際。故頌曰六大無礙常瑜伽。解云無礙者涉入自在義。常者不動不壞等義。瑜伽者翻云相應。相應涉入即是即義。

In this way, the bodies that are formed of the six great elements—the essence of the *dharmadhātu*—are unimpeded and unobstructed, mutually interpenetrating, and in a state of unity. They eternally abide in changelessness, and in identity abide in reality. That is why the verse [above] stated, “The six great elements are unobstructed, and eternally in a state of yoga.” “Unobstructed” means interpenetrating without impediment. “Eternally” means they are unmoving, indestructible, and so on. Yoga is translated as unity. The state of unity and interpenetration is the meaning of the title word, *soku* [in the sense of not being apart from].

<sup>119</sup> Regarding the net of Indra, Kūkai writes in his *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 66–67, TKZ 3.28, also 380–381 for a discussion of the term):

重重帝網名即身者是則舉譬喻。以明諸尊剎塵三密圓融無礙。帝網者因陀羅珠網也。謂身者我身佛身衆生身。是名身。又有四種身。言自性受用變化等流。是名日身。又有三種。字印形是也。如是等身縱橫重重如鏡中影像燈光涉入。彼身即是此身。此身即是彼身。佛身即是衆生身。衆生身即是佛身。不同而同。不異而異。

that does not come, nevertheless because of the yoga of suchness there is neither a subject nor an object, and yet there is a subject and an object.

故頌曰。

Therefore, a poem has:<sup>120</sup>

六大無礙常瑜伽	四種曼荼各不離	三密加持速疾顯	重重帝網名即身
法然具足薩般若	心數心王過刹塵	各具五智無際智	圓鏡力故實覺智

The six great elements are unobstructed, and are eternally in a state of yoga.

The four maṇḍalas are mutually inseparable.

Through the *adhiṣṭhāna* of the three mysteries, it is immediately manifested.

Layer upon layer, the net of Indra is a name for “immediately and in this body.”

In suchness, possessing *sarvajñā*.

The mental events and the Mind-King are more numerous than the grains of dust in the universe.

Each possesses the fivefold wisdom, and infinite-fold wisdom.

Through the power of the perfect mirror, the true wisdom of awakening.

### [III.3.7. Explanation of *sūtra*]

經者貫串不散之義。以語密爲經以心密爲緯。織三業之絲爲海會之錦。錦文千殊同名爲錦。佛相萬差共得稱佛。經被雜色衣執金剛者即表此義。

*Sūtra* means [a book] pierced and laced [together with a cord so that the pages] do not scatter.<sup>121</sup>

The mystery of speech makes the warp, and the mystery of mind the woof. Weave together the threads of the three activities, and the fabric of the oceanic assembly [of the maṇḍala] is made.

The patterns of silk may differ in a thousand ways, but the [fabrics] are all called silk. The marks of the buddhas may vary in ten thousand ways, but all are known as Buddha. When the *Sūtra* mentions “the *vajradhara* wearing a many-colored robe”<sup>122</sup> it is revealing this meaning.

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“Layer upon layer, the net of Indra is a name for ‘immediately and in this body.’” This line is a simile used to demonstrate the perfect and unhindered infinitely interpenetrating three mysteries of all the maṇḍala deities. The net of Indra is Indra’s jeweled net. Body means my own body, the Buddha’s body, and the bodies of all beings. There are also the fourfold bodies of Dharmakāya, which are the *svabhāvakāya* body of own-nature, the *sambhogakāyas*, *nirmāṇakāyas*, and the *niṣyandakāyas*: these are also meant by “body.” There are again three other bodies: letters, seals, and physical forms. These bodies are multiplied infinitely in all directions like an image in many mirrors, and interpenetrate like the light of many lamps. That body is none other than this body. This body is none other than that body. The body of the Buddha is none other than the bodies of beings. The bodies of beings are none other than the body of the Buddha. They are not the same, yet they are the same. They are not different, yet they are different.

<sup>120</sup> This famous verse, written either by Huiguo or Kūkai, and its commentary comprises the main content of Kūkai’s *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (TKZ 3.18–19), see TAKAGI and DREITLAIN 2010: 36ff.

<sup>121</sup> An Indian-style *sūtra* book is meant. Besides being a sacred text, *sūtra* in Sanskrit also means a string or cord, or “that which, like a thread, runs through or holds together everything” (Monier-Williams). 經 also means the warp of a fabric.

<sup>122</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.1a. This is the name of one of the *vajradharas* in attendance, Vicitrāmaradhara (GIEBEL) or Vicitravastra (HODGE).



