A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY ON BUKONG 不空 (aka. Amoghavajra, 705-774):
NETWORKS, INSTITUTIONS, AND IDENTITIES

by

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Abstract

This dissertation addresses the historical practices of the Buddhist monk Bukong, who is well known by his Sanskrit name Amoghavajra and recognized as the most important promoter of the Esoteric tradition of Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga in medieval China. Bukong was of mixed descent, half Indian and half Sogdian, and he traveled widely throughout Asia. Spending most of his lifetime in Tang China, as a Buddhist missionary and court official, he devoted his life to combining a soteriological agenda with monastic service to the state. In this regard, his commitment was so pivotal to the Esoteric school that it gave the latter an institutional expression that distinguished it from other Buddhist traditions in China. The school thrived as vital part of the official institutions of the state and thus constituted a new mode of imperial Buddhism. Bukong’s biographical accounts became the primary context for the historical narratives and documentation of almost all events and issues related to Esoteric Buddhism at the time. Employing a wide variety of historical materials, this study presents a comprehensive biography of Bukong that has been long overdue in academia. The exploration that follows focuses on his political rise and the institutionalization of his Esoteric School in its heyday, revealing the posts held by monks as the religious functionary and official institutes provided for his yogin disciples. The success of Bukong and his school owed significantly to the political and military turbulence caused by the An Lushan rebellion. He contributed to the usurpation of Emperor Suzong and was rewarded with the imperial authorization of his Esoteric tradition and the initial institutionalization of the Esoteric practices. During the next reign, a victory over a foreign invasion widely convinced his contemporaries of the “miraculous” might of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga and facilitated Emperor Daizong’s conversion into a royal yogin. The emperor’s devotion and secret association with Bukong became a powerful factor for the latter to weave an eclectic network that assembled various resources to support Buddhist institutions and projects. Bukong’s diverse achievements and social associations, however, led to the diversified perception of him in historical writings.
Lay Summary

This biographical study aims to understand how Bukong, a Buddhist monk of mixed Indian and Sogdian descent, also known as Amoghavarja, achieved political success in eighth-century China and brought an Indian Buddhist tradition, the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga, a short but magnificent flowering. This study approaches this issue from the perspective of Bukong’s life and weaves Buddhist studies with strands of historical inquiry into medieval China and draws upon studies of the Sogdians and Buddhism of South Asia. The core findings show that under the support of two Chinese emperors, he turned a system of Esoteric practices into part of state institutions and transformed the monastic practitioners into religious functionaries, thus creating a new mode of imperial Buddhism. This study advanced our understandings of the state-church interactions, international exchange, and the development of official institutions of an under-studied period in Chinese history.
Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Zeng Yang.
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List of Abbreviations

**BZJ** Daizong chao zeng Sikong Dabianzheng Guangzhi Sanzang heshang biaozhi ji 代宗贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和尚表制集

**BM** “Da Tang Da Guangzhi sanzang heshang yingzan bing xu” 大唐大廣智三藏和尚影贊并序

**CFYG** Cefu yuangui 册府元龜

**FZTJ** Fozu tongji 佛祖統紀

**FZLDTZ** Fozu lidai tongzai 佛祖歷代通載

**GQLZ** Guang Qingliang zhuan 廣清涼傳

**JTS** Jiu Tangshu 舊唐書

**KZ** Kōbō daishi zenshū 弘法大師全集

**QTW** Quan Tang wen 全唐文

**SGSZ** Song gaoseng zhuàn 宋高僧傳

**SSJZS** Chongkan songben shisan jing zhushu: fu jiaokan ji 重刊宋本十三經注疏

**STTS** Sarvatathāgatakavadāṃgraha

**T** Taishō shinshū daizōkyō 大正新脩大藏経, in notes as (T.[text #].[volume #].[page-column-line])

**THY** Tang huiyao 唐會要

**TPGJ** Taiping guangji 太平廣記

**TPYL** Taiping yulan 太平御覽

**X** Manji zokuzōkyō 卍字續藏經

**XKYL** Da Tang Zhenyuan xu Kaiyuan shijiao lu 大唐貞元續開元釋教錄

**XTS** Xin Tangshu 新唐書

**XB** “Da Tang gu dade kaifu yitongsansi shi hongluqing Suguogong Da Xingshan si Da Guangzhi sanzang heshang zhi bei” 大唐故大德開府儀同三司試鴻臚卿肅國公大興善寺大廣智三藏和上之碑

**XZ** “Da Tang gu dade zeng sikong Dabianzheng Guangzhi Bukong sanzang xingzhuang” 大唐故大德贈司空大辨正廣智不空三藏行狀

**YZ** “Tang zeng Sikong Daxingshan si Dabianzheng Guangzhi Bukong Sanzang heshang yingzan” 唐贈司空大興善寺大辨正廣智不空三藏和尚影讃

**ZYL** Zhenyuan xinding shijiào mulu 貞元新定釋教目錄

**ZZTJ** Zizhi tongjian 資治通鑑
Notes on Usage

In this dissertation, Chinese and Japanese names are given with the surname first, following the practice of these cultures. When these names are spelt in full, the surnames are capitalized to avoid confusion.

The dates in the Chinese traditional calendar are rendered in the format of day-month-year. Sometimes, especially in Appendix A, I abbreviate the day to an Arabic numeral, the lunar month to a Roman numeral, and the year to the era name followed by an Arabic numeral. For example, 10 x of Dali 5 is short for the tenth day of the tenth lunar month of the fifth year of the Dali Era.
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For My Buddhist Mother, YAO Fengyin
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Considering the Cliché

Both traditional and popular rhetoric acclaims Bukong 不空 (Skt. Amoghavajra, 705-774) as an imperial Esoteric master peerless in Chinese history; working under the uninterrupted auspices of three successive emperors of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), he promoted Esoteric Buddhism and led it into an unprecedented golden age that has not been seen since.

Such adulatory talk tries to establish a combined historical paragon of a Buddhist patriarch and a loyal dynastic minister with a consistent and flawless politico-religious career. Albeit with an undeniable didactic purpose—to elicit favour from later rulers and to spur the Buddhist clergy of later generations to carry forward the sacred mission—it reveals the two major themes running through his life-long pursuit: the promotion of Esoteric Buddhism and devotion to imperial service.

A survey of the history of imperial Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty shows that there are extensive records of Bukong’s historical activities, which leave one with a strong impression that this Buddhist monk pushed the cooperation between the state and the Buddhist church to a climax, where Esoteric Buddhist practices were frequently used by the state in military action.

As this dissertation shows, the most remarkable achievement of Bukong’s politico-religious career lies in the incorporation of a system of Buddhist practices into official state institutions, organized into a vibrant organ charged with the execution of imperial instructions concerning various state affairs.

Prior to the success of Bukong, there were no such precedents for Buddhist practices in state institutions. For much of recorded Chinese history, Buddhism was sponsored by the state and royal house as an inactive and symbolic establishment, with certain spiritual facets of the religion appreciated politically, and individual monks with various special talents politically approved or employed by the court. This mode of interaction reached a height with the reign of Empress Wu (r. 690-705), when *ad hoc* projects were launched to seek the ideological force of Buddhism to tackle
the idiosyncratic problems confronting her sovereignty with the ideological force of Buddhism. In a context such as this, Bukong’s endeavours brought about a new sort of imperial Buddhism. Considering that Bukong was ethnically non-Han and Esoteric Buddhism was a recent religious import replete with inexplicable spells and symbols, an array of new exotic deities, and complicated ritual moves that seem incompatible to Sinitic institutions, such an achievement appears all the more intriguing.

Since the middle of last century, scholars have produced a wealth of studies that examined the historical details of various issues and events related to Bukong, and present philosophical analyses, yet there is no scholarship that details how the symbiosis between the state and the Esoteric school through the agency of Bukong was historically established and developed, and how, in this course, the school was organized. This dissertation will address these problems.

These questions, however, cannot be answered without a thorough and detailed grasp of Bukong’s life story. A biographical approach that raises and resolves various issues in light of historical circumstance comes from a basic methodological consideration: in the traditional sources, most of the Esoteric school’s undertakings in service of the state were set in the context of our protagonist’s career and rendered as his missionary commitment and politico-religious achievements. Thus, his life becomes the primary context for one to achieve a preliminary and tenable understanding of related events, and to develop promising topics that guide further research towards exploration of greater contexts.

Bukong’s politico-religious career spanned three successive reigns. Popular rhetoric tempts one into thinking that these three periods constitute a coherent whole, joined by peaceful and seamless transitions and free of undesirable vicissitudes, while a panoramic investigation of his life shows that these three reigns constitute three distinctive phases. The traditional narrative tends to gloss over Bukong’s early embarrassing experiences during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong (685-762, r. 712-756), when he did not acquire any substantial imperial patronage for his
religious missions, and instead projects the honour he accumulated during the zenith of his career onto his earlier days of frustration.

Bukong did not have the chance to approach the locus of imperial power and start a political career until the ascension of Suzong 肅宗 (711-762, r. 756-762), and his politico-religious cause rose to a crescendo with the devoted support of the next ruler, Daizong 代宗 (726-779, r. 762-779). The perilous twists that emerged during the change of reigns require special attention, since how Bukong obtained or renewed imperial support would have a seminal bearing on the ensuing dynamics between the court and Bukong’s Esoteric school.

Traditional and popular rhetoric may have misinformed the general observations made by scholars on the overall themes of Bukong’s politico-religious practice, as this rhetoric ignored a variety of problems that Bukong and his Buddhist cause faced during different reigns. A deeper historical understanding of the distinctive circumstances would have substantiated their research and sharpened their arguments.

Each emperor had his idiosyncrasies, especially in regard to their government policies and religious affinities, and new cabinets were formed by his trusted and favourite officials and eunuchs. With the passing of each reign, Bukong needed to exert effort to win support from his new lord and official colleagues.

More importantly, the three reigns that Bukong’s career spanned were distinguished from one another by differing problems that were distressing the court; he had to decide what were the items at the top of the imperial agenda and devise Buddhist initiatives that would best meet the need of the new situations. In this second half of the seventh century, the Tang Dynasty encountered an event that turned out to be epoch-making for the entirety of Chinese history—the An Lushan rebellion (755-763, hereafter abbreviated as “the Rebellion”). The Rebellion broke out in the heydey of the empire and brought Xuanzong’s reign to an abrupt closure. The engagement with the rebels persisted throughout the entire reign of his successor, Emperor Suzong, and was the
keynote of this period of history. Civil strife upheaved almost every aspect of the state and the social life, a situation which Emperor Daizong inherited in its immediate aftermath.

Both Suzong and Daizong’s reigns began with political and military chaos and confusion, and in these conditions Bukong found access to imperial power; he had been denied such opportunities back in the peaceful days under Xuanzong, despite repeated labour and striving. At critical moments for Suzong and Daizong to establish their imperial authority, he discerned the throne’s most pressing needs and offered extraordinary solutions by virtue of his political and military acumen and ritual techniques. In return, the emperors gave him institutional support and personal devotion.

Orienting his religious commitment towards imperial service during a troubled time, Bukong’s life was fated to be eventful. Various events, episodes, and issues concerning his backgrounds and his politico-religious practices have tempted scholars into investigating and interpreting, from a variety of perspectives, issues such as his travel in South Asia, his translation of Buddhist texts, and the promotion of the cult of Mt. Wutai and/or Mañjuśrī, to name but the more popular ones. These efforts, though undoubtedly constructive, are not based on an extensive examination of the primary context of his life history; therefore, such approaches fall under suspicion of ripping pieces out of the entire picture, making these studies appear partitioned and even alienated from one another.

In Bukong’s biographies, religious mission and commitment to imperial service were interwoven as the primary theme. The inextricable connection between these two matters can be explained through Bukong’s understanding of his Esoteric tradition’s soteriological ideal, the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga (Ch. Jin’gangding yuqie 金刚頂瑜伽; lit. the Yoga of Adamantine-Crown; hereafter the Yoga).\(^1\) The Yoga, or the Yoga Tantra as modern scholars would understand it,

\(^1\) The Sanskrit original of the term Jin’gangding 金刚頂 is often reconstructed as “Vajraśekhara” in line with the Tibetan translation, but based on sources in Chinese, scholars begin to accept that the “Vajroṣṇīṣa” is the correct form, as indicated by information left by Bukong’s Dharma descendants Haiyun 海雲 (d. 834+) and Kūkai 空海 (774-835). See Giebel (1995: 109), cf. Gray 2009: 12, fn. 35.
maintains the fundamental Mahāyāna tenet of saving and benefitting the world but claims
superiority over other forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism by providing a set of rituals as tools to
achieve that goal. Bukong further held that the salvific cause could be fulfilled through monks’
service to the state, and so it became his objective to establish and perpetuate close relations
between the state and the Buddhist community, particularly his Esoteric school.

The success of Bukong’s politico-religious career resulted in a large amount of historical
documentation of his activities, especially those involving imperial actions or government fiat. Some records show direct connections between Bukong’s activities and the political and military
affairs that characterized the reigns of Suzong and Daizong. To approach such correlations,
exploring and reconstructing the historical background is vital, and will lead to a better
understanding of his religious activities. In this regard, previous studies could have gone deeper
and broader into the historical circumstances.

The structure and methodology of this study are the result of the observation above. This
project constructs a comprehensive biography, which taken as the foundation of more in-depth
study, shines light on which themes are most important to an interpretation of Bukong’s life. It
aims to do justice the extensive and detailed historical records devoted to Bukong, which are rarely
seen with other monks in medieval China. Chapter Two represents such an effort. Employing as
many primary sources as it is available, it produces a panorama of Bukong’s life that offers as
much source information while at the same time revealing the critical moments, significant
activities, and major issues that following three chapters will focus on. For problems of lesser
importance, peripheral discussions are interjected into the biographical narrative.

