

An Annotated Translation of Kūkai's *Secret Key to the Heart Sūtra*

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Kōbō Daishi Kūkai (弘法大師空海, 774–835), in his text titled *Hannya-shingyō hiken, jo awasetari* (般若心經祕鍵并序), or the *Secret Key to the Heart Sūtra, with an Introduction*, provides a deeply esoteric interpretation of the *Heart Sūtra*, an interpretation that is unique within the extensive literature of the *Heart Sūtra*. Kūkai's thesis might be seen as revolving around three closely interrelated main points: (1) that the apparently exoteric *sūtras* contain esoteric meanings which can be read by those who know how to read them, (2) that the *Heart Sūtra* reveals the esoteric inner own-realization or *samādhi* of the bodhisattva Prajñā and forms the *dharmamanḍala* of that deity, and (3) that as such it holds within it all the teachings of Buddhism, and is not simply an abbreviated version of the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.

1. Exoteric *sūtras* can be read as esoteric Buddhist teachings

Kūkai says that the exoteric Buddhist *teachings* are revealed by the *nirmānakāya*, and are provisional and adjusted to the receptivity and capacity of the audience,¹ while esoteric Buddhism is preached directly by the Dharmakāya Mahāvairocana for his own enjoyment, and is not adjusted to the audience but is rather the final truth.²

¹ See Kūkai's *Ben kenmitsu nikyō ron* (TKZ 3.109):

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。

The teachings of the *nirmānakāya* are adapted to what is needed, like giving the most appropriate and effective medicine. The *saṃbhogakāya* manifested for the liberation of others conceals his inner realization, and does not directly teach it.

² In *Kan'en no sho* Kūkai writes (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 316–317):

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。故金剛頂經說。自受法樂故。說此理趣。不同應化佛之所說。

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 *Vajrasākhara* and the 100,000-verse *Mahāvairocana*. These [esoteric] *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 [as a *svasaṃbhogakāya*]. Therefore, because the [100,000-verse] *Vajrasākhara* is the preaching of the Dharmakāya for his own enjoyment, it discusses this truth [of the three identities of your own mind, the Buddha's mind, and the minds of all beings]. It is not the same as the teachings of the *saṃbhogakāyas* or *nirmānakāyas*.

However, for Kūkai the line between exoteric and esoteric Buddhist *texts* is not so clear-cut as might be surmised from the above. Exoteric Buddhist texts can be read as esoteric Buddhist teachings provided the reader is able to decipher them correctly. Kūkai writes in his *Konshō-kyō himitsu kada*:³

The teachings of the Tathāgata always have both superficial exoteric and deep esoteric meanings. The exoteric is what is ordinarily discussed. The esoteric is what is explained in the secret treasury. The content of the exoteric schools concerns what historical masters have said. The teachings of the esoteric treasury are not yet understood in this country. Looking now [at the exoteric *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra*], it seems on the surface to discuss the exoteric, but in actuality it establishes its teachings through mantra.

There are, of course, overtly esoteric or tantric texts, and overtly exoteric or non-tantric texts. Examples of the former would of course be the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, and so on. Examples of the latter would include the *Heart Sūtra* and other Prajñāpāramitā texts, *Lotus Sūtra*, *Avataṃsaka*, *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, and so on. Kūkai's point is that the overtly exoteric *sūtras* contain both exoteric and esoteric meanings. Exoteric teachings can never be wrong because they are preached by the Buddha, and by definition the Buddha only speaks truth, though that truth may be provisional or final. The exoteric meanings of exoteric *sūtras* are the surface meanings, which are the ones commentators typically discuss. However, Kūkai says that by reading such texts deeply in a particular way, the esoteric meanings become clear. Specifically, in his *Hannya-shingyō hiken* Kūkai discusses the apparently exoteric *Heart Sūtra* as a text with deep and hidden esoteric teachings.

Buddhist schools that base themselves on a superficial interpretation of exoteric texts, and do not see or discuss the hidden esoteric significances, are thus exoteric schools. Kūkai writes in his *Kan'en no sho*:⁴

From the *nirmāṇakāya*'s *sūtras* above to the treatises and commentaries below [exoteric Buddhism], 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.

Kūkai says in the present text (I.4), "There have been many commentators on the *Heart Sūtra*, but none have yet revealed this hidden secret." In answering a question (III) as to why he would now teach these esoteric meanings when no one has done so before, Kūkai responds, "Whether or not a

³ See Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 246. 夫如來說法必俱顯密二意。顯則常途所談是也。密即祕藏所論即是也。顯家之趣歷代口實。密藏之旨此土未解。今見此經傍說顯義正以真言立宗。所以舉自宗義以樹頌詞。冀博達之士莫致疑恠。于時弘仁四年季冬之月也。

⁴ See Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 314. 上從應化經。下至論章疏。韞自證而不說。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。

teaching should be given depends on the capacity of the recipient of that teaching. Teaching or remaining silent are therefore both in agreement with the Buddha's intention." He also explains that he now explicitly teaches the esoteric meanings hidden in the *Heart Sūtra* out of compassion for those ready to hear these truths (I.1): "Regarding the *samādhi* of this deity (Prajñā), out of compassion I will not follow [in this text the example of the other commentators on the *Heart Sūtra*]."

Kūkai sees the *key* to discovering the esoteric Buddhist teachings within the apparently exoteric *Heart Sūtra* as the ability to look deeply below the surface to perceive the Buddha's true intention. Exoteric or esoteric is ultimately not a matter of what the text says on the surface, but of how deeply it is read. In his section on questions (III) Kūkai says:

The eyes of a great physician see [the plants growing by] the wayside each as medicine [where others see only weeds]. A man who knows gemstones sees jewels [where others see only] rocks and stones. ... [Whether the content of a text is] exoteric or esoteric depends on the [discriminative ability of] the reader. It is not a matter of the sounds and letters [of that text].

Kūkai provides some hints and basic suggestions about how to read the esoteric aspects of the *Heart Sūtra* in this text, saying, like Confucius, that he will provide "one corner" (II.5) and expects his students to grasp from that all the implications, or the other "three corners." One approach Kūkai uses to demonstrate that the *Heart Sūtra* is in reality an esoteric discussion is his analysis of the title.⁵

(II.1) In explaining the meanings of the titles [of *sūtras*] in general, all [are described as] having a person, a teaching, and/or an analogy. This title contains the name of the bodhisattva, Mahā-Prajñāpāramitā. This is the person. This bodhisattva has a *dharmamaṇḍala* mantra *samādhi*-gate, in which each letter is a teaching. Each word in the *sūtra* is a mundane and superficial word, but each is also a profound word of suchness. This is the analogy. ... (II.2.3) What we call the *Heart of Prajñā* (the *Heart Sūtra*) is the body and heart-*dhāraṇī* and so on of the bodhisattva [Prajñā]. The mantra of this *sūtra* is this great heart-*dhāraṇī*. The *Heart of Prajñā* receives its name from this heart-mantra.

The usual interpretation of the words in the title of the *Heart Sūtra* is to see *prajñāpāramitā* as the teaching and *hṛdaya* or "heart" as an analogy, suggesting that the *Heart Sūtra* is the essence of the long *Prajñāpāramitā* texts. Kūkai reinterprets the title as containing all three terms. *Prajñāpāramitā* is a person, the bodhisattva Prajñā, not the teaching. *Heart* for Kūkai is not an analogy, but is the teaching—the heart-mantra—each letter and word of which expands into the seven teachings Kūkai analyzes below. And finally, because each letter of each word of the *sūtra* has infinite and profound meanings, they are all "analogies" or expressions of suchness.

⁵ Refer to notes 69 and 70.

Perhaps the two most important reasons an esoteric reading of the *Heart Sūtra* is possible is that it is actually an exposition of the inner awakening of the bodhisattva Prajñā, and because the words and letters of the *sūtra* contain infinite meanings.

2. The *Heart Sūtra* is the *samādhi* of the bodhisattva Prajñā.

Samādhi in exoteric Buddhism is a one-pointed, undistracted concentration. In esoteric Buddhism, *samādhi* specifically means the state realized through esoteric Buddhist practices such as visualizing a moon or sun disc, repeating mantras, practicing the three mysteries yoga, and so on. Kūkai writes in his *Sanmayakai jo*:⁶

If they were to visualize the light of the sun or moon discs in meditation, recite the sounds and letters of mantras, give rise to the empowerment of the three mysteries, or practice the sublime activities of the four *jñānamudrās*, then they [would know that the] light of Mahāvairocana extends everywhere throughout the *dharmadhātu*. The hindrances caused by ignorance will immediately return to the oceanic vastness of mind. Ignorance immediately transforms into wisdom, and poison suddenly becomes medicine. The deities of the five families [Vajradhātu maṇḍala] and the three families [Mahākaraṇḍgarbhodbhava maṇḍala] manifest perfectly in infinite numbers, and buddhas as numberless as the particles of dust in the world or drops of water in the ocean suddenly spring forth. Abiding in this *samādhi* is called the secret *samādhi*.

In esoteric Buddhism, from the practitioner's aspect, esoteric *samādhi* is the means to realize the enlightened states of the various deities. From the viewpoint of the deities themselves, *samādhi* is the direct expression of the inner own-realization of a buddha or bodhisattva, which is the highest truth realized and also personified by that deity. The differentiating characteristics of a specific esoteric *samādhi* are unique to the vows or special qualities of the deity. Further, because according to Shingon teachings each individual deity is a manifestation of an aspect of the complete wisdom of Mahāvairocana, the *samādhi* of each individual deity is also a gateway leading to the ultimate realization of Dharmakāya, which is absolute truth unadjusted for time, place, or audience. For Kūkai, this can be found within any *sūtra*, whether superficially exoteric or esoteric. His approach is to see any Buddhist text in the deepest sense as a presentation of the *samādhi* of a buddha or bodhisattva, and the overall text as a *dharmamaṇḍala* of that deity. Being able to see that makes the teaching of any text esoteric. In his *Sokushin jōbutsu gi*, Kūkai writes:⁷

Also, Nāgārjuna explains in his *Putixin lun*, “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.” “This *samādhi* is taught” refers to the Dharmakāya's *samādhi* of own-realization.

⁶ See Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 349–350 若能觀日月之輪光。誦聲字之真言。發三密之加持。揮四印之妙用。則大日之光明廓周法界。無明之障者忽歸心海。無明忽爲明毒藥乍爲藥。五部三部之尊森羅圓現。刹塵海滴之佛忽然涌出。住此三昧名祕密三摩地。

⁷ See Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 34–35. 又龍猛菩薩菩提心論說。真言法中卽身成佛故是說三摩地法。於諸教中闕而不書。是說三摩地者。法身自證三摩地。諸教者他受用身所說顯教也。

Such teachings on the esoteric *samādhi* of deities are more or less explicitly written in the esoteric texts, but are not written plainly in the exoteric texts. Nevertheless, Kūkai describes superficially exoteric *sūtras* in many of his texts as giving esoteric teachings, seeing them as presentations of the esoteric *samādhis* of various Buddhist deities. In his *Saishō-kyō kaidai* Kūkai writes:⁸

The *samādhis* of each of the buddhas and bodhisattvas are different. The *Avataṃsaka* is the *samādhi* of Samantabhadra. The *Prajñāpāramitā* is the *samādhi* of Mañjuśrī. The *Lotus Sūtra* is the *samādhi* of the lotus [family] (Avalokiteśvara). ... This [*Suvarṇaprabhāsa*]-*sūtra* is the *samādhi* of the jewel family. ... Ruciraketu and Ākāśagarbha are the deities of the jewel family.

Kūkai also interprets the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* as the esoteric *samādhi* of Mañjuśrī in his *Kongō hannya-haramitsu-kyō kaidai*, and says that the sixteen sections of that *sūtra* can also be seen as the *samādhis* of the sixteen bodhisattvas of the Vajraśekhara:⁹

The *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (T 220) in 600 fascicles, sixteen assemblies, and 282 chapters is altogether the *samādhi*-gate of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. The sixteen assemblies are the *samādhi*-gates of the sixteen great bodhisattvas of the Vajradhātu. ... These *samādhi*-gates of the sixteen great bodhisattvas encompass all Dharma teachings.

As written texts, these are not only the *samādhis* of Buddhist deities, but also form their *dharma-maṇḍalas* among the four maṇḍalas. In *Sokushin jōbutsu gi* Kūkai explains:¹⁰

Third, the *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*.

In his *Kyōkyō kaidai*, Kūkai writes, “The *Dharma*[-*maṇḍala*] is the *bijas*, *samādhi*-gates, and so on of the various deities.”¹¹ In his *Bonmōkyō kaidai*, Kūkai writes that, “All the *sūtras* and teachings are the *samādhis* and *dharma-maṇḍalas* of each of the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and so on.”¹² In *Kongō hannya-haramitsu-kyō kaidai*:¹³

Now, based on the esoteric treasury, the Vajraśekhara, and so on, the *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* is the name of a person (the deity whose *samādhi* is taught). Among the thirty-seven deities [of the Vajradhātu] there are four buddha-mothers. They are the

⁸ TKZ 4.236. 諸佛菩薩三摩地之法各各不同。華嚴者普賢之三摩地。般若者文殊之三摩地。法華則蓮華三昧。佛頂則羯磨三昧。... 今此經者寶部三摩地。... 妙幢虛空竝是寶部之尊。

⁹ TKZ 4.260. 大般若一部六百卷十六會二百八十二品竝是文殊菩薩之三摩地門。十六會則金剛界十六大菩薩三摩地門也。... 此十六大菩薩三摩地法門能攝一切法教。Compare also TKZ 4.256 in the same text.

¹⁰ See Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 54. 三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。

¹¹ TKZ 4.98. 法者諸尊種子及三摩地等法門。

¹² TKZ 4.222. 一切經法皆是一一佛菩薩等三摩地法曼荼羅身也。

¹³ TKZ 4.256. 今據祕藏金剛頂等。金剛般若波羅蜜多者亦是人名。三十七尊中有四佛母。所謂金剛波羅蜜菩薩。寶波羅蜜菩薩。法波羅蜜菩薩。羯磨波羅蜜菩薩是也。今是經則初尊三摩地法曼荼羅。

bodhisattvas Vajra-pāramitā, Ratna-pāramitā, Dharma-pāramitā, and Karma-pāramitā. This *sūtra* is the *samādhi* and *dharma-maṇḍala* of the first of these, [Vajra-pāramitā].

In his various works on the *Lotus Sūtra*, Kūkai makes reference several times to the *Lotus Sūtra* as the *samādhi* and *dharma-maṇḍala* of Avalokiteśvara. In his *Hokkekyō kaidai* Kūkai writes:¹⁴

The infinite meanings of the long and short versions of the *Lotus Sūtra* are all contained within the single [*bija*] letter *hrīḥ*. This [*Lotus*] *sūtra* is the *samādhi* of Avalokiteśvara. When this one letter is repeated, the merits are the same as reciting the entire *Lotus Sūtra*. As a *dharma*-[*maṇḍala*], this *sūtra* is the letter *hrīḥ*. As a *samaya*-[*maṇḍala*], it is an eight-petaled lotus. As a person, it is the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. This person, *dharma*, and lotus specifically are called the *Lotus Sūtra*. ... Where are this person, *dharma*, and lotus? They originally are in the minds of all beings. These three—the mind, Buddha, and beings—are another way of expressing identity. Therefore, the [*Avataṃsaka*]-*sūtra* says (T 278:9.465c), “The mind, the Buddha, beings: these three are not different.”

The *Heart Sūtra* is no exception to the above pattern. Just as Kūkai sees the *Vajracchedikā* as the *samādhi* of Mañjuśrī, the *Lotus* as the *samādhi* of Avalokiteśvara, and the *Avataṃsaka* as that of Samantabhadra, he describes the *Heart Sūtra* as the *samādhi* and *dharma-maṇḍala* of the bodhisattva Prajñā. In this text Kūkai writes (I.3.1), “The *Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra* is nothing but the great heart-mantra *samādhi*-gate of the great bodhisattva Prajñā,” and (II.1) “This bodhisattva (Prajñā) has a *dharma-maṇḍala* mantra *samādhi*-gate, in which each letter is Dharma. Each word in the *sūtra* is a mundane and superficial word, but each is also a profound word of suchness.”

While the *Heart Sūtra* is overall the *samādhi* of Prajñā, Kūkai also defines sections of the *Heart Sūtra* as further divided into the teachings of various schools and *samādhis* of other bodhisattvas.¹⁵ Thus, Kūkai says that the section in the *Heart Sūtra* explaining Huayan (II.3.2.1) is the *samādhi* of Samantabhadra, that of Sanlun (II.3.2.2) is the *samādhi* of Mañjuśrī, that of Faxiang (II.3.3.3) is the *samādhi* of Maitreya, and that of Tiantai (II.3.3.5) is the *samādhi* of Avalokiteśvara.¹⁶

¹⁴ TKZ 4.160. 所謂妙法蓮華經廣略本無邊義埋悉含一吉里字中。今此經則觀自在之三摩地。若誦此一字則曲誦一部法華功德無異。此經於法是吉里字也。於三摩耶是八葉蓮華。於人是觀自在菩薩也。此之人法蓮俱名妙法蓮華。... 茲人法蓮在何處。本來在一切眾生心。茲心佛眾生三種一體異名。是故經云心佛及眾生是三無差別。

¹⁵ This approach is similar to Kūkai's statement noted above that the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* is in general the esoteric *samādhi* of Mañjuśrī, but the parts of the *sūtra* are further described as the *samādhis* of other deities. No further specifics are given, unlike in this text. Note that in the case of the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, Vajratikṣṇa is one of the sixteen bodhisattvas and is also identical with Mañjuśrī, thus his appearance is repeated. This is also true of Vajrasattva in the *Adhyardhaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, see following note.

¹⁶ This seems similar to the *Adhyardhaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, an esoteric *sūtra* that is overall the *samādhi* of Vajrasattva, but with each of the seventeen sections also representing the *samādhi* of a different deity (or group of deities), starting with Vajrasattva, with the *bija* mantra of each deity given at the end of each of the seventeen sections in that text. In one of his *Rishukyō kaidai* Kūkai writes, “This [*Adhyardhaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā*]-*sūtra* has seventeen sections. The one-letter mantra *bija* at the end of each section and each of the *samādhi*-gates are called the bodies of the *dharmadhātu maṇḍala*.” (TKZ 4.115, 是經有十七品。品終一字真言種子及各各三摩地門名法界曼荼羅身)

3. The *Heart Sūtra* contains all teachings

Most East Asian commentators have traditionally understood the *Heart Sūtra* as a condensation of the core meaning of the long *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, and particularly of Xuanzang's translation of the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* in 600 fascicles (T 220). Kuiji suggests that the 600-fascicle *sūtra* was too long and intimidating, thus a digest version became necessary.¹⁷ Fazang and others explain that the *Heart Sūtra* is the essential core of the long *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, just as the heart is the core of the body.¹⁸ This is reasonable, since aside from the opening section and the *mantra* or *dhāraṇī* at the end of the *sūtra*, the bulk of the text of the *Heart Sūtra* is found in passages in the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.¹⁹

However, Kūkai does not agree that such claims are exhaustive, and he adds another and deeper layer to them. He writes (II.2.3), “Some people repeat [the exoteric explanation] that the word *heart* is used because the *Heart Sūtra* gives the essentials of the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, and that it was not taught in a separate assembly. This is like saying a dragon is a snake just because it has scales like a snake.” The *Heart Sūtra* may on the surface seem to be just a conveniently condensed version of a very long *sūtra*, but profoundly speaking it is an esoteric teaching. As noted, Kūkai sees the *Heart Sūtra* as a whole as the *samādhi* of *Prajñā*, but also discusses in its separate sections the *samādhis* of Samantabhadra (Huayan), Mañjuśrī (Sanlun), Maitreya (Faxiang), and Avalokiteśvara (Tiantai). This would not be possible were the *Heart Sūtra* only a abbreviated version of the long *Prajñāpāramitā* texts. For Kūkai, the teachings of the *Heart Sūtra* are not limited to those of the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, but contains all the teachings of

¹⁷ See Shih 2001, 10, 11–12 (T 1710:33.524a):

般若波羅蜜多者大經之通名。心經者此經之別稱。般若之心經也。... 心者堅實妙最之稱。大經隨機義文俱廣。受持傳習或生怯退。傳法聖者錄其堅實妙最之旨別出此經。

Prajñāpāramitā is the general title for the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, while the *Heart Sūtra* is one particular sutra found within it. It is the heart of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. ... *Heart* (*hṛdaya*) signifies essence and excellence. Because the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* is voluminous an extensive in meaning, those who receive, uphold, transmit, or study it may easily become discouraged. Therefore the sages, for the purpose of propagating the Dharma, captured the supreme essence by composing this condensed sutra.

