CONTENTS

I. ARTICLES

1. Signs, Memory and History: A Tantric Buddhist Theory of Scriptural Transmission, by Janet Gyatso 7
2. Symbolism of the Buddhist Stūpa, by Gérard Fussman 37
3. The Identification of dGa’ rab rdo rje, by A.W. Hanson-Barber 55
4. An Approach to Dōgen’s Dialectical Thinking and Method of Instantiation, by Shohei Ichimura 65
7. On the Sources for Sa skya Pañđita’s Notes on the “bSam yas Debate,” by Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp 147

II. BOOK REVIEWS

1. The Bodymind Experience in Japanese Buddhism: A Phenomenological Study of Kūkai and Dōgen, by D. Shaner (William Waldron) 155
2. A Catalogue of the sTog Palace Kanjur, by Tadeusz Skorupski (Bruce Cameron Hall) 156
3. *Early Buddhism and Christianity: A Comparative Study of the Founders' Authority, the Community, and the Discipline*, by Chai-Shin Yu (Vijitha Rajapakse) 162

4. *The Heart of Buddhist Philosophy: Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti*, by Amar Singh (Richard Hayes) 166

5. *Shōbōgenzō: Zen Essays by Dōgen*, translated by Thomas Cleary (Steven Heine) 173


7. *The Tantric Distinction*, by Jeffrey Hopkins (Bruce Burrill) 181
   Jeffrey Hopkins Replies
   Bruce Burrill Replies

NOTES AND NEWS [2 items] 189

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS 191
A Study of the Earliest *Garbha Vidhi*
of the Shingon Sect

by Dale Allen Todaro

This is an exegetical study of the *Garbha*<sup>a</sup>*Vidhi*<sup>b</sup> first introduced to Japan by Kūkai<sup>c</sup> (A.C.E. 774–835), founder of the Japanese tantric school of Shingon Buddhism. Kūkai records that in the sixth and seventh months of 805 he was initiated into both the *Mahā-karuṇā-garbha-mahā-maṇḍala*<sup>d</sup> and the *Vajradhātu-mahā-maṇḍala*<sup>e</sup> by his master Hui-kuo<sup>f</sup> (A.C.E. 741–805) of the Ch'ing-lung temple<sup>g</sup> in Ch'ang-an. Both these initiations he refers to as *gakuhō*<sup>h</sup>, which usually means to be granted permission to receive tantric initiations. After these initiations he was taught the method of contemplating the various deities in both *maṇḍalas*. Then, in the eighth month, Kūkai records that he received a *denbo*<sup>i</sup> consecration empowering him to transmit the practices and teachings he had been taught. He returned to Japan in 806 and, after gaining court sanction for his activities, began initiating followers into both the above *maṇḍalas*. He thus introduced to Japan the *ryōbu*<sup>j</sup> or twofold system of practice and doctrine based on the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* (Jap: Dainichikyō<sup>k</sup>) and the Tattvasaṃgraha lineage of texts (Jap.: Kongōchōkyō shū<sup>l</sup>). As the term *garbha* indicates, this evocation rite concerns the *Mahā-karuṇā-garbhadhava-maṇḍala* (hereafter abbreviated MKG). Because of the continuing role of this *garbha vidhi* in the training of Shingon adherents it is important to clarify its literary basis, structure, purpose and content.

Ever since Kūkai’s introduction of the *Garbha Vidhi* it has been an integral part of the practices stipulated for all Shingon adherents. Although there are no records that show conclusively what if any practices were systematized by Kūkai for his followers, by the end of the Heian period (794–1185) a fourfold set
of rites styled *kegyō* became and continues to be the course of required, preliminary practices for any novice wishing to receive the *denbō* consecration. This fourfold set of rites includes the *Jūhachidō nenju shidai* (Recitation Manual of Eighteen Rites—an evocation rite of Cintamanicakra Avalokiteśvara), *Kongōkai nenju shidai* (Recitation Manual of the Vajradhātu), *Taizōkai nenju shidai* (Recitation Manual of the Garbhadhātu) and the *Goma nenju shidai* (Recitation Manual of the Homa). The word *kegyō* is a translation of the Sanskrit word *prayoga*, meaning to join together and practice. Specifically, these four rites are joined together as a single preliminary practice prior to the *ācārya* (*denbō*) consecration. In addition to being consecutive practices, they are accumulative as well. The *Kongōkai shidai* includes practices already undertaken in the prior *Jūhachidō shidai*. The *Taizōkai shidai* likewise includes practices from both the *Jūhachidō* and *Kongōkai shidai*. The final *Goma* or burnt offering rite is the longest and contains practices from all three previous rites as well as a central fire ceremony. This final *Goma* rite is meant to remove all obstacles that would prevent one from receiving the *ācārya* consecration, and is classified as a *sāntika* rite (Jap.: *sokusai*). Despite the importance of these practices for the Shingon school, they have yet to receive a detailed study in any Western language. In Japan descriptions of representative examples of these *vidhis* have been published, but only two works have briefly interpreted them on the basis of commentaries. In addition, although the *Garbha Vidhi* introduced by Kūkai was recognized for centuries to be based in large part on *chüan* four and seven of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, ever since the publication of Ryūjun Tajima's *Étude sur le Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, attention in the West has focused on *chüan* one of this *sūtra*. No effort has been made to show how other chapters were influential in the Shingon school. Very recent Japanese research has confirmed the indebtedness of Kūkai's *Garbha Vidhi* system to *chüan* four and seven of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*. The results of this research will be examined below.

I. Literary Basis of the Garbha Vidhi

The *Garbha Vidhis* attributed to Kūkai are found in his so-
called Collected Works or Kōbō Daishi Zenshū. These are as follows: 1) Taizō bonji shidai, copy dated 1727; 2) Taizō ryaku shidai, copy dated 1156; 3) Taizō furai gosan shidai, copy dated 1024; 4) Sarai hōben shidai, copy dated 1170; note that this manual is attributed to Genjō (tenth century) in the Nihon Daizōkyō (vol. 44); 5) Gorin tōji shidai, copy dated 1676; 6) Taizō bizai shidai, copy dated 1743; 7) Bizai shidai, copy dated 1170; 8) Taizōkai Hüm ji shidai, copy dated 1743; also attributed to Kanchō(jō) (916–998) or Kōgei (977–1049). No Garbha Vidhi has been found written by Kukai. Until recently the Shingon school traditionally regarded only those vidhis contained in the first three volumes of his Collected Works as likely but not conclusively Kukai’s works. Of the above vidhis, numbers one through five are found in volume two while numbers six through eight are found in volume four, making the former historically more authoritative and influential.

After Kukai introduced the Garbha Vidhi to Japan, a succession of Tendai monks introduced four other Garbha Vidhis, which thereafter became influential in both the Shingon and Tendai sects. These four vidhis are the 1) She ta i-kuei, translated by Subhākarasimha; 2) Ta-p‘i-lu-che-na-ching kuang-da-i-kuei, also translated by Subhākarasimha; 3) Hsüan-fa-ssu i-kuei, composed by Fa-chuan (ninth century), a second generation disciple of Hui-kuo; and 4) Ch‘ing-lung i-kuei, also composed by Fa-chuan. The latter two vidhis of Fa-chuan are almost identical, and were written at the Hsüan-fa and Ch‘ing-lung temples, respectively. These four vidhis are referred to collectively as the Shibu giki by Japanese scholars. (Although they will not be given here, four other works introduced by Kukai and listed by him in his Goshoraimukuroku are related to the Garbha Vidhi.) According to Annen’s Catalogue Ennin (793–864), Enchin (814–891) and Shuei introduced from China the She ta i-kuei, Shuei introduced the Kuang-da-i-kuei, Ennin introduced the Hsüan-fa-ssu i-kuei and Enchin and Shuei both introduced the Ch‘ing-lung i-kuei.

Recently, in two important articles, Ueda Reijō made a critical analysis of the Garbha Vidhis attributed to Kūkai. He has made a convincing case that the Taizō furai gosan shidai, Sarai hōben shidai and Gorin tōji shidai were written by Shuei (809–884) and/or his immediate circle of followers (for example Genjō;
the Nihon Daizōkyō claims Genjō wrote the Sarai hōben shidai) because the mudrās and mantras of these vidhis show a marked indebtedness to the two vidhis written by Fa-chūan, as well as the Kuang-da i-kuei. This is not surprising, since Fa-chūan initiated Shuei into the MKG in the Ch'ing-lung-ssu in Ch'ang-an. Shuei was in China from 862 to 865, and later became the fifth chief abbot of the Tōji in Kyōto. Also, by tracing a number of mantras and mudrās in the Taizō bonji shidai and Taizō ryaku shidai to just the Mahāvairocana-sūtra and its commentary the Ta-p'ī-lu-che-na ch'eng-fu ching-shu, Ueda argues these two vidhis in their original form were written by Kūkai. The Taizō bizai shidai, Bizai shidai and Taizōkai Hūm ji shidai, because of a similar structure and indebtedness to the Mahāvairocana sūtra and its commentary, likewise were written by descendents of the same lineage. Ueda states that even when mantras and mudrās of the Taizō bonji shidai and Taizō ryaku shidai can be found in the Shibugiki (and most of those he discusses are found in these vidhis), if they are not explained in either the Mahāvairocana-sūtra or its commentary, then neither the Taizō bonji shidai or Taizō ryaku shidai use them.