Appendix A is based upon primary texts and provides the grounds for the biographical
construction in Chapter One. It is designed as a compilation of the translations of excerpts and
entire pieces selected from various primary sources, which are split into chronological sections
first by years and then into months or seasons. The date-headings indicate either when the
materials, as the result of historical activities, were created, or the time of the accounts given in
these documents. Comparative analyses follow, which assess the historical veracity of these primary accounts and the underlying historiographical concerns. Based on this, I made compromises between the different accounts, and I provide additional information to account for the placement of the related episodes in my constructed biographical narrative.

Chapter Three focuses on the turning point in Bukong’s political career, which happened during the transition of the imperial power from Xuanzong to Suzong that was stamped with rivalry between the two respective courts surrounding them; Bukong’s choice to champion the latter’s usurpation won him a seat in and wide support from the latter’s poorly-assembled court. I compare these with his experiences under Xuanzong’s reign. Using Buddhist sources, this chapter reveals the roles played by Buddhist monks, practices, and ideology in the establishment of Suzong’s imperial authority and thus enriches the historical picture of this transitional period, drawn by previous scholars based on mainly non-Buddhist historical materials. It provides an excellent case that demonstrates how far a Buddhist monk and an ethnic outsider was allowed to progress on the way towards the establishment of imperial power. It demonstrates that together with his provincial colleagues and friends, Bukong encouraged Suzong to displace his father as the emperor. Wielding his political shrewdness and Buddhist tools of ideology, rituals, and thaumaturgy, he continued working to solve the problem of legitimizing the new emperor and vindicating the new court’s founders, who were under suspicion of complicity in the usurpation.

Chapter Four deals with the development of Bukong’s Buddhist enterprise under the next monarch, Daizong. It demonstrates how he successfully convinced the emperor and his contemporaries of Yoga’s divine power in defusing the military crisis, amassing political, financial, and human resources and systematically channeling them into various Buddhist projects to serve the empire. These involved not only Esoteric disciples and rituals but also ordinary Mahāyāna monks and practices. In particular, this chapter identifies various Esoteric institutes and projects, as well as the permanent official post of *niansong seng* 念誦僧 that was given by the court to his yogin disciples. Holders of this post enjoyed a government stipend and were assigned
by the state to deal with various problems through the performance of the Esoteric rituals. In this way, exotic religious practices were incorporated into the regular operations of Sinitic state institutions. In the course of this, the court officially institutionalized Bukong’s Yoga school. This story refreshes our understanding of the depth of the cooperation between the state and Buddhist church in medieval China. This chapter also reveals official institutes and a permanent post that involved mainly the Mahāyāna practice of sutra recitation, which constituted a less important aspect of Bukong’s Buddhist enterprise. This chapter points to nuances of the official institution of Esoteric Buddhism in this period, a topic which until now was still trapped in scholarly attempts to create a broad outline.

Chapter Five turns to a puzzle that has long evaded scholars: an apparent discrepancy among statements about Bukong’s ethnic identity and ancestral background. It argues that this discrepancy originated in the mixture of his religious and political practices and achievements and in the multiple social networks he maintained. Underlying these statements were the different concerns held by different writers when facing the diversified practice of Bukong but having to present clear historical identity for him. Religious writers may have emphasized his religious contribution to Chinese Buddhism in general, and others would acclaim his status as the patriarch of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga. In the practice of official historiography, one could call attention to his political prestige and balance this with a purely religious approach, but in a political atmosphere that became adverse to Buddhism, a writer needed to avoid playing up his engagement in political affairs. These approaches were best reflected in the opening lines of the biography that formulate the subject figure’s ethnicity through related themes such as ancestry, kinship, and homeland. The existence of diverse accounts suggests that the historical identification of Bukong continued to be dynamic, and that the institutionalization of his politico-religious undertakings proves less than fundamental when exposed to the Sinitic political culture, which was at play in perceiving the historical relevance of an ethnic other and foreign religious practices.
Overall, this study argues that during political and military crises, Bukong found opportunities to show that Esoteric teachings of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga were valuable to the state, in dealing with practical affairs of the emperor and the empire. Under imperial support, he institutionalized various Buddhist projects to deal with various state affairs and created permanent official posts for his clerical followers to guarantee the implementation of his projects. The religious institutions that involved Esoteric practices, in particular, became a vital part of official state institutions and a secret executive agency for the confidential decision-making mechanism. The official institution defined the organization of his Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga school in Tang China, and imperial commissions accorded his yogin disciples the identity of religious functionaries, giving them superiority over other Buddhist monks. These state-serving institutions legitimized a space in which Bukong weaved an eclectic social network, where he drew information for confidential decision-making process in which he took part and collected political, financial, and human resources to develop his Buddhist enterprise. And such a commitment to state service reflects Bukong’s understanding of the Mahāyāna soteriology according to the spirit of the Yoga.

1.2 Key Names and Terms

In historical sources, Bukong was called by various names and titles. His dharma name, taken when he became a Buddhist monk, is “Zhizang” 智藏 (lit. wisdom store); he had an “adamantine title”, created for a practitioner of Esoteric Buddhism, “Amoghavajra” in Sanskrit and the Chinese counterpart “Bukong Jin’gang” 不空金剛, or its shortened form “Bukong” 不空. In this dissertation, I choose the Chinese name “Bukong” to address the subject figure instead of the Sanskrit “Amoghavajra” as modern scholars usually do. As I will show in Chapter Three, it is this Chinese name that marked his first political rise and the inauguration of the subsequent politico-religious cause that determined his historical significance. We owe the popularization of the name “Bukong” to Suzong, who deferentially avoided calling the master by his dharma name

2 Besides those discussed here, one can also encounter the names “Tripiṭaka Da Guangzhi” 大廣智三藏, “Tripiṭaka Da Bianzheng Guangzhi” 大辨正廣智三藏, “Tripiṭaka of the Great Xingshan Monastery” 大興善寺三藏. Occasionally, he was also called by the shortened Sanskrit Esoteric title Amogha, in the Chinese transliteration.
“Zhizang” and chose the adamantine title in recognition of Bukong’s meritorious service through his Esoteric skills. Embodying the starting point of his politico-religious career, this name continued to be used throughout the next reign, when Emperor Daizong created and bestowed new titles. This became the most popular appellation to address him. Additionally, the Chinese form signals the political, cultural, and religious location where he spent most of his lifetime. In contrast, “Amoghavajra” was in use mainly because of his short stay in Sri Lanka and his diplomatic contact with the Tang court. Though significant, his experience abroad constitutes only one episode in his life. The name Bukong best symbolizes the characteristics of his historical profile, as a promoter of Esoteric Buddhism who devoted himself to serving the Tang state.

It seems that the Chinese names of other Indian Esoteric masters who received imperial recognition such as Puti Liuzhi 菩提流志 (often reconstructed as “Bodhiruci”, original Skt. Dharmaruci, c. 572-727), Śubhakarasiṃha, and Vajrabodhi, were the result of the throne’s reformulation based on their original Sanskrit names, which signaled a form of imperial favour. The case of Bukong’s master, Vajrabodhi, is worth a mention here. Vajrabodhi’s original Sanskrit name, perhaps his adamantine title, was probably Bodhivajra, and it seems that the name had been known for a while but not gained its popularity. Presumably, the two morphemes of “Bodhivajra” were permuted to generate “Vajrabodhi”, which was rendered “Jin’gang Zhi” 金剛智. The context of the epitaph implies that this change was the emperor’s doing. The imperial favour embodied by the adaptation explains why it could overshadow the accurate translation. In this chapter, I am using the reconstructed Sanskrit form Vajrabodhi in agreement with the usual practice in modern scholarship for the convenience of reference and discussion.

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3 In his stupa epitaph, the “Taming” by Hunlun Weng, his name is spelt as 菩提跋祇 (折)羅 in Chinese phonetic Sanskrit, and no Chinese translation is given to form a pair. In a text Da Piluzhena fo shuo yaoliue niansong jing 大毘盧遮那佛説要略念誦經 (T849) that is attributed to Vajrabodhi, his name is given as “Puti Jin’gang” 菩提金剛, which must be the Chinese translation of “Bodhivajra”. See T2157_.55.0876c09-10, T2157_.55.0876c20-24.
4 The name Jin’gang Zhi should be a half-translation, since zhi was not the exact Chinese translation of bodhi, as has been pointed out by Van der Kuijp (2007: 1006) which better suited the sensibility of the Chinese contemporary.
5 Recently, Iain Sinclair (2016) suggests that Vajrabodhi’s Sanskrit name should be reconstructed as Vajrabuddhi. He cited Van der Kuijp’s point that the term bodhi was never translated as zhi 聰 while in many cases buddhi was. It seems that Sinclair assumes that buddhi was also transliterated as puti 菩提. He suggests that the name “Vajrabuddhi”
In this dissertation, I follow the more common usage in academic and popular literature and use “Esoteric Buddhism” to denote the various traditions represented by the scriptures featuring mantras or dhāraṇīs that were introduced to China prior to and by Bukong. This notion is equivalent to the “Teachings of Mantra” in Bukong’s lexicon. The advantages of this term have been pointed out scholars.⁶ Others argue that the Tang Esoteric masters, including Bukong, tended to use the term Esoteric Buddhism (mījiao 密教) merely to express the hitherto best sort of Mahāyāna teachings they claimed, just as monks had done prior to this period with the same term to claim the superiority of Mahāyāna Buddhism.⁷ Here I maintain that in some cases, Bukong uses the term “Esoteric Buddhism” to indicate the difference between the Teachings of Mantra and “Mahāyāna”, or to be exact, other Mahāyāna teachings.⁸

Bukong seems to have set another antithesis between exoteric Buddhism and the highest Esoteric teachings known to him, the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga.⁹ I stick to Bukong’s idiom “the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga” (Jīn’gāngdīng yuqie famen 金剛頂瑜伽法門), or simply “the Yoga” (yuqie 瑜伽), to refer to the Esoteric tradition that encompasses the doctrines and practices contained in the eighteen texts of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga cycle and the lineage concerning the legitimate transmission of them. Bukong used this term on the most formal occasions with a strong sense of independence from and superiority over all other Buddhist teachings. Moreover, the term Yoga indicates the unique was the adamantine title taken after the deity Vajrabuddhir when Vajrabuddhi was initiated into the Vajradhātu mandala. He notes that the name “Vajrabuddhir” was translated by Vajrabodhi and Bukong as jīn’gang jue 金剛覺 and jīn’gang hui 金剛慧 respectively.

⁶ See Sørensen 2010: 166-72; and Orzech 2006 and 2012.
⁸ For example, see Bukong’s words: “The Great Sage, the bodhisattva Maṇjuśrī, propagates both Mahāyāna and Esoteric teachings.” 大聖文殊師利菩薩，大乘、密教，皆周流演 (T2120.52.0837b01-02) Although Bukong seldom posited the Esoteric Teachings (xiānjiāo 顯教) and Esoteric Teachings as an antithesis, as would be done by Buddhists of later periods, he spelled out these words based on the explicit premise that the Esoteric Teachings should be accorded independence from Mahāyāna Buddhism. It should be pointed out, however, that the only example appears in the Zōngshī tuoluoni yì zàn 總釋陀羅尼義讃, and Orzech doubts the authenticity of the text. (T902.18.0898a12-13)
⁹ In a text that is undoubtedly attributed to Bukong, Esoteric Teachings are juxtaposed with the teachings of Yoga. See T0996.19.0524a08. On another occasion, when talking about the Esoteric teachings, in reference to the ordinary Mahāyāna, Bukong emphasizes its abject inferiority to the quick enlightenment guaranteed by the Yoga. See T1125.20.0535b23-26. Shinohara suggests that the ceremony that initiates one into the mandala, symbolizing the tradition’s pantheon, may mark the self-awareness as a distinct tradition. See Shinohara 2014: xvi.
practice of the tradition by which the practitioner could accord his or her three *karmas* with those of the Esoteric deities and invoke their magical power to conduct the Mahāyānist mission of universal salvation.¹⁰

Scholars, especially those working on Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, tend to use the term “Yoga Tantra” to refer to the Esoteric tradition that promoted by Vajrabodhi and Bukong in the Tang. There are a Sanskrit manuscript and Tibetan translations that correspond to the Sanskrit original of the *Jin’gangding yiqie rulai zhenshishe dasheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經 (T865) translated by Bukong, titled as *Sarvatathāgatatattvasamgraha* (hereafter both abbreviated as “*STTS*”).¹¹ Rolf Giebel (1995) and Steven Weinberger (2003) have demonstrated the *STTS* represents the emergence of an independent and mature form of *tantra* in the historical development of Indian Buddhism and also show that among the remaining seventeen texts of the Vajroṣṇīya Yoga corpus (*shibahui yuqie* 十八會瑜伽), several came to be identified as texts of Yoga Tantra by Tibetan exegetes of the later period.

As scholars have well noted, the Chinese transliteration of the term “tantra” rarely occurs in Bukong’s translations and, indeed, in the whole Chinese Buddhist canon.¹² Moreover, it is not among the variety of vocabulary deployed by Bukong to signify the teachings of Mantra or the Vajroṣṇīya Yoga.¹³

The term tantra, however, is an academic product of modern scholarship, and scholars should not deny a certain scripture the category of tantra simply because of the absence of the term from the title. The Vajroṣṇīya Yoga practices show many qualities that are characteristic of

¹⁰ When stating this point, Bukong used the Chinese translation “*xiangying men*” 相應門 (the gate of accordance), instead of the Chinese transliteration *quqie* 瑜伽. See T0872.18.0298a14.

¹¹ The Chinese translation (T865) constitutes only the first of the four chapters. The whole of a Sanskrit version was translated into Chinese (T882) by Shihu 施護 (Skt. Dānapāla, fl. 970s). For an explanation of the title of the Chinese translation, see Giebel 2001: 8-9.