¹⁸ T 1712:33.552b:

般若等是所詮之法。心之一字是所引之喻。即般若內統要衷之妙義。況人心藏爲主爲要。統極之本。

Prajñā[*pāramitā*] is what is taught. The word *heart* is an analogy for what is expressed. In other words, it is the excellent meaning that condenses the content of the *Prajñā*[*pāramitā*] and integrates what is essential. It is just like the heart of a person, which is core and essential [to that person]. It is the integrated and ultimate root [of the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*].

¹⁹ Passages similar to the body of Xuanzang's *Heart Sūtra* in his translation of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* include T 220:5.22b, 7.14a, 7.435b, T 223:8.223a, etc. Passages similar to the preamble to the *dhāraṇī* include T 220:5.568b, 5.580c, 7.151b, 7.156a, 7.551b, 7.556a, 7.774b, 7.873a, etc. The opening section and the *dhāraṇī* itself do not appear anywhere in the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. See Nattier 1992 for correspondences between Xuanzang's *Heart Sūtra* and Kumārajīva's translation of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* (p. 158 ff.) and for the *mantra* in other texts (p. 177, n. 52), among which the *Dhāraṇīsamuccaya* (T 901) is noted by Kūkai in the following.

the Buddha. As Prajñā is the “mother of all the buddhas,” it is appropriate that all these teachings, needed to answer the specific needs of different sorts of beings, be contained within her single *samādhi*. Kūkai writes (I.3.1):

The *Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra* (*Heart Sūtra*) is nothing but the great heart-mantra *samādhi*-gate of the great bodhisattva Prajñā. It can be written on a single sheet of paper in fourteen lines. This we can say: while brief it is essential, and though concise it is profound. The Prajñāpāramitā [containing] the five parts of the canon is held in a single phrase of it with nothing left out. The practices and fruits of the seven teachings are all encompassed in a single line of it with room to spare.

It is important to note that the *Heart Sūtra* does not *contain* or *teach* the *samādhi* of Prajñā. Rather, as a *dharma-maṇḍala*, the text itself is the *samādhi* of Prajñā. As a *dharma-maṇḍala*, the text esoterically is itself a *dhāraṇī*, while exoterically it remains a text in ordinary language with a *dhāraṇī* appended to it. Kūkai says that the entire *Heart Sūtra* returns to the *dhāraṇī* (總歸持明),²⁰ and in his concluding verse (IV) that his understanding of the *sūtra* as a whole comes from his understanding of the mantra, “Relying on the meanings of its secret mantra, I have briefly commented on the text of the *Heart Sūtra*.” It might be said that expanding on *some* of the meanings of the *dhāraṇī* and expressing them in ordinary language renders the text of the *Heart Sūtra*. Kūkai understands *dhāraṇīs* as holding within them all teachings and all meanings (I.1). In his *Bonji shittan jimo narabi ni shakugi* he writes:²¹

Dhāraṇī is a Sanskrit word. In Chinese it is translated as *zongchi* (總持), or “holding all.” *Zong* means “to encompass all,” and *chi* means “to hold.” This means that within a single letter infinite teachings are encompassed; within a single *dharma* all *dharma*s are held, within a single meaning all meanings are contained, and within a single sound all virtues are stored. Therefore, *dhāraṇī* is called the inexhaustible treasury. ... This infinite-fold wisdom is completely encompassed in a single letter [of a *dhāraṇī*], and all beings completely possess that infinite-fold buddha wisdom.

Kūkai describes some of the meanings of the letters of *dhāraṇīs* in many of his other texts. For example, in *Unji gi* Kūkai writes:²²

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 *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* and Vajraśekhara texts are exhausted by the three phrases, “*bodhi*[*citta*] is the cause, universal

²⁰ Expressing the entirety of a text with a *dhāraṇī* (*bija*) is an approach known from the esoteric *Adhyardhaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* where each section is at its end expressed by the *bija* of its deity. Kūkai also believes that the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra* is fully expressed in its mantras. See note 3.

²¹ See Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 280–281. 所謂陀羅尼者梵語也。唐翻云總持。總者總攝。持者任持。言於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。故名無盡藏。...如是無量智悉含一字中一切眾生皆悉具足如是無量佛智。

²² See Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 184–185. 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為因大悲為根方便為究竟之三句。若攝廣就略攝未歸本則一切教義不過此三句。束此三句以為一吽字。廣而不亂略而不漏。此則如來不思議力法然加持之所為也。雖千經萬論亦不出此三句一字。其一字中所開因因果等准前思之。非只吽字攝如是義所餘一字門亦復如是。

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, all are fully contained in these three phrases and one letter [*hūṃ*]. 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 *hūṃ* alone. Each of the other letter-gates are exactly the same.

By seeing the *Heart Sūtra* as the *samādhi-gate* and *dharma-maṇḍala* of the bodhisattva Prajñā, Kūkai sees the text as an all-encompassing *dhāraṇī*. The individual letters of the *dhāraṇī* each have infinite meanings, and combine together in infinite ways. Kūkai writes in the present text:

(I.3.2) Furthermore, the two letters *gate* [in the mantra] fully hold within themselves the fruit of the training of the entire *tripiṭaka*, and the two words *pāra-* and *pārasaṃ-* fully encompass the exoteric and esoteric Dharma teachings. A discussion of each sound and letter would take *kalpas* of time and still not be complete, and buddhas equal in numbers to the motes of dust in the universe or drops of water in the oceans would still not be able to finish explaining each word and the reality it teaches. ... (II.6) If the superficial and profound meanings of each of the letters, and so on, were to be fully discussed in the same way, there would be limitless deities and teachings—too many to exhaust even with a *kalpa* of time.

Kūkai sees all texts, not just the *Heart Sūtra*, as encompassing all teachings and all meanings. Of the *Mahāvairocanaḥisambodhi-sūtra*, Kūkai says,²³ “One letter contains limitless meanings, and one dot holds infinite truths.” Not unrelated is Kūkai’s profound vision of the ultimate text of the preaching of Dharmakāya as the totality of the universe itself. He writes,²⁴

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

²³ In *Dainichikyō kaidai* (TKZ 4.4). See Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 318. (一字中含無邊義。一點內吞塵數理)

²⁴ In *Shōryō shū* (TKZ 8.10). See Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 13. (山毫點溟墨 乾坤經籍箱 萬象含一點 六塵閱縑緗)
Compare also Gomez 1995, 107–112.

般若心經祕鍵 并序

Hannya-shingyō hiken, jo awasetari

The Secret Key to the Heart Sūtra, with an Introduction

遍照金剛撰

By Henjō Kongō²⁵

[I. Introduction]²⁶

[I.1. Introductory verse]

文殊利劍絕諸戲	覺母梵文調御師	◑:◑ 眞言爲種子
含藏諸教陀羅尼	無邊生死何能斷	唯有禪那正思惟
尊者三摩仁不讓	我今讚述垂哀悲	

The sharp sword of Mañjuśrī cuts off all conceptual proliferation.²⁷

The Sanskrit [*Prajñāpāramitā*-]sūtra²⁸ of the mother of the buddhas²⁹ (Prajñā)
is the tamer of men.³⁰

²⁵ This is the name Kūkai received from his teacher Huiguo at the time of his *abhīṣeka* at Qinglong-si monastery in 805. Meaning the “vajra shining everywhere,” it is the esoteric name of the Vairocana, the deity Kūkai connected with through *abhīṣeka*. See *Shōrai mokuroku* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 222–224). Kūkai often refers to himself or signs his works in this way.

²⁶ The divisions into sections and the titles of the sections are added by the translator based on traditional analyses. The Chinese text is based on TKZ 3.1–13.

²⁷ Compare section II.3.2.2 on Sanlun below.

²⁸ The sharp sword (利劍) that cuts through *prapañca* and the Sanskrit palm-leaf *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra* (*tāla-pattra*, 梵篋) are the *samaya*-signs (三昧耶形) of these bodhisattvas, expressing their inner own-realization. In his *Sokushin jōbutsu gi*, Kūkai writes (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 52–53):

大日經說一切如來有三種祕密身。謂字印形像。字者法曼荼羅。印謂種種幟幟卽三昧耶曼荼羅。形者相好具足身卽大曼荼羅。此三種身各具威儀事業。是名羯磨曼荼羅。是名四種曼荼羅。

It is taught in the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* (T 848:18.44a) that the *tathāgatas* all have three types of esoteric bodies: letters, seals, and images. The letters are the *dharma-maṇḍala*. The seals are the various signs, and are the *samaya-maṇḍala*. The images are the bodies possessing all the excellent marks, and are the *mahā-maṇḍala*. These three esoteric bodies each have posture and movement, which is called the *karma-maṇḍala*. These are the four *maṇḍalas*.

²⁹ The “mother of the buddhas” (覺母) is the bodhisattva *Prajñā*, who is referred to with similar terms (般若母, 般若波羅蜜佛母) several times in *Xiuxi Boreboluomi pusa guanxing niansong yigui* (T 1151:20.610c, 612a, 612b), the tantric ritual manual for the practice of this bodhisattva Kūkai mentions below (note 148). Because all the buddhas attain enlightenment through realizing the *prajñāpāramitā*, it is often called the “mother” of buddhahood in *Prajñāpāramitā* texts. The bodhisattva *Prajñā* embodies *prajñāpāramitā*, so she is also so called. This description may also be applied to Mañjuśrī: “The great *ārya* deity Mañjuśrī is the mother of the buddhas of the three times. Tathāgatas in the ten directions all initially raise *bodhicitta* through the transformative power of Mañjuśrī.” (文殊師利大聖尊 三世諸佛以爲母十方如來初發心 皆是文殊教化力, T 159:3.305c, 三世覺母妙吉祥, T 159:3.327c, etc.).

³⁰ The *Dazhidu lun* (T 1509:25.638a) says, “Without the tamer of *prajñā*, it is impossible to arrive at the Buddha’s path.” (無般若調御不能至佛道) The “trainer (charioteer) of men” or “the tamer of men to be tamed” (*puruṣa-damya-*

The mantras *dhīḥ* [for Prajñā] and *maṃ* [for Mañjuśrī] are their *bījas*:³¹

They are *dhāraṇīs* that hold within them all teachings.³²

How can we be liberated from the unending cycle of birth and death?

The only way is through the *samādhi* [of Prajñā] and the wisdom [of Mañjuśrī].³³

sārathi, 丈夫調御士, 調御丈夫, 可化丈夫調御師, etc.) is one of the familiar ten epithets of a buddha (十號). The *Dazhidu lun* explains (T 1509:25.72b):

佛以大慈大悲大智故。有時軟美語。有時苦切語。有時雜語。以此調御令不失道。如偈說。佛法爲車弟子馬 實法寶主佛調御 若馬出道失正轍 如是當治令調伏

The Buddha, through great kindness, great compassion, and great wisdom sometimes speaks gentle words, sometimes speaks hard words, and sometimes mixes them, taming people in this way [as needed] so that they do not lose the path. A verse:

The Buddhadharma is the chariot, the disciple the horse,
And the great master of the Dharma, the Buddha, is the charioteer.
If the horse leaves the path and loses the correct track,
Then he should be corrected and tamed.

³¹ A *bīja* is a Sanskrit seed-syllable or letter, written in Siddham and usually in one letter but occasionally more than one, that completely encompasses the enlightenment of that deity. Like the previous *samaya*-signs, these are essential to esoteric Buddhist practice. Here, *dhīḥ* is the *bīja* of the bodhisattva Prajñā, and *maṃ* is that of Mañjuśrī.

The *bījas* of Prajñā are given variously in different texts, including *jñā* (from the words *prajñā* or *jñāna*), *pra* (from *prajñā*), but most commonly *dhīḥ*, *dhi*, or *dhīḥ* from the *dhāraṇī* of the inexhaustible treasury of Prajñā (般若無盡藏陀羅尼): *namo bhagavate prajñā-pāramitāye om hrīḥ dhīḥ śrī-śrūta-vijaye svāhā*, T 852a:18.120a, T 901:18.806b, T 1151:20.613b, 613c, etc.). The *Xiuxi Boreboluomi pusa guanxing niansong yigui* (T 1151:20.613b, 613c), which Kūkai refers to below (note 148) indicates that the letter might be *dhīḥ* (地^𑖀).

The *bīja* of Mañjuśrī are *a*, *aṃ*, and *maṃ* in the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*, or *dhaṃ* in Vajrasekhara texts (the *bīja* of Vajratīkṣṇa). *Maṃ* comes from the first letter of Mañjuśrī's name (appearing in Mañjuśrī's mantra named 妙吉祥真言: *namaḥ samanta-buddhānāṃ maṃ*, T 848:18.16b).

³² Kūkai gives his interpretation of the meaning of *dhāraṇī* in *Bonji shittan jimo narabi ni shakugi* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 280–281):

所謂陀羅尼者梵語也。唐翻云總持。總者總攝。持者任持。言於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。故名無盡藏。

Dhāraṇī is a Sanskrit word. In Chinese it is translated as *zongchi* (總持), or “holding all.” *Zong* means “to encompass all,” and *chi* means “to hold.” This means that within a single letter infinite teachings are encompassed; within a single *dharma* all *dharma*s are held, within a single meaning all meanings are contained, and within a single sound all virtues are stored. Therefore, *dhāraṇī* is called the inexhaustible treasury.

³³ None of the traditional commentators take the terms 禪那 (as a transliteration of *dhyāna*) and 正思惟 (as a translation of *samyak-saṃkalpa*, or “right thought” among the eightfold path) in their usual or literal meanings. Dōhan says (NDZ 10.481a), “Liberation from *saṃsāra* is only by the two methods of *samādhi* and *prajñā* (定慧二法). This *samādhi* and *prajñā* refers to these two bodhisattvas. ‘*Dhyāna*’ means *samādhi* (禪那^ノ定), and is Prajñā, the mother of the buddhas. ‘Right thought’ means *prajñā* (正思惟^ノ慧), and is Mañjuśrī. Therefore, the *samādhi* and *prajñā* of these two bodhisattvas liberates from the unending cycle of birth and death.” Kakuban says (NDZ 10.465b) that, “These are *samādhi*-gates. Specifically, *zenna* (禪那) is *samādhi* within *samādhi* (定中ノ定), and *shōshiyui* (正思惟) is wisdom within *samādhi* (定中ノ智).” Yūkai and other commentators agree that 禪那 refers to the *samādhi* of Prajñā, and 正思惟 to *prajñā* (慧), the *samādhi* of Mañjuśrī (sz 16.194b–195a, 378a, 73b, etc.). With the commentators’ approach rather than a

Regarding the *samādhi* of this deity (Prajñā), out of compassion I will not follow [in this text the example of the other commentators on the *Heart Sūtra*].³⁴

Thus I now with praise expound this teaching. May the Buddha extend his mercy on me.

[I.2. General introduction]

夫佛法非遙心中即近。眞如非外棄身何求。迷悟在我。則發心即到。明暗非他。則信修忽證。

The Buddhadharmā³⁵ is not far removed: it is within the mind and near at hand. Suchness is not without: abandon the body and how could it be found?³⁶ Delusion or

literal one, it will be noted that the body (the *samaya*-forms of the sword and *sūtra* book), speech (the *bījas dhiḥ* and *manḥ*), and now the mind (the *samādhis*) of Prajñā and Mañjuśrī have been presented in this stanza. Liberation from *samsāra* is thus through the esoteric practice of these bodhisattvas. Accordingly, the sense of these two lines is also echoed in the final verse of this text (IV).

Regarding the interpretation of 禪那 as *samādhi*, Liangben of Qinglong-si monastery writes (r 1709:33.451b), “[The word *samādhi* transliterated into Chinese as] *sanmei* (三昧) is a Sanskrit word. It is the same as [the transliteration] *sanmodi* (三摩地), and is specifically translated as ‘equally holding’ (等持). This was formerly expressed as *channa* (禪那).” (言三昧者梵語也。同三摩地俱云等持。古譯禪那) Kūkai writes in his *Himitsu mandara jūjūshin ron* (TKZ 2.117), “*Samādhi* is [transliterated into Chinese from] Sanskrit as *channa*.” (定者梵云禪那) Accordingly, there is precedent for the commentator’s interpretation. Yūkai (sz 16.73b) and others say that 正思惟 can be taken as wisdom because when the eightfold path is divided among the three studies of *śīla*, *samādhi*, and *prajñā*, right thought is included as an aspect of the last.

³⁴ 尊者三摩 is the *samādhi* (三摩地) of the deity Prajñā, which according to Kūkai is the teaching of the *Heart Sūtra*. See section I.3.1 below. There are several traditional interpretations of 仁不讓 (see Yūkai, sz 16.378a–b, 195a–b, etc.). First, that Śākyamuni (仁) himself taught the inner realization of Prajñā, and did not leave it (不讓) to others. Second, that it alludes to the *Lunyu* (see next paragraph). Third, that out of compassion (仁) the Buddha did not teach (不讓) this to those not ready for it. Fourth, that Śākyamuni (仁) did not teach (不讓) this.

In context, the most likely interpretation is that this is an allusion to the *Lunyu* of Confucius (15.36, 當仁不讓於師): “Confronting an act of humanity, do not yield the precedence even to your teacher.” (Huang 1997, 158.) The sense would then be that in writing this commentary now, Kūkai, out of compassionate consideration (仁) towards those who are ready for these esoteric teachings, chooses not to defer (不讓) to the precedent of past commentators who omitted or avoided any discussion of these matters, but will instead discuss it plainly. Compare with section III (also note 139): “*Dhāraṇī* are the secret words of the *tathāgatas*; therefore, the *tripiṭaka* masters of old and the various commentators kept silent and wrote nothing about them. ... Whether or not a teaching should be given depends on the capacity of the recipient of that teaching. Teaching or remaining silent are therefore both in agreement with the Buddha’s intention.”

³⁵ The term Buddhadharmā (佛法) in this sentence is traditionally interpreted in the Shingon school to mean the wisdom of the buddhas (sz 16.378b, etc.). As a paired term with suchness (眞如), it means the cognition or wisdom (智) of the buddhas, and suchness is the object of that cognition, principle or truth (理). Dōhan says (NDZ 10.482a), “The [first] two sentences are the most profound essence of the mantra teachings. ‘Buddhadharmā’ is wisdom (智). ... Wisdom is in the mind, therefore ‘it is within the mind and near at hand.’ Suchness is truth (理). The teaching is that consciousness among the six elements is wisdom (cognitive ability regarding truth), and the [other] five elements are truth (the body of Mahāvairocana). Therefore, the body formed of the five elements (Mahāvairocana) is the truth of suchness.”