上從大日尊下至六道衆生相。住各各威儀顯種種色相。竝是大日尊之差別智印也。非更他身。故經文云我即法界我即金剛身我即天龍八部等。如是法身互相涉入猶如絹布絲縷豎橫相結不散不亂。是則經之義也。

From Mahāvairocana above to the marks of beings in the six rebirth states below, each abides in its own conduct and manner, and displays a unique appearance and characteristics. All are the differentiated wisdom seals of Lord Mahāvairocana. There is not one that is something other. Therefore, a *sūtra* says, “I am identical with the *dharmadhātu*. I am identical with the vajra-body. I am identical with the *devas*, *nāgas*, the eight classes of beings, and so on.”<sup>123</sup> In this way, the *dharmakāya* mutually interpenetrates [with all] just like the horizontal and vertical threads of a silk fabric are mutually interwoven without disarray or disorder. This is the meaning of *sūtra*.

### [III.3.8. Explanation of *Indra*]

因陀羅者。梵語也。翻云帝釋。此最勝義無上義涉入義。

Indra is Sanskrit, and is translated [into Chinese] as “Lord of the Gods.”<sup>124</sup> This means the supreme and highest, and interpenetration.

#### [III.3.8.1. The meaning of supreme and highest]

如釋天能三十三天王中其德最上最勝。此經亦如是。諸大乘衆教中無有等比。又如帝釋珠網重重交映彼此涉入。四種法身四種曼荼互相涉入無盡無盡。非算數譬喻所知。

Just as Indra’s virtues are highest and supreme among all the *deva*-kings of the thirty-three heavens, this *sūtra* is likewise [supreme among *sūtras*]. It is without equal or comparison among the many Mahāyāna teachings. Also, it is like the net of Indra, with its layer upon layer of mutual reflections, where that and this interpenetrate. The fourfold Dharmakāya and the four

<sup>123</sup> The source is unknown. The *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* (T 848:18.23c) has a phrase similar to the first part of this quote:

眞言者宴坐 安住於法界 我即法界性 而住菩提心  
The mantra practitioner sits in meditation, and abides peacefully in the *dharmadhātu*.  
[Thinking,] “I am identical with the nature of the *dharmadhātu*,” dwell in *bodhicitta*.

In *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 32, TKZ 3.17) Kūkai quotes the *Jingangding yujia xiuxi Piluzhena sanmodi fa* (T 876:18.329a):

應當知自身 卽爲金剛界 自身爲金剛 堅實無傾壞 我爲金剛身  
Know your own body as the Vajradhātu itself.  
Your body is a vajra, solid and indestructible.  
[Think,] “I am the vajra-body.”

In *Unji gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 172–173, TKZ 3.66) Kūkai writes:

我則法界。我則法身。我則大日如來。我則金剛薩埵。我則一切佛。我則一切菩薩。我則緣覺。我則聲聞。我則大自在天。我則梵天。我則帝釋。乃至我則天龍鬼神八部衆等。  
I am the *dharmadhātu*. I am Dharmakāya. I am Mahāvairocana. I am Vajrasattva. I am all buddhas. I am all bodhisattvas. I am the *pratyekabuddhas*. I am the *śrāvakas*. I am Maheśvara. I am Brahmā. I am Indra, and the *devas*, *nāgas*, *yaḥsas*, and the others of the eight classes of beings.

This last is a paraphrase of the *Darijing shu*, “Vairocana said, ‘I am Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and the others. I am the *devas*. I am the humans. I am the *yaḥsas*. I am the *nāgas* and *garuḍas*. There is none that I am not,’” (毗盧遮那言我即是文殊觀音等。我即是天即是人。即是鬼神即是龍鳥。如是等無不即是, T 1796:39.788c). The eight classes of beings are the *devas*, *nāgas*, *yaḥsas*, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kiṃnaras*, and *mahoragas*.

<sup>124</sup> Taking 帝釋 as 天帝釋. The *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* (T 848:18.8a) also has 釋天王.

maṇḍa[las]<sup>125</sup> mutually interpenetrate endlessly and inexhaustibly. This cannot be known through numerical calculations or analogies.

故文云勝上大乘句。諸佛大祕密。我今悉開示。此表最上最勝。又如虛空無量智成就正等覺顯現。此表佛智佛身無邊際。

Therefore, the text has,<sup>126</sup>

The supreme and highest words of Mahāyāna,  
The great secret of the buddhas:  
I will now reveal it all.

This shows that [the *Sūtra* is] the highest and supreme. Again, “limitless wisdom like empty space is accomplished, and perfect awakening is revealed.”<sup>127</sup> This reveals the boundlessness of the wisdom and bodies of the Buddha.

### [III.3.8.2. The meaning of interpenetration]

又云等正覺眞言。言名成立相。如因陀羅宗。諸義利成就。此示一能含一切一切又含一互相涉入。

Again it has,<sup>128</sup>

The marks of the syllables, words, and phrases  
Of the fully awakened one's mantras,  
As shown by the [grammatical] teachings of Indra,  
Have all meanings perfected.

This reveals that the one can include the all, and that the all also includes the one, [abiding] in the state of mutual interpenetration.