¹² The Chinese transliteration of “tantra” seems to occur only in two texts, one translated by Śubhakarasiṃha and the other by Bukong; in both cases, it is part of the title of the same *Guhya-tantra*, rendered as “瞿醯且（旦）怛羅（經）” or “瞿醯壇怛囉經” respectively. Bukong preferred to transliterate it as “麴毗伽經”. See T0973.19.0377c26-29 and T0897.18.0770b04-06. Cf. T2176.55.1114a21-23.

¹³ Orzech’s survey in his 2006 and 2010 articles covers a great part of the ample lexicon at Bukong’s command, but it does not seem to be exhaustive.
Tantrism, including the use of *mandala* and *mantra*, the ritualization of meditative practice, the emphasis on visualization and invocation of deities, and the requirement of initiation.\(^{14}\) For the above reasons, the term remains useful in facilitating the academic discussion of the trans-regional and trans-religious phenomenon of tantra.\(^{15}\)

1.3 The Primary Sources

Bukong’s imperial service gained widespread appreciation from various contemporary social circles; it resulted in ample textual sources to remember him and documentation about his life and activities. These records are likely richer than those received by most of the religious men in medieval China.\(^{16}\) Among them, there are eight major sources which are listed below chronologically.

1.3.1 Introducing the Primary Sources

1. *Daizong chao zeng sikong Dabianzheng Guangzhi sanzang heshang biaozhi ji* 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集 (T2120, hereafter *BZJ*): This is a collection of the earliest sources, mainly the memorials composed by Bukong or his disciples and the imperial edicts and replies from the emperors Suzong and Daizong. It was compiled by the monk Yuanzhao 圓照 (728-809 or 732-813) sometime in the first decade of the Zhenyuan 貞元 Era (785-805) and was presented to the court in 794.\(^{17}\)


\(^{15}\) In his three articles, Orzech has discussed the meanings of the wide vocabulary of nomenclature which appeared in various primary materials, particularly those translated or composed by Bukong, and he analysed the values and pitfalls of generic terms such as “Tantra” and “Esoteric Buddhism”. See Orzech 2006, 2010, and 2012.

\(^{16}\) The preservation of these sources, we must admit, is thanks to factors in Japanese Buddhist culture and practice. This is revisited in the part below devoted to the assessment of historical sources.

\(^{17}\) Charles Orzech (1998: 192, 203) assumes that this work was compiled by Yuanzhao between 803 and 805, or shortly after. This date serves his understanding of the apologetic effort of Buddhist monks against the state policy that became unfavourable toward the Buddhist church during the reign of Emperor Dezong 德宗 (r. 779-805). NAKAMURA Hiroichi 中村裕一 (1993: 377-405, 392-395) has shown that it was actually compiled at least a decade earlier, between 785 and 794. As noted by Nakamura, the *BZJ* was part of Yuanzhao’s project to compile a series of collections of Buddhism-related historical document from the recent past. The corpus was presented in its entirety to the court in 794 under the general title “Imperial edicts, stele-inscriptions, memorials, and biographical records from all times and lately collected in the Zhenyuan Era, numbering in eighty-nine *juan* together with a catalogue” (*zhenyuan xinji gujin zhiling bei biao jiju bing mu bashijiu juan* 貞元新集古今制令碑表記録並目八十九卷). With this, we can determine that all these collections, including the *BZJ*, were produced after the first year of Zhenyuan Era.
As MUKAI Ryūken (1978) has pointed out, in the foreword of *BZJ*, Yuanzhao numbers a total of one hundred and forty-four pieces, but the Taishō version available to us has only one hundred and thirty-three items, with eleven pieces mysteriously missing.

Even if an original version becomes available, one must bear in mind that the *BZJ* per se is by no means an all-inclusive compilation of the letters between Bukong and the emperors. According to the account given by Zhao Qian (discussed as no. 4 below), since the reign of Suzong, the imperial decrees issued to Bukong were innumerable, and moreover, tens of letters personally written by Daizong bearing secret instructions were deemed to be confidential in nature and were returned to the court after Bukong’s death.\(^{18}\) These materials were not accessible to Zhao Qian and were most likely beyond the Yuanzhao’s reach. These confidential materials may concern secret tasks given to Bukong by Daizong that involved the performance of lethal rituals.\(^{19}\)

2. “Da Tang gu dade kaifu yitongsansi shi hongluqing Suguo gong Da Xingshan si Da Guangzhi sanzang heshang zhi bei” 大唐故大德開府儀同三司試鴻臚卿肅國公大興善寺大廣智三藏和上之碑 (hereafter “XB”): This is a biography composed by the monk Feixi 飛錫 (742–805+)\(^{20}\) on the day of Bukong’s death in 774. Feixi created this artistic

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\(^{18}\) Zhao Qian’s account reads:

The scores of hand-written edicts by the emperor (i.e. Daizong) are in dozens; they are all secret instructions from the Sage (i.e. Daizong) and therefore have been presented back to the court with all respect. As for all handwritten edicts by the emperor [that the master had received] from as early as the previous reign through present sacred reign, the scrolls crammed the storage trunks. [代宗] 所賜大師手詔數十首 , 皆聖人密旨 , 並卻進奉。

The above translation is considerably different from that presented by Orlando (1981: 155), but I adopt his translation of key terms.

\(^{19}\) According to Goble’s theory, the Esoteric rituals that invoke the violence of the wrathful Esoteric deities and thereby result in massive murder of the enemies explain why Bukong’s Esoteric tradition could outstrip the indigenous ritual traditions, and as the Tang state was entangled by consecutive military threat, Bukong’s ritual advantage became one of the most important factors that encouraged imperial patronage. See Goble 2012: 44-45, and Chapter Three.

\(^{20}\) Feixi was a famous writer of the time. He also composed a poetic image-eulogy (*yingzan* 影讃) for Bukong. Since the title used by Feixi to sign this eulogy differs from that which appears on the XB, the two pieces were written at different times. The title that appears in the eulogy suggests a composition date earlier than that of the XB. And unlike the XB, the eulogy may have been inscribed somewhere Bukong’s image was installed, for Feixi signed for performing the calligraphy as well. For studies of this figure, see KOBAYASHI Junken 2003 and 2008. I will discuss the monk Daji’s arrogation in the composition of the XB and the reaction of Bukong’s chief successor Huilang 慧朗 in the discussion below.
tribute under the instruction of the powerful monk and court official Daji 大濟. It was meant to be inscribed on the stele planned for Bukong’s relic stupa, but the plan seems to have been thwarted by Bukong’s disciples. Therefore, the text lacks the information of the executor of the calligraphy. It was preserved in the BZJ and referred to by Yuanzhao as “xingbei” 行碑 (stele inscription of conduct), perhaps to differentiate it from the beiming 碑銘 that was actually inscribed on the stele, listed as the fifth item below.

3. “Da Tang Da Guangzhi sanzang heshang yingzan bing xu” 大唐大廣智三藏和尚影讃并序 (hereafter “Yingzan”): This is a commemorative text for Bukong by the official Yan Ying 嚴郢 (d. 782) preserved in the BZJ. The lack of Bukong’s posthumous title “Da Bianzheng” 大辨正 in the long sequence of his titles suggests that it was written at a time before its bestowal on 5 vii of 774. Since the arrangement of the pieces included in BZJ suggests a general chronology, its placement between the two pieces that were both dated 24 vi 774 suggests they share the same composition date.

4. “Da Tang gu dade zeng sikong Dabianzheng Guangzhi Bukong sanzang xingzhuang” 大唐故大德贈司空大辨正廣智不空三藏行狀 (T2120, hereafter “XZ”). This is an official biography composed in 774 by Zhao Qian 趙遷 (766-777+), who by then had served Bukong as a personal attendant and secretary for nine years. Composed under the order of Bukong and submitted to the court as his official biography, it adopts the genre called “account of conduct” (xingzhuang 行狀) which was applicable only to a deceased official, usually by his families, students, old friends, associates, or colleagues. This account of Bukong’s life largely follows the structure of the XB but supplements it with many valuable messages.

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21 T2120.52.0845b22.
22 By rule, only officials of the top three ranks were eligible to have an account of conduct, to be archived in the court. In practice, there were many cases where people of lower ranks were allowed to have biographies of this genre. As an official document, it had three functions: to establish the deceased official’s fame, to request the bestowal of a posthumous title for him, and to claim a place for him in the official history. See Twitchett 1992: 69-70.
5. “Tang Da Xingshan si gu dade Da Bianzheng Guangzhi sanzang heshang beaming bing xu”
唐大興善寺故大德大辨正廣智三藏和尚碑銘並序 (hereafter “BM”): This artistic
biography was composed in 781,\(^{23}\) seven years after Bukong’s death, by Yan Ying, the
author of the “Beiming” discussed above, at the request of Bukong’s disciple Huilang 慧
朗. It was carved on the stele at Bukong’s stupa erected in 774 at Bukong’s residence
quarters in the Great Xingshan Monastery, the Translation Chapel (fanjing yuan 翻經院).
The calligraphy was executed by the official Xu Hao 徐浩 (703-782). It was also included
in the BZJ and can be found in many other collections of inscriptions compiled in different
periods.\(^{24}\)

The two writings by Yan Ying are flowery; it appears that BM was intended more as an
artistic tribute to Bukong than a biographical account. It lacks detailed information about
Bukong’s activities and avoids discussing his involvement in political and military affairs. This
corresponds to the general trends in stele inscription of the time\(^{25}\) but had a more fundamental
reason lay in Emperor Dezong’s hostility towards Esoteric Buddhism early in his reign when Yan
Ying was ordered to compose the BM.

6. Da Tang Zhenyuan xu Kaiyuan shijiao lu 大唐貞元續開元釋教錄 (T2156, hereafter
“XKYL”): This canonical catalogue of Buddhist literature was completed by Yuanzhao in
796. It was compiled as the sequel of the magisterial canonical catalogue Kaiyuan shijiao

\(^{23}\) Xu Hao was a partisan of Yuan Zai and Wang Jin, the chief ministers of Daizong’s reign and two ardent supporters
of Bukong’s Buddhist projects in the court. See ZZTJ: 224, 7220.

\(^{24}\) The stele is preserved in the museum of the Stele Forest in Xi’an. For the various sources that included in the BM,
please refer to Katsumata 1969: 113 (note 3).

\(^{25}\) Commercialization was underway in stele inscription writing. This trend accelerated during the Tang and prevailed
in the post-Rebellion period. The business allowed the famous writers of the time to make a fortune. Such
profit-driven practices seriously affected the content’s historical veracity, which became more and more hollow and
full of rhetorical flourishes. Writers would slant the report or even distort facts to seek a larger payment. See XU
Hairong 2011: 23-27. For deceased officials, the design of their tomb tablets their bureaucratic rank. The content of the
inscription was discussed and decided collectively by officials at a meeting conducted by the office kaogong si 考功司]. See THY: 38, 691; and XTS: 46, 1190.

As for the long gap between the erection of the stele and the composition of the text to be inscribed, Jinhua Chen
suggests that it was because the exact content to inscribe needed to be discussed among monks at the Great Xingshan
mulu 開元釋教錄 (hereafter “KYL”) and was completed by Zhisheng’s 智昇 (fl. 700-740) in 730. In the text, Yuanzhao modeled the structure of the KYL and allotted a section for biographical sketches of translators who were active in the past six decades. As two productive translators, Vajrabodhi and Bukong are treated in detail.

7. Zhenyuan xingding shijiao mulu 貞元新定釋教目錄 (T2157, the fifteenth and sixteenth juan, hereafter “ZYL”): Generally speaking, the ZYL was a combination of the KYL and his previously completed XKYL. A comparison shows that Yuanzhao made some significant updates and supplements to the contents of the XKYL. As a work commissioned by the Emperor Dezong 德宗 (742-805, r. 779-805), it was done by Yuanzhao between 23 x Zhenyuan 15 and 15 vi Zhenyuan 16 (24 Nov. 799-10 Jul. 800).

Some assessments of the ZYL and XKYL must be made on the value of their data. First, when compiling the two catalogues, Yuanzhao copied plenty of primary sources such as memorials found in the BZJ, and perhaps sources from other similar collections that he had compiled. Since these collections are no longer extant, excerpts and whole pieces preserved in these two works are particularly valuable. However, quotations are inserted into Yuanzhao’s own narration, and meticulous work is required to extract them from the content. Secondly, to patch up primary materials, Yuanzhao used frothy paddings, formulaic expressions, and even composed fictive historical scenes, which prove to be quite unreliable. This is partly because he did not personally know Bukong, nor had he participated in any of his Buddhist projects. This said, I am surprised to find that the phrasing in a couple of places in these transitional lines is identical to the wording of Zhao Qian in the XZ. Since it seems that Yuanzhao had never had the opportunity to read the XZ, he and Zhao Qian may have availed themselves of the same sources.

8. “Tang Jingzhao Da Xingshan si Bukong zhuan Huilang” 唐京兆大興善寺不空傳慧朗 in the Song Gaoseng zhuan 宋高僧傳 (hereafter “SGSZ”): This collection of biographies was

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26 See the demonstration made by MUKAI Ryūken 1978: 110-11.
27 The dates are given in a manuscript version studied in TSUKAMOTO Zenryū 1975: 373.
completed under the nominal editorship of Zanning 贊寧 (919-1001) and presented by him in 988. The major part of Bukong’s biography in this work follows the accounts of XZ, with a few modifications and supplements, perhaps from unknown but reliable sources. It continues with several anecdotes that were dramatized to feature Bukong’s miraculous performances. These stories can found in literary fiction, and their historical veracity is highly doubtful.

Biographical accounts of Bukong are also found in Kūkai’s 空海 (774-835) Himitsu mandarakyō fuhō den 秘密曼荼羅教付法傳, composed between 816 and 821, and a commemorative text dedicated to Vajrabodhi and Bukong composed by Quan Deyu 權德興 (759-818) at the request of Bukong’s disciples Huiying 惠應 and Huize 惠則, “Tang Da Xingshan si gu Da Hongjiao Da Bianzheng Sanzang Heshang Yingtang jieming bing xu” 唐大興善寺故大弘教大辯正三藏和尚影堂碣銘並序. These two materials, however, are not informative and are riddled with errors. Kūkai’s accounts were largely drawn from the BZJ and the ZYL, while, as scholars have criticized, Quan’s writing is couched in hackneyed sayings and contains apparent mistakes.