³⁶ Compare Kūkai’s *Chūju kankyō no shi* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 240), “Sukhāvātī and Tuṣṭita are originally in

awakening are both within us: the moment we raise the thought [of *bodhi*] we are already there.³⁷ Neither wisdom nor ignorance is something other: if we practice with conviction we will immediately realize enlightenment.³⁸

哀哉哀哉長眠子。苦哉痛哉狂醉人。痛狂笑不醉酷睡嘲覺者。不曾訪醫王之藥。何時見大日之光。

How pitiful, how pitiful, are those long slumbering [in ignorance]! Alas, the suffering and pain of those insanely intoxicated [by delusions]!³⁹ Tormented madmen laugh at those who have come

one's own mind" (安樂觀史本來胸中), and in his *Kan'en no sho* (see note 89, Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 316).

³⁷ The *Avatamsaka* (T 278:9.449c) says, "At the moment of first raising *bodhicitta* you will attain full awakening, and know the true nature of all *dharmas*." (初發心時。便成正覺。知一切法真實之性) The *Darijing shu* says, "If you know yourself as you really are, then at the moment of first raising *bodhicitta* you will attain full awakening." (若如實自知。卽是初發心時便成正覺, T 1796:39.587b). This idea is repeated in many esoteric manuals, such as "Immediately upon raising *bodhicitta*, you sit on the *bodhimaṇḍa* and turn the wheel of true Dharma." (T 1088:20.216c). (纔發菩提心卽坐菩提道場。轉正法輪)

³⁸ This passage is quoted from the *Bore xinjing shu* (z 528:26.733c) of Mingkuang, a Tang Tiantai scholar-monk and student of Zhanran, and possibly more or less contemporaneous with Kūkai's teacher, Huiguo. On the reverse side of a manuscript of Kūkai are lines copied from Mingkuang, indicating Kūkai appreciated his work (see Miyazaki 1976, 161). For an overview of the debate regarding Kūkai's quoting of Mingkuang, see the notes of Yoneda Kōnin appended to Sakata Kōzen's work (1999, 159–160).

³⁹ Kūkai expresses similar thoughts in many places in his writings. Some examples include *Unji gi* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 147):

三界六道長迷一如之理常醉三毒之事荒獵幻野無心歸宅。長眠夢落覺悟何時。今以佛眼觀之佛與眾生同住解脫之床。無此無彼無二平等。

Those in the triple world and the six rebirth states are long confused about the truth of the single suchness. They are incessantly intoxicated by the three poisons [greed, hatred, and ignorance] and pursue their wild hunts on phantom plains, with no thought of ever returning home. They nod forever in their dream realms; when will they ever awaken? Now, observing with the eye of the Buddha, both the Buddha and ordinary beings are in the same liberated state. There is neither this nor that: there is only nonduality and identity.

久醉無明酒。知本覺源。長眠三界夢。永愛四蛇原。身與口心行十惡。不忠不孝罪業繁。撥因果無罪福。蕩逸昏迷營口腹。生之死之笑而哭。(Shōryō shū, TKZ 8.13)

Unrelentingly drunken on the liquor of ignorance, we do not realize the original source of awakening. Endlessly nodding in the dream of the triple world [of *samsāra*], we ceaselessly cling to the field of the four poisonous snakes [the four elements making up physical bodies]. In deed, word, and thought we commit the ten evil acts. We are not loyal, not filial, and our sins are many. We brush aside [any thought of] cause and effect, and ignore the [truth that we create our own] sufferings or blessings. We do as we please in utter confusion, feeding our basest desires. We are born then die; we die then are born: laughing, then crying.

三界狂人不知狂 四生盲者不識盲 生生生暗生始 死死死冥死終 (Hizō hōyaku, TKZ 3.113)

The madmen of the triple world do not know they are insane;
The blind born in the four ways do not realize they are blind.
Born over and over and over again; not knowing how birth begins;
Dying over and over and over again; not realizing how death ends.

to their senses, and those in a drunken stupor ridicule the awakened ones. “Never having sought out the medicine of the King of Medicine,⁴⁰ when will they encounter the light of the great sun?”⁴¹

至若翳障輕重覺悟遲速機根不同性欲即異。

People are dissimilar in the severity of their obscurations and obstructions and in the length of time they need to awaken.⁴² They are different in their receptivity and capacity, and in their natures and inclinations.

遂使二教殊轍分手金蓮之場。五乘竝鑣踠蹄幻影之埽。

Accordingly, [for those receptive enough for it,] the special method [of esoteric Buddhism] is divided into the two teachings of the Vajra[dhātu] and the Lotus [Mahākaruṇāgarbhodbhava maṇḍalas], like [chariot] tracks [running parallel to each other through the] fields. [For those inclined to exoteric Buddhism,] the [horses] of the five vehicles stand bit to bit, stamping and pawing at the ground within the fence of phantoms and illusions.⁴³

⁴⁰ King of Medicine (醫王) is a common expression, comparing the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni to the greatest of physicians, who administers medicine to cure the specific delusions and spiritual illnesses of beings. Kūkai writes in *Ben kenmitsu nikyō ron* (TKZ 3.109): “The teachings of the *nirmāṇakāya* are adapted to what is needed, like giving the most appropriate and effective medicine.” (應化說法逗機施藥言不虛故)

⁴¹ Quoting Mingkuang's next sentence following the above quoted passage. Gōhō explains that (sz 16.80b), “The light of the great sun is the buddha-nature inherently possessed by beings.” He quotes the *Dasheng liqu liu boluomi jing* (T 261:8.908b), “All sentient beings have original wisdom like the sun.” “Great sun” can also be understood as Mahāvairocana.

⁴² Compare *Shōrai mokuroku* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 210)

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。仰善之客庶曉其趣矣。教之優劣法之濫觴如金剛薩埵五祕密儀軌及大辯正三藏表答等中廣說。

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.

⁴³ Raiyu says that comparing a chariot (the esoteric) to horses (the exoteric) reveals the superiority of the esoteric (sz 16.8a). Yūkai comments on this paragraph (sz 16.381a), “Phantoms and illusions together as used to express the insubstantiality (無自性). The meaning is that, compared to the highest truth of the two maṇḍalas of the vajra and lotus, insubstantiality as taught by exoteric Buddhism does not [attain that degree of] truth.”

Yūkai elsewhere (sz 16.202b) says that the five vehicles are the vehicles of men, *devas*, *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and bodhisattvas, and this is the standard explanation in the various commentaries. He goes on to say that the human and *deva* vehicles correspond to the second (Confucianism) and third (Daoism) of Kūkai's ten stages of mind, the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha* vehicles to the fourth and fifth stages, and the bodhisattva vehicle to the sixth through ninth stages (Faxiang, Sanlun, Tiantai, and Huayan). However, given the different set of five vehicles discussed in this text, perhaps in this case they could be identified here as those of Huayan, Sanlun/Mādhyamika, Faxiang/Yogācāra, the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, and Tiantai.

The actual practice of the esoteric is compared to a rapidly advancing chariot, while the five exoteric paths stand bit to bit locked in academic debate over which is superior. They go no further than to flourish their various academic doctrines, and do not fully put them into practice. This may be taken as an observation of the condition of Buddhism in Kūkai's day. In *Unji gi* Kūkai writes (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 176), “Within the disputatious and confusing network

隨其解毒得藥卽別。慈父導子之方大綱在此乎。

Different medicines are needed as antidotes for different poisons.⁴⁴ This is the fundamental principle the loving father (the Buddha) uses in guiding his sons.⁴⁵

[I.3. Introduction to the *Heart Sūtra*]

[I.3.1. Overview of the *Heart Sūtra*]

大般若波羅蜜多心經者卽是大般若菩薩大心眞言三摩地法門。文欠一紙行則十四。可謂簡而要約而深。五藏般若嘆一句而不飽。七宗行果歎一行而不足。

The *Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra* (*Heart Sūtra*) is nothing but the great heart-mantra *samādhi*-gate of the great bodhisattva Prajñā. It can be written on a single sheet of paper in fourteen lines.⁴⁶ This we can say: while brief it is essential, and though concise it is profound. The Prajñāpāramitā [containing] the five parts of the canon⁴⁷ is held in a single phrase of [the *Heart*

of claims of the non-Buddhists, the two vehicles, Mahāyāna, and so on, each school raises its banners and beats its war drums, accusing the others of being the false pretenders.” (諸外道二乘及大乘教等教網紛紜各舉旌鼓爭稱僞帝) What makes esoteric Buddhism effective is its practice, not simply intellectual understanding or debate. In *Shōrai mokuroku* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 230–231),

修定多途有遲有速。翫一心利刀顯教也。揮三密金剛密藏也。遊心顯教三僧祇眇焉。持身密藏十六生甚促。頓中之頓密藏當之也。

There are many methods of cultivating *samādhi*. Some are slow, and some are immediate. Exoteric Buddhism simply toys with the sharp sword of one-mind, but the secret treasury [decisively] wields the vajra of the three mysteries. Those who amuse their minds with exoteric Buddhism must spend three incalculable *kalpas* [to attain full buddhahood]. Those who embody the esoteric treasury need nothing more than “sixteen births.” The esoteric treasury is indeed the most sudden among the sudden.

Kūkai elsewhere presents images using different horse bits (分鑣) to mean the different goals of the various vehicles. In his *Shōrai mokuroku* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 208) he writes, “The five vehicles differ in their orientations [lit. “have separate bits”].” (五乘分鑣逐器頓漸) In *Kan'en no sho* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 310), “The single vehicle or the three vehicles [of *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and bodhisattvas] have different teachings [lit. “have separate bits”] to urge beings to their separate goals.” (一乘三乘分鑣駟生) In *Bunkyō hifu ron* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 3), “the goals of the three teachings [of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism] are clearly distinguished [lit. “have separate bits”].” (三教於是分鑣) The character 鑣 has been corrected to 鑣.

⁴⁴ This is the reason why different teachings and vehicles are needed. Kūkai writes in his *Shōrai mokuroku* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 208): “The sea of Dharma has but a single taste. It seems shallow or profound depending on our own capacities. The five vehicles differ in their orientations, and depending on the abilities of beings can be either sudden or gradual.” (法海一味隨機淺深。五乘分鑣逐器頓漸)

⁴⁵ This sentence is traditionally not read as a question in spite of the presence of 乎.

⁴⁶ There is a traditional debate about how the *Heart Sūtra* can be written in fourteen lines. It is standard to write the *Heart Sūtra* in Chinese in seventeen and a half lines, with each line containing seventeen characters. Suggestions include varying the number of characters in a line, not counting the title and mantra in the total number of lines, or that Kūkai means fourteen lines when written in Siddham in *ślokas* of thirty-two letters each, coming to some fourteen lines. Conze notes (1967, 148) that “the *Hṛdaya*, as is well known, is transmitted in a longer form (about twenty-five *ślokas*), and a shorter form (about fourteen *ślokas*.” As the short *Heart Sūtra* is under discussion, this seems the most reasonable solution.

⁴⁷ In the *Dasheng liqu liu boluomi jing* (T 261:8.868c) and elsewhere, the five parts of the canon are given as the

Sūtra] with nothing left out. The practices and fruits of the seven teachings⁴⁸ are all encompassed in a single line of it with room to spare.

[I.3.2. Significances of the phrases of the *Heart Sūtra*]

觀在薩埵則舉諸乘之行人。度苦涅槃則褰諸教之得樂。五蘊橫指迷境三佛豎示悟心。

“The bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara” [in the opening of the *Heart Sūtra*, “When the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is practicing the profound *prajñāpāramitā*...”] signifies the practitioner of any vehicle. The text from “becomes free from suffering” to “[ultimately attains] *nirvāṇa*” reveals the peace realized by the various teachings. The “five *skandhas*” [in “he clearly saw that the five *skandhas* are all empty”] demonstrate the realm of confusion shared by all beings, and the phrase “buddhas of the past, present, and future” [in “all the buddhas of the past, present, and future, by relying on the *prajñāpāramitā*, attain perfect *bodhi*”] reveals the awakened mind that is realized only by the buddhas.

言色空則普賢解頤圓融之義。談不生則文殊破顏絕戲之觀。說之識界簡持拍手。泯之境智歸一快心。十二因緣指生滅於麒麟角。四諦法輪驚苦空於羊車。

When [the identity of] matter and emptiness is declared, Samantabhadra smiles because the teaching of perfect interpenetration has been given.⁴⁹ When not arising [and so on] is discussed, Mañjuśrī is happy because the [correct] view for cutting off conceptual proliferation has been given.⁵⁰ When the realm of consciousness [and so on] is talked about, Maitreya claps his hands.⁵¹ When the object known and the knowing merge, Avalokiteśvara's heart is delighted.⁵² The twelve links of dependent origination point to arising and ceasing for the *pratyekabuddhas*.⁵³ The Dharma-wheel of the four noble truths awakens the *śrāvakas* to the truths of suffering, and so on.⁵⁴

Sūtras, Vinaya, Abhidharma, *Prajñāpāramitā*, and the Esoteric or Dhāraṇī. The meaning is probably that all the Buddhist teachings are held in the *Prajñāpāramitā*, and the *Prajñāpāramitā* itself is in turn held in each word or phrase of the *Heart Sūtra*, which itself is an expansion of the mantra.

⁴⁸ The seven teachings meant are those discussed in this text, in the sequence given below: the Huayan, Sanlun/Mādhyamika, Faxiang/Yogācāra, *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, Tiantai, and esoteric teachings. All of these are perfectly contained in the *Heart Sūtra*.

⁴⁹ Section II.3.2.1. This is the teaching of Huayan, represented by Samantabhadra.

⁵⁰ Section II.3.2.2. This is the teaching of Sanlun/Mādhyamika, represented by Mañjuśrī.

⁵¹ Section II.3.3.3. This is the teaching of Faxiang/Yogācāra, represented by Maitreya, here referred to with 簡持, indicating discriminating among the 100 *dharma*s.

⁵² Section II.3.3.5. This is the teaching of Tiantai, represented by Avalokiteśvara, here referred to with 歸一 (“returning to the one”).

⁵³ Section II.3.3.4. The *pratyekabuddhas*, here referred to with 麒麟角 (“unicorn's horn,” suggesting enlightenment attained alone and without a teacher), are traditionally said to attain enlightenment by eliminating or breaking the twelve *pratītya-samutpāda*.

⁵⁴ The *śrāvakas*, here referred to with 羊車 (“goat vehicle,” see note 106), attain liberation through the four noble truths. There are sixteen aspects of the four noble truths (十六行相), four for each. Two of the aspects of the truth of suffering are “suffering” (苦 *duḥkha*) and “empty” (空 *sūnya*), and 苦空 is used here to represent all four noble truths.

况復𑖀𑖁二字吞諸藏之行果。𑖀𑖁兩言孕顯密之法教。一一聲字歷劫之談不盡。一一實塵滴之佛無極。

Furthermore, the two letters *gate* [in the mantra] fully contain within themselves the fruit of the training of the entire *tripiṭaka*, and the two words *pāra-* and *pārasaṃ*⁵⁵ fully encompass the exoteric and esoteric Dharma teachings. A discussion of each sound and letter would take *kalpas* of time and still not be complete, and buddhas equal in numbers to the motes of dust in the universe or drops of water in the oceans would still not be able to finish explaining each word and the reality it teaches.

[I.3.3. Special virtues of the *Heart Sūtra*]

是故誦持講供則拔苦與樂。修習思惟則得道起通。甚深之稱誠宜可然。

Therefore, reciting, upholding, explaining, and revering the *Heart Sūtra* relieves suffering and gives ease. Cultivate what it teaches and meditate on it, and you will attain the path (*bodhi*) and realize the superpowers. The description of “profound” is indeed an appropriate one.⁵⁶

[I.4. Reason for writing]

余教童之次聊撮綱要釋彼五分。釋家雖多未鈞此幽。翻譯同異顯密差別竝如後釋。

When I teach beginning students, I summarize the essential meaning of the *Heart Sūtra* into five sections and comment on them. There have been many commentators on the *Heart Sūtra*, but none have yet revealed this hidden secret. How the various [Chinese] translations differ, and the differences between the exoteric and esoteric interpretations, will be discussed later.

[I.5. Additional questions]

或問云般若第二未了之教。何能吞三顯之經。

Question. The *Prajñāpāramitā* belongs to the second turning of the teachings, which is not final. How can you say that it also contains the teachings of the third and final turning of the teachings?⁵⁷

如來說法一字含五乘之義。一念說三藏之法。何況一部一品何匱何無。龜卦爻著含萬象而無盡。帝網聲論吞諸義而不窮。

[Answer.] In the preaching of the Tathāgata, one letter contains the teachings of the five vehicles. In an instant of thought, the teachings of the *tripiṭaka* are given. How then could the *Heart Sūtra*, which is an entire text in one chapter, be incomplete or lacking? Even the cracks on tortoise shells, the eight trigrams, their individual lines, and divining sticks can all comprise the

⁵⁵ See notes 126 and 127.

⁵⁶ The word “profound” (甚深) is used to describe the *prajñāpāramitā* in the beginning of the *Heart Sūtra*.

⁵⁷ This question is given from the standpoint of Faxiang and is based on the *Samdhinirmocana-sūtra* (T 676:16.697a–b, etc.), which divides the teachings of Śākyamuni into three categories or turnings, Hīnayāna, *Prajñāpāramitā*, and *Vijñaptimātratā*. The first two are not final (未了), but the last is (顯了).

10,000 phenomena and are not exhausted. The net of Indra and the *Śabda-śāstra* both contain all meanings without reaching their limits.⁵⁸

難者曰若然前來法匠何不吐斯言。

Question. If that is so, then why did the commentators of the past not say this before?

答聖人投藥隨機深淺。賢者說默待時待人。吾未知。蓋可言不言。不言不言。不言言之。失智人斷而已。

Answer. The *āryas* give the medicine of teachings according to the listeners' capacities, which may be sometimes deep and sometimes shallow. The sages may speak or keep still, waiting for the right time and the right person. I do not know if they simply did not speak when the conditions were right, or if they did not speak because the conditions were not right. It may be that I am speaking now when I should not.⁵⁹ The wise will judge if this is so.⁶⁰

[II. Main discussion]

[II.1. On the title of the *Heart Sūtra*]

佛說摩訶般若波羅蜜多心經者。就此題額有二別梵漢別故。今謂佛說摩訶般若波羅蜜多心經者胡漢雜舉。說心經三字漢名。餘九字胡號。

The *Heart Sūtra* has two different titles, a Sanskrit title and a Chinese title. The Chinese title under discussion now (*Foshuo mohe-bore-boluomiduo xin jing*, or *The Heart of the Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra Spoken by the Buddha*) mixes Chinese words with transliterated Sanskrit words.⁶¹ The three

⁵⁸ The infinite jewels of Indra's net are reflected in each other infinitely and so contain each other. The grammatical text *Śabda-śāstra* said to be written by Indra contains many meanings in a single word. These and the examples from Chinese divination serve to illustrate the idea that infinite meanings can be contained in what seems to be finite. Kūkai has expressed this thought similarly in several other places. In *Shō-ji-jissō gi* Kūkai quotes the *Darījing shu* (TKZ 3.37, Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 90), "Indra himself wrote the treatise on grammar *Śabda-śāstra*, showing that a single syllable can include multiple meanings." (天帝自造聲論。能於一言具含眾義) In *Unji gi* Kūkai writes (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 175), "There is nothing not encompassed by them. There is nothing not exhausted by them. It is like the grammar teachings of Indra, through which all purposes are realized, or like the lines of the hexagrams of Fu Xi, in which each and every line contains the 10,000 phenomena." (無所不攝無所不盡。猶如因陀羅宗一切義利悉皆成就。又如伏羲六爻一一爻中各具萬像) In *Bonji shittan jimo* Kūkai writes (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 285), "In this way, the meaning of any single letter contains within it the truth of the meanings of all other letters. This is similar [in Chinese divination] to one line of the hexagrams containing the 10,000 phenomena within, or knowing everything about the past, present, and future through one crossed crack in a tortoise shell." (如一字者自餘一切字義皆含如是義理。譬如易一爻中具含萬象龜十字上悉知三世)

⁵⁹ Alluding to the *Lunyu* of Confucius (15.8, 可與言而不與之言失人。不可與言而與之言失言。知者不失人亦不失言): "If a man is worth talking to and you do not talk to him, you lose a man; if a man is not worth talking to and you talk to him, you lose your words. The man of wisdom neither loses a man nor loses his words." (Huang 1997, 88.)