Fa-chūan's influential vidhis were written after Kūkai's return to Japan, so they have no direct bearing on the vidhi system introduced by Kūkai. Of course, the vidhis of Kūkai and Fa-chūan belong to the same oral tradition and share in common many mudrās and mantras derived from the Mahāvairocana-sūtra and/or its commentary, these being the chief but not the only sources for the Garbha Vidhi in China. It should be noted that while the sūtra gives transliterated mantras, it does not explain in detail how to form specific mudrās. Traditionally mudrās were transmitted from master to disciple and they are not typically drawn in the vidhis. On the basis of Ueda's research there can be no doubt that the author(s) of the Taizō bonji shidai and Taizō ryaku shidai relied on the Mahāvairocana-sūtra and its commentary, although this still does not prove conclusively that Kūkai alone wrote these. It is almost certain that Hui-kuo strongly influenced their content. Kūkai states in his Goshoraimokuroku that he learned from Hui-kuo the bonji giki of the MKG (i.e., the Siddham letters of the mantras and evocation rites).

I have made a detailed comparison in list form of all the vidhis in the Collected Works of Kūkai, the Collected Works of
Because there are from 250 to 350 items in each *vidhi*, this list cannot be shown here. Because these *vidhis* do not always explain fully the prescribed *mudrās* or *mantras*, these could not be compared. Although *mudrās* and *mantras* can differ as detailed by Gōhō,38 these differences do not mean a change in the rite to be performed. This comparison has shown conclusively that the structure and contents of the *Taizō bonji shidai*, *Taizō ryaku shidai*, *Taizō bizai shidai*, *Bizai shidai* and the *Taizōkai Hūm ji shidai* are practically identical. Based on the results of this comparison, which corroborate and compliment Ueda's findings, there can be no doubt that the above five *vidhis* stem from a single source and that they represent the early *vidhi* system transmitted by Kūkai, as tradition maintains. This group of five *vidhis* will thus be analysed in this article.

Before we examine these in more detail, a few general comments should be made about the eight *vidhis* traditionally attributed to Kūkai. A feature of almost all of these, as well as those attributed to Kūkai's disciples Jichie46 (786–847) and Shinga4k (801–79),39 is that their *mantras*40 are all written in the Siddham script,41 with about half of them including the Chinese transliterations. In contrast, Fa-chüan eliminated this script in his two *vidhis* and substituted the Chinese transliteration of the *mantras*. Gengo11 (911–995) and Gōhō state42 that because Kūkai's *Taizō bonji shidai* contains Sanskrit it is impractical and cannot be used. They advocate, instead, the use of Fa-chüan's *Ch'ing-lung i-kuei* because Fa-chüan added glosses on the meanings of the *mantras*. This is the principal reason for the influence of this *vidhi* in Japan. Amoghavajra also developed a systemic method for the transliteration of the sounds of the Siddham syllables into Chinese in his *Yü-chia chin-kang-ting ching shih-tzu mu p’ìn*.43 Despite this evidence of how difficult it was for the devotees of this tradition to use Siddham, those *Garbha Vidhis* still being written today continue to use this script,44 undoubtedly because Amoghavajra and Kūkai maintained that *mantras* pronounced in Siddham were more effective.45 Needless to say, few Japanese in the ninth century could have understood the pronunciation or meaning of the *mantras* they were reciting, as Sanskrit studies were just beginning in Japan. Kūkai's work entitled *Bonji shittan jimo shakugi*46,4m was the first work by a Japanese on Siddham and even he made errors in the script.47 Another observation
to be made is that from the start there was never any question that each Tendai or Shingon ācārya was free to compose his own *vidhi* changing its length as he saw fit. The short manuals of Jichie and Shinga are good examples of how *vidhis* tended to become abbreviated and suggest an adjustment to Japanese needs. Time and again in the commentaries on the *Garbha Vidhis* we are told that an ācārya is free to compose or practice a *vidhi* as he pleases, in part because there never was a single authoritative text accepted by all Shingon or Tendai practitioners. Annen states that it is because Ennin studied with eight different masters in China (whom he lists) that there are so many different traditions about the *mantras* and *mudrās* in the *Garbha Vidhis*. With the growth of the tantric tradition in China and Japan, which stipulated a close master-disciple relationship, and because this was an oral system that in fact led to changes in *mudrās* and *mantras*, it was inevitable that many lineages would have arisen transmitting their own secret and preferred *vidhis*. This is one reason why there was and continues to be a great deal of factionalism in the Shingon sect. Nevertheless, to whatever extent *vidhis* differ in their *mudrās* and *mantras*, there was a common structure to all of them that was early recognized.

II. Structure of the Garbha Vidhis

This structure is described by Gōhō (1301–1362), in his work entitled *Taizōkai nenju shidai yōshuki*, as being based on *chüan* seven of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*. Although another Shingon monk, Shingo, and the Tendai monk Kakuchō give differently worded analyses, they too maintain the *Garbha Vidhi* is based on *chüan* seven. The major sections of *chüan* seven Gōhō identifies are as follows: a) section two of *chüan* seven, entitled “Increasing Benefits and Protection and Purifying Action”; this concerns the purification of vows and in all *vidhis* involves purifying the body, robes and the nine expedients; b) section three, entitled “Offering Rite”; this involves the three parts of visualizing the palace of Mahāvairocana (i.e., the *Mahā-karunā-garbhodhava-mandala*), beckoning all gods to enter this palace and making offerings, as described in the *vidhis*; c) section four, entitled “Method of
Dhāraṇī Recitation”; this entails the two parts of perfecting the body (i.e., becoming one with Mahāvairocana) and dhāraṇī recitation. In the *vidhis*, after these evocation rites, the deities are asked to leave the mandala, the palace is dissolved and the devotee leaves the shrine or seat of meditation.

On the basis of this structure Gōhō further proposes in his *Taizōkai nenji yoshuki* a way of analysing all of the *Garbha Vidhis*, although his work in particular examines the Shibu giki. He thus identifies two initial sections named “Preliminary Experiments” and “Establishing the Altar.” These correspond to a) above. Next comes the “Visualization of the Seat of Enlightenment,” corresponding to b) above. There follow sections on all the assemblies of the MKG, the “tathāgatakāya” (also corresponding to b) above) and offering and recitation rites, corresponding to c) above. This analysis does make it easier to analyse the Shibu giki, although all of these are not consistent in their placement of the tathāgatakāya assembly. In contrast, the above five Shingon *vidhis* all agree in placing the tathāgatakāya assembly before the assemblies of the mandala. Interpretations of these differences will be given below. Although Gōhō’s analysis is not exclusively relied on by all Japanese scholars, because of its practicality it will be followed below in the exegesis of the structure and contents of the five Shingon *vidhis*.

There are two further distinctive features of the five Shingon *vidhis* that distinguish them from Fa-chūan’s manual and those of Shuei’s lineage. First, in their initial sections on purification, they repeat the same purification rites found in the Jūhachidō and Kongōkai gikis, these often being prior rites in the systematized Shidō kegyō system. Second, these *vidhis* are unique in taking their section on the assemblies of the MKG mandala almost verbatim from *chūan* four, section nine, of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* entitled “Secret Mudrās.” Even in the two longer *vidhis* attributed to Jichi and Shinga who, as direct disciples of Kūkai would be expected to show greater conformity to these five *vidhis*, there is a shared but different series of rites. In contrast to the “Secret Mudrās” section, the *vidhis* of Jichi and Shinga and those of Shuei’s lineage contain evocation rites for many more deities of the mandala (especially for those of the exterior assembly or Kongō gaibuin) and are much longer *vidhis* over all.
III. Commentaries on the Garbha Vidhis

Although there are many so-called commentaries on the Garbha Vidhis by both Shingon and Tendai monks, very few are of any great interpretative value. Both the Tendai\(^{61}\) and Shingon traditions rely on the Mahāvairocana-sūtra and its commentary the Ta-p‘i-lu-che-na ch‘eng-fu ching-shu\(^{62}\) for authoritative interpretations. Although this article analyses the five Shingon vidhis discussed above, none of the available Japanese commentaries specifically analyses these. Instead, they focus on the influential Shibu giki. Nevertheless, these will be used because they are the only Sino-Japanese commentaries available\(^{63}\) and because all vidhis share in common a core of evocation procedures interpreted alike on the basis of the Ta-p‘i-lu-che-na shu.

One of the best commentaries is Shingo’s Renge Taizōkai giki kaishaku,\(^{64}\) which interprets Fa-chüan’s Ch‘ing-lung i-kuei. The commentaries of Raiyu\(^{\text{aab}}\) (1226–1304),\(^{65}\) Gōhō,\(^{66}\) and the Tendai monk Kakucho\(^{67}\) are also valuable, although they focus on explaining the different traditions of making a single mudrā and often neglect to interpret the contents of the vidhi discussed. The commentaries of Ennin\(^{68}\) and Annen\(^{69}\) particularly become occupied with explaining how the mudrās of the Shibu giki and Mahāvairocana-sūtra differ or are the same, and offer very little bona fide interpretation.\(^{70}\)

Due to the length of these vidhis only a few of the important components of each section will be presented and interpreted. These vidhis can be very tedious, especially when read without the aid of the commentaries. My purpose in presenting the following survey is to clarify the structure and contents of these vidhis, these being little investigated in the West. In addition to using Gōhō’s proposed title headings for each section, I will also offer my own section titles to further clarify their purpose. A list in Chinese of the contents of a typical, early Garbha Vidhi is given at the end of this paper.