Biographical sources of Bukong’s close associates, written by their contemporaries, can offer additional information. Sources on his master Vajrabodhi and his close lay disciple Shi/Li Yuancong 史/李元琮 are the most relevant. Two of Vajrabodhi’s biographical texts are preserved in the ZYL, and a third has been reassembled from quotations kept in a later work.

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28 It is also known as the Kō fuhō den 廣付法傳. See the Kōbō daishi zenshū 弘法大師全集: 1, 1-49. For an investigation of the original sources used by Kūkai in the Kō fuhō den, see MUKAI Ryūken 1978: 112-13.
29 See the Xinkan Quan Zaizhi wenji 新刊權載之文集: 28.
31 They are the “Gu Jin’gang Zhi sanzang xingji” 故金剛智三藏行記 (hereafter “Xingji”) by Lü Xiang 呂向 (722-757), and the “Da Tang Dongjing Da Guangfu si gu Jin'gang Sanzang taming bing xu” 大唐東京大廣福寺故金剛三藏塔銘並序 (hereafter “Taming”) by one Hunlun Weng 混論翁 (d. u.) in 743. There is another biography for Vajrabodhi that could be recovered from the work Ruiju hassō ten 類聚八祖傳 that was compiled by the Japanese monk Yōkai 楊海 (1274-1347). The title of the original piece is said to be “Jin’gang Zhi sanzang heshang ji” 金剛智三藏和尚記 (hereafter “Sanzang heshang ji”). Vajrabodhi’s biography in the SGSZ is similar in both structure and content, and thus it might be the stele inscription authored by Du Hongjian 杜鴻漸 (708-769) that is given a particular mention towards the end of the biography in the SGSZ. (T2061.50.0712a17-18). Kūkai mentions in the Kō fuhō den
Shi/Li Yuancong’s tomb tablet was excavated only recently. 32 “Da Tang gu Baoying gongchen kaifu yitongsansi youlongwujun zhijunshi shangzhuguo Liangguo gong Li gong muzhiming bing xu” 大唐故寶應功臣開府儀同三司右龍武軍知軍事上柱國涼國公李公墓志銘并序 (hereafter “Shi/Li Yuancong muzhiming”) was composed by Zhao Qian shortly after Shi/Li’s death in 776. The transcript is published in WANG Lianlong’s article (2014). The discovery of this text exposes some scholars’ widely-held misunderstandings. One is that Shi/Li Yuancong was not a eunuch, but a military officer of the Imperial Guards. Another is that he did not accompany Bukong in the travel to Sri Lanka and India, denying a time-honoured assumption reflected in Kūkai’s Kō fuhō den. 33 It also reveals that Shi/Li’s provided special help for Bukong when he was slighted at the southern corner of the country.

Snippets of information about Bukong’s activities, though sparse and of uneven reliability, can be found in many other sources, including the Fozu tongji 佛祖統紀 (T2035, hereafter “FZTJ”), the Fozu lidai tongzai 佛祖歷代通載 (T2036, hereafter “FZLDTZ”), and other comprehensive Buddhist histories compiled after the Tang Dynasty. Compilers of these works must have had some unknown sources at hand, but frequently, their accounts conflict with earlier and presumably more reliable sources. Therefore, these works, whenever employed, must be treated with caution.

Some secular sources from the genre of classified books, such as the Cefu yuangui 册府元龜 (“CFYG” hereafter for short) and the Taiping yulan 太平御覽 (“TPYL” for short), report on Bukong’s activities, and the compilers seem to have quoted from primary materials created in the Tang period. Unlike the standard histories, they were spared the rigid censorship exercised in Confucianist historiography and thus could enrich the story from the non-religious angle.

(See KBZ: 1, 14-15) a stele inscription near a gate of the Guangfu 廣福 Monastery in Luoyang, but he does not tell who the author was. See the discussion in IWASAKI Hideo 2004 and 2005.
32 The tablet is preserved in the museum of the Stele Forest in Xi’an.
33 See Kōbōdaishi zenshū: 1, 22.
1.3.2 Previous Studies on the Primary Sources and the Current Approach

Previous scholarship has treated the above chief primary sources. The first one that had been carefully studied is the rather late SGSZ. In 1945, Yi-liang Chou published his dissertation, the translation of biographies of the three tantric masters of Tang China: Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra (i.e. Bukong). The translations were heavily annotated, and although many decades have passed, some views are still insightful. In discussions, he consulted more reliable biographical sources such as the XB and the XZ, but the cross investigation seems to be less than comprehensive and can be promisingly expanded to other materials.

Translations of earlier and more important biographical materials were presented by Raffaello Orlando in his 1981 dissertation. These materials include three biographies (the XZ, the XB, the BM), and memorials selected from the BZJ. It seems that his translation was influenced by Yi-liang Chou and OSABE Kazuo’s understandings.34 Summaries are available for those pieces in the BZJ that he left untranslated. Orlando touched upon the problem of different biographical genres but did not proceed to discuss the historical value of the materials in that perspective.35 Most academic discussions of Bukong’s life that appeared afterwards fall back on the translations made by Chou and Orlando.

Over the past decades, there appeared a sizable accumulation of the English translations of the historical materials associated with Bukong. When preparing my own translations, I benefitted from Yi-liang Chou’s translation strategies and annotations. My translations of the memorials selected from the BZJ differ significantly from those done by Orlando, but I was inspired by his techniques and effective translations of technical terms and formulaic expressions. Some sources that Orlando did not rendere into English are supplemented here. This said, many pieces of correspondence in the BZJ, especially those between the emperor and his disciples composed after

34 See Orlando 1981: 105, 131.
Bukong’s death, which are less instrumental in constructing his biography, await to be translated on later occasions.

When working on the *BZJ*, I benefitted from the outcome of documentation studies popular among Japanese scholars. A couple of manuscript versions of the *BZJ* have been made public, showing the variant characters or even possible errors in the Taishō version.

In 1992, TAKEUCHI Kōzen published the facsimile and transcript of the third *juan* of an old manuscript *BZJ* found in the temple of Ishiyama Dera 石山寺; two years later, he published the sixth *juan* of another old manuscript kept in the Gotoh Museum. Takeuchi collated the two manuscripts against six other editions, including printed versions and manuscripts. His investigations show that there are at least seventeen manuscripts of the *BZJ* preserved in Japan, which he classifies into nine lineages of transmission.36

Another manuscript was published in 1993, and it is the first four *juan* of *BZJ* dated to the eleventh century and preserved in the temple of Shōren In 青蓮院 (hereafter “Shōren-in version”).37

Unlike the background of the *BZJ*, the *XKYL*, and the *ZYL*, the textual history of the *XZ* is obscure. Although upon composition the text needed to be presented to the court, copies were not prevented from circulating in society. It is not included in the *BZJ*, however, and Yuanzhao seems to have never read it. Nor is it mentioned in any of the catalogues of Buddhist texts brought to Japan by Japanese pilgrim monks. The only version in existence is none other than the original of the Taishō edition, the fourteenth-century manuscript now preserved in the chapel of Kanchi In 観智院 in Tōji 東寺, Kyōto. Its earliest usage was in tenth-century China by the compilers of the *SGSZ*, and then quotations from it appear in the *Ruiju hassō den* 類聚八祖傳, a work compiled by the monk Yōkai 榮海 (1278-1347) in Japan between the thirteenth and fourteenth century. This led IWAMOTO Hiroshi (1996b) to assume that the text of *XZ* was a fabrication of a later time, in the

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37 KYŪSOJIN Hitaku, NAKAMURA Hiroichi, and TSUKISHIMA Hiroshi 1993.
middle of tenth century and before the completion of the SGSZ which shows homogeneity in prose style and narrative structure. The similarity between the XZ and the XB suggests that the former’s formation was done based on the latter. Iwamoto’s argument seems less than compelling, however, and I leave the following section to a close assessment of his reasons.

According to Iwamoto’s theory, the evidence of the XZ’s fabrication comes from its report of Bukong’s diplomatic mission to the Tang court on behalf of the king of Sinhala in 746. This event appears only in the XZ, but not in the XB or any other primary sources. As an affair of diplomatic nature, it was not recorded by earlier historical works such as the Tongdian 通典 and the Jiu Tangshu 舊唐書 (hereafter JTS), completed in 801 and 945 respectively; and the first secular source that offers it a mention is the Tang huiyao 唐會要 (hereafter THY) completed in 961. Therefore, Iwamoto believes that the record of this diplomatic event must have been a later insertion, made during the period after the completion of the THY but before the compilation of the SGSZ, that is, between 961 and 988.

In addition, when relating the transmission of Esoteric teachings from the Sri Lankan ācārya Samantabhadra to Bukong, XZ highlights the three systems of Esoteric teachings presented in the Vajroṣṇīṣa sutras, the Mahāvairocana-sutra, and Susuddhikara-sutra. Iwamoto assumes that this speaks of the tripartite scheme (Jpn. sanbu sōshō 三部相承) in classifying the Esoteric teachings which had not emerged until the first half of the ninth century. This proves that this section in the XZ was another interpolation made at a later time.

It seems that Iwamoto overlooked the formation process of the THY. The work is a combination of two different source materials in terms of authorship and the date of completion. The first forty juan of THY, which contains the record of Bukong’s diplomatic mission from Sinhala to the Tang, were originally a separate work called Huiyao 會要. This work was completed during the Zhenyuan Era (785-805) by the brothers Su Mian 蘇冕 (734-805) and Su Bian 蘇弁 (d. 805). Over half-century later, Cui Xuan 崔鉉 (d. 869) intended to present the records of affairs happened in the following decades, until the end of the Dazhong Era (847-860) and thus
produced another work of forty *juan* as its sequel called *Xu Huiyao* 續會要. The two texts were put together later on as one work by Wang Pu 王溥 (922-982), who also included his own contribution of documenting affairs after the Dazhong Era, which took another twenty *juan*. Iwamoto interprets this final form of the work, that took shape in 961 and numbered one hundred *juan*, as completed all at once.  

The lack of a report on Bukong’s diplomatic mission in the *Tongdian* and the *JTS* cannot disprove the XZ’s earlier origin. The *Tongdian* was never intended to be a historical document as detailed as the *THY*. The records about Sinhala appeared in the section of “Border Defence” (*bianfang* 邊防), in which the neighbouring countries of Tang China were treated in a similarly cursory manner. After a slight introduction to the history of Sinhala, the authors give few cases of its diplomatic contact with China, all from pre-Tang periods, and did not spare any words on the changes happened ever after.  

The authors of the *JTS* simply did not set aside a monograph for Sinhala, the absence of the record about Bukong’s diplomatic visit to the Tang court is unsurprising. All in all, Iwamoto’s first argument is hardly tenable.  

As for his second ground, I would rather understand it as a suggestion that the tripartite scheme in the classification of Esoteric Buddhism, that gained popularity later in Japan, does have its origin or prototype in eighth-century China. In the *Dubu tuoluo ni mu* 都部陀羅尼目 (The Synopsis of Various Systems of Dhāraṇī Teaching, T903), Bukong presents summaries of the five “systems” (*bu* 部) of Dhāraṇī Teaching; after his discussions of the above three systems, he added the systems taught in the sutra *Subhāhu-pariprcchā-sūtra* (*Supohu tuongzi qingwen jing* 蘇婆呼童子請問經, T895) and in a certain sutra called *Dali sameiye jing* 怛唎三昧耶經.  

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39 See *THY*:193, 5263. Cf. the discussion in HUANG Yongnian 2002: 12.
40 The text is also titled *Tuoluoni men zhu bu yaomu* 陀羅尼門諸部要目, informed by Yuanzhao’s two catalogues. See T2156.55.0767c28 and T2157.55.0927c29.
Chapter 2: A Comprehensive Biography of Bukong

2.1 Early Years: 705-741

In the year of 705, Bukong was born to a family made by a mixed marriage. His father was a North Indian Brahmin, while his mother was of Sogdian descent.

Such an interracial union could suggest that the family of either side may have been uprooted from their traditional homeland. Therefore, the birthplace of Bukong could not be firmly assigned among the candidate locations of North India, Sogdiana, and the surrounding areas. And indeed, we find no explicit claim about Bukong’s birthplace. Some of the traditional accounts indicate Bukong’s ethnic identity by specifying his paternal pedigree, while others locate his hometown in a couple of other regions which were associated with his life in various ways. The problem of his ethnic identity in traditional narratives, which involves consideration of his geographical origin, ancestry, and politico-religious career, calls for an in-depth and extensive investigation.41

To describe his sacred reincarnation, the biographies spare prose expanding on the miraculous and propitious signs showed by Buddhist deities to the mother that led to his conception, a staple in Buddhist hagiographies from medieval China.42 Allowing for any sort of seriousness, one may say that the maternal family was, at least, amenable to Buddhist devotions.43 Such explanation erases any surprise that would otherwise arise while one reads that the young boy, at the hands of his maternal uncle, should be entrusted to a Buddhist teacher.

It is said that Bukong’s father died when he was still early in childhood, and therefore he was brought up by his maternal uncle in a Sogdian community. Following his uncle, Bukong spent his early teens on extensive journeys, perhaps in the midst of a caravan of merchants, which was a typical livelihood for the Sogdians. Sogdian merchants established a commercial network along the Silk Route and expanded it into inner China. They were well-known for smartness and aspirations to pursue commercial interests, and could travel any distance as long as it appeared

41 For the exploration of this issue, see Chapter Five.
43 For a general discussion of Buddhism and the Sogdians, see Walter: 2006.
profitable. Materials have been excavated to show that Sogdian children joined in the business trip and left their family before the age of fifteen, and this warrants Zhao Qian’s report of the age of ten *sui* (the age of nine) when Bukong, following his uncle, made his maiden trip to China.