⁶⁰ The character 失 in this sentence is based on the quote in the preceding note, and a closer translation would be, "The wise will judge if I am losing [my words]."

⁶¹ In the Chinese title Kūkai gives, 佛說摩訶般若波羅蜜多心經 *Foshuo mohe-bore-boluomiduo xin jing*, the nine characters 佛 (*fo*, buddha) and 摩訶般若波羅蜜多 (*mohe-bore-boluomiduo*, or *mahā-prajñā-pāramitā*) are transliterated from Sanskrit using Chinese characters, and the other three characters 說 (*shuo*, speak) 心 (*xin*, heart), and 經 (*jing*, classic or *sūtra*) are translations into Chinese.

若以總義說皆俱人法喻。斯則大般若波羅蜜多菩薩之名。卽是人。此菩薩俱法曼荼羅眞言三摩地門。一一字卽法。此一一名皆以世間淺名表法性深號卽是喻。

In explaining the meanings of the titles [of *sūtras*] in general, all [are described as] having a person, teaching, and analogy.⁶⁹ This title contains the name of the bodhisattva, Mahā-Prajñāpāramitā. This is the person. This bodhisattva has a *dharmā-maṇḍala* mantra *samādhi*-gate, in which each letter is a teaching. Each word in the *sūtra* is a mundane and superficial word, but each is also a profound word of suchness. This is the analogy.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Kūkai refers to 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. For example, seven ways of analyzing the constituent terms of a *sūtra* title (七種立題) are often used: titles that give (1) only a person (單人), (2) only a teaching (單法), (3) only an example (單譬), (4) a person and a teaching (人法), (5) a teaching and an example (法譬), (6) a person and an example (人譬), and (7) all three (人法譬具足). In his *Guan Wuliangshou fo jing su* (觀無量壽佛經疏) Zhiyi says (T 1750:37.186c), “All *sūtras* have two names, the shared and the particular. The shared name is the one word *sūtra*. There are seven kinds of particular names: the person, teaching, or example alone; or two of those, or all of them.” (一切眾經皆有通別二名。通則經之一字。別則有七。或單人法譬。或複。或具) Specific examples of each of these are given at T 1751:37.198c, and are of course based on the Chinese translated/transliterated titles. More or fewer than seven possibilities are mentioned by other Chinese commentators.

“Person” in the exoteric sense here means the name of deity or main character given in the title, but in the esoteric sense also means the *samādhi* of that deity as esoterically taught in the *sūtra*. In his *Kongōchōgyō kaidai* (TKZ 4.73–74) discussing the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, Kūkai gives the usual exoteric interpretation of the words in *sūtra* titles. (See also *Hokkekyō kaidai* TKZ 4.170–171 for a similar passage.)

或古德云。諸經題名或約人立名。阿彌陀經藥師經等是也。或據法得號。大般若大涅槃等經是。或約喻名之。譬喻經是。或法喻合立。妙法蓮華經是。或人法喻俱舉。大方廣佛華嚴經是。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。

The ancient masters have said that the titles of *sūtras* can be organized [into three types]. There are those that are named for a person, such as the Amitābha, Bhaiṣajyaguru, or other *sūtras*. There are others that are named for a teaching, such as the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, or others. There are others that have analogies in their names, such as the *avadāna sūtras*. Some are named for both a teaching and an analogy, such as the *Lotus Sūtra of the Sublime Dharma*. Others are named for a person, teaching, and analogy, such as the *Mahā-vaipulya Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*. According to the superficial interpretation of the ancient masters, the [full] title of this *sūtra* (金剛頂一切如來眞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 Vajraśekhara Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha*) would have all three: person, teaching, and analogy. *Vajraśekhara* (vajra-peak) is the analogy. *Sarvatathāgata* (all the *tathāgatas*) is the person. The other words are the teaching.

⁷⁰ The usual or exoteric approach to the title of the *Heart Sūtra* is to treat *prajñāpāramitā* as the teaching, and “heart” as an analogy (T 1713:33.558c, etc.) meaning the essence of the *Large Prajñāpāramitā*. Kūkai’s understanding here is profoundly esoteric and unique. In one of his *Dainichikyō kaidai* (TKZ 4.33), Kūkai gives a similarly esoteric discussion concerning the title of the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*.

若言人則是人也一一字人種字故。言法則悉法也一一字法智印故。言譬則諸名卽譬以淺顯深故。

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

[II.2. Outline of the *Heart Sūtra*]

[II.2.1. The audience of the *Heart Sūtra*]

此三摩地門佛在鷲峯山爲鷲子等說之。

This *samādhi*-gate was taught by the Buddha at Ḡḍhrakūṭa for the sake of Śāriputra and others.

[II.2.2. The Chinese translations of the *Heart Sūtra*]

此經數翻譯。第一羅什三藏譯。今所說本是。次唐遍覺三藏翻題無佛說摩訶四字。五蘊下加等字。遠離下除一切字。陀羅尼後無功能。次大周義淨三藏本題省摩訶字。真言後加功能。又法月及般若兩三藏翻並有序分流通。又陀羅尼集經第三卷說此真言法。經題與羅什同。

There are several [Chinese] translations of the *Heart Sūtra*. First, there is the translation by Tripiṭaka Master Kumārajīva, which is the text discussed here.⁷¹ Next, in the translation of Tripiṭaka Master Xuanzang,⁷² the four characters *foshuo mohe* (佛說摩訶, “spoken by the Buddha *mahā*”) are missing from the title, after the word *wuyun* (五蘊, “five *skandhas*”) the character *deng* (等, “and so on”) is added, after *yuanli* (遠離, free from) the word *yiqie* (一切, “all”) is missing, and after the *dhāraṇī* there is no text describing its effectiveness.⁷³ Next, Tripiṭaka Master Yijing’s translation omits the word *mohe* (摩訶, “*mahā*”) from the title, and after the mantra there is a description of its potency.⁷⁴ The translations of Tripiṭaka Masters Dharmacandra and of Prajña both have introductions and conclusions.⁷⁵ Also, the third fascicle of the *Dhāraṇīsamuccaya*

⁷¹ The oldest Chinese translation of the *Heart Sūtra* is by Kumārajīva, made between 402 and 412, and is a short version titled *Mohe bore boluomi da mingzhou jing* (摩訶般若波羅蜜大明呪經, *Sūtra of the Great Mantra of the Mahā-Prajñāpāramitā*, 卍 250). It is clear that the text Kūkai refers to is not Kumārajīva’s extant text, but is very nearly identical with Xuanzang’s version and may be practically considered to be that text, Kūkai’s statement here notwithstanding. Some have suggested that an unknown and lost translation by Kumārajīva is meant. The debate over which version of the *Heart Sūtra* Kūkai used to write this text is summarized by Matsunaga (2006, 129–132). See also notes 73 and 127.

⁷² Xuanzang translated his text in 649 under the title *Bore boluomiduo xin jing* (般若波羅蜜多心經, *Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra*, 卍 251). This short version is the most popular today.

⁷³ In actuality, the text used for recitation in Shingon Buddhism today is not Kumārajīva’s version, but is a slightly modified version of Xuanzang’s translation with these three changes: 佛說摩訶 added to the title (Kumārajīva’s version has 摩訶 only), 等 omitted after 五蘊 (Kumārajīva’s version also lacks 等 after 五陰), and 一切 added after 遠離 (Kumārajīva’s version has 一切 after 離). Both texts end after the *dhāraṇī*. This text is used for the translations of the *Heart Sūtra* below.

⁷⁴ The translation ascribed to Yijing in 700 and titled *Foshuo bore boluomiduo xin jing* (佛說般若波羅蜜多心經) is nearly identical with Xuanzang’s version, and was not included in the Taishō edition (Matsunaga 2006, 56).

⁷⁵ Dharmacandra translated the text in 738 as *Pubian zhizang bore boluomiduo xin jing* (普遍智藏般若波羅蜜多心經, *Universal Treasury of Wisdom Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra*, 卍 252). The translation of Prajña et al. was completed in 790, and is titled *Bore boluomiduo xin jing* (般若波羅蜜多心經, 卍 253). Both of these are long versions of the *Heart Sūtra*, with an introduction and a conclusion added to the core text.

The three other extant Chinese translations of the *Heart Sūtra* included in the Taishō edition (卍 254, translated by Prajñācakra in 850; 卍 255, the Dunhuang translation by Facheng in 856; and 卍 257, translated by Dānapāla in 980) are all long versions that postdate Kūkai. Translations by Zhi Qian, Bodhiruci, and Śikṣānanda mentioned in catalogs are lost.

discusses this mantra method.⁷⁶ The title of the *sūtra* [given there] is the same as Kumārajīva's title.⁷⁷

[II.2.3. The esoteric meaning of the *Heart Sūtra*]

言般若心者此菩薩有身心等陀羅尼。是經真言即大心呪。依此心真言得般若心名。

What we call the *Heart of Prajñā* (the *Heart Sūtra*) is the body⁷⁸ and heart-*dhāraṇī* and so on of the bodhisattva [Prajñā]. The mantra of this *sūtra* is this great heart-*dhāraṇī*.⁷⁹ The *Heart of Prajñā* receives its name from this heart-mantra.

或云略出大般若經心要故名心。不是別會說。^云 所謂如有龍之蛇鱗。

Some people repeat [the exoteric explanation] that the word *heart* is used because the *Heart Sūtra* gives the essentials of the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, and that it was not taught in a separate assembly.⁸⁰ This is like saying a dragon is a snake just because it has scales like a snake.⁸¹

⁷⁶ *Dhāraṇīsamuccaya*, T 901:18.804c ff. This section in the third fascicle, consisting of a short *sūtra* and an esoteric ritual manual including a description of the appearance of the bodhisattva Prajñā, thirteen mudrās, nine *dhāraṇīs*, and a description of a maṇḍala, is summarized by Conze (1978, 88).

⁷⁷ The title given in the third fascicle of the *Dhāraṇīsamuccaya* of a text quite different in content from the *Heart Sūtra* is *Bore boluomiduo daxin jing* (般若波羅蜜多大心經, *The Great Heart of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*), and is not the same as the title of the extant version of Kumārajīva's title, *Mohe bore boluomi da mingzhou jing* (see note 71).

⁷⁸ The first of the thirteen mudrās of Prajñā in the *Dhāraṇīsamuccaya* is called the “body of Prajñā mudrā” (般若身印, T 901:18.805c), but there is no “body” *dhāraṇī* given. Kūkai's intention may be to say that the *Heart Sūtra* is itself the body of Prajñā.

⁷⁹ The fourth *dhāraṇī* in the third fascicle of the *Dhāraṇīsamuccaya* (T 901:18.807b) is the same *dhāraṇī* given in the *Heart Sūtra* (with *tad yathā* added), and is called there the “great heart-*dhāraṇī* of Prajñā” (般若大心陀羅尼), or the “great heart-*dhāraṇī*” (大心呪). In the text it is combined with the “great heart-mudrā” (大心印), the fifth mudrā of the thirteen.

⁸⁰ The idea that the *Heart Sūtra* is a condensed version of the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* is ubiquitous in Chinese commentaries, for some examples see notes 17 and 18. The *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* was taught in four places (including Ḡṛdhrakūṭa in Rājagṛha) in sixteen assemblies. Since the *Heart Sūtra* is commonly considered a condensed version of the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* made after that was preached, the *Heart Sūtra* could exoterically be said to have not been preached separately by the Buddha.

⁸¹ Alluding to *Liuzi* (劉子, 25): “The inferior horse has a hair of the thoroughbred, but cannot be called a thoroughbred. ... The dragon has a scale of the snake, but cannot be called a snake.” (譬駑馬有驥之一毛。而不可謂之驥也。... 猶龍有蛇之一鱗。而不可謂之蛇也) The meaning is that although the *Heart Sūtra* and the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* seem to share some passages (see note 19), the esoteric meaning of the *Heart Sūtra* is far more profound than it simply being a conveniently condensed version of the long text. It may be inferred that Kūkai is not negating the conventional wisdom of the *Heart Sūtra* as a short version of the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, but is instead adding to that a further esoteric understanding. Specifically, Kūkai's point is that the word “heart” does not suggest a condensation, but instead esoterically points to the heart-mantra and *samādhi* of Prajñā. The literary allusion of the dragon and snake seems to suggest inferiority, but the inferiority is in the superficial understanding of what “heart” means here. Certainly Kūkai does not mean to say that the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* is itself somehow inferior to the *Heart Sūtra*. Indeed, for Kūkai that *sūtra* is itself the *samādhi* of Mañjuśrī, as he notes in his *Kongō hannya-haramitsu-kyō kaidai* (note 9), “The

[II.3. The five sections of the *Heart Sūtra*]

此經總有五分。第一人法總通分。觀自在至度一切苦厄是。

This *sūtra* in general has five sections. The first section is the general introduction to the person (the bodhisattva whose *samādhi* is taught) and the teaching. It is from “when the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara” to “becomes free from all suffering and distress.”

第二分別諸乘分。色不異空至無所得故是。

The second section differentiates among the vehicles. It is from “matter is not different from emptiness” to “there is no object to be attained.”

第三行人得益分。菩提薩埵至三藐三菩提是也。

The third section gives the benefits attained by the practitioner. It is from “the bodhisattva” to “perfect *bodhi*.”

第四總歸持明分。故知般若至真實不虛是也。

The fourth section describes the entire [*sūtra*] as returning to the *dhāraṇī*. It is from “therefore, know that the *prajñāpāramitā*” to “true and not false.”

第五祕藏真言分。咒咒咒咒至唵是也。

The fifth section is the mantra of the secret treasury. It is from “gate gate” to “*svāhā*.”

[II.3.1. The first section: a general introduction to the person and the teaching]

[觀自在菩薩行深般若波羅蜜多時照見五蘊皆空度一切苦厄]

[When the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara was practicing the profound *prajñāpāramitā*, he clearly saw that the five *skandhas* are all empty, and thereby was freed from all suffering and distress.⁸²]

第一人法總通分有五。因行證入時是也。言觀自在能行人。即此人本覺菩提爲因。深般若能所觀法。即是行。照空則能證智。度苦則所得果。果即入也。依彼教人智無量。依智差別時亦多。三生三劫六十百妄執差別是名時。頌曰

The first section, the general introduction to the person and the teaching, has five parts: the cause, cultivation, realization, entering, and the time. Avalokiteśvara in the text is the practitioner.⁸³ In other words, this means a person inherently possessing the awakening of *bodhi*, which is the cause.⁸⁴ “The profound *prajñā[pāramitā]*” is both the meditation and the teaching that is

Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra in 600 fascicles, sixteen assemblies, and 282 chapters is altogether the *samādhi*-gate of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.”

⁸² The translation of the *Heart Sūtra* is added here from the modified Xuanzang translation, see note 73.

⁸³ This is also Fazang’s interpretation (T 1712:33.552c).

⁸⁴ This corresponds to the person mentioned in the section title. This inherent *bodhi* is given as the cause of attaining wisdom in the *Mahāvairocanaḥśambodhi-sūtra* (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。

“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

meditated on. It is the cultivation. “Clearly [saw that the five *skandhas* are all] empty” is the wisdom that brings realization. “Was freed from suffering” is the fruit obtained. The fruit is entering [into *nirvāṇa*].⁸⁵ Depending on the teaching and the person [who receives the teaching], there are infinite [differences in] wisdom. Depending on these differences in wisdom, the time required [to attain the goal] will also be varied. Depending on the degree of the false discriminations [to be overcome], the length of time could be three lifetimes, three *kalpas*, sixty *kalpas*, or a hundred *kalpas*.⁸⁶ This is what is meant by the word “when [the bodhisattva...].”

觀人修智慧 深照五眾空 歷劫修念者 離煩一心通
 [When] the meditator⁸⁷ is cultivating *prajñā*,
 He profoundly sees the emptiness of the five [*skandhas*].
 He who cultivates his mind through *kalpas*⁸⁸

[the practice of] skillful means is the ultimate goal. Vajrapāṇi, what is *bodhi*? It is knowing one's own mind just as it really is.”

⁸⁵ Traditional interpretations have compared these four steps to the esoteric meanings of the four transformations of the letter *a*: *a* for inherent awakening, *ā* for the cultivation of that awakening, *aṃ* for *bodhi*, and *aḥ* for *nirvāṇa*.

⁸⁶ Depending on the teaching and the capacity of the person, the length of time will vary. The examples given are all for the exoteric paths. According to the traditional commentaries (sz 16.394a, zsz 20.144b–1445a, etc.), three lifetimes is for the Huayan teachings (T 1868:45.0518a), three *kalpas* is for the Sanlun and Faxiang teaching, sixty *kalpas* is for the *śrāvakas*, and 100 *kalpas* is for the *pratyekabuddhas*.

As Kūkai explains in his *Sokushin jōbutsu gi*, the esoteric path is attained in a single lifetime (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 27–78). According to the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, buddhahood in one lifetime is possible by understanding three *kalpas* to be not a length of time but to mean three *vikalpas* (coarse, subtle, and very subtle false discriminations). The *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.600c) comments on this passage.

越世間三妄執出世間心生者。若以淨菩提心爲出世間心。卽是超越三劫瑜祇行。梵云劫跋。有二義。一者時分。二者妄執。若依常途解釋。度三阿僧祇劫得成正覺。若祕密釋。超一劫瑜祇行。卽度百六十心等一重麤妄執。名一阿僧祇劫。超二劫瑜祇行。又度百六十心等一重細妄執。名二阿僧祇劫。眞言門行者。復越一劫。更度百六十心等一重極細妄執。得至佛慧初心。故云三阿僧祇劫成佛也。若一生度此三妄執。卽一生成佛。何論時分耶。

[The *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* (T 848:18.3a) says,] “Transcending the three mundane false discriminations, the supramundane mind is born.” Taking pure *bodhicitta* as the supramundane mind, this is the practice of a yogin who transcends the three *kalpas*. In Sanskrit *kalpa* has two meanings. The first is [a length of] time. The second is false discrimination (*vikalpa*). According to the common meaning, after passing through three *asamkhyeya kalpas*, complete awakening is perfected. In the esoteric interpretation, the practice of a yogin who transcends the first *kalpa* is to transcend the stage of the gross false discriminations of the 160 minds and so on. This is called the first *asamkhyeya kalpa*. The practice of a yogin who transcends the second *kalpa* is again to transcend the stage of the subtle false discriminations of the 160 minds and so on. This is called the second *asamkhyeya kalpa*. Practitioners of the mantra path transcend another *kalpa*, which is to transcend the stage of the very subtle false discriminations of the 160 minds and so on, to arrive at the first stage of a buddha's wisdom. Therefore, this is called [transcending] three *asamkhyeya kalpas* to perfect buddhahood. If one can transcend these three false discriminations in one lifetime, then one can perfect buddhahood in one lifetime. What need is there to discuss lengths of time?

⁸⁷ “Meditator” (觀人) suggests both Avalokiteśvara (觀自在) and the practitioner (行人) as mentioned in the text.