IV. Purpose of the Garbha Vidhi

The Ta-p‘i-lu-che-na shu states\(^{71}\) that the assemblies of the MKG mandala express the tathāgata dharmadhātu body as well as
perfect and complete enlightenment. Paraphrasing Raiyu, he
says the word garbha, or womb, symbolizes great compassion,
the means by which the mind of enlightenment (bodhicitta) is
cultivated.72 Just as a child is born from the womb, is taught
manners and customs by its parents, and later is shown how to
perfect actions, so does this maṇḍala symbolize the innate, pure
but unawakened mind of the Shingon practitioner who by means
of the Garbha Vidhi cultivates this mind and achieves enlighten-
ment. Thereafter, the devotee works to save others. In the
mythological terms of the Shingon school, because living beings
are unaware of their innate enlightenment Mahāvairocana out
of compassion reveals both the Garbha Vidhi and the MKG
maṇḍala so the bodhicitta of all living beings can be cultivated.73
Gengo states that the assemblies of the maṇḍala are divided into
the three families of Buddha, Vajra and Lotus74 because it deals
with samādhi, wisdom and compassion, respectively.75 Gōhō also
correlates these three families with the three mysteries of the
body, mind and speech, respectively.76 He writes that the Vaj-
radhātu maṇḍala is concerned with practices that are for the
pleasure of the Self-oriented Dharmakāya in Bliss (Jap.: Jijuyō
hōshin\textsuperscript{aac}) while the MKG maṇḍala is concerned with practices
of the Other-oriented Dharmakāya in Bliss (Jap.: Tajuyō hōs-
shin\textsuperscript{aad}) which benefit and save living beings.77 The anonymous
author of the Himitsudan tohō daiajari jōnenju shoki also correlates
the three families of this maṇḍala with the dharmakāya (Buddha
family), sambhogakāya (Lotus family) and nirmanakāya/ nisyand-
dakāya (Vajra family).78

As described by Hakeda,79 Kūkai taught that the Vajradhātu
maṇḍala represented Mahāvairocana (the dharmakāya, bodhicitta)
as the Body of Wisdom while the MKG maṇḍala represented
Mahāvairocana as the Body of Principle.

"Kūkai interpreted these two aspects of Mahāvairocana as
being inseparably related and asserted that both bodies are non-
dual (richi-funi). He said 'that which realizes is wisdom (chi) and
that which is to be realized is principle (ni). The names differ but
they are one in their essential nature.'"

This doctrinal interpretation of these two maṇḍalas of the Shin-
gon school by Kūkai derives from the unique methods of medi-
tation of the Vajrayāna. These involve visualizing oneself in the form of a Buddha, as exemplified below, and promise the rapid attainment of Buddhahood.80 As Jeffrey Hopkins writes in clarifying this form of meditation in the Vajrayāna of Tibet:

"In deity yoga, one first meditates on emptiness and then uses that consciousness realizing emptiness—or at least an imitation of it—as the basis of emanation of a Buddha. The wisdom consciousness thus has two parts—a factor of wisdom and a factor of method, or factors of (1) ascertainment of emptiness and (2) appearance as an ideal being—and hence, through the practice of deity yoga, one simultaneously accumulates the collections of merit and wisdom, making their amassing much faster . . .

The systems that have this practice are called the Vajra Vehicle, because the appearance of a deity is the display of a consciousness which is a fusion of wisdom understanding emptiness and compassion seeking the welfare of others—an inseparable union symbolized by a vajra . . ."81

The bodhicitta has the two inseparable aspects of "that which realizes" or "ascertainment of emptiness" and "that which is to be realized" or "appearance as an ideal being." This practice of "deity yoga" in the Shingon tradition helps explain why the Garbha and Vajradhātu rites have always been performed as a pair in Japan. Today these vidhis are sometimes performed before the MKG and Vajradhātu manḍalas, which are hung in the shrine, and these two manḍalas express the two inseparable aspects of the bodhicitta which is perfected through "deity yoga."

V. Preliminary Expedients—Rites of Purification

There are approximately twenty-five ritual acts in this section, a few of which are given below. These involve cleansing the body, prostrating before all buddhas, purifying the altar offerings, summoning all buddhas to come and protect the devotee, etc. All of these can be classified as purification rites.

Every Shidō kegyō system begins with the devotee first bathing or otherwise cleansing his body and robes. Upon approaching the shrine one visualizes that "my body is that of Vajrasattva." This initial visualization expresses the Shingon teaching that a
devotee of whatever talent is essentially enlightened. The *vidhi* is meant to awaken the innate *bodhicitta* symbolized by Vajrasattva.

When purifying the three karmic actions of the body, speech and mind one intones the mantra: *Om svabhāva-suddha sarvadharma svabhāva-suddho 'ham* (Om All natures are pure by nature; I am pure by nature). One contemplates that the ten evil deeds of the three actions are hereby purified. The lotus *añjali* (mudrā no. 1), formed with the middle fingers slightly apart, expresses the budding mind of enlightenment, not yet fully awakened.

The purification of the Buddha, Lotus and Vajra class of deities also focuses on the purification of the body, speech and mind respectively. The devotee imagines the deities of each family empowering one and causing one to attain rapidly pure actions of the body, speech and mind. The mantras of each family are as follows: *Om tathāgatodbhavāya svāhā* (Om Homage to the Tathāgata-born! svāhā); *Om padmodbhavāya svāhā* (Om Homage to the Lotus-born! svāhā); *Om vajrodbhavāya svāhā* (Om Homage to the Vajra-born! svāhā). The three mudrās accompanying these recitations (mudrā nos. 2, 3, 4) are *samaya*, or symbolic mudrās, representing the Buddha’s head, a lotus and a three-pronged thunderbolt, respectively, and are formed during the empowerment. The *Ta-p’i-lu-che-na shu* says *svāhā* means to exhort all the deities of the three families to protect and empower the devotee.

When donning armour one recites *Om vajrāgni pradīptāya svāhā* (Om Homage to thunderbolt Agni, bursting into flames! svāhā). The devotee’s body is visualized encircled by flames. Any who would hinder the devotee in his practices are now unable to do so. The two middle fingers of the mudrā (no. 5) represent the flames of wisdom fanned by the wind (the two index fingers). By realizing *śūnyatā* (the two thumbs) the four demons (defilements, five aggregates, death, Lord of the Heaven of Desire) are subdued (the two little and ring fingers pressed on by the thumbs).

One purifies the earth with the thunderbolt *añjali* (mudrā no. 6), saying *rajo’ pagatāh sarva-dharmāh* (May all elements be free from impurities!). This mantra is meant to purify the site of the *vidhi*. The pure land of the Dharmakāya Mahāvairocana
(right hand) in union with the defiled realm of living beings (left hand) means both realms are not-two.

The above ritual actions and many more not discussed are found in the prior Jūhachido and Kongōkai rites, and are a unique feature of the five Shingon vidhis. The following nine expedients are found in all Garbha vidhis.

These nine expedients and their mantras are based on chūan seven of the Mahāvairocana-sūtra. (The sūtra does not give the mudrās, and these vary from one vidhi to the next.) All commentaries equate these nine ritual acts with the nine deities in the center of the maṇḍala as it is drawn in Japan. These are called expedients because by the power of these nine mantras and mudrās the perceptions (vijñāna) are transformed and the devotee realizes the five wisdoms. The correlations of the deities and the expedients is as follows: 1) Paying Homage—Samantabhadra; 2) Expelling transgressions—Manjūṣrī; 3) Going for Refuge—Avalokiteśvara; 4) Offering the body—Maitreya; 5) Generating the Mind of Enlightenment—Ratnaketu; 6) Sharing Joy—Saṃkusumitarāja; 7) Request—Amitābha; 8) Requesting the Dharmaśāya—Divyadundubhimegha-nirghoṣa; 9) Transfer of Merits—Mahāvairocana. Raiyu says these nine expedients are used because the MKG is the maṇḍala of cause while the Vajradhātu maṇḍala is the maṇḍala of effect. By these expedients the five wisdoms symbolized by the five buddhas in the center of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala are realized. This interpretation indicates how the two maṇḍalas and their respective vidhis are viewed as inseparable.

**VI. Constructing the Altar—Visualizing Oneself as Vajrasattva**

There are approximately fifteen ritual acts in this section, all centered around visualizing oneself as Vajrasattva.

The devotee visualizes the syllable ma in the right eye and the syllable ta in the left eye. These become the light of the sun and moon. This visualization facilitates seeing Vajrasattva. Ma and ta express insight and samādhi, respectively.

The Ta-p’i-lu-che-na shu identifies the next three rites (entering the Buddha's pledge; birth of the dharmaśāya; turning the wheel of the teaching) with the pledges of the three families
of the MKG. One is empowered here as a master of these families. Kakuban (1095–1143) repeats this interpretation. These three rites are also based on chiian seven of the Mahāvairocana-sūtra.