### [III.3.9. Explanation of *rāja* or “king”]

王者自在爲名高貴爲稱。梵音囉惹。𑖀字聲者所謂苦惱聲啼哭愁歎無主無歸無救護聲。又塵垢義。𑖀字聲者最勝義高貴義自在義殊勝義勇猛義端正義智慧義。能摧滅一切衆生憍慢自高陵蔑他義。解云。苦惱啼哭等聲者。所化之境。最勝智惠等。能化之人法也。佛爲一切衆生作自在王。能以智劍摧破一切衆生無明等苦。此經能說四種法身帝王自在義故云王。

A king is so called because he is sovereign, and so titled because he is noble. “King” in Sanskrit is *rāja*.<sup>129</sup> “The sound of the letter *ra* is the sound of suffering, and the sound of sorrow, misery,

<sup>125</sup> TKZ has the Siddham 𑖀𑖀 (\**mada*) instead of 𑖀𑖀 (*maṇḍa*). KZ has the Chinese transliteration 曼荼, as used here.

<sup>126</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.2a. After Vajrapāṇi questions the Buddha, he responds with this verse:

勝上大乘句 心續生之相 諸佛大祕密 外道不能識 我今悉開示  
The supreme and highest words of Mahāyāna, the marks of the successive states of mind,  
The great secrets of the buddhas, unknowable to non-Buddhists:  
I will now reveal it all.

<sup>127</sup> Paraphrasing the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.2a, continuing after the above quotation:

無量如虛空 不染污常住 諸法不能動 本來寂無相 無量智成就 正等覺顯現  
Immeasurable like empty space, undefiled, eternal,  
Immovable by dharmas, originally still and without marks,  
Limitless wisdom is accomplished, and perfect awakening is revealed.

<sup>128</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.9c. Also quoted by Kūkai in *Shō-ji-jissō gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 89, TKZ 3.37).

<sup>129</sup> TKZ has the Siddham 𑖀𑖀 (\**rāja*) instead of 𑖀𑖀 (*rāja*). KZ has the Chinese transliteration 囉惹, as used here.

abandonment, homelessness, and being without a protector.”<sup>130</sup> It also means defilement (*rajas*). “The sound of the letter *ja* means what is supreme, noble, sovereign, excellent, courageous, beautiful, and wise. It is capable of crushing the pride and self-aggrandizement of all beings that disparages others.”<sup>131</sup> To explain this, the sounds of suffering, sorrow and so on are what is transformed. Supreme, wise, and so on refers to the person or teaching that transforms. The Buddha makes himself a sovereign king for the sake of all beings. With his sword of wisdom, he is able to destroy the ignorance (*avidyā*) and so on of all beings. Because this *sūtra* preaches the fourfold Dharmakāya, which has the meaning of royal sovereignty, it is [itself] called a king.

釋名竟。

The discussion of the words [of the title] is finished.

[IV. The overall meaning of the title]

[IV.1. The fourfold Dharmakāya and the three bodies of the Buddha in the title]

次就次第相承且釋淺略義者。大毗盧遮那者自性法身即本有本覺理身。次成佛者受用身。此有二種。一自受用二他受用。修得即始覺智身。神變者他受用應身即變化法身。加持者等流身即是三界六道隨類之身。若攝四爲三者。神變加持合爲一。即法應化三身如次可知。

Next, to provisionally explain the superficial meaning in sequence,<sup>132</sup> Mahāvairocana is the own-essence of the Dharmakāya (*svabhāvakāya*), which is the intrinsic truth-body of inherent awakening. Next, the “attainment of buddhahood” (*abhisambodhi*) is the *saṃbhogakāya*, of which there are two types: the *svasaṃbhogakāya* and the *parasam̐bhogakāya*. Attainment through cultivation is the wisdom-body of awakening initiated and attained through cultivation. “Miraculous transformation” (*vikurvita*) is the *nirmāṇakāya* [appearing] for the sake of others, and is the transformation body of the *dharmakāya*. “Empowerment” (*adhiṣṭhāna*) is the *niṣyandakāyas*, which are the bodies [manifesting] in accordance with the [various] kinds of beings in the six rebirth states in the triple world. If the four-[fold Dharmakāya]<sup>133</sup> is condensed into three [bodies], then [the words] “the miraculously transformative empowerment” are treated together as one, and the *dharmakāya*, *saṃbhogakāya*, and *nirmāṇakāya* can be known in sequence.

<sup>130</sup> *Shouhu guojiezhū tuoluoni jing*, T 997:19.572a.

<sup>131</sup> *Shouhu guojiezhū tuoluoni jing*, T 997:19.572a.