⁸⁸ Dōhan says (NDZ 10.497a) that that “he who cultivates his mind through *kalpas*” refers to the time, or “when” in

Is freed from afflictions: the one-mind is penetrated.⁸⁹

[II.3.2. The second section: differentiating among the vehicles]

第二分別諸乘分亦五。建絕相二一是也。

The second section on differentiating among the vehicles can also be divided into five [vehicles]: those of “establishing” (Huayan), “cutting off” (Sanlun), “marks” (Faxiang), “the two” (*śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha*), and “the single” (Tiantai).

[II.3.2.1. Huayan]

[舍利子色不異空空不異色。色即是空空即是色。受想行識亦復如是]

[“Śāriputra, matter is not different from emptiness, emptiness is not different from matter; matter is itself emptiness, emptiness is itself matter. Of sensations, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness the same can be said.”]

初建者所謂建立如來三摩地門是。色不異空至亦復如是也。建立如來即普賢菩薩祕號。普賢圓因以圓融三法爲宗。故以名之。又是一切如來菩提心行願之身。頌曰

First, “establishing” [mutual identity] is the *samādhi*-gate of the “Tathāgata of establishing.” This refers to the passage from “matter is not different from emptiness” to “the same can be said.”⁹⁰

the *Heart Sūtra*, which is three *kalpas* of time in the exoteric understanding but three degrees of false discrimination in the esoteric view (see note 86), which may be transcended in one moment of thought (念, *kṣāṇa*).

⁸⁹ Penetrating the one-mind (一心) means attaining *bodhi* or *nirvāṇa*, with the implication that this is a state originally present and shared by all beings. In *Hizō hōyaku* Kūkai writes (一心本自湛然澄, TKZ 3.153), “The One Mind is like water; it is originally clean and serene” (Hakeda 1972, 204), and (TKZ 3.162):

初心之佛其德不思議。萬德始顯一心稍現。證此心時知三種世間即我身覺十箇量等亦我心。

The excellent power of an aspirant’s Buddhahood, the moment he sets his mind on enlightenment, is mysterious; all excellent qualities are made manifest for the first time, and the One Mind is unveiled. When he realizes this mind, he will come to the awareness that the threefold world is his body and that the entire universe is also his Mind. (Hakeda 1972, 212)

Kakuban says (NDZ 10.470b-471a) that this line corresponds to “liberates from all suffering and distress” in the *Heart Sūtra*. He says that one-mind has two meanings: the non-dual one-mind (不二一心) of esoteric Buddhism and that each of the three vehicles has the truth of the single suchness. The overall meaning is that by escaping *samsāra* and attaining the peace of *bodhi* and *nirvāṇa*, freedom from grasping at opposing categories is attained and the one-mind of the identity of subject and object is penetrated. Raihō says that the one-mind is what is entered by all vehicles, exoteric or esoteric (zsz 20.146a). It is the secret treasury of mantra, which the nine exoteric stages of mind (in the ten stages of mind system) all realize. Kakuban’s “non-dual one-mind” may be thought of as similar to the identity of the three minds (三心平等) Kūkai discusses in texts such as *Kan’en no sho* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 316):

和尚告曰。若知自心即知佛心。知佛心即知眾生心。知三心平等即名大覺。

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.

⁹⁰ Compare *Hizō hōyaku* (TKZ 3.153), where Kūkai discusses these phrases in connection with Sanlun.

色不異空建諸法而宛然空。空不異色泯諸相而宛然有。是故色即是空空即是色。諸法亦爾何物不然。似

The “Tathāgata of establishing” is the esoteric name of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra.⁹¹ His teaching of the perfect cause is the threefold perfect interpenetration.⁹² That is why [this section of the *Heart Sūtra*] is named [“establishing”]. It is also the body of the cultivation and vows of *bodhicitta* of all the *tathāgatas*.⁹³ A verse:

水波之不離。同金莊之不異。

Matter, which is not different from emptiness, unfolds itself as all phenomenal existences; yet it is of the nature of emptiness. Emptiness, which is not different from matter, nullifies all marks of particularity; yet it is manifested as a variety of temporary beings. Thus, matter is none other than emptiness, and emptiness itself is none other than matter; all phenomenal existences are of the same structure. What can remain an exception? The relationship that exists between these two is comparable to the inseparable relationship that exists between water and its waves or between gold and gold ornaments. (Hakeda 1972, 201)

⁹¹ In Amoghavajra's translation of the *Adhyardhaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (T 243:8.785c), the name 一切平等建立如來 “the Tathāgata establishing the identity of all *dharmas*” (*sarvadharmasamatāpratiṣṭhitas tathāgataḥ*) appears. This is explained in the commentary to that text (T 1003:19.615b) as another name for the bodhisattva Samantabhadra. Kūkai says that Huayan, the ninth of his ten stages, is the *samādhi* of Samantabhadra in his *Daijō Tennō no kanjō no mon* (TKZ 5.21):

花嚴妙通法界無障廣談理事圓融。是則除諸法性相不變之病示心佛無別之藥。名人則普賢大士法界三昧之門也。

Huayan/Kegon is the sublime interpenetration without obstruction of the *dharmadhātu*, and widely discusses the perfect interpenetration of the absolute and phenomena. This is to remove the disease of believing that the natures and marks of *dharmas* are unchanging, and to reveal the medicine of the identity of the mind and buddhas. To name the person, this is the *dharmadhātu samādhi-gate* of Samantabhadra.

⁹² One interpretation of the “threefold perfect interpenetration” is the Huayan teaching of the interpenetration of the absolute with phenomena (事理無礙), the mutual interpenetration of phenomena (事事無礙), and the mutual interpenetration of the absolute (理理無礙). *Rūpa* and the other *skandhas* corresponds to phenomena (事), and emptiness to the absolute (理). Kūkai's thesis is that the identity of matter and so on with emptiness in the *Heart Sūtra* demonstrates the *samādhi* of Samantabhadra, which is the teaching of mutual interpenetration of Huayan. Another interpretation of the threefold interpenetration is the interpenetration of the three types of worlds (三種世間: the realms of beings, their support worlds, and the buddhas and bodhisattvas), cf. *Himitsu mandara jūjūshin ron*, TKZ 2.297.

⁹³ In esoteric Buddhism, Samantabhadra is identical with Vajrasattva (T 1125:20.538a, etc.), and as such is the perfect cause (圓因), where Mahāvairocana is the perfect result (圓果). In that sense, Samantabhadra/Vajrasattva represents pure *bodhicitta*. The *Darijing shu* explains (T 1796:39.787c), “Samantabhadra is *bodhicitta*. Without this sublime cause, there can never be the highest and great result (buddhahood).” (普賢者是菩提心也。若無此妙因。終不能至無上大果) *Bodhicitta* is the source of all the practices and vows of the bodhisattvas, so Samantabhadra is called their body here. He is called the “*bodhicitta* of all the *tathāgatas*” (是一切如來菩提心, T 1125:20.538a). The *Darijing shu* explains his name (T 1796:39.582b):

普賢菩薩者。普是遍一切處義。賢是最妙善義。謂菩提心所起願行。及身口意。悉皆平等遍一切處。純一妙善備具眾德。故以為名。

In Samantabhadra's name, *samanta* (普) means penetrating everywhere, and *bhadra* (賢) means the most sublimely good. The meaning is that the cultivation and vows arising from *bodhicitta* and [the three mysteries practice of] body, speech, and mind are all universally shared and penetrate everywhere, are pure and sublimely good, and possess all virtues. That is why Samantabhadra is so named.

色空本不二 事理元來同 無擬融三種 金水喻其宗
 Matter and emptiness are fundamentally not two;
 Phenomena and the absolute are originally identical.
 Without obstruction, triply interpenetrating,
 The analogies of this teaching are the golden [lion] and water [and waves].⁹⁴

[II.3.2.2. Sanlun]

[舍利子是諸法空相。不生不滅。不垢不淨。不增不減]
 [“Śāriputra, all *dharmas* are characterized by emptiness: they neither arise nor cease, are neither defiled nor pure, and neither increase nor decrease.”]

二絕者所謂無戲論如來三摩地門是也。是諸法空相至不增不減是。言無戲論如來即文殊菩薩密號。文殊利劍能揮八不絕彼妄執之心乎。是故以名。頌曰

Second, “cutting off” [conceptual proliferation] is the *samādhi*-gate of the “Tathāgata free of conceptual proliferation.” This refers to the passage from “all *dharmas* are characterized by emptiness” to “neither increase nor decrease.” The “Tathāgata free of conceptual proliferation” is the esoteric name of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.⁹⁵ The sharp sword of Mañjuśrī, the wielding of the eight negations, cuts off falsely discriminating thoughts.⁹⁶ That is why [this sentence of the *Heart Sūtra*] is named [“cutting off”]. A verse:

⁹⁴ Two Huayan analogies illustrating the inseparability of gold (essence) from a lion made of gold (function), or of water (the absolute) from waves (phenomena). The analogy of the golden lion appears in T 1880, and of the water in T 1867:45.511c, T 1733:35.119a, and so on.

⁹⁵ In Amoghavajra’s translation of the *Adhyardhaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (T 243:8.785a), the name 一切無戲論如來 “the Tathāgata free of all conceptual proliferation” (*sarvadharmāprapañcas tathāgataḥ*) appears. This is explained in the commentary to that text (T 1003:19.613b) as another name for the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Kūkai says that Sanlun, the seventh of his ten stages, is the *samādhi* of Prajñā and Mañjuśrī in his *Daijō Tennō no kanjō no mon* (TKZ 5. 20):

三論則善說八不空性之理妙開除滅諸戲論之趣。一實無生之觀因之而立。二諦中道之義從此而發。是則燒落三毒四魔之猛火。寧卷戲論妄雲之暴風。掃身心著愛除內外障礙此藥得最。般若佛母文殊三昧之門也。

Sanlun/Sanron teaches well the eight negations and the truth of emptiness, and sublimely opens the path to eliminating conceptual proliferation. The view of the one reality that does not arise [nor cease] is thus established, and the teaching of the two truths and the middle path is accordingly given. It is the fierce flame that consumes the three poisons and four *māras*, and the blast of wind that blows away the false clouds of conceptual proliferation. It sweeps away the physical and mental attachments, and removes inner and outer obstructions. This medicine is the highest. It is the *samādhi*-gate of Prajñā, the mother of the buddhas, and Mañjuśrī.

⁹⁶ This sentence is traditionally not read as a question. This section of the *Heart Sūtra* reveals Mañjuśrī’s *samādhi* of eliminating useless conceptual proliferation by means of the eight negations, likened to the sword of *prajñā*. The eight negations appear in the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (T 220:6.988a, 7.389a; see also T 1564:30.1b, etc.).

若菩薩摩訶薩修行般若波羅蜜多時。如實知一切從緣所生法不生不滅。不斷不常。不一不異。不來不去。絕諸戲論。

If, when the bodhisattva-mahāsattva is cultivating the *prajñāpāramitā*, he clearly knows all *dharmas* arising from conditions to be neither arising nor ceasing, neither interrupted not eternal, neither the

八不絕諸戲 文殊是彼人 獨空畢竟理 義用最幽真

The eight negations cut off all conceptual proliferation;

Mañjuśrī is the person who [cuts off all conceptual proliferation].

The single emptiness⁹⁷ is the ultimate truth;

Its application [in compassionate activities] is the most profound reality.

[II.3.3.3. Faxiang]

[是故空中無色無受想行識。無眼耳鼻舌身意。無色聲香味觸法。無眼界乃至無意識界]

["Therefore, in emptiness there is no matter, and no sensations, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness; no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind; no form, sounds, scents, tangibles, and objects of mind; no realm of vision, and so on to no realm of consciousness."]

三相者所謂摩訶梅多羅冒地薩怛嚩三摩地門是也。是故空中無色至無意識界是也。大慈三昧以與樂爲宗示因果爲誠。相性別論。唯識遮境。心只在此乎。頌曰

Third, [knowing] the “marks” [of *dharmas*] is the *samādhi*-gate of Mahā-Maitreya Bodhisattva.⁹⁸ This refers to the passage from “therefore, in emptiness there is no matter” to “no realm of consciousness.” [Maitreya’s] teaching is to give ease through the *samādhi* of universal kindness,

same nor different, and neither coming nor going, then he cuts off all conceptual proliferation.

⁹⁷ The “single emptiness” (獨空) is discussed in the *Dazhidu lun* (T 1509:25.551a):

問曰。云何是獨空。答曰。十八空皆因緣相待。如內空因內法。故名內空。若無內法則無內空。十八空皆爾。是獨空無因無待故名獨空。

Question. What is the single emptiness? Answer. The eighteen aspects of emptiness (*aṣṭadaśaśūnyatā*) are all relative to causes and conditions. For example, internal emptiness (*adhyātma-śūnyatā*) relies on internal *dharmas* (the six sense organs), and is thus named internal emptiness. Without any internal *dharmas*, there would be no internal emptiness. The eighteen aspects of emptiness are all the same. This single emptiness has no cause and relies on nothing, therefore it is called the single emptiness.

The single emptiness is free of all relativity, and is suchness. Jizang writes (T 1824:42.2b), “Because it is primordial and ultimate, free of all existences, and is only reality and *dharmatā*, it is called ‘single.’” (以本來畢竟無所有唯有實相法性故稱爲獨)

⁹⁸ Kūkai says that Faxiang, the sixth of his ten stages, is the *samādhi* of Maitreya in his *Daijō Tennō no kanjō no mon* (TKZ 5. 20):

法相委說八識三性之義妙宣唯識無境之理。固談因果普說法門。言位豎示五十二位。告時吐三大無數。是則遮撥因果理愚者迷心外境癡人調伏大慢眾生之藥。彌勒大慈三昧之門也。

Faxiang/Hossō precisely teaches the eight consciousnesses and the three natures, and sublimely proclaims consciousness-only and the truth that the objects of consciousness do not exist [independently]. It firmly discusses cause and effect, and widely teaches the Dharma-gates. When discussing the bodhisattva stages, it reveals fifty-two progressive stages, and when talking about the length of time [to attain buddhahood], it says that three great *asamkhyeya kalpas* are required. It corrects those fools who ignore the truth of cause and effect and ignorant people who are confused about objects external to mind. It is the medicine that tames great pride in beings. It is Maitreya’s *samādhi-gate* of universal kindness.

and his instructions [warn against ignoring] cause and effect. He explains the differences between the marks [of *dharmas*] and nature (mind). Consciousness-only counteracts [the idea of the self-existence of] the objects of cognition.⁹⁹ [Maitreya's] heart [of universal kindness] is fully expressed here [in this sentence of the *Heart Sūtra*].¹⁰⁰ A verse:

二我何時斷 三祇證法身 阿陀是識性 幻影即名賓

When will beings abandon [ideas about the enduring reality of] the two (the self and *dharmas*)?

In three *asaṃkhyeya kalpas*,¹⁰¹ when they realize *dharmakāya* (attain buddhahood).

The *ādāna* is the essence of the [other] consciousnesses.¹⁰²

A phantom and an illusion; it is only a name or a guest.¹⁰³

[II.3.3.4. The two vehicles]

[無無明亦無無明盡乃至無老死亦無老死盡。無苦集滅道]

[“There is no ignorance and no ending of ignorance, and so on to no aging and death and no ending of aging and death. There is no suffering, no origin of suffering, no cessation of suffering, and no noble path.”]

四二者唯蘊無我拔業因種是也。是即二乘三摩地門也。無無明至無老死盡即是因緣佛之三昧。頌曰
Fourth, the two are (1) knowing that there is no enduring self but believing that the *skandhas* exist (the *śrāvaka* path) and (2) removing karma, the [twelve] causes [and conditions of

⁹⁹ The external objects of the five *skandhas*, the twelve *āyatana*s, and eighteen *dhātus*, are knowable only as the constructions of consciousness, and thus have no self-existence outside of that. Consciousness and its objects are different, but are mutually dependent. Kūkai suggests that the negations in this section of the *Heart Sūtra* make the point that perceived objects lack any independent existence, and so this section represents the *samādhi* of Maitreya, who gave the teachings Faxiang/Yogācāra are based on out of kindness (*maitrī*) to beings.

¹⁰⁰ This sentence is traditionally not read as a question, and is somewhat terse and ambiguous. Modern Japanese commentators have explained the meaning in a wide range of ways, see Matsunaga 2006, 154–156.

¹⁰¹ Faxiang teaches (*Cheng weishi lun*, T 1585:31.54c, 57c; etc.) that enlightenment is possible after cultivating for three incalculable *kalpas* (one of these equaling 10⁵¹ years in the *Abhidharmakośa*, T 1558:29.63c). Kuiji writes in his commentary on the *Heart Sūtra* (Shih 2001, 80–81), “The Yogācārins comment that unsurpassed enlightenment is broad and profound and cannot be attained with little effort. ... if counted in great *kalpas*, which are beyond all measure, then it would take three immeasurable great *kalpas* to accomplish perfect realization.” (如應者言。無上菩提廣大深遠。非少積因可能證獲。 ... 若以大劫超過一切算數之量。總經於三無數大劫方得證滿, T 1710:33.535a) For the esoteric interpretation of three *kalpas*, see note 86 and Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 28ff.

¹⁰² *Ādānavijñāna*, or appropriating consciousness (also 執持識), is another name for *ālayavijñāna*, or storehouse consciousness, the eighth consciousness of the Yogācāra/Faxiang system, on which the other seven consciousnesses rely.

¹⁰³ Alluding to *Zhuangzi*, chap 1. “A name is only the guest of what is real.” (名者實之賓也) “Real” in the Buddhist sense means not dependent on causes and conditions. The *ālayavijñāna* and the other seven consciousnesses are dependent on the objects of cognition, and so are not themselves real.

dependent arising], and the seeds [of ignorance] (the *pratyekabuddha* path).¹⁰⁴ This is accordingly the *samādhi*-gate of the two vehicles. The passage from “there is no ignorance” to “no ending of aging and death” is the *samādhi* of the *pratyekabuddhas*. A verse:

風葉知因緣 輪迴覺幾年 露花除種子 羊鹿號相連

[Seeing] the falling leaves driven by wind, the *pratyekabuddhas* know causes
and conditions.¹⁰⁵

How long will it take to find liberation from *saṃsāra*?

[Seeing the] dew on a flower, they remove the seeds [of ignorance].

The *śrāvaka* and the *pratyekabuddha* paths may be taken together.¹⁰⁶

無苦集滅道。此是一句五字即依聲得道之三昧。頌曰

The sentence in five characters, “there is no suffering, no origin of suffering, no cessation of suffering, and no noble path” is the *samādhi* of the *śrāvakas*, who attain the path by hearing the Buddha's voice.¹⁰⁷ A verse:

白骨我何在 青瘀人本無 吾師是四念 羅漢亦何虞

Bleached bones! Where in you is an enduring self?

Livid corpse! Never a person to be found here.¹⁰⁸

The *śrāvakas*' teacher is the four bases of mindfulness.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Kūkai uses the first phrase (唯蘊無我) as the name for the fourth or *śrāvaka* stage in his *Himitsu mandara jūjūshin ron* (TKZ 2.147) and *Hizō hōyaku* (TKZ 3.129), and the second phrase (拔業因種) for the fifth or *pratyekabuddha* stage (TKZ 2.173, 3.145). Both phrases are drawn from the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* (T 848:18.3b).

The four noble truths and the elimination or breaking of the twelve links are often traditionally described as the means to attainment of the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* respectively. Regarding the question of how their negations in the *Heart Sūtra* can be understood as the *samādhis* of the two vehicles, Yūkai (sz 16.324b) lists the explanations given by various commentators. One explanation is that since the entire *Heart Sūtra* is based on Mañjuśrī's *samādhi*, the *samādhis* of all the paths including the Hīnayāna paths are expressed in that modality. Another is that the negations mean there is no longer an attachment to the self in the realizations of the two vehicles.