The uncle’s company probably travelled through the many oasis towns on the Silk Route where Sogdian people already settled and thrived, such as Shazhou 沙洲, Guazhou 瓜州, and Suzhou 肅州, and in 714, they arrived at their first stations in the empire, Wuwei 武威 (aka. Liangzhou 漢州, the present-day Wuwei City) and Taiyuan 太原 (the present-day the Taiyuan City), both being well-known populated cities of the Sogdians. This track into Tang China implies that they had been living in some area to the northwest of the prevailing domains of Sinitic culture.

Some three years later, they appeared in the country of Shepo 鬍婆 in Southeast Asia, and it was here that Bukong met his Buddhist master, Vajrabodhi, who ushered him onto a new track of life.

At the time, Vajrabodhi was on his journey towards Tang China, which he had embarked on in 716, accompanied by the diplomatic corps of the Pallava state of South India. He had visited the kingdoms in Sri Lanka *en route* and then arrived in the kingdom of Śrīvijaya on Sumatra Island, where he was cordially entertained by the king and retained for five months.

Joining the new company and while proceeding towards the destination, in the year 717 Bukong began to receive Buddhist training from Vajrabodhi, beginning with basic knowledge of Sanskrit. He grasped it at an astonishing speed, the sources praise, testifying to the prodigious aptitude to learn higher teachings with which he was blessed. By early 718, Vajrabodhi imparted to

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44 The merchants constitute one of the three major social classes in the Sogdian states in Central Asia, and trade was a major livelihood for the Sogdians that had settled abroad. Since the fourth century, Sogdian merchants settled in the oasis towns in the modern Xinjiang and Gansu area, and with these towns serving as hubs for commercial traffic, they dominated the trade along the Silk Route. Their enterprise reached its zenith during the sixth to eighth centuries. For some historical survey of Sogdian commercial activities in China, see La Vaissière 2005.

45 The account that Bukong met Vajrabodhi at Shepo in Southeast Asia at the age of fourteen *sui* is given by Yuanzhao in the *ZYL*(T2157.55.0881a15-16). See the translation and the discussion in Appendix A: 225-27.

46 See the discussion below.

47 For the Sogdian settlements in the oasis towns along the Silk Route from Central Asia to Hexi Corridor, see RONG Xinjiang 2001a, b, and 2005.
him the Precepts of the Enlightened Mind (putixin jie 菩提心戒), which was a prerequisite to being inducted into the teachings of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga (the Adamantine-Crown Yoga) that he would be struggling to pursue and promote for the rest of his life.

During the initiation ceremony, the initiated was blindfolded and led by an Esoteric master into a sanctum equipped with the painting of maṇḍala, where all deities of the Esoteric tradition were laid out according to a certain template. Then the student cast a flower garland onto the maṇḍala, which would fall on a Buddhist deity, thus determining which one would be the principal divinity of his meditative and ritual practices focused on, or in other words, which subset of yogic practices he was supposed to be taught.48 That deity was regarded as the practitioner’s “Primarily Venerated One” (benzun 本尊).49 Although none of Bukong’s biographical sources identify this deity, it was said that the test result at this occasion convinced Vajrabodhi that a successor to him was present.

48 For the procedure of the entire ceremony, see the instructions in Jin’gangding yuqie zhong lüechu niansong jing 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經 (T866, hereafter “Niansong jing”) and in the STTS. The procedures taught in the two texts are slightly different. The former text was translated by Vajrabodhi and thus may reflect the ceremony actually held by him for Bukong. The latter was translated by Bukong from a Sanskrit version obtained from Samantabhadra in Sri Lanka in early 740s.

From Samantabhadra, Bukong also received a manual of ceremony for imparting the Precepts of Enlightened Mind, Shou putixin jie yi 受菩提心戒儀 (The Rite for Receiving the Precepts of Enlightened Mind, T915, 1 juan), which was compiled by Samantabhadra himself. The provenance of this text is provided by Yuanzhao in ZYL. See T2157.55.0880a18.

The maṇḍala prepared for the initiation ceremony was the Great Maṇḍala, the primary one in the whole set of maṇḍalas of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga introduced in the first chapter of the STTS.

49 When relating the story of the initiation of Huiguo 惠果 (746-805), one of Bukong’s successors, the biography identifies the deity his garland fell upon as the Dharmacakrapravarti Bodhisattva (zhuanfalun pusa 轉法輪菩薩). The text continues with Bukong’s comment, which reveals that he had ended up with this Venerated One as well while in South India. Bukong happily foretold that “[You will] promulgate and transmit the great Teachings of Dhāraṇī as well as I do, without differences whatsoever.” 弘傳總持大教，如我無異 See Huiguo’s Account of conduct, T2057.50.0294c24-27.

The venue of the ceremony held by Vajrabodhi for Bukong by early 718, however, was never mentioned; it must have been somewhere in Southeast Asia, instead of South India or Sri Lanka. The initiation held in South India referred to must be the one given by Ācārya Samantabhadra.

If Bukong had been initiated twice and by different masters, he would have received two Esoteric titles, but only one was known to the sources. I have discussed the implications of the Buddhist title “Amoghavajra” and the Chinese form “Bukong” in Introduction, and please see also the discussion below and in Chapter Three and Chapter Five.
A successful ceremony entailed the bestowal of an adamantine title on the initiated. Bukong’s adamantine name “Amoghavajra”, a Sanskrit name often seen in its Chinese transliteration, may have been created by Vajrabodhi at this time, but it is equally plausible that the title was given by Samantabhadra (Puxian 普賢) when Bukong went through the Vajroṣṇīṣa teachings all over again decades later in Sri Lanka.

By the year of 719, following Vajrabodhi and the South Indian diplomatic corps, Bukong had visited some countries of Southeast Asia. Finally, the company reached the territory of the Tang, disembarking in the Guangzhou province. Once again, Bukong was on the soil of China. The chief diplomat, a general called Mizhunna (mizhunna 米准那), must have taken up business with the local government of the Guangzhou 广州; and the diplomatic corps were sent to Chang’an, the West Capital of the Tang. In this year or the next, the company arrived in the city and was received by the court. As the head of the diplomatic corps, Mzhuna may have presented Vajrabodhi as a sort of precious talent. Several years earlier, South India had suffered from lengthy draught, and the king sought out Vajrabodhi, who was then staying in Central India, to relieve the country of the calamity. Vajrabodhi successfully brought a fall of rain and displayed his Esoteric virtuosity. Full of cheer and gratitude, the king built a temple for Vajrabodhi.⁵₀

In addition to the diplomat’s recommendation, Vajrabodhi’s royal background must have also boosted the imperial hospitality. The master was first affiliated to the Cien 慈恩 Monastery and later transferred to Jianfu 薦福 Monastery.

It seems that Vajrabodhi soon became an imperial attendant of Emperor Xuanzong, and he had the honour to be among the imperial entourage when, in the following years, the court moved

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⁵₀ See the accounts in “Xingji”: Then, South India having suffered for three years from a severe drought, its king Narasimhapotavarman sent an envoy to invite the master (i.e. Vajrabodhi) [to his country]. [Vajrabodhi] erected an Abhiṣeka Sanctum within [the king’s] palace and prayed for rain. On that occasion, the sweet beneficence of rain poured down, and the king and his ministers rejoiced. Then, [they] built a temple to enconce the master. 其後南天三年亢旱，其王捺羅僧伽補多靺摩遣使迎請和上。於自宮中建灌頂道場請雨，其時甘澤流澍，王臣欣慶，遂為和上造寺安置 See T2157.55.0875b14-17. The translation here is made based on the version presented in Sundberg and Giebel 2011: 135.
back and forth at odd intervals between Chang’an and Luoyang, the East Capital. As Vajrabodhi’s young disciple, Bukong, one may assume, would be following the master wherever he went.

In 719, Bukong was tonsured and became a Buddhist novice, and perhaps at this moment, he acquired the Chinese Dharma name, Zhizang 智藏. It should be noted that the name may also have been given five years later, when Bukong would take the full precepts.

In the year of 722, the court moved to Luoyang, and in the interim Vajrabodhi was installed at the Guangfu 廣福 Monastery. At this monastery, he established a stupa for the Vairocana Buddha, the supreme Buddhist divinity to Esoteric Buddhism, and Emperor Xuanzong performed a piece of calligraphy for the stupa’s nameplate.\footnote{See Bukong’s statement in “Dongdu xianshi tayuan ji shijietan yuan qing chou dade zhi yi shou” 東都先師塔院及石戒壇院請抽大德制一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0841a21-24. See Appendix A: 329-331. Cf. the inscription on Vajrabodhi’s stupa kept in ZYL, “Datang Dongjing Da Guangfu si gu Jin’gang Sanzang taming bing xu” 大唐東京大廣福寺故金剛三藏塔銘并序 (hereafter “Taming”), T2157.55.0876c23-20.}

In the third month of 723, following the court, Vajrabodhi moved back to Chang’an. Thanks to imperial support, he embarked on the translation of Buddhist scriptures at the Zisheng 資聖 Monastery. In this year, according to the Xu Gujin yijing tuji 續古今譯經圖紀, he produced two translations. One was the Niansong jing mentioned above, an abridged version of the STTS with brief summaries of other seventeen sutras of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga cycle. The whole set of eighteen sutras of the Yoga had been purportedly jettisoned, by mistake, into the angry ocean years before during a violent storm while he was sailing to Tang China. This translation project is said to have been conducted upon Xuanzong’s instruction, and a dignitary from East India by the name of Yisheluo 伊舍羅 (Skt. Īśvara?), who held an official post at court, was called to render assistance.\footnote{The Sanskrit name is reconstructed as Īśvara by Yi-liang Chou (1945: 281). He was a lay Buddhist and held the position of zhizhongshu 直中書 in the Secretariat. As pointed out by Chou, Īśvara had some experiences in Buddhist translation. He had acted the role of Checking Sanskrit Text (zheng fanben 證梵本) in Yijing’s 義浄 (635-713) translation group and had also participated in the translation project headed by Puti Liuzhi 菩提流志 (Bodhiruci, Original Skt. Dharmaruci, c. 572-727). See T2061.50.0710c22, 0720b18. For more information about this Yishelu, see Chen 2007: 402, 408.} A monk from Mt. Songshan 嵩山 called Wengu 溫古 served as the scribe (bishou 筆史).
受). With their help, Vajrabodhi also translated the dhāraṇī text *Qi juzhi fomu Zhunti daming tuoluoni* 七俱胝陀准提大明陀羅尼經 (T1075).

According to Vajrabodhi’s own account recorded by the monk Yixing 一行 (683-727), a well-known polymath and a favoured imperial attendant at the time, the latter played a critical role in the translation of the *Niansong jing*. Early on, Vajrabodhi had performed the empowerment ritual for him to learn the Vajroṣṇīṣa teachings, and he may have facilitated the imperial support for Vajrabodhi’s activities.

By this point, it seems that Bukong had not earned his way to Vajrabodhi’s translation projects, and this condition seemingly continued until the year of 730 when he was asked by the master to join in the translation of two texts of the Yoga.

In the sixth month of 724, the court moved to Luoyang. At the Guangfu Monastery, Bukong was fully ordained into Buddhist clergy by Vajrabodhi. The ceremony was held at an ancient ordination platform patterned on the idea upheld by the Sarvāstivāda school, and he was very well trained and finally became an authority in the vinaya texts of that tradition.

The traditional sources also celebrate Bukong’s stunning aptitude for mastering other aspects of Buddhist learning during this period, extolling the examples of his unbelievable rates in studying the texts *Treatise on the Śabda Śāstra* (shengming lun 聲明論) and *Vows of Mañjuśrī* (wenshu yuan 文殊願).

In the year of 726, it is said that Vajrabodhi got a successor, which means he had instructed that disciple all Vajroṣṇīṣa teachings and entrusted him with the mission to carry on the lineage of the tradition. Although the source does not identify the person, circumstances suggest it was Yixing. And Yixing’s sudden death in the next year explains the lack of further mention of this heir or any development of the branch out of him.

From the middle of 727 to the middle of 731, the court stayed in Chang’an. In 730, Bukong participated in Vajrabodhi’s translation of the *Jin’gangding jing Manshushili pusa wuzi xin tuoluoni pin* 金剛頂經曼殊室利菩提五字心心陀羅尼品 (1 juan, T1173) and *Guanzizai Ruyilun*
puṣa yuqie fayao 觀自在如意輪菩薩瑜伽要 (1 juan, T1087) at the Great Jianfu Monastery. He took the duty of the Term-Translator (yīyu 譯語). Additionally, Vajrabodhi supplemented an old translation of the “Mahāpratisarā dhāraṇī” with some missing lines and thus contributed another version.53

After 731, Vajrabodhi produced more translations, but it is unknown whether Bukong played any part in the work.54

In 736, when the court was in Luoyang, many foreign monks were deported from the country in the aftermath of a revolt led by one Liu Zhicheng 劉志成 in the fifth month. Liu sought out a certain Tripiṭaka Baohua 寶花 to decide upon a most propitious date to launch the uprising. Unfortunately, the plot was uncovered, and apparently the foreigner monk Baohua was convicted of complicity. The resentment of the authorities expanded to all foreigner monks, and an edict was issued to expel them from the land. Initially, Vajrabodhi disregarded the ordinance and refused to be deported; he defended his decision by the pathetic excuse that the phraseology of the edict applied only to the “barbarians”, who were supposed to be of ethnic minority from the north or the west to China (fanhu 藩胡/番胡), whereas he was an Indian monk (fanseng 梵僧), a status that was not affected by the edict. The legalistic wordplay by Vajrabodhi may suggest that the background of the monk Baohua was Central Asian.55

53 This old translation that Vajrabodhi found incomplete may have referred to the version (T920) produced by Puti Liuzhi.