When doing the Buddha’s pledge one recites namah samanta-buddhānām asame trisame samaye svāhā (Homage to all the buddhas! Oh pledge, without equal, of the three equalities! svāhā). Kakuchō writes one here attains a tathāgata body endowed equally with the three mysteries (the above three equalities) of the body, speech and mind. The mudrā to be formed here is the lotus añjali (mudrā no. 7). The four fingers of each hand pressed together represent the as-yet-unawakened mind of man (the eight consciousnesses), while the two extended thumbs represent the samādhi and insight which the devotee cultivates. This mudrā seals the five places (forehead, right and left shoulders, chest and throat), which symbolizes perfecting the five wisdoms.

With the mudrā (no. 8) and mantra of the birth of the dharmadhātu, the devotee becomes identical with the dharmadhātu. The mantra to be recited is namah samanta-buddhānām dharmadhātu-svabhāvako’ ham (Homage to all the buddhas. I am the self-nature of the dharmadhātu). The two index fingers of this mudrā represent generating the flame of the Buddha’s knowledge. The three fingers grasping the thumbs means the three poisons (ignorance, attachment and hatred) are transformed and one’s nature becomes pure like space (the thumbs mean space).

The mantra for turning the wheel of the teaching is namah samanta-vajrānām vajrātmako’ ham (Homage to all the vajras. I consist of vajra). One visualizes one’s body as Vajrasattva holding a vajra. The mudrā shows the wheel of the teaching being turned (the two thumbs represent the hub and the other eight fingers represent the eight spokes, i.e., the eightfold path) (mudrā no. 9).

Now one visualizes the syllable ram, brilliant and white, on the head. This eliminates all defilements and transgressions accumulated over 100 kalpas and enables one to attain wisdom and blessings. The syllable ram represents the tathāgata’s fire of wisdom.

The final act of this section is called Constructing the Altar or, the tathāgata-first mudrā (mudrā no. 10). Shingo says that this and the following rite of sprinkling perfumed water on the site are the final actions taken to remove impurities in the mind
before visualizing the mandala. It is apparent from this interpretation that all the rites in this section were performed in order to make the devotee a suitable "shrine" for this visualization. The devotee has now become completely purified and abides in the samādhi of Mahāvairocana, realizing the five wisdoms. The thumb of the left hand (the devotee's consciousness) is placed within the palm of the right hand; it is then grasped by the four fingers of the right hand and the tip of the right hand's thumb presses down on the tip of the left hand's thumb (i.e., the devotee's consciousness is transformed into the five wisdoms symbolized by the right hand's five fingers; also, the two thumbs of both hands touching together signify taking refuge in śūnyatā).

VII. Visualizing the Seat of Enlightenment—Visualizing the Container World

There are approximately forty ritual acts in this section. These rites concern establishing a proper container world (i.e., mandala) and the invitation of the deities to descend into the mandala.

The rite of visualizing the five cakras is derived from chūans five and seven of the Mahāvairocana-sūtra. Gōhō states that by this visualization the devotee's body becomes identical with Mahāvairocana. There are various descriptions of this rite but all focus on visualizing the five syllables a, vam, ram, ha and kham, which together are the five-syllable mantra of Mahāvairocana in the MKG mandala. The Taizō Bonji Shidai says that these syllables should be visualized on the moon disc in one's own heart so as to form the body of Vajrasattva, whom even the great Māra cannot obstruct.

Shingo says that these five syllables are the seed syllables of the five elements behind all physical phenomena. Even the Taizō Bonji Shidai makes the same statement. However, this contradicts Kūkai's own statement in his Sokushin jōbutsu gi (Principle of Attaining Buddhahood with this Very Body), where he identifies the five syllables a, va, ra, ha and kha as the seed syllables of earth, water, fire, wind and space. Both Shingo and the editor of the Taizō Bonji Shidai are thus confusing this mantra
of Mahāvairocana with the seed syllables of the five elements.

The King of One Hundred Lights is taken from chuān six of the Mahāvairocana-sūtra. One recites namaḥ samanta-buddhānām am (Homage to all the buddhas. am) and forms the vajra añjali (mudrā no. 11). The letter am, Kakuchō says, symbolizes the mind of enlightenment. This is to be visualized on top of the head. The two hands are joined together with the tips interlocking. The mudrā symbolizes the inseparable union of the MKG maṇḍala and the Vajradhātu maṇḍala.

The Visualization of the Container World is also based on chuāns five and seven of the Mahāvairocana-sūtra, and is explained in chuān fourteen of the Ta-p’i-lu-che-na shu. The latter says that this visualization is always performed when a MKG maṇḍala is to be visualized. The Taizo Bonji Shidai describes this visualization as follows:

Below (imagine) there is the syllable kham which forms the space circle, of various colors and round in shape; above that is the syllable ham which forms the wind circle, black in color and crescent shaped; above that is the syllable ram which forms the fire circle, red in color and triangular in shape; above that is the syllable vam which forms the water circle, white in color and circular; above it is the syllable am which forms the earth circle, yellow in color and square in shape. Above the earth circle there is syllable kam which forms the seven concentric mountain ranges. Above these in the sky is the syllable a which becomes Mahāvairocana. From his stomach cakra there flows out a milk rain which falls down on the mountains. This turns into a perfumed ocean of eight blessings. In the midst of the ocean is the syllable pra which changes into a Golden Tortoise. On the back of the tortoise is the syllable hūm which becomes a five-pronged vajra. Above it is the syllable aḥ which becomes a great lotus. Above the lotus are the syllables pra, su, hūm, vam, etc., which change into the King of this marvellous, high mountain (It has eight peaks composed of the four gems).

The above obviously is one version of the Indian Buddhist cosmos that was transplanted to China and Japan. Mount Sumeru is the central peak surrounded by the seven concentric mountains. The milk raining down is a symbol of Mahāvairocana's constant teaching. This becomes the setting of Mahāvairocana's palace and the MKG maṇḍala.
Next, the *Taizō Bonji Shidai* describes the *maṇḍala* to be visualized:

Above the Lord of Mount Sumeru there is the syllable *ah* which turns into an eight-pillared palace. Its four gates are open and adorned with the seven precious gems. In the center of the palace is the syllable *kṛh* which forms an eight-petalled lotus. On the lotus is the syllable *a* which turns into a *stūpa*. This turns into Mahāvairocana. His body is endowed with the fortuitous marks and is brilliant, being completely luminous. The four *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas* and the sacred ones of the thirteen assemblies encircle him in front and behind and are seated.

Raiyu says that the devotee should imagine the inhabitants of this palace singing wonderful music and playing stringed instruments that produce wonderful sounds.

A common request found next in the five Shingon *vidhis* is as follows:

"I request Mahāvairocana, all the *tathāgatas* of the countless assemblies, the multitude of thunderbolt *bodhisattvas* of the two vehicles, the omnipresent assemblies of the great palace, the countless sages and all enlightened beings, I now, like the Buddha, have perfected the two worlds, I have perfected my body and established the *maṇḍala*; it is now variously adorned; do not abandon your vows of compassion but do now descend. I only pray that all you sages fulfill your original vows and receive me and others so that I attain success."

There follows in these *vidhis* the evocation rites of the four Guardians of the four gates, the Space net and Fire enclosure, etc., all of which are meant to protect the *maṇḍala* from demons while the deities descend into it. A bell is rung (this signifies *samādhi*) to attract the deities, lotus seats are prepared for them, and the following eight deities are the first to arrive.

These eight, secret *mudrās* are based on *chüan* five of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* and are explained in the *Ta-p'ī-lu-che-na shu*. In the latter it is stated that by means of these eight *mudrās* and *mantras* all deities will spontaneously descend into the *maṇḍala* and fulfill the devotee's vows and praxis. If the *yogin* then unites with these deities and dwells in their seats magical powers (*siddhi*) are attained. The *Ta-p'ī-lu-che-na shu*
correlates these eight mudrās and mantras with the four buddhas and bodhisattvas in the very center of the maṇḍala as follows: 1) Yamāntaka (literally: Great majesty and virtue engendered)—Ratnaketu in the east; 2) Vajra Indestructible—Saṃkṣu-sumitarāja in the south; 3) Lotus Store—Amitābha in the west; 4) Adorned with ten thousand virtues—Divyadundubhimegainirghoṣa in the north; 5) All Limbs engendered—Samantabhadra in the southeast; 6) Dharma abiding—Maṅjuśrī in the southwest; 7) The Dhāraṇī of the Bhagavat—Avalokiteśvara in the northwest; 8) Promptly Empowering—Maitreya in the northeast. Shingo says that by these mudrās the devotee can abide in the body of Mahāvairocana. Two of these follow.

1) Mudrā no. 12. This mudrā represents a jewel; the thumbs, index fingers and little fingers represent radiating light. That is, this is the wish-fulfilling gem of Mahāvairocana. From this mudrā the great virtues of a tathāgata arise. Gōhō says that the two ring fingers express principle while the two middle fingers express wisdom—the two inseparable aspects of the mind of enlightenment. The mantra to be recited is namah samanta-buddha-nām ram rah svāhā (Homage to all the buddhas! ram rah svahā). Ram and rah are based on the two syllables am and ah, meaning perfect enlightenment and nirvāṇa, respectively. Ra is the seed syllable of the fire element (the two middle fingers also represent the burning flame of wisdom) and thus ram and rah signify enlightenment and nirvāṇa, and are present in the fire element from which arise the tathāgata’s virtues.