<sup>132</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.387b) explains that commentary in the Shingon school can be made according to a normal sequence or a reverse sequence (順觀旋轉逆觀旋轉). What is meant here by 次第相承 is the normal sequence. He goes on to say that the “superficial or profound are relative,” and that “a profound discussion would state that each individual phrase contains limitless meanings, such as the four maṇḍalas, the fourfold Dharmakāya, and so on. Treating the fourfold Dharmakāya and so on vertically (in terms of how its aspects are distinguished) is thus the superficial understanding.” (今淺深待對約深祕——句皆含四曼四身等無邊義理。然豎作四身等配釋是淺略釋也)。

<sup>133</sup> The fourfold Dharmakāya in Kūkai’s esoteric system consists of the *svabhāvakāya*, the *saṃbhogakāya* divided into *svasaṃbhogakāya* and *parasam̐bhogakāya*, the *nirmāṇakāya*, and the *niṣyandakāya*. For a discussion see TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 366–368. The three are the exoteric three bodies of the Buddha, *dharmakāya*, *saṃbhogakāya*, and *nirmāṇakāya*, with the last including the *niṣyandakāya*.

## [IV.2. Essence, manifestations, and functions in the title]

又次配三大釋者。大毗盧遮那者體也。成佛者相也。神變加持者用也。

Next, to explain [the title] by assigning [the words to] the three great aspects,<sup>134</sup> Mahāvairocana is the essence, “attaining buddhahood” is the manifestation, and “miraculously transformative *adhiṣṭhāna*” is the function.

## [IV.3. The person, teaching, and the analogy in the title]

## [IV.3.1. Person, teaching, and analogy applied to the word “great”]

又次約人法喻釋者。竝皆具人法喻三義。何者大者若一切物事彼此相望必有大小之名。須彌非大芥子非小。螢火即大。日光即小。螻蛄爲大。大鵬名小。須彌之大望大土之身中不大。芥子望毛端則大。如是相待大名重重。今所謂大者究竟最極之大即大中之最大。以世間所見大顯出世幽遠之大。顯現爲喻不見爲法。此則人也。則一大具三。

Next, to explain [the title] in terms of the person, teaching, and analogy,<sup>135</sup> all of [the words in the title] possess three meanings: the person, teaching, and analogy.<sup>136</sup> Why? Because regarding the word “great,” all phenomena are relative to each other—that and this—and are inevitably labeled as large or small. [But relative to something larger] Mt Sumeru is not large, and [relative to something smaller] a mustard seed is not small. The light of a firefly thus can be large, and the light of the sun small. The tiniest insect might be large, and the great roc might be called small.<sup>137</sup> The size of Mt Sumeru is not large when compared with the body of a *mahāsattva*.<sup>138</sup> The mustard seed is large when compared with the tip of a hair. Because of this relativity, the word “great” can have multilayered meanings. [However,] what is now [in the *Sūtra*] called “great” is the final and

<sup>134</sup> Essence (體), manifestations (相), and functions (用), discussed in *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 37ff).

<sup>135</sup> This is a common Chinese exegetical practice for analyzing the titles of *sūtras*, in which several ways of analyzing a title according to its words are posited. See DREITLEIN 2011 footnote 69 for details. “Person” means the name of the preacher, teaching is the Dharma taught such as the *prajñāpāramitā*, and analogies often appear, such as the “lotus” of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Kūkai uses this as a means to comment esoterically on a *sūtra*, such as he does with the *Heart Sūtra* (DREITLEIN 2011). In his *Kongōchōgyō kaidai* (TKZ 4.73–74) discussing the *Sarvathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, Kūkai gives what would be the usual exoteric interpretation of the words in *sūtra* titles.

今此經題名准古德淺略釋具人法喻三。金剛頂是喻也。一切如來人也。餘字法也。

According to the superficial interpretation of the ancient masters, the [full] title of this *sūtra* (金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經, *The Sūtra of the King of the Great Teaching of Mahāyāna Immediate Realization in the Vajrasekhara Sarvathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*) would have all three: person, teaching, and analogy. *Vajrasekhara* (vajra-peak) is the analogy. *Sarvathāgata* (all the *tathāgatas*) is the person. The other words are the teaching.

<sup>136</sup> In another version of *Dainichikyō kaidai* (TKZ 4.33, 大毗盧遮那), Kūkai explains his esoteric interpretation of the title of the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*.

若言人則是人也——字人種字故。言法則悉法也——字法智印故。言譬則諸名即譬以淺顯深故。

The person [in the title] is that person (Mahāvairocana), because each of the letters are the *bijas* of that person. The teaching is every teaching, because each letter is a *dharmajñānamudrā*. The analogy is that all the words are analogies, because the profound is revealed through the superficial.

<sup>137</sup> The *jiao-ming* (螻蛄, 焦螟) is an imaginary tiny insect appearing in Chapter Five (湯問篇) of the *Liezi* (列子) that is so small it lives in the eyebrows of a mosquito, yet laughs at the *peng* (鵬), which is a huge mythical bird like a roc, also known from Chapter One (逍遙遊) of the *Zhuangzi* (莊子). See *Hizō hōyaku* (TKZ 3.131, HAKEDA 1972: 178).