54 These texts were the Jiān’gangdīng jīng yuqie xiuxī Piluzhēnā sān módì fā 金刚頂經瑜伽修習毘盧遮那三麼地法 (1 juan), Qianshòu Qiānyān Guānshìyīn pūsā dàshēn zhòushěn 千手千眼觀世音菩薩大身呪本 (1 juan), Qianshòu Qiānyān Guānzìzāi pūsā guāngdá yuǎnmǎn wù ái dǎběixīn tuōluǒnǐ zhòushěn 千手千眼觀自在菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼咒本 (1 juan), and Budōng shízhé tuōluǒnǐ mǐmí fā 不動使者陀羅尼祕密法 (1 juan). See the record in the ZYL, T2120.52.0841a20-19.

55 For a discussion of Vajrabodhi’s response to the decree in regard to the dynamics in ethnic identification of non-Han peoples living in Tang China, see Abramson 2008: viii-x.
Only several days later, Vajrabodhi made his own decision to leave the country. When travelling to the pass of Yanmenguan 雁門關, he addressed to the court a note about his departure, and Emperor Xuanzong immediately sent a special decree according him the privilege to stay.\textsuperscript{56}

In the tenth month of 736, the court moved to Chang’an and remained there for the rest of Xuanzong’s reign. During the period, Bukong unswervingly aspired for the most advanced teachings of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga, frequently termed as the Three Mysteries of the Five Divisions (\emph{wubu sanmi 五部三密}). In 739 or perhaps earlier, after requesting the instruction from Vajrabodhi for three years, he continued to encounter Vajrabodhi’s refusal. As a result, Bukong decided to head for India in quest of an enlightened \emph{ācārya}.

At first, his action did not bother Vajrabodhi, and what made the master change his mind, it is said, was a dream that woke him up in the night when Bukong had already been on his way—the Buddhist statues in various monasteries of Chang’an started off to follow Bukong! Clearly, the dream was understood as a warning to Vajrabodhi that he would lose an ideal successor who had gained even the unanimous approval of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas; moreover, because of Bukong’s departure, the divinities seemed to be threatening to abandon Vajrabodhi. Shocked by such a revelation, he immediately sent for Bukong to ask him to come back, promising to impart to him all the learnings without reservation.

In the seventh month of 741, an imperial order was issued allowing Vajrabodhi and his followers to go back to their own country. On the very same day, Tripiṭaka Fayue 法月 (Skt. Dharmacandra, 653-743) bade farewell to the court and left for India.

The sources are silent about the reason for the two masters’ simultaneous departure, and this concurrence prompts one to surmise that the general climate may have turned rather adverse for foreign monks to conduct Buddhist missions in the Tang and eventually made them give up their

\textsuperscript{56} Another Indian monk who was retained by the emperor’s special favour was Tripiṭaka Fayue 法月 (Skt. Dharmacandra, 653-743). Six years later, he and Vajrabodhi set off for India on the same day. See below and Appendix A: 238, 244.
efforts. Perhaps it could partly explain why Bukong, after Vajrabodhi’s death, would quit China all the same.

The exact destination of Vajrabodhi’s intended journey, it should be noted, was unclear; the sources only give it vaguely as “his own country” (benguo 本國), perhaps keeping the exact diction of the court. Vajrabodhi’s native land had been identified as either South India or Central India. In light of the fact that Bukong followed his instruction and set out for Sri Lanka, perhaps it had been the initial destination of their journey as well. Indeed, Vajrabodhi had been very well treated by a royal house in Sri Lanka, which would serve as a shelter for him and his followers. Furthermore, he may have kept close contact with Esoteric practitioners there, which could render an explanation why Bukong finally received the hospitality from the king of Sinhala and acquired Esoteric teachings from Samantabhadra and other Buddhist masters.

When reaching Luoyang, Vajrabodhi passed away on the fifteenth day of the eighth month (29 Sept. 741) at the Guangfu Monastery, where he used to take residence when following the court to move to the East Capital. In the ninth month, Xuanzong issued an instruction to inter his relics at Longmen 龍門, and in the second month of 743, the pagoda was erected, on the mound to the west of the Fengxian 奉先 Monastery.

The death of Vajrabodhi pushed Bukong to the foreground of the historical stage and confronted him with urgent problems. Unlike his master, he did not enjoy an established reputation or any royal ancestry that could open a route into the upper society in Tang China. At that moment, he was in need of completing and refining the practices of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga; the heir’s inadequacies had become a concern for the master during his last days. An expedition to the Indic world seemed effective in addressing both problems, and Vajrabodhi asked Bukong to proceed to Sinhala, Sri Lanka: the link he had established with its royal house, perhaps with the Buddhist community there as well, would yield necessary backing and friendly resources for his student to advance Buddhist learnings.

57 For the discussion of Vajrabodhi’s ethnic identity, see Chapter Five.
It appears that it is Bukong who became responsible for arranging the composition of the epitaph, and he found a certain Hunlun Weng 混論翁 who authored the “Taming” as is available to us today. It is uncertain, however, whether or not he had waited to see the completion of the stupa before setting out for Sri Lanka. Probably back in the time when requesting the decent treatment of Vajrabodhi’s relics, he had obtained from the court a titular assignment of a diplomatic mission to facilitate the journey.

Up to this point, thanks to the advantages of the social associations formed by Vajrabodhi, Bukong must have made the acquaintance of some people that would turn out to be significant supporters of his Buddhist activities. The most important one was Shi/Li Yuancong 史/李元琮 (707-776). Shi/Li was a Turkish descendent and served in the Palace Guards in the Tang. A devotee of Buddhism, he had managed to gain from Vajrabodhi some Esoteric teachings, according to his tomb tablet written by Zhao Qian.58 After the death of Vajrabodhi, he must have become Bukong’s student before the latter started the journey abroad, for, by the year of 774, Bukong numbered their intimate relationship as long as thirty-odd years.59

Another important figure was Du Hongjian 杜鴻漸 (708-769); as will be seen later, he would join forces with Bukong to facilitate the formation of the new reign of Emperor Suzong in 756 and become an eminent minister and one of Bukong’s major supporters at court. According to the SGSZ, Du was an earnest Buddhist practitioner, and he had been a student of Vajrabodhi and composed a memorial biography for him that was inscribed on a stone-stele.60

58 See the account on the tomb tablet of Shi/Li Yuancong:
[Yuancong] held a special fondness for Buddhist scriptures, and he had received the abhiseka service from Tripitaka Vajrabodhi—his initial entry into the field of the Mantra [Teachings]. As early as in the Kaiyuan Era (713-741), he had joined the Northern Army, guarding the imperial palace. Early in the Tianbao Era (742-756), he started the official career through the state examination of martial arts.尤好釋典，曾於金剛三藏得授灌頂，初入真言之閫閾也。開元中，早宿衛北軍。天寶初，以武藝入仕
The inscription has been published in WANG Lianlong 2014: 35.
59 This is told by Bukong in his last testament. See T2120.52.0844b15-16.
60 This is mentioned in Vajrabodhi’s biography in SGSZ: [Vajrabodhi’s] disciple who had received his abhiseka service, the Vice Minister of Secretariat Department, Du Hongjian, had entrusted his soul to and rendered attendance on [the master], composed a piece of epitaph to remember his virtue.灌頂弟子中書侍郎杜鴻漸，素所歸奉，述碑紀德焉 (T2061.50.0712a18-17) The stele might be the one erected at a gate of the Guangfu Monastery mentioned by Kūkai in Kōfuhō den. See KBZ: 1, 14-15.
2.2 The Expedition to Sri Lanka and India: c. 742-745

Bukong’s achievement in the learnings of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga, his meritorious and miraculous performance in royal service, and the king’s reverent reception of him are the motifs of the traditional narratives of this eventful story in South Asia.

Guangzhou was the ending point of the land route, where Bukong had to continue the journey by navigating the South Sea to Sri Lanka. When reaching Guangzhou, we are told, Bukong met with the enthusiastic reception of the provincial censor, Liu Julin 劉巨鱗 (d. 749). Liu seems to be a devout believer of Buddhism, and he repeatedly requested Bukong to administer the abhiṣeka ceremony, to which the latter finally agreed. The ceremony was held at the Faxing 法性 Monastery, and on this great occasion, Bukong is said to have converted a multitude of people to Buddhism.

During his stay in Guangzhou, Bukong devoted himself to a ten-day prayer retreat, and he successfully aroused the theophany of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, who was widely perceived as the guardian divinity of China. In conveying such a mysterious happening, the narratives may have intended to imply Bukong’s inextricable Dharma ties to this land and that he was destined to return to the Tang for a promising missionary career.

In return, Liu rendered generous patronage to Bukong’s upcoming oversea expedition. He arranged the ship for Bukong and his followers and exhorted the foreign shipmaster to take good care of them. Then, Liu held a grand farewell ceremony to see Bukong off, which, as was said, was attended by people from various walks of life, suggesting the widespread veneration he had drawn during the sojourn in Guangzhou. Accompanied by his disciples Hanguang 含光 and the young Huibian 慧辯, as well as eighteen other followers, Bukong boarded the ship of the foreign merchants.

The sources continue with high points of the adventure on the sea, a thrilling account of how Bukong displayed magical power to subjugate evil forces that brought about dreadful perils that sought to swallow the ships.
Perhaps in the year of 742, the ship arrived in Sinhala, a kingdom on the island of Ceylon. Hearing that an envoy from the Tang had come to visit, the king Śilāmegha (Shihuoniqie 尸邏迷伽, aka. Aggabodhi VI, r. 733-772) sent an agent to welcome Bukong. The king’s grand-uncle, the king Manavarman (r. 684-718), held Vajrabodhi in special veneration and had entreated him to stay in the country when the latter took his leave for China. Bukong must have presented himself as the heir of Vajrabodhi.

The reception of Bukong was highly reverent. In the court, he enjoyed a seven-day homage, and each day he was bathed ceremonially by the king, the royal families, and the ministers, in succession.

Afterwards, according to the ZYL, Bukong was ensconced at the famous “Buddha’s Tooth Monastery”, the Abhayagiri Vihāra, a centre of Esoteric Buddhism at the time. He sought out the great Esoteric Ācārya Samantabhadra, who imparted him the entire teachings of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga, and the method to arrange the altar for practicing the teachings of the Garbhodhatu (Womb-Store Realm). His disciples Hanguang and Huibian were initiated to the secret practices of all five divisions of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga (wubu guanding 五部灌頂). From Vajrabodhi, Bukong had acquired only the incomplete teachings contained in the Niansong jing, a collection of abridgements of the eighteen Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga sutras in four thousand verses, and at this point Samantabhadra granted him the whole series of the cycle, numbering one-hundred thousand verses in their entirety. During the remaining three years in Sinhala, Bukong continued to learn from other masters various divisions of Mantrayāna Teachings (zhū zhēnyán jiāo 諸真言教), finally accumulating a collection of over five hundred Buddhist scriptures.

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61 See “Xingji”, T2157.55.0876a26-27.
62 For a study on Esoteric practices in this monastery during the period, cf. Paranavitana 1929, Mudiyanse 1967, Dohanian 1980, Thero 2007, 2008, 2013; Sundberg 2014, and, especially, his forthcoming paper. Sundberg’s forthcoming article also includes a historical study on the great support to Esoteric practitioners and institutions given by the Lankan kings, from Mānavaranmāna (r. 684-718), Śilāmegha’s grandfather and grand-uncle, to Sena I (r. 834-854), and the subsequent suppression under Sena II (r. 854-888). Sundberg (2016) points out that Abhayagiri Vihāra enjoyed great religious authority in Southeast Asia, where branches bearing the same name were established in a couple of kingdoms. In the course of spreading the influence of the Abhayagiri Viharā, the royal influence of Sri Lanka also played a role.
Bukong’s study had likely been supported by the king, who then would like to test his achievement. He arranged a dangerous game, in which Bukong was left alone to deal with several frenetic elephants before a multitudinous audience. With the unfathomable might of the Three Mysteries, we are told, he drove the elephants away with a look of unflappability. The wonder amazed the entire country.

Backed by the wide witness of the king and his people, this engrossing story about his miraculous work proved to be of great value in advertising his reputation as an Esoteric virtuoso. It led the contemporary monks in China to regard the feat as a parallel to the Buddha’s taming a mad elephant, as Feixi had pointed out in the XB.

2.3 At Xuanzong’s Court: 746-749

Having acquired credentials as an Esoteric master and credentials in royal service, Bukong became anxious to go back to Tang China throughout the remainder of his time in Sinhala. Now, as a monastic talent with the Sinhalese king’s endorsement, he could be transferred from one court to another, just to following the trajectory of his late master. The king let him be his envoy and carry out a diplomatic mission to China.

In early 746, Bukong, carrying a letter and gifts prepared by the Sinhalese king, led the diplomatic corps to the Tang capital Chang’an. On this occasion, he was formally addressed by the Sanskrit name Amoghavajra and the religious title “Abhiṣekha-Tripitaka” (guanding sanzang灌頂三藏). The title “Abhiṣekha-Tripitaka” stood for the royal certification of his comprehensive knowledge of the Buddhist canon and the authority to spread Esoteric teachings, specially the Yoga; while the Sanskrit adamantine name “Amoghavajra”, displacing his Chinese Dharma name, asserts the Indic, Esoteric background that he had recently enhanced.

Furthermore, the complete version of the Vajroṣṇiṣa canonical corpus, a host of Sanskrit scriptures, and accounts of the miracles that he had performed were brought back to China, and all substantiated Bukong’s profile as an Esoteric adept and authority with international fame.
Bukong was temporarily officially ensconced at the Court of Diplomatic Reception and Funeral Rites (honglu si 鴻臚寺). Apparently, he was more successful than his late master in attracting the attention of Emperor Xuanzong, but soon it turned out to be merely a passing fascination fueled by the curiosity about exotic cultures and a religious imagination nurtured by Xuanzong’s Daoist ideas. The over-ambitious emperor desired to be empowered to learn the most advanced practices of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga, and Bukong was summoned into the palace and conducted the abhiṣeka ritual of the Five-Division, a benefice that he would never offer the subsequent two rulers who were much more supportive of Bukong’s Buddhist cause.