8) Mudrā no. 13. This is the mudrā of turning the Wheel of the teaching. It is revolved in a circular motion three times counter-clockwise and three times clockwise. The mantra here is namah samanta-buddha-nām mahā-yoga-yogini yogeśvara kham-jarike svāhā (Homage to all the buddhas! Oh yogini of great yoga! Oh Goddess of yoga! Oh space-born! svahā). (When the mudrā is turned counterclockwise, the right thumb is on the left thumb; when turned clockwise, the left thumb is on the right thumb.)

Two stages of mediation have been introduced above which should be clarified. These can be explained by referring to the Kriyā tantric tradition of Tibet whose fundamental text is the Mahāvairocana-sūtra. Previously, the entire maṇḍala and its deities were visualized, whereas now deities begin to descend into this maṇḍala. In the former, the yogin visualized and iden-
tified with the *samaya-sattvās* (symbolic beings), i.e., the deities the yogin has imagined, a product of the mind. Those deities who descend into the *manḍala* are *jñāna-sattvas* (knowledge beings). These are considered celestial deities or *buddhas*, corporeal manifestations of Mahāvairocana, and are summoned from the Ākāśa realm. As hinted at above, once the latter descend, the symbolic being is identified with the knowledge being and magical powers are obtained.

**VIII. The Tathāgatakāya Assembly—Realization of Mahāvairocana’s Virtues**

This assembly is based on chüan four of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*. There are three traditions concerning the place of this assembly within the *Garbha Vidhis*. As explained by Gengō, it can be found before the visualized seat of enlightenment, as in the *Hsüan-fa-ssu i-kuei* and *Sarai hōben shidai*; it is also placed after the seat of enlightenment and just before the assemblies of the *manḍala* which are manifested below, as in the five Shingon *vidhis*, the *vidhis* of Jichie and Shinga and the *Ch’ing-lung i-kuei*; finally, it is also placed after the *manḍala* assemblies as in the *Taizō furei gosan shidai* and *Gorin tōji shidai*. Gengō says that if this assembly is placed before the visualized seat of enlightenment it signifies the adornment of the yogin’s body and a necessary preparation for the visualization of the container world. If this assembly comes before the *manḍala* assemblies it expresses the virtues of Mahāvairocana (as a manifested *jñāna-sattva*). If this assembly is found after the *manḍala* it expresses the results of the practice. The anonymous author of the *Himitsu dantohō daiajari jōnenju shoki* writes that if this assembly comes after the *manḍala* it is meant only to express the origin of the *manḍala* assemblies and not the way the *vidhi* is practiced. Placed before the *manḍala* it expresses the inner realized virtues of the yogin which are then manifested externally in the *manḍala*.

Regardless of these differences, it is clear that this assembly represents the virtues of Mahāvairocana that the devotee realizes. Shingo writes that this assembly represents Mahāvairocana’s entry into *samsāra*, i.e., the *mudrās* of this assembly clarify the traits of the *nirmāṇakāya buddha* who appears
to teach Buddhism. The *Ta-p'i-lu-che-na shu* says that the practices of this assembly result in the complete purity of the body and mind and the fulfillment of the yogin’s vows.

Only a few of the nearly thirty rites of this assembly will be presented. Gōhō and Kakuban classify these rites as representative of the mystery of either the body, speech or mind. In the MKG mandalas of Japan the deities of this assembly are depicted in the Śākyamuni assembly.

*Tathāgata’s usṇīsa* (mudrā no. 14); mystery of the body. The two middle fingers stand erect. The index fingers press against the back of the middle fingers while the thumbs press against the base of the middle fingers. This represents a three-pronged vajra, i.e., an usṇīṣa. The mantra to be recited is *namah samanta-buddhānām hūṃ hūṃ* (Homage to all the buddhas! hūṃ hūṃ). The *Ta-p'i-lu-che-na shu* says that the two hūṃ syllables mean cause and effect or practice and buddhahood.

*Tathāgata’s tongue* (mudrā no. 15); mystery of speech. This is represented by the two ring fingers inserted in the palms; these two fingers are pressed by the two thumbs. *Mantra: namah samanta-buddhānām tathāgata-jiha satya-dharma-pratiṣṭhita svāhā* (Homage to all the buddhas! Tathāgata’s tongue! Dweller in the true teaching! svāhā).

*Tathāgata’s mindfulness* (mudrā no. 16); mystery of mind. *Mantra: namah samanta-buddhānām tathāgata-smṛti sattva-hitābhyaudinga gagana-samāsama svāhā* (Homage to all the buddhas! Oh mindfulness of the Tathāgata, creating the benefits of living beings, equivalent to space and without equal! svāhā). The two index fingers, representing cause and effect, press down on the two thumbs (representing space and śūnyatā), i.e., the two obstructions of cause and effect are resolved in the realization of śūnyatā. The three other erect fingers represent the virtues of the Buddha, Lotus and Vajra families. This mudrā is also called the Sword of Wisdom.
IX. The Twelve Assemblies of the MKG Maṇḍala in Japan—Aspects of Enlightenment

These assemblies in the five Shingon vidhis are based on chuăn four of the Mahāvairocana-sūtra. In these vidhis all 414 deities depicted in the MKG maṇḍala do not have corresponding evocation rites. In contrast to these shorter vidhis, those attributed to Jichie and Shinga contain many more mudrās and mantras for the deities in each assembly of the MKG maṇḍala. These latter two vidhis, as well as that attributed to Engyō (799-852), present these assemblies in the same order as does the Kuang-da i-kuei: 1) All knowledge; also called Buddha’s mother (Henchi); 2) Lotus family or Avalokiteśvara (Rengebu); 3) Vajrapāṇi or Vajra family (Kongoshu); 4) Five Vidyādharas or jīmyō assembly; 5) Maṇjuśrī; 6) Sarvanivāraṇa-viśkambhi or Jogaishō assembly; 7) Kṣitigarbha (Jizō); 8) Ākāśagarbha (Kokuzō); 9) Śākyamuni (Shaka); 10) Exterior Vajras (Gekongō). The five Shingon vidhis present these assemblies in the same order as the vidhis of Fa-chūn and the She-ta i-kuei as

* The two Lotus families
** The two Vajra families. The exterior Vajras sometimes are classified as a Vajra family.
The numbers 1–3 indicate the rank of each assembly.
STUDY OF THE GARBHA VIDHI

follows: 1) All-knowledge; 2) Avalokiteśvara; 3) Mañjuśrī; 4) Sarvanivāraṇa-viśkambhi; 5) Kṣitigarbha; 6) Akāśagarbha; 7) Vajrapāṇi; 8) Vidyādhāras; 9) Śākyamuni; 10) Exterior Vajras.

In all these vidhis the previous section on the “eight secret mudrās” and the evocation rite of the “all illuminating rays of 100 syllables” are correlated with the nine deities of the eight-petal assembly. Shingo and Raiyu write that in these abbreviated vidhis the Susiddhi assembly is not delineated because it is interpreted as being represented by Susiddhikara Bodhisattva, depicted in the Akāśagarbha assembly. This is how the vidhi’s account for the twelve assemblies.

Annen attempts to explain why the assemblies appear in different orders in the vidhis. When the yogin starts from the center of the mandala and moves outward as in the Kuang-da i-kuei, that is, from the first rank of the mandala (Eight petals, All-knowledge, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi and Vidyādhāras) to the second (Śākyamuni, Mañjuśrī, Sarvanivāraṇa-viśkambhi, Akāśagarbha and Kṣitigarbha) and the third rank (Exterior Vajras), this is a method of recitation beginning from the source and moving outward towards manifestations. In contrast, Annen and the Ta-p‘i-lu-che-na-shu say that a recitation beginning in the outer assemblies and moving inward represents a practice moving from a cause to an effect, i.e., this is a practice seeking the mind of enlightenment represented by the eight-petal assembly. Notwithstanding this “explanation,” the commentaries do not explain why the five Shingon vidhis proceed in the rank order 1-2-1-2-3, and this topic needs to be further investigated.

There are approximately 100 deities with their mudrās and mantras in the Shingon vidhis. Instead of giving examples of these it will suffice here to state the basic concept behind the structure of the MKG mandala as this relates to the vidhis. As the Ta-p‘i-lu-che-na-shu states, due to the Tathāgata’s empowerment the first rank of assemblies is manifested by virtue of the Buddha’s enlightenment. The second rank of great beings is manifested due to the practice of great compassion. The third rank appears by virtue of skillful means. Thus, in reciting the mantras and forming the mudrās of the deities in the mandala, the yogin cultivates compassion based on the bodhicitta and develops
skillful means to aid all living beings in attaining enlightenment.\textsuperscript{129}

X. Offerings and Dhārani Recitation – Siddhis

A distinctive feature of this section in the five Shingon \textit{vidhis} is that its structure and many of its rites (there are about thirty-five rites) are based on the \textit{Vajradhātu Vidhi} system introduced by Kūkai, and not the \textit{Mahāvairocana-sūtra}, although some major rites presented below are based on the \textit{sūtra}.\textsuperscript{130} The rites in this section clearly illustrate the accomplishments of the \textit{yogin} who has successfully summoned the deities to the \textit{manḍala}.