¹⁰⁵ Compare *Himitsu mandara jūjūshin ron* (TKZ 2.173; also *Hizō hōyaku* TKZ 3.145):

見彼華葉覺四相之無常。住此林落證三昧於無言。業惱株杙猶此而拔。無明種子因之而斷。

The *pratyekabuddhas* see flowers and leaves, and realize the impermanence of the four marks [of conditioned things: arising, continuing, changing, and ceasing]. They live in forests or hamlets, and attain *samādhi* in silence. The stumps of karma and afflictions are uprooted that way, and the seeds of ignorance are severed because of that.

¹⁰⁶ Literally, “the names of the goat and deer [carts] are interconnected.” The meaning is that the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha* paths can be grouped together as the two vehicles of Hīnayāna. In the parable of the three carts and the burning house in the *Lotus Sūtra* (T 262:9.12c), the goat cart corresponds to the *śrāvaka* path, the deer cart to the *pratyekabuddha* path, and the ox cart to the bodhisattva path. (Reeves 2008, 113ff.)

¹⁰⁷ 依聲得道, “those who attain the path by hearing the [Buddha's] voice,” means the *śrāvakas*.

¹⁰⁸ These two lines refer to the mindfulness of impurity (*aśubhasmṛti*, 不淨觀) by observing the nine stages of the decay of a corpse practiced by those on the *śrāvaka* path to eliminate lust. “Bleached bones” (白骨) is the eighth stage, of a skeleton still connected by ligaments. “Livid corpse” (青瘀) is the third stage. The other stages are abbreviated here.

¹⁰⁹ The four bases of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*, 四念處). Seeing (1) the body as impure (觀身不淨), (2) sensations as suffering (觀受是苦), (3) the mind as impermanent (觀心無常), and (4) *dharmas* as lacking an enduring self (觀法無

How peaceful the state of the *arhat!*

[II.3.3.5. Tiantai]

[無智亦無得。以無所得故]

["There is no knowing and also no attaining, because there is nothing to be attained."]

五一者阿哩也嚩路枳帝冒地薩怛嚩之三摩地門也。無智至無所得故是也。此得自性清淨如來以一道清淨妙蓮不染開示眾生拔其苦厄。智學能達得名所證。既泯理智強以一名。法華涅槃等攝末歸本教唯含此十字。諸乘差別智者察之。頌曰

Fifth, "the single" is the *samādhi* of Ārya-Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva. It is the passage from "there is no knowing" to "because there is nothing to be attained." Through the sublime lotus free of stain¹¹⁰ that is the purity of the single path,¹¹¹ this "Tathāgata who attains the purity of self-nature"¹¹² opens and demonstrates¹¹³ [the Buddha's insight] to beings, and frees them from

我).

¹¹⁰ In the commentary on the *Adhyardhaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (T 1003:19.612b) translated by Amoghavajra:

觀自在菩薩。手持蓮華。觀一切有情身中如來藏性自性清淨光明。一切惑染所不能染。由觀自在菩薩加持。得離垢清淨等同聖者。

Avalokiteśvara holds a lotus in his hand, and perceives within the bodies of all beings the *tathāgatagarbha*-nature and the luminosity of the purity of own-nature, which no afflictions or defilements can stain. Through the *adhiṣṭhāna* of Avalokiteśvara, purity and freedom from defilement is attained, and identity with the deity achieved.

¹¹¹ Compare Kūkai's *Himitsu mandara jūjūshin ron* (TKZ 2.270–271):

言一道無爲住心所說法門是觀自在菩薩三摩地門。所以觀自在菩薩手執蓮華。表一切眾生身心中有本來清淨理。雖沈淪無明三毒泥中往來六趣四生垢穢。不染不垢猶如蓮華。是本來清淨理名一道無爲。是一

道亦名一乘。所謂佛乘。
The Dharma-gate taught by the mind-stage of the unconditioned single path is the *samādhi*-gate of Avalokiteśvara. Avalokiteśvara holds a lotus in his hand, thus he manifests the truth of the original purity within the bodies and minds of all beings. Beings sink in the mud of ignorance and the three poisons, and wander through the impurities of the six rebirth states and births in the four ways, yet just like the lotus they are not stained or defiled by them. This truth of original purity is named the unconditioned single path. The single path may also be called the single vehicle, which is the buddha vehicle.

¹¹² In Amoghavajra's translation of the *Adhyardhaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (T 243:8.784c), the name 得自性清淨法性如來 "the Tathāgata who attains the purity and suchness of self-nature" (*svabhāvaśuddhas tathāgataḥ*) appears. This is explained in the commentary (T 1003:19.612a) as another name for Amitāyus, who "abiding in the impure world of the five defilements is Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva." (住雜染五濁世界。則爲觀自在菩薩) Kūkai says that Tiantai, the eighth of his ten stages, is the *samādhi* of Avalokiteśvara in his *Daijō Tennō no kanjō no mon* (TKZ 5. 20–21):

天台言一乘三觀之道顯四教一如之義。一念三諦造境卽中以爲極妙。據法華經憑中觀論備一家義住一岳峯。言其人則觀音大悲三昧之門也。

Tiantai/Tendai teaches the path of the single vehicle and the three views, and reveals that the four teachings are a single suchness. The ultimate teachings are the [three-thousand worlds in a] single thought, the three truths, and seeing all objects of cognition as the middle [path]. The teachings of this school are based on the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, and the school is located at Mt.

“suffering and distress.” “Knowing” is what penetrates, and the “attained” is what is realized. However, because the truth that is known and the knowing have already merged, nothing can be said except to describe them as “single.” The *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, and others, are teachings on returning from the branches (the three vehicles) to the root (the single vehicle),¹¹⁴ and are fully contained in the ten characters [of this sentence in the *Heart Sūtra*]. Students pursuing wisdom should consider the differences among the various vehicles. A verse:

觀蓮知自淨 見菓覺心德 一道泯能所 三車即歸默
Meditate on the lotus and know your own [original] purity.¹¹⁵

Tiantai. As to the person, this is Avalokiteśvara's *samādhi*-gate of universal compassion.

¹¹³ Alluding to the *Lotus Sūtra*, “opens and demonstrates” are the first two of the four actions of opening, demonstrating, apprehending, and entering (開示悟入). By the first two, all four are implied. The *Lotus Sūtra* says (T 262:9.7a):

諸佛世尊。欲令眾生開佛知見。使得清淨故。出現於世。欲示眾生佛之知見故。出現於世。欲令眾生悟佛知見故。出現於世。欲令眾生入佛知見道故。出現於世。舍利弗。是為諸佛以一大事因緣故出現於世。

The buddhas, the world-honored ones, appear in the world because they want living beings to open a way to the buddhas' insight, and thus become pure. They appear in the world because they want to demonstrate the buddhas' insight to living beings. They appear in the world because they want living beings to apprehend things with the buddhas' insight. They appear in the world because they want living beings to enter into the way of the buddhas' insight. (Reeves 2008, 83)

¹¹⁴ Jizang uses this term when describing the three turnings of the wheel of Dharma (三種法輪, T 1722:34.634c).

言三種者。一者根本法輪二者枝末之教三者攝末歸本。根本法輪者。謂佛初成道花嚴之會純為菩薩開一因一果法門。謂根本之教也。但薄福鈍根之流不堪於聞一因一果故。於一佛乘分別說三。謂枝末之教也。四十餘年說三乘之教陶練其心。至今法花始得會彼三乘歸於一道。即攝末歸本教也。

The three are: (1) the basic turning of the Dharma-wheel, (2) the branch teachings, and (3) returning from the branches to the root. The root turning is that of the assembly of the *Avataṃsaka* when the Buddha first attained enlightenment, and purely revealed the Dharma-gate of the single cause (the bodhisattva path) and single fruit (buddhahood) for the bodhisattvas. This is called the root teaching. However, those of few merits and inferior receptivity were unable to endure listening to the single cause and single fruit, so the Buddha divided up the single buddha vehicle and taught three paths. These are called the branch teachings. After over forty years of teaching those three vehicles and training the minds of people, he then revealed to them through the lotus assembly that the three vehicles return to the single path. This is the teaching of returning from the branches to the root.

¹¹⁵ The analogy of the lotus, which grows through filthy water but blossoms above it without any stain has long and often been used in Buddhism to express how the bodhisattvas can remain in the world but not be afflicted by it. For example, in the *Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (T 220:7.927b):

雖在世間世法不染。猶淤泥處所出蓮華。如是菩薩雖處生死。甚深般若波羅蜜多巧便力故而不染著。Although the bodhisattvas remain in the world, they are not stained by the things of the world, just like the lotus which emerges from mud and filth. In the same way, although the bodhisattvas remain in *saṃsāra*, through the skillful power of the profound *prajñāpāramitā* nothing of it affects them.

As noted above in notes 110 and 111, the teaching of the lotus is also often used in esoteric Buddhism to express the intrinsically pure nature of beings. See also the *Darījing shu* (T 1796:39.706b):

如世蓮華出淤泥之中。生處雖惡。而蓮華體性清淨妙色無比。不為諸垢所染。凡夫亦復如是。雖種種不淨三毒過患無量無邊。亦此蓮華三昧甚深果實。皆生其中。即是如來平等大慧之光也。Mundane lotuses emerge from mud and filth, and although they grow under evil circumstances, they

See the fruit [of *bodhi*] and realize the [inherent] qualities of your mind.
 In the single path subject and object merge;
 The three carts¹¹⁶ then return [to the one] in silence.

[II.4. The third section: the benefits attained by the practitioner]

[菩提薩埵依般若波羅蜜多故心無罣礙。無罣礙故無有恐怖。遠離一切顛倒夢想究竟涅槃。三世諸佛依般若波羅蜜多故得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提]

[“The bodhisattva, because of his reliance on the *prajñāpāramitā*, has no mental obstructions. Because he has no obstructions, he has no fear. Being free from all inverted views, he ultimately attains *nirvāṇa*. All the buddhas of the past, present, and future, by relying on the *prajñāpāramitā*, attain supreme and perfect *bodhi*.”]

第三行人得益分有二。人法是也。

Third, the section on the benefits attained by the practitioner has two divisions: the person and the teaching.

初人有七。前六後一。隨乘差別薩埵有異故。又薩埵有四。愚識金智是也。

First, there are seven kinds of person: the six already discussed, and one more to follow.¹¹⁷ Each of these vehicles is different, because the beings [suited for each] are different. These beings are of four types: foolish, conscious, vajra, and knowledge [beings].¹¹⁸

essence of the lotus is pure and sublimely hued without compare. They are not stained by all that filth. Ordinary beings are the same. Although they experience infinite and limitless impurities, the three poisons, and afflictions, this lotus *samādhi* and its profound fruit grows among them. It is the light of the equally-shared wisdom of the Tathāgatas.

¹¹⁶ The *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and bodhisattva paths return to the buddha vehicle. See note 114.

¹¹⁷ This paragraph explains the word “bodhisattva” in “the bodhisattva, because of his reliance on the *prajñāpāramitā*...” in the *Heart Sūtra*. The six types of person are those discussed in the preceding section: Samantabhadra (Huayan), Mañjuśrī (Sanlun/Mādhyamika), Maitreya (Faxiang/Yogācāra), the *śrāvaka*, the *pratyekabuddha*, and Avalokiteśvara (Tiantai). The one remaining will be discussed below, and is the secret treasury of esoteric Buddhism.

¹¹⁸ Two lists of three types of beings have been cited in reference to this (Yūkai, sz 16.344b). First, in the esoteric ritual manual *Jingangding yujia Jingangsaduo wumimi xiuxing niansong yigui* (T 1125:20.539a), “There are three kinds of beings: foolish beings, knowledge beings, and vajra beings.” (有三種薩埵。所謂愚薩埵智薩埵金剛薩埵) Second, in the *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.582c), “There are, in brief, three kinds of beings. First there are those like foolish children. ... Second, there are the conscious beings. These belong to the two vehicles. ... Third, there are the bodhisattvas.” (薩埵略有三種。一者愚童薩埵。謂六道凡夫。... 二者有識薩埵。即二乘也。... 三者菩提薩埵) Dōhan (NDZ 10.507b) says that foolish beings are ordinary beings in the six rebirth destinations, conscious beings are those of the two vehicles, knowledge beings are practitioners of the various Mahāyāna paths, and vajra beings are practitioners of the mantra path, and discusses them in that order. Yūkai (sz 16.344b) says that the meaning of this passage has “not been clear since ancient times” (古來四種薩埵其義不分明). It seems that either the “foolish beings” in T 1125 have been expanded into two categories, ordinary beings and the two vehicles, or the bodhisattvas in the *Darijing shu* have been expanded into the exoteric and esoteric. Therefore, this expression may be a combination of the two passages. Yūkai says that this sequence does not accord with Kūkai’s intention (the exoteric is given last in the list), and cites Kūkai’s disciple

次又法四。謂因行證入也。般若即能因能行。無礙離障即入涅槃。能證覺智即證果。如文思知。頌曰

Next, there are four aspects of the teaching: the cause, cultivation, awakening, and entering. [In the passage “because of his reliance on the *prajñāpāramitā*,”] the *prajñāpāramitā* is both the cause and the cultivation. [In the lines “has no mental obstructions” and “because he has no obstructions, he has no fear. Being free from all inverted views,”] “no obstructions” and [in “he ultimately attains *nirvāṇa*”] freedom from hindrances is entering into *nirvāṇa*. [In the sentence, “all the buddhas of the past, present, and future, by relying on the *prajñāpāramitā*, attain perfect *bodhi*,”] their awakening to buddha wisdom is the fruit of awakening. Reflect on the text itself to know this. A verse:

行人數是七 重二彼之法 圓寂將菩提 正依何事乏
 There are seven kinds of practitioners,
 And two pairs of teachings.¹¹⁹
 Entering *nirvāṇa* and attaining *bodhi*¹²⁰
 Are the primary and dependent results.¹²¹ Can there be anything lacking in
 them?

[II.5. The fourth section: the entire *sūtra* returns to the *dhāraṇī*]

[故知般若波羅蜜多。是大神呪。是大明呪。是無上呪。是無等等呪。能除一切苦。眞實不虛]

[“Therefore, know that the *prajñāpāramitā* is the great mantra, the mantra of great wisdom, the highest mantra, and the peerless mantra. It can remove all suffering, and is true and not false.”]

Shinzei's record of Kūkai's oral teachings *Takao kuketsu* (高雄口決, T 2466:78.34b), where interlinear notes say that foolish beings are ordinary beings (謂愚薩埵 凡), conscious beings are the two vehicles (識薩埵 二乘), vajra beings are the bodhisattvas (金剛薩埵 菩薩), and wise beings are the buddhas (智薩埵 佛). Raihō (ZS 20.164a–b), admitting this problem is “truly difficult” (誠難思), agrees that the sequence of esoteric-exoteric is not acceptable, and that Shinzei's explanation is useful, but that this section describes the vehicles suited for practitioners before they have reached some attainment and may not be appropriate. Ignoring Shinzei's text and taking the last two terms to mean the esoteric and exoteric paths in that sequence, some modern Japanese commentators have inverted their order as a solution (Matsunaga 2006, 175), which Hakeda also seems to follow (Hakeda 1972, 272).

¹¹⁹ The cause (usually expressed as *bodhicitta*) and cultivation form one pair describing the causes or training, and *bodhi* and *nirvāṇa* another pair giving the results or attainment.

¹²⁰ The *Heart Sūtra* gives these two terms in this sequence, but the following line reverses them to the usual sequence.

¹²¹ 正依 (正報依報) in the causal stage usually refers to the primary result of the bodies and minds of beings attained as the result of karma, and dependent result of the worlds they live in. Traditional commentaries (Yūkai, sz 16.349b, 400a, etc) suggest that here this refers to the resultant stage, *bodhi* and *nirvāṇa*. Thus the primary result is the fruit of *bodhi* attained by buddhas through the cause of *bodhicitta* and the cultivation of the *prajñāpāramitā*, and the dependent result is the pure lands (corresponding to *nirvāṇa*) in which they dwell, attained through *bodhi*. Thus *bodhi* would be the primary result and *nirvāṇa* the dependent result in this understanding. All virtues and wisdom are thus perfectly contained within these two.

第四總歸持明分又三。名體用。四種呪明舉名。真實不虛指體。能除諸苦顯用。

Fourth, the section on describing the entire [sūtra] as returning to the *dhāraṇī* has three divisions: the names, the essence, and the function. The four descriptions of mantra (“the great mantra, the mantra of great wisdom, the highest mantra, and the peerless mantra”) provide the names. “True and not false” points to the essence. “It can remove all suffering” reveals the function.

舉名中初是大神呪聲聞真言。二緣覺真言。三大乘真言。四祕藏真言。

Regarding the names given, the first, the “great mantra,” is the mantra of the *śrāvakas*. The second, [the “mantra of great wisdom”] is the mantra of the *pratyekabuddhas*. The third, [the “highest mantra”] is the mantra of Mahāyāna. The fourth, [the “peerless mantra”] is the mantra of the secret treasury.¹²²

若以通義一一真言皆俱四名。略示一隅。圓智之人三即歸一。頌曰

From the inclusive perspective, each of these mantras possesses all four names. I have limited the discussion here to only one corner.¹²³ Those who can perfectly extrapolate [the other three corners] should also know that those three return to the one. A verse:

總持有文義 忍呪悉持明 聲字與人法 實相俱此名

The all-encompassing *dhāraṇīs* are [of four types:] texts (*dharmadhāraṇīs*), meanings (*arthadhāraṇīs*),

Patience (*kṣāntilābhadhāraṇīs*), and mantras (*mantradhāraṇīs*): they are *dhāraṇīs* holding all wisdom.¹²⁴

Sounds and letters, the person and the teaching,

And reality: [these five] hold these names [of the four *dhāraṇīs*].¹²⁵

¹²² Compare Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (T 223:8.286b):

是般若波羅蜜攝一切善法。若聲聞法。若辟支佛法。若菩薩法。若佛法。... 般若波羅蜜是大明呪。無上明呪。無等等明呪。何以故。世尊是般若波羅蜜能除一切不善。能與一切善法。

The *Prajñāpāramitā* gathers all wholesome teachings into itself, including the *śrāvaka* teachings, the *pratyekabuddha* teachings, the bodhisattva teachings, and the buddha teachings. ... The *Prajñāpāramitā* is the mantra of great wisdom, the highest mantra, and the peerless mantra. Why is that? Bhagavān, [it is because] the *Prajñāpāramitā* can remove all things not wholesome, and can provide all wholesome teachings.

¹²³ Alluding to the *Lunyu* of Confucius (7.8, 舉一隅不以三隅反則不復也): “If I have brought up one corner and he [the student] does not return with the other three, I will not repeat,” (Huang 1997, 88).

¹²⁴ Kūkai uses the word *zongchi* (總持) here, which is the Chinese translation for *dhāraṇī*. In his *Bonji shittan jimo narabi ni shakugi* he gave the esoteric meaning of this word, see note 32. Kūkai goes on in the same text to describe four types of *dhāraṇīs*: the *dharmadhāraṇīs*, *arthadhāraṇīs*, *mantradhāraṇīs*, and *bodhisattvakṣāntilābhadhāraṇīs*. See Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 280–285.