In the same year of 746, Bukong was moved to the Jingying 浄影 Monastery in Chang’an. During these days, he was ordered several times by Xuanzong to cope with extreme weather, and his successes resulted in the spread of those miracle stories and confirmation his thaumaturgic power. They became the highlight of the episodes narrated in historical sources and epitomized his activities in Xuanzong’s reign.

The sources rave about two wonders worked by Bukong in this context. One was about praying for rain to end a prolonged drought, and the other was about his stopping a windstorm. Because of his great service, Xuanzong conferred on him the title “Imperial Preceptor Zhizang”. Since the title was created based on Bukong’s Dharma name that he had received two decades ago in China, Xuanzong seems not have shown appreciation to his proud adamantine title “Amoghavajra” that had been recently put to use and reminded one of his consequential expedition to South Asia.

Emperor Xuanzong’s favour towards Bukong remained at a personal level, with a detectable pursuit of amazement and amusement, and it did not endure. He was treated as no more than a thaumaturgist to cater to the emperor’s needs in profane issues, just as a servant in attendance but one of special calibre. Unlike Vajrabodhi, Bukong did not get the chance to undertake any Buddhist projects during this period, and nor had he received adequate support to conduct
translations. His position in the capital was vulnerable to unexpected and unfavourable fluctuation in court politics.

In 749, Bukong was ousted from the capital. At first, the imperial order was to expel him from the country, but when reaching the Shaozhou 韶州 prefecture (the modern-day Shaoguan 韶關 City in Guangdong), he stopped, making the well-worn excuse of illness, by which time a second imperial instruction followed to retain him.

The sources are reticent about the issues leading to his disgrace. Whatever caused the trouble was not serious, and apparently, the emperor’s decision to pursue his deportation was not firm. What was needed was only to distance Bukong from the capital. Possibly, the true aim of the throne was merely to break any suspicious connections that Bukong had formed in politics of the capital and to prevent any disquieting developments.

Bukong must have fully understood the true aim of the court. He had been offered by the court five post-horses (yiji 驛騎) for the wearying journey. Such treatment was usually restricted to officials holding commissions, while Bukong neither held a position of defined rank nor was executing an imperial errand. That Bukong’s nominal excuse could bring about the emperor’s mercy seems to confirm this understanding.

In less than three years, Bukong, already an accomplished Esoteric master and a diplomatic envoy, was banished from the Tang capital, however friendly the imperial order may have appeared. The contextual effect of this event made Vajrabodhi’s departure in 741 and Bukong’s trip to South Asia, about which sources either avoid addressing or provide different reasons, all the

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63 In June of the year 749, Liu Julin, the governor of Nanhai 南海 Commandery, was put to death because of an offence of corruption. Liu had helped Bukong to arrange the trip to Sri Lanka, and his downfall may have implicated Bukong, an idea that has been put forward by LÜ Jianfu (1995: 253). If that were the case, it would be somewhat baffling that almost all of the biographical sources should enthuse about the pomp and ceremony of the farewell fete Liu had held for Bukong.

64 Taking into account the existence of a statute issued by Emperor Xuanzong in 746 which prohibited the exiles from tarrying during the journey, the true purpose of Bukong’s halt becomes clearer. See “Jin liubian ren zai lu douliu zhao” 禁流貶人在路逗留詔 (An Edict Prohibiting Exiles from Tarrying on the Way) kept in JTS (106, 3254): Dispatch escorts to travel via the post stations and lead the [those concerned] to their posts, and do not allow them to wander away to here or there. 差使馳驛, 領送至任, 勿許東西
more intriguing, becoming an issue that has invited much discussion and different interpretations from modern scholars. Most of these analyses seem to be encouraged by a concern with the events’ indication to the situation of Esoteric Buddhism in Tang China and their influence on its subsequent development.

TSUKAMOTO Shunkō (1952) holds that in Bukong’s journey in the early 740s, aside from studying Esoteric Buddhism, he received a commission from Emperor Xuanzong to collect exotic treasures, herbs, and magician healers. These things, along with Indian lore of astronomy, calendar, and fortunetelling held great appeal to the Tang court during this period. This was one of the reasons why the Esoteric Buddhist teachings introduced by Śubhakarasimha and Vajrabodhi, which contained many elements of this kind, had been readily accepted.

Another factor that facilitated the court’s acceptance of Esoteric Buddhism was its similarity to Daoism, especially their shared emphasis on the worldly benefits of which the emperor was enamoured. However, gradually the emperor’s preference for rival Daoism loomed large as a rivalling factor, with the ever-increasing power of Daoists in court. Because of the Daoists’ hostility and persuasiveness, Esoteric Buddhism fell from imperial favour, the reason why Bukong was left in the remote south for four years.

Adopting a similar perspective, TAKESHIMA Atsuo (1963) emphasizes the rising and hostile power of Daoist priests. Back to the days when Śubhakarasimha and Vajrabodhi were leading the missionary cause of Esoteric Buddhism, the attack from the Daoist priests had largely been defused by their common disciple Yixing 行 (683-727), who held a friendly association with Daoist priests. With the successive demise of the three, Esoteric Buddhism became weakened in strength, especially in the face of Daoist challenges. Per Takeshima, it was in view of the imminent difficult situation of Esoteric Buddhism in China that Vajrabodhi asked Bukong to go back to India. When appearing once again in the capital with his enhanced Esoteric learnings, Bukong had to deal with the feud. His deportation suggests that he was still not able to contend against the Daoists.
Takeshima’s view is supported by MATSUNAGA Yūkei (1973) and UEKI Morio (1993). Notably, Ueki demonstrated the consequence of Emperor Xuanzong’s institutional measures to promote Daoist priests, the state examination system to offer Daoist priests a route into the court service during the Kaiyuan Era (713-741). TSUKAMOTO Shunko (1952) and YAMAZAKI Hiroshi (1967) offer opposing views, claiming that Bukong’s return to the Indic world was sponsored by the Tang court and thus indicated bright prospects for the development of Esoteric Buddhism. Although upholding the latter view, FUJIYOSHI Masumi (1976) made a distinctive approach based on a body of non-Buddhist sources. He investigated the issues in the context of the diplomatic exchange between China and India and argued that both Vajrabodhi and Bukong served as the diplomats of the Tang court in the journeys.

Fujiyoshi argued that Vajrabodhi’s homeward journey in 741 was the result of diplomatic contacts made earlier in that year made by his compatriots. The Tang court may have ordered Vajrabodhi to join the diplomatic corps in the return journey and offered him the position as a diplomat on the side of Tang Empire. And a diplomatic commission to Bukong explains why he was accompanied by the eunuch Shi/Li Yuancong, and why the company, when reaching Gaungzhou, received the hospitable treatment of the local governor. He further suggests that Bukong’s 749 move was a diplomatic one as well, which could be confirmed by the fact that the court offered five official horses for him to make the journey, since such an arrangement was limited to official errands.

65 For the Daoist priests favoured at Xuanzong’s court, see WANG Yongping 2000.
66 In 731, a diplomatic mission arrived from Vajrabodhi’s home country, and it was sent by a king with the same name as that of his father as presented in the “Xingji” and “Taming”. It is unknown, however, what kingdom the diplomatic corps in 741 was from; the source only calls the king by the name Li Cheng’en 李承恩, which was obviously a bestowal by the Tang emperor that needed to be noted in the formal document to show the submissive stance of his kingdom to the Tang empire. Fujiyoshi believes that this diplomatic visit had something to do with Vajrabodhi’s departure. See Fujiyoshi 1976: 831-32. For the records of the diplomatic contacts between the Tang and Central India, see CFYG: 971, 11411; JTS: 198, 5309; and THY: 100, 1787.
67 In this point, Fujiyoshi’s is misled by the false information in Kūkai’s Kō fuhō den. As mentioned above, Shi/Li’s newly discovered tomb tablet has disproved the prior assumptions: Shi/Li was neither a eunuch nor was he among Bukong’s traveling group.
As Fujiyoshi observes, the previous studies done by Japanese scholars were all concerned with the development of the “Pure Esoteric Buddhism” (Ch. zhengchun mijiao, Jp. seijun mikyō 正純密教) in Tang China, that is, from the initial stage under the promotion by Śubhakarasimha and Vajrabodhi towards the flourishing period with the effort of Bukong during the reigns of Suzong and Daizong. What Fujiyoshi fails to point out is the anachronism underlying the misleading rubric “Pure Esoteric Buddhism”, which packs together the Esoteric teachings promoted by Śubhakarasimha and those by Vajrabodhi and Bukong as opposed to those that had been transmitted to China earlier, was a concept created much later in Japan, as Ryūichi Abé has shown.\(^{68}\)

The insufficiency of historical information leaves much room for scholars to make contrasting surmises. What seems to have been neglected in the prior scholarly speculations is an examination of the course of Bukong’s life which claims the most direct context of the issues and leads to safer interpretations. I believe that Vajrabodhi’s decision to leave China and Bukong’s eventual journey should be seen as separate events. The piece of information about the Indian Buddhist monk Fayue seems rather important for our understanding of Vajrabodhi’s decision to leave China. Fayue set on his homeward journey on the same day as Vajrabodhi did; the conjunction of their departure points to a common factor that turned rather disadvantageous to foreign monks.\(^{69}\)

Bukong’s departure, despite the worsened general situation, was out of his personal concerns in the first place; without the auspice of Vajrabodhi, he needed to perfect his study of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga and gain some notable experience to develop a better career. This could be testified by the very destination of the Land of Lion, for the connection that his master maintained with Buddhists and the royal house of Sri Lanka could entirely fulfill Bukong’s needs. The credential provided by the Tang court for him to show the king was merely an acknowledged act of

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\(^{68}\) See Abé 1999: 152-54.  
\(^{69}\) The conjunction of Vajrabodhi’s and Fayue’s departures is noticed by Yi-liang Chou, but he does not make further observation. See Chou 1945: 283, fn. 56.
the state to lend grace to a returning foreigner, which would help him to obtain a better reception. Therefore, any Tang credentials dispatched with Bukong may not have any particular meaning, and this could be the reason why it is neglected in the accounts given by Bukong and by Zhao Qian.

As mentioned earlier, the 749 event seems indeed to be a deportation, but it was so in the sense of a political gesture and not over a serious concern. Thus, Bukong lived in seclusion at Shaozhou for the next four years, and the sources report little about his activities during the period, as if his existence had been forgotten by the patrician society of the capital.

2.4 In the Military Government of Geshu Han 哥舒翰: 754-756

Although the exile may have broken off the preparatory work that Bukongs had laid down for further development in the capital, it was not nullified merely in this way. He may have maintained contact with his friends or followers in Chang’an, and one of them proved to be Shi/Li Yuancong. Yuancong had been Bukong’s fellow under their master Vajrabodhi, and ever since Bukong returned to the Tang capital, he, then an officer in the Guards, became a complaisant disciple of this new Esoteric master. In 752, running an errand for the court, Yuancong travelled to the province of Nanhai and paid a visit to Bukong in Shaozhou in an anxious quest for Esoteric teachings, which he valued so much that, his biography says, he was indifferent to various treasures which abounded in the region.

The year following Yuancong’s visit, Geshu Han 哥舒翰 (700—757), the joint governor of the Hexi 河西 and Longyou 隆右 military commands on the northwestern frontier of the empire, requested the court to allow him to call on Bukong to provide religious services in his military government. It is unknown whether it owed to Yuancong’s arrangement when reporting his own duty back from the Nanhai province.

Limited by the sources, it is still unclear why Geshu Han would have come to think of incorporating Esoteric undertakings into his military business and extending substantial patronage to Bukong, despite the clear and simple expression of his consideration, “to pray for blessing for
the battlefield”. It seems that Geshu upheld the Buddhist faith, and in the ninth month of 753 sponsored a stone inscription of the *Amitābha Sūtra*.\(^70\) In addition, he shared ethnicity with Bukong, both being of Sogdian maternal descent.

The court gave its sanction. It was worth noting that in this process, the support from Gao Lishi 高力士 (684-762) seems indispensable. Gao was an influential eunuch of Xuanzong’s reign and a well-known Buddhist believer, and among his many positions at court, one was the Commissioner of Merit of the Left Street (zuojie gongde shi 左街功德使), responsible for imperially sponsored Buddhist projects.\(^71\)

Bukong was ordered to go back to the capital and reside at the Baoshou 保壽 Monastery first, and one month later, he received another instruction which ordered him to head for Geshu Han’s military government. In 754, Bukong appeared in Wuwei, seat of the Hexi Command, and there he resided at the Kaiyuan 開元 Monastery.

A cascade of accounts about his missionary activities emerge in the various sources, which were the earliest significant indications that he had gained actual support to conduct religious activities ever since his return from Sri Lanka. Under the aegis of Geshu Han, he held a massive ceremony of *abhiṣeka*, in which all military officers and civil officials in the government received the Esoteric ritual performed by Bukong and became his disciples in this sense. Thus, he gained extensive association with the government and its personnel, and some of them, such as Gao Shi 高適 (c. 702-765), Li Xiyan 李希言 (d. u.) and perhaps Pei Mian 裴冕 (704-770), became his closer disciples and assistants, proving to be his partners in enthroning the future Emperor

\(^70\) See *Jinshi lu* 金石錄: 7, 174.

\(^71\) For a record of Gao Lishi’s devotion to Buddhism and his position as Merit Commissioner, see his tomb tablet “Tang gu Yulinjun changshang Gao gong muzhiming bing xu” 唐故羽林軍長上高公墓誌銘并序 composed by Sheng Yu 盛遇. Cf. the biography of Gao Lishi in the *JTS* (184, 4757): “[Various imperial commissions, such as] developing dharmic merit, purchasing rare birds and beasts, and arranging an imperial visit, were all at the discretion of [Gao] Lishi.” 修功德, 市鳥獸, 詣一處, 則不啻千貫, 皆在力士可否 Cf. his biography in *XTS*: 207, 5858. It has been suggested that Gao was the first figure who held the post of Merit Commissioner in the Tang Dynasty. See the discussion in YAN Yaozhong 2004: 66.
Suzong. Bukong’s influence as a master of Esoteric Buddhism percolated among people in the northwestern border area.