After all knowledge beings of the \textit{manḍala} have been attracted, drawn in, tied and subdued by the four attracting (\textit{samgraha}aqa) deities, bringing about non-duality between the \textit{yogin} and these knowledge beings, the offerings of powdered incense, flowers, stick incense, food and lights are offered to them. As interpreted by the \textit{Ta-p'i-lu-che-na shu}, Shingo and Kakuchō\textsuperscript{131}, powdered incense means purity, flowers represent all practices born from compassion, stick incense means the ability to penetrate the \textit{dharmadhātu} (i.e., in accord with each virtue cultivated a fire of wisdom burns and the breeze of liberation blows; in accord with the power of one’s vows of compassion one perfumes all spontaneously), food refers to the results of one’s practices, i.e., a supreme ambrosia (enlightenment) that is beyond \textit{samsāra} and lights refer to the \textit{yogin}'s boundless wisdom that illuminates all living beings. In some \textit{vidhis}, \textit{argha} water (feet-cooling water) heads this list, making six offerings. Kakuchō says these refer to the six perfected \textit{pāramitās} of charity, morality, patience, striving, \textit{samādhi} and insight.\textsuperscript{132} It is obvious that these offerings involve both “outer” and “inner offerings,” the latter representing the attainments of the \textit{yogin}.

The next series of rites, concluding the \textit{vidhi} in general, are interpreted as the turning of the Wheel of the Teaching by the \textit{yogin}.\textsuperscript{133} When either contemplating a circle of syllables on the body or reciting certain \textit{mantras}, the devotee is really the enlightened Mahāvairocana who is constantly teaching the esoteric doctrine. This is the implementation of skillful means for the enlightenment of all living beings.

The practice of the rite entitled “Lord of Twelve \textit{Mantras}”
involves visualizing twelve syllables on twelve parts of the body. Because all *vidhis* employ slightly different syllables, these varying schemes need not be individually interpreted. The twelve parts of the body are the head, brow, two ears, two shoulders, chest, back (or throat), stomach, loins and two feet. The *Ta-p'i-lu-che-na shu* says that by contemplating these letters on the body the *yogin* becomes the Buddha Vairocana, the essence of the *dharmaḥatu*, and turns the Wheel of the Teaching. As described by this commentary and Annen, the letters *a*, *ā*, *ām* and *ah*, meaning giving rise to the thought of enlightenment, cultivating it, realizing enlightenment and entering *Nirvāṇa*, are virtues found in the Buddha, Lotus and Vajra families. These families are represented by the letters *a*, *sa* and *va*, respectively. The scheme of twelve syllables resulting from this interpretation is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four a's</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>ā</th>
<th>ām</th>
<th>ah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddha a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>ā</td>
<td>ām</td>
<td>ah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotus sa</td>
<td>sa</td>
<td>sā</td>
<td>sam</td>
<td>sah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vajra va</td>
<td>va</td>
<td>vā</td>
<td>vam</td>
<td>vah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When he visualizes these twelve syllables on the twelve parts of the body, the *yogin* embodies the above four virtues as cultivated in each of the three families.

The above set of twelve syllables is also used in the following visualization, entitled the Three Families and Four Places. The syllables *a*, *sa* and *va*, referring to the three families, are contemplated on the top of the head and on the right and left shoulders, respectively. The *yogin* thus is the Lord of the Teachings of the three families. Then the syllables *a*, *sa* and *va* are contemplated on the head, *ā*, *sā* and *vā* are contemplated on the chest, *ām*, *sam*, and *vam* are visualized at the stomach and *ah*, *sah* and *vah* are visualized below the loins. These four groups of syllables represent the four *mandalas* (Great, Symbolic, Law and Action) realized by the *yogin*.

Following this visualization, the yogin contemplates
Mahāvairocana entering the body and the yogin entering Mahāvairocana (nyūga-ganyūātar). As explained in the Taizō bonji shidai\textsuperscript{138} the yogin

"... visualizes in the mind a full moon disc with nine concentric layers\textsuperscript{139} (these are the abodes of the nine deities – in the center of the mandala). Above this is the syllable \textit{a}. Because the syllable \textit{a} (a symbol of Mahāvairocana) is fundamentally unborn and cannot be comprehended the intrinsic nature of my mind also cannot be comprehended; the minds of living beings also are fundamentally unborn and cannot be comprehended; the realm of all buddhas also is fundamentally unborn and cannot be comprehended; buddhas and living beings are not two and are equal. For this reason I am Mahāvairocana and Mahāvairocana is myself."

The devotee now recites the mantra of Mahāvairocana in the MKG mandalā: \textit{a vi ra hūṃ kham}. Then follows the empowerment of the Buddha’s mother (also called Buddha’s Eyes because the five eyes, i.e., wisdoms, are perfected). This is also practiced in the Vajradhātu Vidhi (mudrā no. 17). The two index fingers touch the backs of the upper joints of the two middle fingers. The tips of the two little fingers touch one another. The two thumbs touch the middle joints of the two middle fingers. (Various explanations exist concerning how this mudrā represents five eyes.\textsuperscript{140}) The forehead, right and left shoulders, chest and throat are empowered with this mudrā. The mantra to be recited is: \textit{namo bhagavat-uṣṇīṣa om ru ru sphuru jvala tiṣṭha siddha-locani sarvārtha-sādhani svāhā} (Homage to the uṣṇīṣa of the Bhagavat! Om Speak! Speak! Fill up! Radiate! Remain! Oh, gaze of the accomplished one! Oh, one who makes achieve all aims! svāhā).

The five Shingon vidhīs conclude with further recitations, the transfer of the merits of the practice to all living beings, the farewell to the knowledge beings and their return to the Ākāśa realm, the dissolving of the mandala, and the departure of the devotee from the shrine.

XI. Concluding Remarks

In this brief survey I have attempted to identify the major components of the Garbha Vidhi system introduced to Japan by
Kūkai. The five *vidhis* judged to be representative of this system are long manuals, and without some knowledge of their structure and components the rationale behind the ritual-meditation process is otherwise difficult to understand. We have seen that the *kalpa* is a composite practice. Its structure is based on *chüan* seven of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, and specific rites are taken from *chüans* four, five and six as well. Based on the explanations of authoritative commentaries I have labeled the major sections of the *vidhi* system as follows: 1) Rites of Purification; 2) Visualizing Oneself as Vajrasattva; 3) Visualizing the Container World; 4) Realization of Mahāvairocana’s virtues; 5) Aspects of Enlightenment; 6) *Siddhis*. As a result of this survey, the character and natural progression of the meditation process becomes evident.

This process can be summarized as follows. The *yogin* begins by purifying and protecting his body, speech and mind. Without the removal of defilements, both physical and mental, the proper environment for the visualization of deities is not established. The *yogin* then visualizes Vajrasattva (another name for the *Tathāgata Mahāvairocana*), the Lord of the three families. Next, the *yogin* generates the residence of Mahāvairocana (the MKG mandala) at the summit of Mount Sumeru and visualizes Mahāvairocana and all the deities of the mandala residing in this palace. Thus far, all visualizations have been of symbolic-beings, i.e., these are products of the mind with which the *yogin* temporarily identifies. Mount Sumeru is in the Akaniṣṭha heaven, the highest of the form realms, and here clearly is also a product of the mind. Once this mandala has been protected the knowledge-beings are summoned and they descend into this container world. The *yogin* then unites the knowledge- and symbolic-beings and attains various powers not discussed in the manual. Once these knowledge-beings descend, the *yogin’s* vows to attain enlightenment, etc., can be fulfilled. Presumably the mandala is visualized in the Akaniṣṭha heaven because it is here that the knowledge-beings are able to take on form. These knowledge-beings are offered food, incense, etc., both of the physical and mental varieties, as explained in the commentaries. Finally, the *yogin* recites *dhāranīs*. These are recited while dwelling on the shapes of syllables visualized on different parts of the body. At the conclusion of the ritual the same visualizations that were performed to establish the mandala are performed again, this time with the goal of
dissolving the visualization. The protective space net, fire enclosure, etc. are removed, the knowledge-beings are bid farewell and the yogin dwells in sūnyatā.\textsuperscript{141}

It is obvious that all visualizations are accompanied by external, ritual actions. These represent, but are not substitutions for, the visualization (e.g., the mudrā of “the budding mind of enlightenment” represents the state of the mind of the yogin). On the other hand, even when the goal of attaining enlightenment for oneself and others is intensely generated, if this goal is pursued without ritual contemplation, it cannot be rapidly achieved. The Shingon tradition maintains that when the mudrās, mantras and visualizations together are properly performed, only then can the vidhi be successfully accomplished. The practitioners of the Shidō Kegyō system also believe that one cannot really understand these practices or their effects just by reading about them as we have done here. The way of forming a mudrā, the way of ringing a bell, etc. have to be learned from a teacher. Of course, without prerequisite training, visualization cannot be practiced either. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this study has clarified the contents and theory of the Garbha Vidhi.

**MUDRĀS**

![Mudras Diagram]

1  2  3  4  5  6, 11

7  8  9  10  12  13

14  15  16  17

NOTES

Abbreviations


T – Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō


1. The titles for these evocation rites, or *vidhis* (Jp.: *giki*), as illustrated in this paper have always varied in Japan. *Garbha* is my translation for the Japanese word *taizo*. The *Mikkyō Daijiten* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1983), pp. 1489, 1492, translates *taizo* as both *garbha* and *garbhakosa*. Four *vidhis* attributed to Kūkai also use the word *garbhakosa*. The word *taizo* is found in the Chinese translation of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* (T. 18, No. 848) and until a Sanskrit version of this scripture is found or until all references to this word in Tibetan and Chinese commentaries are analysed the restoration of the correct Sanskrit will be problematic.