<sup>138</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.393a) quotes the *Avatamsaka*, “The body of the Buddha is inconceivable, all the worlds are within it,” (佛身不思議 國土悉在中, T 279:10.32a) to show that the large size of Mt. Sumeru is relative since it is easily encompassed by the Buddha’s body.

absolute greatness, which is the greatest of the great. By the mundane and visible greatness, the hidden and profound supramundane greatness is revealed.<sup>139</sup> [The greatness that] is manifest [in the world] is the analogy, and [the greatness that] is not seeable is the teaching.<sup>140</sup> This is then the person (Vairocana). This means that the single [word] “great” possesses the three [meanings of the person, teaching, and analogy].<sup>141</sup>

#### [IV.3.2. “Great” as an analogy for the remaining words]

毗盧遮那者光明遍照之義。一燈遍一室而除暗。一日遍一天而奪黑。然則遍明之名遍于諸物。成者以世間小成喻出世大成。佛者覺知義。一切衆生亦有覺知。舉此小覺之喻標彼大覺之法。神變者亦有大小。世間外道猶起神變。以此淺事喻之深法。餘亦准知。

“Vairocana” means all-illuminating radiance. [The light of] one lamp fills one room and eliminates darkness. [The light of] one sun fills one sky and takes away the blackness. However [unlike those], the word “all-illuminating” is that which extends to all things. “Attain” uses the analogy of a small mundane attainment for the great supramundane attainment. “Buddhahood” means awakening. All beings also have [some partial degree of] awakening. Using this small awakening as an analogy, that teaching of great awakening is demonstrated. “Miraculous transformation” also has the great and small. The non-Buddhists of the world are able to create some magical transformations. Those shallow affairs are used as an analogy for this profound teaching. The [interpretation of the] remaining [words in the title] can be known [from this].

#### [IV.4. The meanings of the letters used in the Sanskrit title]

次據梵名釋者。

Next, a commentary on the Sanskrit words [of the title].

##### [IV.4.1. The meanings of the letters in *mahā*]

初𑖀字有二義。一字相二字義。字相者我義。字義者我不可得義又空義。此亦有無量我義。神我假我實我等是。毗盧遮那則名大我。我則大自在義。故又云內心之大我。我一切本初等。𑖀字者一切法因緣不可得義。

The first letter *ma* has two meanings: first, the superficial meaning, and second, the profound meaning.<sup>142</sup> The superficial meaning is “selfness” (*mamatā*). The profound meaning is that a self is ungraspable, which also means emptiness. There are additionally numberless [superficial] meanings of the word self, including a divine self, a provisional self, a real self, and so on.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.393a) comments, “mundane and visible means the [relative] size of Mt. Sumeru or a mustard seed and so on as above, and supramundane greatness means the greatness of the *dharmakāya*” (世間所見上須彌芥子等大也。出世大法身大也)。

<sup>140</sup> Brackets based on Yūkai (NDZ 14.393a). The relative idea of greatness is used as an analogy to express the absolute greatness of the teaching.

<sup>141</sup> Brackets based on Yūkai (NDZ 14.393a).

<sup>142</sup> Kūkai discusses the meanings of the letter *ma* at length in *Unji gi*, see TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 132, 167–172, and 150–155 and 292–299 for the other letters.

<sup>143</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.393b) says that the divine self is the speculation of the non-Buddhists, the provisional self is discussed by the *śrāvakas*, and the real self is the concept that worldlings (*prthagjanas*) have (神我者外道計也。假我者佛弟子等我言也。實我凡人我也)。

Vairocana is the name for the great-self.<sup>144</sup> [The great]-self means great freedom. Therefore [the *Sūtra*] also mentions the “great-self of the inner mind,”<sup>145</sup> “I am the root and origin of all,”<sup>146</sup> and so on. The letter *hā* means that for all dharmas, causes and conditions (*hetu-pratyaya*) are ungraspable.

#### [IV.4.2. The meanings of the letters in Vairocana]

𑖀字者一切法言說不可得義。𑖁字者一切法塵垢不可得義。𑖂字者一切法無遷變義。𑖃字者一切法名不可得義。

The letter *vai* means that for all dharmas, language (*vāc*) is ungraspable. The letter *ro* means that for all dharmas, impurity (*rajas*) is ungraspable. The letter *ca* means that all dharmas are free of degeneration (*cyuti*). The letter *na* means that for all dharmas, names (*nāma*) are ungraspable.