¹²⁵ The five mentioned—sounds, letters, the person (the bodhisattva whose *samādhi* is taught), the teaching, and reality—are essences expressed through the four types of *dhāraṇīs*. Yūkai (sz 16.358b) comments that, “To show that the word for *dhāraṇī* (translated as “all-encompassing”) encompasses all things, these five are mentioned. There is nothing outside of these five. That is why this text above has (I.3.2), ‘A discussion of each sound and letter would take *kalpas* of time and still not be complete, and buddhas equal in numbers to the motes of dust in the universe or drops of

[II.6. The fifth section: the mantra of the secret treasury]

[故說般若波羅蜜多呪。卽說呪曰。揭帝 揭帝 般羅揭帝 般羅僧揭帝 菩提 僧莎訶]
 [“Therefore, I teach the mantra of the *prajñāpāramitā*.” Then he taught this mantra:
gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā.]

第五祕藏眞言分有五。初𑖀𑖩顯聲聞行果。二𑖀𑖩舉緣覺行果。三𑖀𑖩指諸大乘最勝行果。四𑖀𑖩
 𑖀𑖩明眞言曼荼羅俱足輪圓行果。五𑖀𑖩說上諸乘究竟菩提證入義。

Fifth, the section on the mantra of the secret treasury has five divisions. [In the mantra, *gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā,*] the first *gate* reveals the fruit of the training¹²⁶ of the *śrāvakas*. The second *gate* gives the fruit of the training of the *pratyekabuddhas*. Third, *pāragate*¹²⁷ indicates

water in the oceans would still not be able to finish explaining each word and the reality it teaches.” Compare *Shō-ji-jissō gi* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 82), “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.” (所謂聲字實相者卽是法佛平等之三密。眾生本有之曼荼也)

¹²⁶ Matsunaga (2006, 191) explains the word *gate* as the vocative of the feminine *gatā* of the past participle *gata* of the verb *gam*, and translates it as “you who have gone (and arrived),” meaning the attainment of enlightenment. Kūkai interprets the word *gate* with 行果, translated as the “fruit of the training.” In Shingon Buddhism, *gate* is traditionally explained as combining the letter *ga* (from *gati*, “going”) with the letter *te*, consisting of the letter *ta* (signifying ungraspable *tathatā*) with the vowel changed to *e* (*aiśvara*, “sovereignty”). Therefore, “unrestricted suchness” (the letter *te*) is the fruit attained through the “going” (the letter *ga*), or training, of each path.

¹²⁷ The Siddham in Kūkai’s text reads **pragate* (where the standard text has *pāragate*) and **prasugate* (instead of *pārasaṃgate*). This may be a mistake on Kūkai’s part, a copyist’s error, or Kūkai may be using a different text from the standard one known today. Note that, however, the oldest extant manuscript of the *Heart Sūtra* in Siddham, the Hōryū-ji manuscript, gives the standard mantra. SAKATA (1999, 94) says **prasugate* is a copyist’s error for **prasamgate*. In his notes to Sakata’s work, Yoneda (pp. 163–165) agrees that the words in the mantra in the version of the text Kūkai is using may have been **pragate* and **prasamgate*. He notes that Kūkai renders *gate* as 行果, and uses the word “supreme” (最勝) to render *pra-*, which is a possible translation of that prefix, and uses “complete and perfect” (俱足輪圓) to translate *prasam-*. Matsunaga (2006, 195–196) repeats this argument, and continues:

Kūkai wrote the title of the *sūtra* in Siddham as *pramita* [instead of *pāramitā*], so it is possible that he is confusing *pra* with *pāra*. However, on the other hand there is evidence that indirectly supports the idea that the *dhāraṇī* in the *sūtra* Kūkai referred to was *pragate prasamgate*.

The evidence is Huilin’s *Yiqie jing yinyi* (一切經音義, 卍 2128:54.369c), which mentions a translation of the *Heart Sūtra* (般若波羅多[蜜]心經) by Kumārajīva that is not the extant one. The mantra in that text is transliterated with 般囉, with the two characters to be read as one syllable (二合), therefore rendering *pra* and not *pāra*. Accordingly, Matsunaga suggests that a version of the *Heart Sūtra* existed at that time with such a mantra. Matsunaga also says that when Kūkai stayed at the Ximing-si monastery in Chang’an (see Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 200), Huilin was also staying there at the same time and working on the *Yiqie jing yinyi*, and therefore it is possible that they encountered and spoke to each other there. Matsunaga (2006, 196) continues,

The version of the *Heart Sūtra* Kūkai makes use of in the *Secret Key* is one translated by Kumārajīva and titled *Foshuo mohe-bore-boluomiduo xin jing* (*The Heart of the Great Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha*, 佛說摩訶般若波羅蜜多心經, not extant). In the *Yiqie jing yinyi*, the title of Kumārajīva’s version is transliterated as *Bore-boluo[mī]duo xin jing* (般若波羅多[蜜]心經), different from the [extant Kumārajīva translation, 卍 250] *Mohe bore boluomi da mingzhou jing* (摩訶般若波羅蜜大明呪經, *Sūtra of the Great Mantra of Mahā Prajñāpāramitā*). The two [the title in Kūkai’s text and the title of the lost

the supreme fruit of the training of the various forms of Mahāyāna.¹²⁸ Fourth, *pārasaṃgate* elucidates the complete and perfect fruit of the training (*gate*) through mantra and maṇḍala. Fifth, *bodhi svāhā* speaks of the ultimate *bodhi* [those of] the above vehicles realize, and [the *nirvāṇa* they] enter.¹²⁹

句義如是。若約字相義等釋之。有無量人法等義歷劫難盡。若要聞者依法更問。頌曰

The meanings of the words are as given above. If the superficial and profound meanings of each of the letters,¹³⁰ and so on, were to be fully discussed in the same way, there would be

Kumārajīva text in the *Yiqie jing yinyi*] coincide.

Matsunaga therefore suggests that we not ignore the possibility that Kūkai used a lost Kumārajīva translation of the *Heart Sūtra* different from the extant Kumārajīva translation, and that the mantra in that text may have included the words *pragate* and *prasaṃgate*, rather than *pāragate* and *pārasaṃgate*. Such a possibility must not be automatically excluded; however, given the other nonstandard usages in the Siddham title in this text (in particular *pāramitā* written as **pramita*, see note 63), the admitted need to at least correct **prasugate* to **prasaṃgate*, and so on, an error by either Kūkai or a later copyist seems the simplest solution pending further evidence. On that basis, the standard forms of the mantra are used in this translation.

¹²⁸ In *Unji gi*, Kūkai discussed the cause, training, and fruit of the *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and bodhisattvas according to the letter *hūṃ*. See Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 179–182.

¹²⁹ Kūkai assigns *gate gate* to the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, *pāragate* to Mahāyāna, *pārasaṃgate* to esoteric Buddhism, and *bodhi svāhā* as *bodhi* and *nirvāṇa*. Mingkuang (z 528:26.735b) has a limited similarity with Kūkai's thesis, but does not extend to esoteric Buddhism:

已上明祕密般若也。揭諦揭諦者世也。度也。是明白度也。波羅揭諦者明度他。波羅僧揭諦者總明白度度他也。菩提者明白他共到所處也。娑婆訶者明究竟。是中有事究竟理究竟也

The above [mantra] explains the secret *prajñā*. *Gate gate* is the world and liberation. It explains self-liberation. *Pāragate* explains liberating others. *Pārasaṃgate* generally explains self-liberation and liberating others. *Bodhi* explains both the self and others together arriving at the other shore. *Svāhā* explains the ultimate. Within it is the ultimate of phenomena and the ultimate of truth.

¹³⁰ The term 字相義 (字相字義), or the superficial and profound meanings of Sanskrit letters is discussed by Kūkai at length in his *Unji gi* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 128–197). Each of these letters can represent different Buddhist deities as their *bija*-letters, and each letter can also represent specific Buddhist teachings. See the examples in *Unji gi* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 150–155) and *Bonji shittan jimo narabi ni shakugi* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 292–299).

“And so on” refers to Kūkai's “sixteen gates” (十六門), among which the “superficial and profound meanings of letters” is found. Based on a passage in the *Darījing shu* (T 1796:39.656a, see Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 150–151), Kūkai gives a list of the sixteen in one his three *Hokkekyō kaidai* (TKZ 4.185–186, also *Hokkekyō shaku* TKZ 4.201).

釋一切經且有十六門。謂遮情。表德。淺略。深祕。字相。字義。一字攝多。多字歸一。一字釋多。多字釋一。一字成多。多字成一。一字破多。多字破一。順觀旋轉。逆觀旋轉門也。諸佛如來舉此十六門流出一切經教還攝一切法門。釋判一切教義修習一切觀門。顯發一切佛引攝一切人。是則諸經之根源諸教之帝王。

There are sixteen gates for interpreting the entire *tripitaka*. They are: (1) counteracting delusions (negating) and (2) revealing virtues (affirming), (3) the shallow and incomplete and (4) the profound and hidden, (5) the superficial meanings of letters and (6) the profound meanings of letters, (7) one letter encompassing many and (8) many letters returning to one, (9) one letter interpreting many and (10) many letters interpreting one, (11) one letter establishing many and (12) many letters establishing one, (13) one letter refuting many and (14) many letters refuting one, and (15) revolving clockwise and (16) revolving counterclockwise. The buddhas, the *tathāgatas*, use these sixteen gates to expound all the *sūtras* and teachings, and also to encompass all those Dharma-gates. They classify all teachings,

limitless deities and teachings—too many to exhaust even with a *kalpa* of time.¹³¹ Those who wish to receive [the full esoteric teachings] should inquire further in the correct way [from a master].¹³² A verse:¹³³

真言不思議 觀誦無明除 一字含千理 卽身證法如
行行至圓寂 去去入原初 三界如客舍 一心是本居

The mantra [of the *Heart Sūtra*] is inconceivable.¹³⁴

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

Each of its letters contains a thousand truths.¹³⁵

Immediately and in this body realize Dharma and suchness.¹³⁶

cultivate all the gates of meditation, reveal all buddhas, and guide all people to liberation. They are the source of the *sūtras*, and the emperor of teachings.

¹³¹ Compare *Hokkekyō kaidai* TKZ 4.196 (similar content at 4.193, *Hokkekyō shaku*, TKZ 4.209), where Kūkai writes regarding the *Lotus Sūtra*, “If each of these letters and phrases were to be explained in detail, it would be difficult to complete in even a *kalpa* of time.” (如是字字句句義若廣釋者歷劫難盡也)

¹³² The student must first receive *abhiṣeka* correctly from a genuine master of esoteric Buddhism, and then receive the teachings directly and in person from the master. The deepest teachings cannot be had from written materials. Kūkai writes in his *Jissō Hannya-kyō tasshaku* (Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 337), “This esoteric meditation cannot be put down on paper, it can only be transmitted in person from the master.” (此密觀者不能染紙對面傳授耳) He continues (340):

一一句一一字悉含無邊之義理。是故顯學古德雖釋更閉。自非密傳之人何能得解。若能有心具受。不面不得。

Each phrase and each letter contains within themselves limitless meanings. Therefore, the exoteric masters of old commented on them only up to a point, and then remained silent. Who but a person with the transmission of the esoteric teachings would be able to understand these meanings? Even if there were a person with the intention to master this, he would be unable to do so without face-to-face instruction from a master.

¹³³ The first four lines discuss the benefits of mantras generally, while the second four lines discuss the *Heart Sūtra* mantra specifically. (The first four lines also appear in a later apocryphal text ascribed to Yixing titled *Ichigyō zenji jimo hyō* 一行禪師字母表, *Dhyāna Master Yixing's Mātrkā Chart*).

¹³⁴ Dōhan says (NDZ 10.511b) that “mantra” here specifically means the eight associations of the *Heart Sūtra* mantra discussed above (II.6): *gate gate* for the two vehicles, *pāragate* for Huayan, Sanlun, Faxiang, and Tiantai, *pārasaṃgate* for the esoteric, and *bodhi svāhā* for the *bodhi* and *nirvāṇa* attained by all of them.

¹³⁵ Dōhan (ibid.) says this corresponds to (7) “one letter encompassing many” (一字攝多) among the sixteen gates mentioned above in note 130, while Kakuban (NDZ 10.474b) says it represents (6) “the profound meanings of letters” (字義).

¹³⁶ Yūkai has a somewhat more generalized approach (sz 16.402b–403a) than Dōhan (note 134), saying that “mantras are inconceivable” means that the inner realization of a buddha is beyond the conception of those still in the causal stage. “Meditate” refers to the mystery of mind, “recite” to the mystery of speech, and “immediately and in this body” to the mystery of body. “Each letter contains a thousand truths” reveals the all-encompassing nature of *dhāraṇīs*.

The expression “Dharma and suchness” (法如) repeats the terms (佛法 *Buddhadharma* and 眞如 *suchness*) given in the passage quoted from Mingkuang in the beginning of this text (“The *Buddhadharma* is not far removed: it is within the mind and near at hand. Suchness is not without: abandon the body and how could it be found?”). According to Yūkai, in the term “Dharma and suchness,” *Buddhadharma* means the cognition (智) of a Buddha, and “suchness” means the truth (理) that is the object of that cognition (see note 35 above). Kakuban has a similar approach that he

Go on, go on, to attain perfect peace.
 Go beyond, go beyond, to enter the fundamental source.¹³⁷
 The triple world is no more than an inn for travelers,
 But the one-mind is our true home.¹³⁸

[III. Questions]

問陀羅尼是如來祕密語。所以古三藏諸疏家皆閉口絕筆。今作此釋深背聖旨。

Question. *Dhāraṇī* are the secret words of the *tathāgatas*; therefore, the *tripīṭaka* masters of old and the various commentators kept silent and wrote nothing about them.¹³⁹ Why do you now write a commentary on this, profoundly turning your back on the Buddha's intent?

如來說法有二種。一顯二祕。爲顯機說多名句。爲祕根說總持字。是故如來自說𠄎字𠄎字等種種義。是則爲祕機作此說。龍猛無畏廣智等亦說其義。能不之間在教機耳。說之默之竝契佛意。

[Answer.] The preaching of the Tathāgata is of two kinds: the exoteric and the esoteric. For those inclined to the exoteric he teaches using many words and sentences, but for those receptive

discusses at some length (NDZ 10.474b–475a).

¹³⁷ Yūkai (ibid.) remarks that the lines “Go on, go on, to attain perfect peace. Go beyond, go beyond, to enter the fundamental source” are an expansion on the letters of the word *gate*. “Go on, go on” and “go beyond, go beyond” (行行去去, for *gate* in the four words *gate*, *gate*, *pāragate*, and *pārasaṃgate*) represent the letter *ga* signifying *gati*. “Perfect peace” (圓寂) and “fundamental source” (原初) represent the letter *te* in *gate*, with “perfect peace” being *nirvāṇa* and the “fundamental source” being *bodhi* (see note 126).

Dōhan says that 法如 refers to the letter *te* in *gate*, meaning ungraspable suchness (如如不可得). He also says that, “The fruit of the training means that the training itself is the fruit.” (行果者行即果也)

Kakuban (NDZ 10.475a) says that “go on, go on, to attain perfect peace” corresponds to *gate gate* and is the training, with “perfect peace” or *nirvāṇa* as the fruit of that training; and that “go beyond, go beyond, to enter the fundamental source” corresponds to *pāragate pārasaṃgate*, with “fundamental source” or *bodhi* as its fruit. He adds that *bodhi* and *nirvāṇa* are reversed here because those of the two vehicles seek only *nirvāṇa*, while Mahāyāna seeks both.

¹³⁸ Kakuban (NDZ 10.475b) says these two lines correspond to *bodhi svāhā*. He remarks, “Escaping the [transience of the] travelers' inn of the triple world and returning to the true home of the one-mind means attaining ultimate *bodhi* and *nirvāṇa*. The one-mind is *bodhi*.” Regarding “one-mind,” see note 89.

¹³⁹ Xuanzang writes in his commentary on the *Heart Sūtra* (T 1714:33.571a), “The above [mantra] is the secret teaching of *prajñā*. Mantras are the first of the five kinds of words not to be translated. It may be that this mantra consists of the secret words of the buddhas. It is not something that inferior, unenlightened people can know.” (已上密說般若。此五種不翻之一也。蓋呪是佛之密語。非下凡所知)

Fazang says in his commentary (T 1712:33.555a), “[The mantra] cannot be commented on. Because it is the secret words of the buddhas, it cannot be analyzed from the causal stage. It should only be recited, to remove hindrances and increase merits.” (不可釋。以是諸佛祕語非因位所解。但當誦持除障增福) He continues with a brief straightforward discussion of the literal meanings of the words of the mantra without commentary.

Kuiji does not comment on the mantra and simply remarks at the very end of his text (T 1710:33), “Its implications are profound and far-reaching, and its teachings are hidden and vast. It is not easily explained in detail.” (意趣深遠教理幽廣不易詳贊) Also see Shih 2001, 125.

Wōnch'uk goes into some detail regarding his views of the mantra (T 1711.33.551c–552a), see Lusthaus 2003, 94–98. For Mingkuang's comments regarding the mantra, see note 129.

to the esoteric he teaches the letters of the *dhāraṇīs*.¹⁴⁰ For that reason, the Tathāgata himself taught the various meanings of letters such as *a* and *om*.¹⁴¹ He gave these explanations for those prepared to receive the esoteric. Nāgārjuna,¹⁴² Śubhakarasiṃha,¹⁴³ Amoghavajra,¹⁴⁴ and others

¹⁴⁰ Those of lesser or exoteric receptivity to the teachings require verbose explanations of a single point to be able to grasp it, while those of superior or esoteric receptivity can understand a vast range of meanings from a single letter. Compare Kūkai's *Himitsu mandara jūjūshin ron* (TKZ 2.190, also *Bonmōkyō kaidai*, TKZ 4.222: see Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 18; also *Hokkekyō shaku*, TKZ 4.199):

此乘有二種義。謂淺略深祕是也。以多名句說一義理此即淺略。一一言名俱無量義。卽是真言祕密。

This vehicle has two senses: the shallow and incomplete [exoteric] and the profound and hidden [esoteric]. Using many words and phrases to teach a single meaning is the shallow and incomplete. When each individual word possesses infinite meanings, that is mantra and the esoteric.

¹⁴¹ See the following notes for some of the many commentaries on the letter *a*. The letter *om* is discussed in the *Shouhu guojiezhu tuoluoni jing* (T 997:19.565c–566a, see Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 141):

陀羅尼母所謂唵字。所以者何。三字和合爲唵字故。謂阿喇烏莽。一喇字者。是菩提心義是諸法門義。亦無二義亦諸法果義。亦是性義是自在義。... 又法身義。二烏字者卽報身義。三莽字者是化身義。以合三字共爲唵字。攝義無邊故爲一切陀羅尼首。與諸字義而作先導。... 雖不說餘而無不攝。此陀羅尼亦復如是。雖說一字無所不收。

The mother of *dhāraṇīs* is the letter *om*. Why? Because the letter *om* is a composite of three letters: *a*, *u*, and *ma*. The letter *a* means *bodhicitta*, all the Dharma-gates, that which is without equal, the fruit of all teachings, the nature of all *dharmas* [fundamental nonarising], and complete freedom It also means *dharmakāya*. Next, the letter *u* means the *sambhogakāya*. Third, the letter *ma* means the *nirmāṇakāya*. These three together form the letter *om*. Because it includes infinite meanings, [the letter *om*] is the chief among all *dhāraṇīs*. It is the leader among the meanings of all letters. ... Even though the rest of the letters may not be discussed, there is none not included in this [letter *om*]. Even though only one letter is discussed, it is always included therein.