4. The Ono branch of early Shingon Buddhism interprets these *gakahō* initiations in this way. In contrast, the Hiroswa branch interprets Kūkai’s *gakahō* initiations as *denbō* initiations (transmission of the teaching), which empower one as a master (*ācārya*). The Hiroswa branch believes Kūkai altogether received three *denbō* consecrations. TS, pp. 107-09.

5. See Kūkai’s record (the original is in Kūkai’s own hand) of those he personally initiated into the *Vajradhātu* and *Mahā-karunā-garbha mandalas* at Takaosanji, the *Takao kanjōki*. Kōbō Daishi Zenshū, Vol. 3, edited by Sofu senyōkai (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1911), p. 620ff.

6. Kūkai gives in his *Shingonshū shogaku kyōritsun mon mokuroku* (KDZ, vol. 1, pp. 105-23) a list of the sutras, commentaries, etc. he required his disciples to study. The list contains sixty-two sutras belonging to the *Tattva-sangraha* lineage but only seven sutras belonging to the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* lineage.

8. The *Shingon denju sakuhō* ascribed to Kūkai (KDZ, vol. 4, p. 417) prescribes the following set of practices: 1) *Kechien kanjō* (for establishing a personal relationship with one deity); 2) *Jūhachidō*; 3) *Issonbō* (offering rite to one deity); 4) *Kongōkai*; 5) *Taizōkai*; 6) *Goma*. When the court sanctioned three Shingon nembudōsha just before Kūkai’s death they were required to master, among other things, an *Issonbō* of one deity from the MKG and one deity from the Vajradhātu *mandala*, the *Jūhachidō* rite, the *Bonji shiten sho* (a textbook on the Siddham letters Kūkai introduced from China but which now is lost), etc., but not the *Goma*. KDZ, Vol. 5, p. 92. As Kūkai’s sect grew the need arose eventually for a structured discipline. TS, p. 23ff.


10. The Hirosawa branch of the Shingon sect, on the basis of the *Kongōchō yuga gomaki* attributed to Kūkai, practices the *Goma* before the *Taizōkai shidai*. The Ono branch, on the basis of the *Kenritsu mandara goma giki*, also attributed to Kūkai, practices these four rites in the order given. TS, p. 33ff.


15. E.g., Gōhō (1306-1362) states this in this *Taizōkai Nenju Shidai Yōshū*, *Shingonshū Zensho* (hereafter abbreviated *SZ*), vol. 25 (Tōkyō: Shingonshū Zensho Kankōkai Shibō, 1984), p. 444.


18. KDZ, Vol. 2, pp. 247-86; also called *Garbha Ku* (sic: ko)ša dharma.
20. KDZ, Vol. 2, pp. 342-388; also called *Garbhakusa* dharma, *Taizōkai shidai*, *Usugami shidai* or *Atsugami shidai*.
21. KDZ, Vol. 2, pp. 396-451; also called *Garbhakosa* dharma or *Taizō Usugami shidai*.
23. KDZ, Vol. 2, pp. 454-481; also called *Taizōkai nenju shidai*.
26. KDZ, Vol. 4, pp. 665-694; also called *Garbhakuša* dharma or *Taizōkai bizai shidai*.
27. In the ninth century the Tendai sect also formed a *Shido Kegyō* system. An example dating from 1272 is found in Horiou Toki's *Japanese Mudrā based on the Si-do-in-dzou*.
28. T. 18, No. 850.
29. T. 18, No. 851.
31. T. 18, No. 853.
32. T. 18, Nos. 854, 856, 857, 859.
33. T. 55, No. 2176, p. 115c.
35. See *Mikkyō Daijiten*, p. 850, for a short biography.
36. T. 39, No. 1796. Śubhakarasiṃha's oral explanations are here recorded by I-hsing. I-hsing also adds his own interpretations.
37. Sixteen *vidhis* were compared. These included the eight traditionally attributed to Kūkai as well as the following *vidhis*: *Taizōkai shidai* (KDDZ, Vol. 1, pp. 519-575) and *Taizō kubi shidai* (KDDZ, Vol. 1, pp. 271-74), both attributed to Jichie; the *Taizō daihō shidai* (KDDZ, Vol. 2, pp. 1-74) and *Taizō kubi shidai* (KDDZ, Vol. 1, pp. 75-79), both attributed to Shinga, another of Kūkai's disciples; the *Taizō daishidai*, attributed to Engyō (799-852) (KDDZ, Vol. 3, pp. 165-346); Yūkai's (1345-1416) *Taizōkai shidai* (T. 78, No. 2509, p. 901ff.); Gengō's (911-955) *Taizōkai nenju shiki*, found in TS, pp. 400-516 or *Kokuyaku Seiyō Taikei, Tōmitsu bu*, Vol. 2, pp. 1-144; and Iwahara Taishin's *Taizōkai nenju shidai* (Kōyasan: Matsumoto Nishindō, 1976).
38. SZ, Vol. 25.
39. The *Taizōkai shidai* (KDDZ, Vol. 1) attributed to Jichie and the *Taizō daihō shidai* (KDDZ, Vol. 2) attributed to Shinga.
40. For a recent study of *dhāraṇīs* and mantras see Ujike Kakusho, *Darani no Sekai* (Osaka: Tōhō shuppanshi, 1984).
42. TS, pp. 71-72; SZ, Vol. 25, p. 4.
43. T. 18, No. 880.
44. See Iwahara Teishin's manual listed above in ft. nt. 37.
46. T. 84, No. 2701. This, however is not a grammar book on Sanskrit.

Kūkai interprets śūnyatā in reference to the Siddham letters he lists.
48. The *Mikkyō Daṣjitien* (p. 1488ff.) lists fifty-two different *vidhis*.

50. By maintaining the most essential contents and structure of the Garbha Vidhi the abbreviated manuals must have been considered as effective as the longer ones. The shorter *vidhis* always reduce the number of evocation rites to the deities in the MKG. There are no comparable short Garbha Vidhis in the Taishō canon.

51. T. 75, No. 2399, p. 633c; T. 75, No. 2404, p. 806c.
52. T. 75, No. 2390 (Taizō daithō tai juki), p. 54a.

55. T. 18, No. 848, p. 45ff.
56. T. 61, No. 2232 (*Renge taizōkai giki kaishaku*), p. 865c.
57. T. 75, No. 2404 (Taizōkai shōki), p. 799b.

59. T. 18, No. 848, pp. 24-30. Ueda has discussed the ten mudrās which alone differ. See his "Daishi gosaku Taizō shidai no Kōsatsu (1)," pp. 54-55.
63. There is another commentary of interest by Śubhākaraśimha's Korean disciple Pul ka sa ae (Jp.: Fukashigi). See T. 39, No. 1797. This interprets chūan seven of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*.

64. T. 61, No. 2231.
65. T. 79, No. 2554; Taizō nyū rishō.
66. SZ, Vol. 25.
67. T. 75, No. 2398 (Taizō sammitsushō); T. 75, No. 2399 (Sammitsu shō ryoken); T. 75, No. 2404 (Taizōkai shōki).

68. T. 75, No. 2385 (Taizōkai koshinki).
69. T. 75, No. 2390 (Taizōkai daithōtai juki); See also T. 75, No. 2397.
70. Also read were the following commentaries: Kakuban's (1095-1145) *Taizōkai sata* (T. 79, No. 2579); Gengo's *Taizōkai sanbu hishaku* (T. 78, No. 2472) and the Himitsudan tohō daijōrjō jōnenju shoki (T. 75, No. 2405), anonymous.