#### [IV.4.3. The meanings of the letters in *abhisambodhi*]

𑖄字者有不可得義。𑖅字者諦不可得義。𑖆字者言語義。𑖇字者一切法界義。𑖈字者妙觀察智定義。𑖉字者法界不可得義。

The letter *bhi* means that states of being (*bhava*) are ungraspable. The letter *saṃ* means that truth (*satya*) is ungraspable. The letter *bo* means language.<sup>147</sup> The letter *dhi* means all of the *dharmadhātu*. The letter *si* means the *samādhi* of the wisdom of sublime discrimination.<sup>148</sup> The letter *ddhā*<sup>149</sup> means that the *dharmadhātu* is ungraspable.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>144</sup> See note 31.

<sup>145</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.40c. The *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.588b) says, “because the mind is itself the perfect awakening of the Tathāgata, the text speaks of the great-self of the inner mind,” (即以心爲如來應正等覺所謂內心之大我也).

<sup>146</sup> *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, T 848:18.22c. Quoted in *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 3.68–70, TKZ 3.29).

<sup>147</sup> It seems that *bo* has been misread as *vo*, as the word *vāc* seems again intended. Only the superficial meanings (without “ungraspable”) of this and the next two letters are given. Yūkai makes no comment. Ryōken (NDZ 14.369a) only says that “language means mantras” (言語者眞言義也).

<sup>148</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.394b) remarks that the letter *sa* is the *bīja* of the Lotus Family, which among the fourfold wisdom corresponds to the wisdom of sublime discrimination (*pratyavekṣaṇā-jñāna*). The mark adding the vowel *i* to a letter is called the *samādhi*-mark (三昧點), hence the above meaning.

<sup>149</sup> KZ and both Ryōken and Yūkai give the Siddham letter 𑖉 *ddhā* here, while TKZ has the letter 𑖇: *dhiḥ* with no footnote. The commentators have been followed as the more traditional reading.

<sup>150</sup> Yūkai (NDZ 14.394b) says, “these two letters read as *siddhā* are not in the title of the *Sūtra*. Their appearing here has been a matter of doubt for a long time” (此𑖉𑖉二字經題無之。今舉之古來不審也). Yūkai goes on to mention a dubious attempt to read *siddhā* as *citta*, and then gives his personal view that since the titles of Sanskrit texts (according to him) begin with the word \**siddhām*, that Kūkai has here returned to the beginning of such a title (凡諸經梵文題初安𑖉𑖉二字。故今釋經題畢。立還初𑖉𑖉二字釋也). It seems more likely that someone has corrupted the text with later emendations based on the misunderstanding that the Chinese character 成 is a translation of *siddha*, even though *abhisambodhi* appeared earlier in the Siddham title given in this text.

[IV.4.4. The one letter *a* is the essence of all the letters, and of the whole *Sūtra*]

如是義無量。歷劫何盡。如是諸字門皆以初阿字爲本體。所謂<sup>151</sup>阿字則大日之種子真言。此經以此一字爲體。是經始終唯說此字義。此字具無量無邊義。且說小分。經云

Such meanings are infinite. [Even if they were to be explained] for a *kalpa*, how could they be exhausted? All of these letter-gates have the first letter *a* as their fundamental essence.<sup>151</sup> The letter *a* is the *bija*-mantra of Mahāvairocana.<sup>152</sup> The essence of the *Sūtra* is this one letter. The *Sūtra* from beginning to end only explains the meanings of this letter [*a*]. This letter [*a*] possesses infinite and limitless meanings. Only a few have been provisionally discussed [here]. The *Sūtra* says, ...<sup>153</sup>

<sup>151</sup> The *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* (T 848:18.17b) has,

祕密主是等一切真言我已宣說。是中一切真言之心。汝當諦聽。所謂阿字門。念此一切諸真言心最爲無上。是一切真言所住。於此真言而得決定。

Lord of the Secret Ones, I have already taught all these mantras. The heart within all those mantras—listen carefully—is the gate of the letter *a*. Meditating on this heart of all mantras is by far the highest. It is where all mantras abide, and by it mantras gain their effectiveness.

It also has (T 848:18.38a):

所謂阿字者 一切真言心 從此遍流出 無量諸真言 一切戲論息 能生巧智慧

The letter *a* is the heart of all mantras.

Flowing out from it everywhere, limitless mantras emerge.

It puts to rest all useless conceptual proliferation, and is able to produce skillful wisdom.

The *Darjīng shu* comments (T 1796:39.688a), “Without the sound of *a*, there would be no other letters. It is therefore the mother of all the letters, and accordingly the place from where all mantras originate,” (若離阿聲則無餘字。卽是諸字之母。卽一切真言生處也)。Kūkai quotes the *Darjīng shu* (T 1796:39.651c) in *Unji gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 130, TKZ 3.53):

凡最初開口之音皆有阿聲。若離阿聲則無一切言說。故爲衆聲之母。

The sound *a* is present in all sounds from the start, from the moment of opening the mouth to speak them. Without the *a*-sound there would be no words or speech. Thus, the *a*-sound is considered to be the mother of all sounds.