¹⁴² In the *Putixin lun* ascribed to Nāgārjuna (the tantric teacher of Nāgabodhi), there is the sentence (T 1665:32574a), “The letter *a* has the meaning of the fundamental non-arising (*ady-anutpāda*) of all *dharmas*.” (夫阿字者一切法本不生義)

¹⁴³ Śubhakarasiṃha, in the *Darijing shu* commentary on the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* explains (T 1796:39.651c, see Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 293):

經云。謂阿字門一切諸法本不生故者。阿字是一切法教之本。凡最初開口之音皆有阿聲。若離阿聲則無一切言說。故爲眾聲之母。凡三界語言皆依於名。而名依於字。故悉曇阿字。亦爲眾字之母。當知阿字門真實義。... 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。卽是如實知自心。

The [*Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi*]-*sūtra* says, “The gate of the letter *a* is the fundamental nonarising of all *dharmas*.” The letter *a* is the root of all teachings. Generally, the very first sound made when we open our mouths always has the sound of *a*. Without the sound *a* there could be no words or speech, therefore it is the mother of all sounds. Generally speaking, all speech in the triple world relies on names and words. Names and words rely on letters. Therefore the Siddham letter *a* is also the mother of all letters. Thus, the true meaning of the gate of the letter *a* is that 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.”

¹⁴⁴ Sentences similar to “The gate of the letter *a* is the fundamental non-arising of all *dharmas*.” (T 880:18.338b, 阿字門一切法本不生) appear in many of Amoghavajra’s translations.

also taught those meanings. Whether or not a teaching should be given depends on the capacity of the recipient of that teaching. Teaching or remaining silent are therefore both in agreement with the Buddha's intention.

問顯密二教其旨天懸。今此顯經中說祕義不可。

Question. The exoteric and the esoteric are far apart from each other in their content. Now you are discussing esoteric meanings within an exoteric *sūtra*. This is not possible.¹⁴⁵

醫王之目觸途皆藥。解寶之人礦石見寶。知與不知何誰罪過。

[Answer.] The eyes of a great physician see [the plants growing by] the wayside each as medicine [where others see only weeds].¹⁴⁶ A man who knows gemstones sees jewels [where others see only] rocks and stones.¹⁴⁷ [Those who know the esoteric] know, and [those who know only the exoteric] do not know. Who might we say is in error?

又此尊真言儀軌觀法佛金剛頂中說。此祕中極祕。應化釋迦在給孤園爲菩薩天人說畫像壇法真言手印等。亦是祕密。陀羅尼集經第三卷是。

The Buddha taught the mantra, ritual, and visualization practices of this deity (the bodhisattva Prajñā) within the Vajraśekhara lineage.¹⁴⁸ This is the most esoteric within the esoteric. When the *nirmānakāya* Śākyamuni was staying at Anāthapiṇḍada-ārāma, for the sake of bodhisattvas, gods,

¹⁴⁵ Yūkai interprets this in two ways (sz 16.366a, 404b). One is that the *Heart Sūtra* is originally an exoteric text from which profound esoteric meanings can be extracted with the eye of wisdom. The exoteric commentators thus overlooked the esoteric significances that Kūkai describes. The other is that the *Heart Sūtra* is originally an esoteric text intended to teach the esoteric *samādhi* of the bodhisattva Prajñā. The other commentators on the *Heart Sūtra* were not aware of this, and misunderstood the text as an exoteric text. The questioner identifies the text as exoteric. Therefore, according to the first interpretation, Kūkai agrees that the text is exoteric, but claims that deeper meanings can be discerned by those who know how to look at it. According to the second interpretation, Kūkai disagrees with the assumption in the question that the *Heart Sūtra* is an exoteric text, which is the claim of a person who lacks in understanding. The first interpretation seems more likely given Kūkai's statements in the *Konshō-kyō himitsu kada* (see note 3).

¹⁴⁶ "A great physician" 醫王 here probably does not directly mean the Buddha, but simply one skilled in medicine. The term 世醫王 appears in the *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.669c) meaning a great physician of the world. See also note 40. Compare *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.636b):

如一地所生一雨所潤。然諸藥草性分不同。若醫王觀之。則知如是藥草。於其病中非對治所宜。然於其病則勢力殊勝。

It is like medicinal herbs growing in the same place and watered by the same rain, which nevertheless are different in their qualities. When a great physician sees them, he knows which medicinal herbs are not suited for treating a specific ailment, and which are the most potent for that disease.

¹⁴⁷ Compare *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.604b):

猶如有如意寶在石礦之中。以世人不識故。棄在衢路之間。與瓦礫無異。然別寶者。見有微相纔影彰於外。即便識之。

It is like a *cintāmaṇi* hidden inside a stone. Worldly people do not recognize it, and toss it away on the road as if it were no different from other worthless rubble. However, an expert in jewels will notice some subtle characteristics or faint indications on the exterior, and so recognize it for what it is.

¹⁴⁸ The text meant is *Xiuxi Boreboluomi pusa guanxing niansong yigui* (T 1151:20), a Vajraśekhara text translated into Chinese by Amoghavajra and brought from China by Kūkai and listed in his *Shōrai mokuroku* (TKZ 1.15), giving the details of the esoteric practice of the bodhisattva Prajñā.

and men¹⁴⁹ he also taught the painting of sacred images, the arrangement of altars, as well as mantras, mudrās, and so on.¹⁵⁰ This is also esoteric. This is in the third fascicle of the *Dhāraṇīsamuccaya*.

顯密在人聲字即非。然猶顯中之祕祕中極祕。淺深重重耳。

[Whether the content of a text is] exoteric or esoteric depends on the [discriminative ability of] the reader. It is not a matter of the sounds and letters [of that text]. Nevertheless, there is the esoteric within the exoteric, and the most esoteric within the esoteric.¹⁵¹ The shallow and profound take on multilayered meanings [relative to each other].

¹⁴⁹ The text meant is the short text in the third fascicle of the *Dhāraṇīsamuccaya* (T 901:18.804c ff) mentioned above (II.2.2), titled *Bore boluomiduo daxin jing*, a ritual manual for the practice of the bodhisattva Prajñā. The text begins (T 901:18.804c):

如是我聞。一時佛在舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園。與千二百五十阿羅漢無量阿僧祇諸大菩薩天龍八部人非人等俱。

Thus have I heard. Once, the Buddha was staying at Jetavana Anāthapiṇḍada-ārāma in Śrāvastī together with 1,250 arhats, countless numbers of great bodhisattvas, *devas*, *nāgas*, the eight kinds of beings, humans, non-humans, and so on.

¹⁵⁰ The text in the *Dhāraṇīsamuccaya* (previous note) is an esoteric ritual manual explaining how to paint an image of Prajñā (805a–c), a section on arranging the altar (808a), explanations of thirteen mudrās (805c–806c), and several *dhāraṇīs* (806b–807c).

¹⁵¹ The two previous sentences discuss esoteric or exoteric as dependent on the discernment of the reader regardless of the type of text itself. The discussion now shifts in this sentence to the overt esoteric or exoteric textual categories. Dōhan (NDZ 10.514b–515a) writes, “The exoteric as exoteric is the three vehicles. The exoteric as esoteric is the single vehicle. The esoteric as exoteric is the common *dhāraṇīs*. The esoteric as esoteric refers to the Vajraśekhara and *Mahāvairocanaḥṣambodhi-sūtra*.” “The esoteric within the exoteric” would then mean the esoteric meanings that can be found in exoteric texts like the *Heart Sūtra*, and so on. Among the overtly esoteric texts there are common *dhāraṇī* texts like the *Dhāraṇīsamuccaya*, and also deeply esoteric texts like the Vajraśekhara, and the *Xiuxi Boreboluomi pusa guanxing niansong yigui* based on it, and so on. The latter are “the most esoteric within the esoteric.” In *Ben kenmitsu nikyō ron* Kūkai writes (TKZ 3.109):

顯密之義重重無數。若以淺望深則祕密淺略則顯也。所以外道經書亦有祕藏名。如來所說中顯密重重。若以佛說小教望外人說即有深密之名。以大比小亦有顯密。一乘以簡三立祕名。總持擇多名得密號。法身說深奧應化教淺略。所以名祕。

The meanings of exoteric and esoteric are manifold. If the more profound is compared with the less profound, the former is to be called esoteric and the latter, exoteric. This is the reason why we often find the term esoteric introduced in non-Buddhist scriptures as well. Among the teachings given by the Tathagata, various distinctions between exoteric and esoteric have been made. The Hinayana doctrines explained by the Buddha can be called esoteric when compared to the doctrines given by non-Buddhist teachers. In the same way, when the Mahayana doctrines are compared with the Hinayana doctrines, the former are esoteric and the latter, exoteric. Even in the Mahayana itself, the teaching of the One Vehicle is esoteric in contrast to the teachings of the Three Vehicles. In order to distinguish the dharani section from other lengthy discourses, we call it esoteric. The teaching given by the Dharmakaya Buddha is the most profound, while the teachings of the Nirmanakaya are apparent and simplified; hence, the former is called esoteric. (Hakeda 1972, 156)

[IV. Concluding verse]

我依祕密眞言義 略讚心經五分文 一字一文遍法界
 無終無始我心分 翳眼眾生盲不見 曼儒般若能解紛
 灑斯甘露霑迷者 同斷無明破魔軍

Relying on the meanings of its secret mantra,

I have briefly commented on the text of the *Heart Sūtra* in five sections.¹⁵²

Each letter and sentence pervades the *dharmadhātu*:

Beginningless and endless,¹⁵³ they are one's own heart.¹⁵⁴

Ordinary beings with occluded eyes are blind, and cannot see this,¹⁵⁵

Mañjuśrī and Prajñā can liberate them from their confusion.

They pour out the nectar [of this merit], giving relief to those lost in delusion.

May all together eliminate ignorance, and defeat the army of Māra!

般若心經祕鍵

*The Secret Key to the Heart Sūtra*¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Unlike the exoteric commentators of the *Heart Sūtra* who often avoid discussing the mantra in any detail (see note 139), Kūkai has taken the unique approach of using the mantra itself as the basis for understanding the meanings of the *Heart Sūtra*.

¹⁵³ The *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra* says (T 848:18.10a, see also Takagi and Dreitlein 2010, 278–279):

此眞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。謂諸眞言。眞言法爾故

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.

¹⁵⁴ The letters of the *Heart Sūtra* form the *dharmamaṇḍala* of Prajñā Bodhisattva, which is infinite in space and time. The letters are at the same time the heart of Prajñā Bodhisattva expressed as her heart-mantra, the hearts of all beings, and the practitioner's own heart (Yūkai, sz 16.405b). Compare note 89.

¹⁵⁵ Compare the *Darijing shu* (T 1796:39.669c):

一切眾生心目。本有佛知見性。但以無智膜翳故。諸法實相不得明了現前。

The minds and eyes of all beings originally have the insight of a buddha. However, because through ignorance [their eyes are] filmed and occluded, they cannot clearly see the suchness of all *dharmas* that is right before their eyes.

¹⁵⁶ The “memorial” appended to the text is clearly a forgery of a later time, and has been so considered by most commentators due to a lack of historical accuracy and many textual problems, including odd phrasings and incorrect Chinese unlike the polished writings expected from Kūkai but typical of later centuries in Japan, and the fact that the text is not written anything like the formal memorial it purports to be. For details, see Oda 1985, 1228–1230. No plague is recorded for 818, though a plague appears in historical records for the third month of 823, when a ceremony for Bhaiṣajyaguru was conducted by 300 monks at Tōdai-ji temple (Oda 1985, 1229). There was, however, a drought in 818, and it is known that Saichō at least was asked to pray for rain. It is unknown if Kūkai was asked to do so. Also, there was an earthquake in 818.9 after which *sūtra* recitations were ordered, and plagues often broke out after

Abbreviations

- NDZ 日本大藏經 *Nihon Daizōkyō*
SZ 眞言宗全書 *Shingon-shū zensho*
T 大正新脩大藏經 *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*
TKZ 定本弘法大師全集 *Teihon Kōbō Daishi zenshū*
Z 大日本續藏經 (卍續藏經) *Dai Nihon Zoku-zōkyō (Manji Zoku-zōkyō)*
ZSZ 續眞言宗全書 *Zoku Shingon-shū zensho*

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earthquakes (Sakata 1999, 150). There is a copy of the *Heart Sūtra* kept in Daikaku-ji temple made by Emperor Saga at the time of a plague, and it is possible that Kūkai lectured on the *Heart Sūtra* at that time. However, there is no record connecting *Hannya-shingyō hiken* to such a conjectured lecture, or to connect any of this to the year 818. The text appended to *Hannya-shingyō hiken* follows.

于時弘仁九年春天下大疫。爰帝皇自染黃金於筆端握紺紙於爪掌奉書寫般若心經一卷。予範講讀之撰綴經旨之宗。未吐結願詞蘇生族于途。夜變而日光赫赫。是非愚身戒德金輪御信力所爲也。但詣神舍輩奉誦此祕鍵。昔予陪鷲峯說法之筵親聞是深文。豈不達其義而已。入唐沙門空海上表

In the spring of the ninth year of Kōnin (818) the nation was struck by a great plague. At that time, the emperor (Saga) himself dipped his brush in golden ink, and taking up a dark blue paper, personally copied out the *Heart Sūtra*. I, Kūkai, wrote down the teachings concerning the gist of this *sūtra* as the text for a lecture. Before I had reached the closing dedication of my lecture, [a miracle or vision came to pass. The dead seemed to] return to life and stand in the road. The night was transformed by the brilliant light of the sun. This was not due to my virtues in keeping the precepts, it was due to His Majesty's actions [in copying out the *sūtra*]. Those who visit shrines [to pray] should recite this *Secret Key*. Long ago, [in a former life] I sat among the assembly at Ḡḍhrakūṭa and personally heard this profound text [expounded by the Buddha], so have I not fully understood its meaning? This memorial is presented by the *śramaṇa* Kūkai, who journeyed to Tang.

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Major Texts

- Ben kenmitsu nikyō ron* 辯顯密二教論, TKZ 3.73–110 (*On the Differences between Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism*, by Kūkai).
- 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, submitted to the court with the above memorial (TKZ 8.62–64), 814 [Kōnin 5.i7.28]).
- Bonmōkyō kaidai* 梵網經開題, TKZ 4.217–230 (*Introduction to the Fanwang-jing*, by Kūkai).
- Bore xinjing shu* 般若心經疏, z 528:26 (*Commentary on the Heart Sūtra*, by Mingkuang 明曠).
- Bunkyō hifu ron* 文鏡祕府論, TKZ 6.1–247 (*The Secret Repository of the Mirror of Writing*, by Kūkai).
- Chūju kankyō no shi narabi ni jo* 中壽感興詩并序, in *Shōryō shū*, TKZ 8.43–44 (*A Poem in Reflection on My Fortieth Birthday, with an Introduction*, by Kūkai [age 40], 813 [Kōnin 4.11]).
- Daijō Tennō no kanjō no mon* 太上天皇灌頂文, TKZ 5.13–25 (*A Text on Abhiṣeka for the Retired Emperor*, by Kūkai). Full title: 大和尚奉爲平安城太上天皇灌頂文 *Dai-wajō Heian-jō Daijō Tennō no on-tame no kanjō no mon*, also called *Heizei Tennō kanjō mon* 平城天皇灌頂文.
- Dainichikyō kaidai* 大日經開題, TKZ 4.1–63 (*Introduction to the Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, by Kūkai).
- 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, 725).
- Dasheng liqu liu boluomi jing* 大乘理趣六波羅蜜多經, T 261:8 (*Sūtra on the Mahāyāna Path to Truth of the Six Pāramitās*, trans. Prajña, 788)
- Dazhidu lun* 大智度論, T 1509:25 [Jpn. *Daichido ron*] (**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*, trans. Kumārajīva, 402–406).

- Dhāraṇīsamuccaya*, T 901:18 (*Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經, *Compendium of Dhāraṇī*, trans. Atigupta 653 or 654).
- 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).
- Hokkekyō kaidai* 法華經開題, TKZ 4.153–196 (*Introduction to the Lotus Sūtra*, by Kūkai).
- Hokkekyō shaku* 法華經釋, TKZ 4.197–209 (*Commentary on the Lotus Sūtra*, by Kūkai).
- 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* 奉勸諸有緣眾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 [age 41 or 42], 815 [Kōnin 6.4.2]).
- Kongō hannya-haramitsu-kyō kaidai* 金剛般若波羅蜜經開題, TKZ 4.253–268 (*Introduction to the Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, by Kūkai).
- Kongōchōgyō kaidai* 金剛頂經開題, TKZ 4.65–92 (*Introduction to the Vajraśekhara*, by Kūkai).
- Konshō-kyō himitsu kada* 金勝王經祕密伽陀, TKZ 4.239–252 (*Secret Gāthās on the Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra*; by Kūkai [age 40], 813 [Kōnin 4.12]).
- Kyōōkyō kaidai* 教王經開題, TKZ 4.93–105 (*Introduction to the Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, by Kūkai).
- Large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (*Da bore boluomiduo jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經), T 220:5–7 (trans. Xuanzang, 660–663).
- Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects of Confucius*).
- 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 Enlightenment within the Yoga of the Vajraśekhara*, attributed to Nāgārjuna, trans. Amoghavajra).
- Rishukyō kaidai* 理趣經開題, TKZ 4.107–118 (*Introduction to the Adhyardhaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, by Kūkai).
- Saishō-kyō kaidai* 最勝王經開題, TKZ 4.231–237 (*Introduction to the Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra*, by Kūkai).
- Sanmayakai jo* 三昧耶戒序, TKZ 5.1–10 (*Introduction to the Samaya Commitments*, by Kūkai).
- Shō-ji-jissō gi* 聲字實相義, TKZ 3.33–49 (*The Meanings of Sound, Letter, and Reality*, by Kūkai, undated).

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 [age 33], 806 [Daidō 1.10.22]).

Shōryō shū 性靈集, TKZ 8.3–216 (*Collection of Miraculous Writings*, also read *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).

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

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

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

Xiuxi Boreboluomi pusa guanxing niansong yigui 修習般若波羅蜜菩薩觀行念誦儀軌, T 1151:20 (*Mantra Recitation Ritual Manual for Cultivating the Yoga of Prajñāpāramitā Bodhisattva*, transl. Amoghavajra).

Zhuangzi 莊子 (*The Book of Zhuangzi*).

Sino-Japanese Characters

Amoghavajra 不空 (705–774)	Liangben 良賁 (717–777)
Bodhiruci 菩提流志 (?–527)	Mingkuang 明曠
Dānapāla 施護	Nāgārjuna 龍猛
Dharmacandra 法月 (653–743)	Prajña 般若 (734–?)
Dōhan 道範 (1184–1252)	Prajñācakra 智慧輪
Facheng 法成 (‘Gos Chos-grub?)	Qinglong-si 青龍寺
Faxiang 法相 (Jpn. Hossō)	Raihō 賴寶 (1279–?)
Fazang 法藏 (643–712)	Raiyu 賴瑜 (1226–1304)
Gōhō 杲寶 (1306–1362)	Sanlun 三論 (Jpn. Sanron)
Huayan 華嚴 (Jpn. Kegon)	Shinzei 眞濟 (800–860)
Huiguo 惠果 (746–805)	Śikṣānanda 實叉難陀 (652–710)
Huilin 慧琳	Śubhakarasiṃha 善無畏 (637–735)
Jizang 吉藏 (549–623)	Tiantai 天台 (Jpn Tendai)
Kakuban 覺鑊 (1095–1143)	Wōnch’uk 圓測 (613–696)
Kuiji 窺基 (632–682)	Xuanzang 玄奘 (600–664)
Kūkai 空海 (774–835)	Yijing 義淨 (635–713)
Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344–413)	Yūkai 宥快 (1345–1416)

Zhanran 湛然 (711–782)

Zhiyi 智顛 (538–597)

Zhi Qian 支謙 (fl. 223–253)

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This online version corrects some minor errors in the print version.