72. T. 79, No. 2534, p. 145b. Raiyu himself refers to the famous passage of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* (T. No. 848, p. 1b-c) which, in describing enlighten-
ment, says "Bodhicitta is the cause, great compassion is the root and skilful means is the end."
73. T. 39, p. 722b.
75. T. 78, No. 2472, p. 74.
76. SZ, Vol. 25, pp. 8-9.
78. T. 75, p. 807.
80. This latter point is discussed by Kūkai in his Benken mitsu nikyō ron, KDZ, Vol. 1, pp. 474-506.
82. Yoshida Keiko’s Kontai Ryōbu Shingon Geki (Kyōto: Heirakuji shoten, 1978) and TS were referred to for an understanding of the Siddham mantras in these vidhis. All translations are my own.
83. Killing, stealing, adultery, lying, immoral language, slander, equivocation, coveting and false views.
84. The pictures of the mudrās were taken from TS. There are often two or three variations for one mudrā. Those depicted are meant to be representative only. The interpretation for these mudrās was based on Ōyama Kōjun’s Himitsu Bukkyō. Although he does not acknowledge it, Ōyama bases his interpretations on standard commentaries. For example, his explanations of the mudrās in the section entitled “Preliminary Expedients” are based on Raiyu’s Kongōkai hotsu-e sho (T. 79, No. 2533); Kōzen’s (1120-1203) Kongōkai sho, SZ, Vol. 24, pp. 62-204; Donjaku’s (1674-1742) Kongōkai shidai shiki, SZ, Vol. 24, pp. 205-372, etc. A key to the meaning of the fingers of each hand can be found in Mikkyō Jiten, p. 347, Taizō Zuzō VIII, T. No. 3168, pp. 298-99, and Dale E. Saunders’ Mudrā: A Study of Symbolic Gestures in Japanese Buddhist Sculpture (Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 32.
85. T. 39, p. 714.
87. T. 79, No. 2534, p. 147.
88. T. 39, p. 675c.
89. T. 79, No. 2519.
91. T. 39, p. 715a; T. 75, No. 2385, p. 2b.
92. T. 75, 2385, p. 3b; T. 75, No. 2404, p. 800b.
93. SZ, Vol. 25, p. 73; TS, p. 415. Also called Chi ken in, Mudrā of the Knowledge fist. Cf. Saunders, Mudrā, p. 102ff.
94. T. 61, No. 2232, p. 571; Cf. T. 79, No. 2519, p. 33.
95. T. No. 848, p. 30ff, 47ff.
96. SZ, Vol. 25, p. 81; Cf. T. 75, No. 2399, p. 635a.
97. Mikkō Daijiten, p. 600b.
98. T. 61, No. 2231, p. 573.
100. T. No. 848, p. 40a.
103. KDZ, Vol. 2, p. 252. This is quoted as an example of this visualization in the early vidhis of the Shingon school.
104. Although the Mahāvairocana-sūtra and its commentary discuss thirteen assemblies, the MKG mandala as it is drawn in Japan has twelve assembles. See Toganoo Shoun, Mandara no Kenkyū, p. 102. When the four Vidyādhāras of the Susiddhi Assembly are separately drawn, they become the thirteenth assembly.
105. T. 79, No. 2534, p. 150.
106. T. 61, No. 2231, p. 572b.
107. T. No. 848, pp. 36c-37b.
109. This explanation is repeated by all the major commentaries.
110. T. 61, No. 2221, p. 583c.
111. SZ, Vol. 25, p. 130.
112. Raiyu further explains this. T. 79, No. 2534, p. 150.
113. T. 18, No. 869 (The Chin-kang-ting-ching yu-ch'ieh shih-pa-hue chih kuei), p. 284c, 1.22, also refers to the deities of the Vajradhātu Mandala as knowledge-beings. Kūkai also calls them knowledge-beings in T. 61, No. 2221, p. 21 (Kongōchōkyō kaidai), while quoting from T. 18, No. 869.
114. Donjaku describes this process in reference to the Vajradhātu Vidhi. See his Kongōchō daikyō shiki (T. 61, No. 2225, p. 337cff.).
117. T. 78, No. 2472, p. 120. Cf. TS, pp. 498-99.
118. T. 75, No. 2405, p. 807.
119. T. 61, No. 2231, p. 574.
120. T. 39, p. 714b.
121. T. 79, No. 2519, p. 34; TS, p. 497.
122. T. 18, pp. 26c-30.
125. T. 61, No. 2231, p. 586b; T. 79, No. 2534, p. 162.
126. T. 75, No. 2390, p. 110ff.
130. Raiyu points this out in his commentary. T. 79, No. 2534, p. 172c. Those rites based on the Kongokai shidai (See KDZ, Vol. 2, p. 232ff.) include the various offerings discussed in this article, the stanza of three powers, (also found in the Mahāvairocana-sūtra), empowerment of Buddha’s mother, the entrance of Mahāvairocana into the yogin and vice-versa (Jp.: nyūga-ganyū), etc.
133. T. 75, No. 2405, p. 808; T. 75, No. 2404, p. 805.
136. The Taizō honji shidai states that the yogin should visualize am on the top of the head and on the right ear, ah on the brow, kham on the left ear, sam on the right shoulder and sah on the left, ham on the throat, hah on the chest, ram at the stomach, rah at the loins, van at the right foot and vah at the left foot. This scheme is based on T. 18, No. 848, chuan 5. See Yoshida Keikō, Kontai Ryōbu Shingon Geki, p. 592ff.
137. T. 39, p. 724c.
139. There are various traditions concerning this visualization. TS, p. 513; SZ, Vol. 25, p. 506-507.
140. Ōyama Kōjun, Himitsu Bukkyō, p. 200.

Kanji

a. 脇
b. 儀軌
c. 大悲胎蔵曼茶曼羅
d. 金剛界大曼茶蔵
e. 賑果
f. 青龍手
g. 独
h. 信法
i. 面部
j. 太日権
k. 金剛頂種字
l. 四度加行
m. 十八遍念誦次第
n. 金剛界“...”
o. 靠壁“...”
p. 蓮華念誦次第
q. 昼夜
r. 能薰八字次第
s. “略次第”
t. “普體五法次第”
u. 作禮方便次第
v. 玄靜
w. 五輪投七字次第
x. 勃氣発在次第
Contents of the Taikai Hûm ji Shidai

This vidhi (see KDZ, vol. 4, pp. 665-695) is considered to be representative of the early Garbha vidhi system introduced to Japan by Kûkai. Below, the sections of this vidhis as outlined in this study are delineated. Due to the length of such a vidhi, the use of these section headings is essential for a clear understanding of the meditation process. Those rites discussed in this study are marked with an asterisk.

Rites of Purification

1. 修解<br>2. 房中濕*<br>3. 観覧 Hûm*<br>4. 三身<br>5. 薬灌

6. 作灌法<br>7. 清戒<br>8. 清三業*<br>9. 三部被甲*<br>10. 加托香末
11. 加对供具
12. 淨地 *
13. 洗澡 *
14. 三密護身
15. 觀佛
16. 安座起
17. 無障
18. 安剛持盈禮
19. 表白神分
20. 一切恭敬
21. 入覺三時耶
22. 洗界生
23. 九方便 *
24. 勵請
25. 王十願

Visualizing Oneself as Vajrasattva
26. 背供養三力
27. 視力重耳(聞)字
28. 聽(聞) 聞(聞)字觀 *
29. 地結
30. 四方結
31. 入覺三時耶 *
32. 洗界生 *
33. 轉法輪 *
34. 金刚錐
35. 鎖(arm)字觀 *
36. 大力
37. 不動
38. 地神
39. 如來等 *

Visualizing the Container World
40. 灌淨
41. 聆日偈
42. 呼請
43. 拍地
44. 王輪觀 *
45. 巨光王 *
46. 三生

47. 黑垢眼
48. 滿足足
49. 道場觀 *
50. 大藏 *
51. 靈藏 *
52. 禪藏
53. 菩藏
54. 大羯磨印
55. 王色界意
56. 宮殿觀 *
57. 會空觀
58. 王力偈
59. 小金剛輪
60. 請諸偈 *
61. 名題伽
62. 入覺三時耶
63. 不動結護
64. 無遮*
65. 師魔

66. 大界 * FOUR *

Visualizing the Container World
67. 空穢 *
68. 火院 *
69. 末三摩耶
70. 善根
71. 菩薩
72. 垂 *
73. 金*
74. 大威德生 * #74-81
75. 金刚不壞 *
76. 密藏 * the eight
77. 密德 *
78. 分生 *
79. 法生 *
80. 世尊 *
81. 猛 *(102)
82. 菩薩
83. 無所不至 *
84. 百光王

Realization of Mahāvairocana’s virtues

*Translation of Sanskrit terms and phrases.*
Assemblies of MKG Manila

Aspects of Enlightenment Rengebuin

119. 瑞日庄

120. 売大

121. 裏

122. 名代

123. 仏壇

124. 馬頭

125. 地蔵

Monjuin

126. 名残

127. 之相

128. 前塔

129. 言室

130. 鳥波

131. 地蔵

132. 湯治

133. 調奉教

Jogaihōin

134. 除蒜

135. 施與

136. 綾悪趣

137. 妙善悪

138. 大恩生

139. 賛南閣

140. 除熱懲

141. 不思議

Jizōin

142. 地蔵

143. 賛南

144. 賛南

145. 揚地

146. 賛南

147. 妙善

Kokuzōin

148. 虚空無也

149. 虚空

150. 虚空

151. 行悪

152. 仏住

Kongōshuin

153. 朝堂院

154. 仏堂
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Text Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>155.</td>
<td>STUDY OF THE GARBAH VIDHI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156.</td>
<td>金剛鑷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157.</td>
<td>金剛針</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158.</td>
<td>金剛髻</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaikain</td>
<td>159. 藥能勝</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160.</td>
<td>相同</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161.</td>
<td>寬之</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162.</td>
<td>萬相</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163.</td>
<td>一切頂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimyöin</td>
<td>164. 不動印</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>165.</td>
<td>降三世</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gekongöin</td>
<td>166. 如末頂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167.</td>
<td>白華蓋</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168.</td>
<td>月頂頂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>169.</td>
<td>蝴蝶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170.</td>
<td>除障</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171.</td>
<td>冬聚</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172.</td>
<td>廣生</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>173.</td>
<td>勝生</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174.</td>
<td>無量勝</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175.</td>
<td>摩尼善相</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176.</td>
<td>摩頂眼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177.</td>
<td>虎能勝</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178.</td>
<td>妃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>179.</td>
<td>藥菩薩</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180.</td>
<td>嘗在天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181.</td>
<td>萬華</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>182.</td>
<td>九華</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183.</td>
<td>滿喜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184.</td>
<td>尊者</td>
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