Kūkai further quotes the *Darjīng shu* (T 1796:39.651c) in *Unji gi* (TAKAGI and DREITLEIN 2010: 138–139, TKZ 3.55–56, see also note 37):

又所謂阿字門一切諸法本不生者。凡三界語言皆依於名。而名依於字故。悉曇阿字亦爲衆字之母。當知阿字門真實義亦復如是。遍於一切法義之中也。... 猶如聞一切語言時卽是聞阿聲。如是見一切法生時卽是見本不生際。若見本不生際者是如實知自心。如實知自心卽是一切智智。故毗盧遮那唯以此一字爲真言也。

“The gate of the letter *a* is the fundamental nonarising of all dharmas (T 848:18.10a).” Generally speaking, all speech in the triple world relies on names and words. Names and words rely on letters, and the Siddham letter *a* is the mother of all letters. Thus, the true meaning of the gate of the letter *a* is [related to dharmas in] the same [way as the letter *a* is related to the other letters]: it pervades all dharmas and their meanings. ... In every word one hears, the sound of *a* is present. In the same way, when one sees the arising of dharmas, one sees the full extent of fundamental nonarising. Understanding the full extent of fundamental nonarising is “knowing one’s own mind just as it really is” (T 848:18.1.c). “Knowing one’s own mind just as it really is” is omniscient wisdom. Therefore, Vairocana has nothing more than this single letter *a* as his mantra.

<sup>152</sup> The ritual manual appended to the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* in the seventh fascicle (T 848:18.52b) has, “The *bija*-heart [mantra] of Mahāvairocana Tathāgata is *namaḥ samanta-buddhānāṃ a*. This is because the gate of the letter *a* is the fundamental nonarising of all dharmas” (大日如來種子心曰。南麼三曼多勃駄喃阿。阿字門所謂一切法本不生故)。

<sup>153</sup> Another *Dainichikyō kaidai* (今釋此經, TKZ 4.24) begins with this sentence: “To comment on this *Sūtra* now, there are in brief three gates: first, the general meaning; second, a commentary on the title; and third, entering the text to make particular comments,” (今釋此經略用三門。謂第一述大意。第二釋題目。第三入文判釋)。The comments on the *Sūtra* in that text are given from TKZ 4:27–30, and consists of brief summaries of a few of the chapters. The present text ends here, but as a lecture given by Kūkai presumably would have been followed by some similar comments.

### Abbreviations

- KZ 弘法大師全集 *Kōbō Daishi zenshū*  
 NDZ 日本大藏經 *Nihon Daizōkyō*  
 T 大正新脩大藏經 *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*  
 TKZ 定本弘法大師全集 *Teihon Kōbō Daishi zenshū*

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*Avataṃsaka*. Chinese translation: *Dafangguang Fo Huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T 278:9 (*Mahāvaiṣṭya Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* [Avataṃsaka], trans. Buddhabhadra in 60 fascicles, 418–422); T 279:10 (trans. Śikṣānanda in 80 fascicles, 695–699).

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*Bonji Shittan jimo narabi ni shakugi* 梵字悉曇字母并釋義, TKZ 5.99–113 (*The Siddham Mother-Letters, with a Commentary*, by Kūkai, TKZ 8.62–64, submitted to the court as a memorial in 814 [Kōnin 5.i7.28]).

*Bonmōkyō kaidai* 梵網經開題, TKZ 4.217–230 (*On the Title of the Brahma Net Sūtra*, by Kūkai).

*Busiyi shu* 不思議疏 (*Commentary of Busai*), common title of *Da Piluzhena jing gongyang cidī fa shu* 大毗盧遮那經供養次第法疏, T 1797:39 (*Commentary on the Offering Sequential Method in the Mahāvairocana-sūtra* [a commentary of the seventh fascicle of the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*], by the Silla monk Bulgasai 不可思議).

*Dainichikyō kaidai* 大日經開題, TKZ 4.1–63 (*On the Title of the Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, by Kūkai, seven versions).

*Da Piluzhena fo shuo yaolie niansong jing* 大毗盧遮那佛說要略念誦經, T 849:18 (*The Sūtra of Abbreviated Mantra Recitation Spoken by Mahāvairocana Buddha*, trans. Vajrabodhi).

*Darijing shu* 大日經疏 (*Commentary on the Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*), abbreviated title of *Da-Piluzhena-chengfo-jing shu* 大毗盧遮那成佛經疏, T 1796:39 (*Commentary on the Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, by Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing 一行, 725).

*Dazhidu lun* 大智度論, T 1509:25 (\**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*, trans. Kumārajīva, 402–406).

*Guan Wuliangshou-jing yishu* 觀無量壽經義疏, T 1752:37 (*Commentary on the Amitāyus Contemplation Sutra*, by Jizang 吉藏).

*Hannya-shingyō hiken* 般若心經祕鍵, TKZ 3.1–13 (*Secret Key to the Heart Sūtra*, by Kūkai).

*Himitsu mandara jūjūshin ron* 祕密曼荼羅十住心論, TKZ 2.1–326, abbreviated as *Jūjūshin ron* 十住心論, (*Ten Stages of Mind in the Secret Maṇḍala*, by Kūkai, submitted to the court in 830).

*Hizō hōyaku* 祕藏寶鑰, TKZ 3.111–176 (*Jeweled Key to the Secret Treasury*, by Kūkai).

- Jingangding-jing da yujia mimi xindi famen yijue* 金剛頂經大瑜伽祕密心地法門義訣, T 1798:39 (Meanings of the Secret Mind-ground Dharma-gate of the Great Yoga of the Vajraśekhara-sūtra, trans. Vajrabodhi and recorded by Amoghavajra).
- Jingangding-jing yujia shibahui zhigui* 金剛頂經瑜伽十八會指歸, T 869:18 (Synopsis of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Vajraśekhara-sūtra, trans. Amoghavajra).
- Jingangding-jing yujia xiuxi Piluzhena sanmodi fa* 金剛頂經瑜伽修習毗盧遮那三摩地法, T 876:18 (The Samādhi Method of Vairocana for Cultivating the Yoga of the Vajraśekhara-sūtra, trans. Vajrabodhi, 731–736).
- Jingangding yujia zhong lüechu niansong jing* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經, T 866:18 (The Sūtra of Mantra Recitation Abbreviated from the Yoga of the Vajraśekhara, trans. Vajrabodhi, 723).
- Kan'en no sho* 勸緣疏, *Shōryō shū*, TKZ 8.173–176 (On Encouraging Those with a Connection to Buddhism; full title: *Moromoro no uen no shu o susumetatematsute himitsu no hōzō awasete sanjūgo kan o utsushitatematsurubeshi* 奉勸諸有緣衆應奉寫祕密法藏合三十五卷, *Encouraging all those with a connection to Buddhism to copy the Dharma treasury of esoteric Buddhism: in total thirty-five fascicles*; by Kūkai, 815 [Kōnin 6.4.2]).
- Kongōchōgyō kaidai* 金剛頂經開題, TKZ 4.65–92 (On the Title of the Vajraśekhara-sūtra, by Kūkai).
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- Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*. Chinese translation: *Ru lengqie jing* 入楞伽經, T 671:16 (trans. Bodhiruci, 513).
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- Putixin lun* 菩提心論 (Treatise on Bodhicitta), abbreviated title of *Jingangding yujiazhong fa anoduoluo sanmiaosanputixin lun* 金剛頂瑜伽中發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心論, T 1665:32 (The Treatise on Raising the Thought of Supreme and Perfect Awakening within the Yoga of the Vajraśekhara, attributed to Nāgārjuna, trans. Amoghavajra).
- Sanmayakai jo* 三昧耶戒序, TKZ 5.1–10 (Introduction to the Samaya Commitments, by Kūkai).
- Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*. Chinese translation *Jingangding yiqie rulai zhenshi she dasheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經, T 865:18 (three fascicles,

*The Sūtra of the King of the Great Teaching of Mahāyāna Immediate Realization in the Vajrasekhara Sarvatathāgatattattvasaṃgraha*, a partial translation of the *Sarvatathāgatattattvasaṃgraha*, trans. Amoghavajra, 753).

*Shi moheyan lun* 釋摩訶衍論, T 1668:32 (*Interpreting the Mahāyāna*, a commentary on the *Awakening of Faith*, ascribed to Nāgārjuna but probably a Korean composition of the seventh or eighth century).

*Shō-ji-jissō gi* 聲字實相義, TKZ 3.33–49 (*The Meanings of Sound, Letter, and Reality*, by Kūkai).

*Shōrai mokuroku* 請來目錄, TKZ 1.1–39 (*A List of Texts and Items Brought from China*, also *Goshōrai mokuroku* 御請來目錄, by Kūkai, 806 [Daidō 1.10.22]).

*Shōryō shū* 性靈集, TKZ 8.3–216 (*Collection of Miraculous Writings*, the title also read as *Seirei shū*; full title: 遍照發揮性靈集 *Henjō hokki shōryō shū*, *Collection of the Miraculous Writings of Kūkai*; by Kūkai, compiled by Shinzei 眞濟).

*Shouhu guojie zhu tuoluoni jing* 守護國界主陀羅尼經, T 997:19 (*Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Protecting Rulers of Realms*, trans. Prajña and Muniśrī, 803–804).

*Sokushin jōbutsu gi* 卽身成佛義, TKZ 3.15–31 (*Buddhahood Immediately and in This Body*, by Kūkai).

*Unji gi* 吽字義, TKZ 3. 51–72 (*The Meanings of the Letter Hūṃ*, by Kūkai).