Shi/Li Yuancong appeared at the Hexi government sometime afterwards. Unable to make further progress in Esoteric practice, again he came to seek Bukong’s instruction. Despite the personal motivation, his trip to Hexi must have been undertaken as part of some official errand. Together with Hanguang, he received instruction in the secret practices of all five divisions of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga. Most likely, Bukong made this a reward for his special assistance.

During this period, Bukong acquired the support personnel necessary to carry out his project of Buddhist translation; Gushu Han asked his literati subordinates, Li Xiyan and Tian Liangqiu 田良丘—both of them held high positions in the government—to render their services. With the adequate staffing, Bukong could not wait any longer to render the primary sutra of the eighteen Yoga sutras, the STTS, into Chinese, but they only finished the first chapter. He also produced the translations of three texts from the cycle of the One-Syllable Buddha-Crown (Skt. ekāksaraṣṇīṣa, Ch. yizi foding 一字佛頂).73

To better facilitate the translation project, the Hexi government sent a letter to the Anxi 安西 Protectorate, asking them to search for the Indian monk Liyan 利言 (c. 707-788+), who could provide professional assistance.74

Back in 741, Liyan followed his master Fayue and departed for India from Chang’an on the same day as Vajrabodhi and Bukong. Along the Silk Road, they encountered a violent uprising on the way and found shelter in the kingdom of Khotan. In 763, the master passed away, and since then Liyan must have remained somewhere nearby. Obviously, Bukong and Liyan may have

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72 See the discussions in Chapter Three.
73 These are the Putichang suoshuo yiziding lunwang jing 菩提場所説一字頂輪王經 in five juan (T950), Yiziding lunwang yuqie jing 一字頂輪王瑜伽經 in one juan (missing), and Yiziding lunwang niansong yigui 一字頂輪王念誦儀軌 in one juan (T954).
74 Liyan’s Dharma name was Satyacandra, or Zhenyue 真月 in Chinese translation. He had also the style name (zi 字) Bunaxian 布那羨 (the Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit original). See ZYL, T2157.55.0878b12-16. For an examination of his activities, cf. CHEN Ming 2008: 105.
known each other since their old days in Chang’an, and somehow Bukong learnt his old friend’s situation.

Thanks to the prompt and generous assistances by Feng Changqing 封常清 (ca. 700-756), the head of the Anxi government, Liyan was found and sent to Wuwei in the second month of 755.

The steady momentum of Bukong’s Buddhist mission in Hexi was thwarted by the breakout of the An Lushan rebellion at the end of 755. The subsequent military and political upheaval, however, generated an unexpected opportunity that provided much greater scope for Bukong to augment his power, prestige, and religious mission.

At the time, the most powerful military forces of the country were all deployed on the frontiers. The two greatest military blocs were settled in the northeast and northwest, under the control of An Lushan 安祿山 (c. 703-756) and Geshu Han, respectively. At the same time, the state left to itself no military power that could counterbalance the frontier military forces. In the face of the abrupt uprising, the central government had to raise temporary troops from the common populace. Hastily trained and poorly armed, the newly-conscripted soldiers could hardly defend themselves against the attack from the battle-hardened professional warriors of the rebels.75

The rebel forces swept the vast region of Hebei and Henan in less than one month, seizing the East Capital, Luoyang (18 Jan. 756), where An Lushan proclaimed himself emperor and established his new regime, the Greater Yan. The loyalist army, under the command of two capable generals, Gao Xianzhi 高仙芝 (d. 762) and Feng Changqing, abandoned the pregnable Shanzhou 陝州 and chose to fall back to the Tongguan 潼關 pass, the last barrier but a natural unassailable one they could rely on to block the advance of the enemies and ensure the security of the capital city Chang’an.

A string of rapid debacles suffered by the government armies rather frightened Emperor Xuanzong, who became so outraged at the withdrawal strategy as to impetuously put Gao and

75 For the major military blocs and an analysis of the military strength of various parties during the Rebellion, see the discussions in HUANG Yongnian 2004: 314-28.
Feng to death, two of the few competent generals at the time. To fill their vacancy, Xuanzong ordered Geshu Han to take over overall command to fight against the rebels.

Since the second month of 755, Geshu had confined himself within his residence in Chang’an due to a severe disease and shunned contact with society. After a vain attempt to decline the appointment, Geshu set out for Tongguan. At the time, Geshu’s armies in the northwestern frontier were moved to the hinterland to reinforce the military presence of the state. Geshu stuck to the previous non-engagement strategy, and the Tang armies firmly held the pass for another six months.

In the sixth month of 756, the court forced Geshu to move his armies out of the stronghold and launch an all-out blow to the enemies. The result proved to be devastating. The loyalist forces were routed, and Geshu was captured and killed the next day. Chang’an was doomed to be savaged; four days later, Xuanzong fled the capital city, being accompanied only by his royal families and a couple of close ministers. Ten days later, the capital fell.

In the course of his escape, Yang Guozhong 楊國忠 (d. 762), the chief minister and the putative culprit of the fiasco, was killed by the soldiers in the Imperial Guards, and the emperor was forced to hang his beloved concubine Yang Guifei.

2.5 The Reign of Suzong: 756–762

Xuanzong decided to move on towards Sichuan, while the Crown Prince, Li Heng 李亨 (711–762, r. 756–762), leading troops split from the Imperial Guards, branched out with the goal of rallying forces to counterattack the rebels. With the dissolution of the force of Hexi and Longyou military bloc, the army of the Shuofang 朔方 Command in the north became the only military power that the Tang House could fall back on. Du Hongjian, on behalf of the preeminent officials at Shuofang, sent to persuade the prince to proceed to Lingwu 靈武, the headquarters of the command. Soon Pei Mian came from Hexi and then joined the group. He and Du Hongjian took the initiative and relentlessly prompted the prince to proclaim himself the new emperor so as to raise the nation’s morale. The prince finally gave his consent and ascended the throne, historically
known as Emperor Suzong. One month later, his father was informed of this news and reluctantly admitted his status as the retired emperor.

Bukong had his contribution to the usurpation as well. Back in the fifth month of 756, when the Tongguan pass had not yet been breached, Bukong was summoned by the court back to Chang’an. He was ordered to organize an Abhiṣeka Sanctum (guanding daochang 灌頂道場) at the Great Xingshan 興善 Monastery, for, imaginably, fear made the court condescend to seek any sort of power that might possibly prove to be useful against the rebels, including Esoteric Buddhist deities in whom Emperor Xuanzong had not hitherto expressed much interest. Probably this also owed to Geshu’s recommendation of Bukong in view of his appreciable performance in Hexi Government. During this short period, the Crown Prince Li Heng secretly sent his messages and gifts to Bukong, as well as the special demand for dealing certain affairs through Esoteric rituals.

When the capital was overrun by the rebels, Bukong did not escape but remained at the Great Xingshan Monastery, and he continued with his religious undertakings secretly enacted in support of the royal house, as he told Suzong on a later occasion.

His disciple Hanguang came into the capital city to join Bukong, presumably from Hexi. Then he asked Hanguang to flee the city and go westwards, with the clear purpose of catching up with Xuanzong and his imperial entourage and maintaining the connection with the court.

On the road, Hanguang encountered the small band led by the Crown Prince that had split from Xuanzong’s procession, and he joined the group and began to act as a liaison between Bukong and Li Heng, the future Emperor Suzong. Communication between them was thus resumed. More importantly, like his Buddhist fellow Du Hongjian and colleague Pei Mian, he also encouraged the prince to establish himself as the emperor and start a new reign. Their concordant action suggests that there must have been negotiations and cooperation among the three friends underway; all having been thwarted in their attempts to penetrate the higher level of the central government, they were eager for an outlet for political ambition. Thus, Bukong became one of the
principal architects of the new court, and a promising future for his religious mission could be expected.

The sovereignty of the new Emperor Suzong, however, was improper by nature, and had already provoked questioning and criticism among officials and the common populace. Moreover, his father, the retired Xuanzong, continued to exercise imperial authority in policymaking and the appointment of significant officials, and his royal brother took moves to divide the territory and establish his own regime. The developments seemed to be overshadowing Suzong’s sovereignty.

With the loyalist troops under his command, Suzong was eager to make sensational military headway and consolidate his status as the sole imperial authority. He needed to retake the capital city as soon as possible. From the second to the tenth month of 757, when the new court remained in Fengxiang 鳳翔, Suzong became ever more anxious to recover the capital Chang‘an. If the plan succeeded, it would be regarded as the proof that it was he who was holding the heavenly mandate, and then it would expeditiously mute the public questioning of the legitimacy of his rulership. In carrying out the plan, the loyalist army suffered bloody setbacks, but Suzong persevered in his position, neglecting any pieces of advice on more effective strategies.

Bukong astutely identified Suzong’s principal concern, and in this respect, he frequently presented advice on military strategy, which not only evinces Bukong’s understanding of military affairs but also suggests that he had been paying close attention to military intelligence and had gathered useful information.

At the same time, the emperor asked for instructions on Esoteric rituals that could be used to cast out the “evil forces” embodied by the rebels. Bukong presented a certain Esoteric scripture titled “Budong zun bafang shenqi jing” 不動尊八方神旗經. Although the exact teachings are unknown to us, it should be a text whose target readership was limited to rulers and that was supposed to be used to invoke the power of a fold of nine violent Esoteric deities headed, by Acalā, to destroy enemies in battle. In the court at Fengxiang, Suzong assembled one hundred monks from everywhere to hold a Buddhist chanting ceremony. With the presence the Esoteric monk
Hanguang, this ceremony may have been laid out in accordance with the teachings given in that text. And among monks in attendance, there was Bukong’s future disciple Yuanjiao, a native of the Fengxiang region.\(^{76}\)

Most significantly, Bukong somehow successfully prophesied that the capital Chang’an would be recovered on the twenty-eighth day of the ninth of the year (14 Nov. 757). On that day, with the vital assistance of the Uighur mercenaries, the Tang armies vanquished the rebel forces that occupied the city. And on the eighteenth day of the next month (3 Dec.), Luoyang was recovered, and in return for their service, the court let the Uighurs pillage the city.

The recovery of the two capitals demonstrated that the new emperor possessed a sage vision and inspired in his contemporaries a hindsight that his seeming usurpation was actually a predestined, rightful happening. Bukong’s prediction reinforced the awareness that the new emperor held a divine mandate and was supported from above.

While the city was still in the hands of the enemies, Bukong and his followers, such as Huixiao, clandestinely devoted themselves to cultivating dharmic merit for the emperor. As a reward, Huixiao was granted by the court a special, formal ordination after the dynasty’s restoration. Suzong delivered a letter to him, expressing his appreciation for his service and extolling the wondrous power of the Buddhas.\(^{77}\)

On the first day of the tenth month of 757 (16 Nov.), the court ordered the lustration of the imperial palace in preparation for the return of the emperor,\(^{78}\) and Bukong was commissioned to hold an Esoteric ceremony to purge demonic influences.

\(^{76}\) For a discussion of Yuanjiao’s background and activities, see Jinhua Chen 2010: 155-156.

\(^{77}\) See “Enzhi ming Sanzang dizi seng Huixiao wei guo niansong zhi yi shou” 恩旨命三藏弟子僧惠曉為國念誦制一首, in the BZJ, T52.858b11-17: “Now [We] restored the empire, and it all owes to the answering of the Buddhas’ power.” 今剋復天下，皆佛力之應也

\(^{78}\) See the JTS (10, 247): “An edict orders to clean up the imperial palace so as to present a reverential welcome to the return of the Supreme Emperor (i.e. the retired Xuanzong),” 詔曰灑掃宮闕，奉迎上皇
On the twenty-third day, Suzong returned to the capital. Bukong sent congratulatory memorials to celebrate the recovery of the two capitals, which, perhaps, were meant to remind the throne of his contribution in the decision-making process and to solicit acknowledgement.

In the eleventh month, it was decided that after Xuanzong’s return, Suzong would hold a general ceremony to accord promotions to ministers for their services during the extremely hard time. On the fourth day of the next month (17 Jan. 758), the retired emperor arrived, and from that day forward, according to the ZYL, Suzong ceased to address Bukong by his Dharma name “Zhizang”, but reverentially call him by “Bukong”, the Chinese translation of his Esoteric title “Amoghavajra”. Five days later, Bukong presented a memorial celebrating the reunion of the imperial father and son, and since the composition of this piece, the name “Bukong” began to be adopted to sign all the memorials composed ever after, while the name Zhizang was abandoned.

On the fifteenth day of the month (28 Jan. 758), the imperial ceremony to reward the ministers took place, and Bukong was ordered to continue to hold the position of Abhiṣeka Master. He was ordered to establish a sanctum in the palace, where he performed the ritual of bathing the Buddhist statues and the homa sacrifice at regular intervals for the welfare of the state. He also devoted himself to the Esoteric practices to invoke the might of the Thirty-Seven divinities of the Vajröṣṇīṣa Yoga and the sixteen deities disposed to protect the Tang.

The year 758 was a vintage year for Bukong’s politico-religious career. He performed an abhiṣeka ceremony to consecrate Suzong as a cakravartin or Wheel-turning Sacred King, which is the ideal universal ruler found in the political mythology of Buddhism as well as other Indian religions. This was one of the many measures taken by Suzong to boost his image as a legitimate sovereign. At the same time, it threw Bukong into the limelight, providing him with great authority.

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79 See the JTS (10, 248): “Now there are no occasions for anxiety for the two capitals, and the Three Intelligent (i.e. Heaven, Earth, and Man) are all enjoying the festivity. It is suitable to offer sacrifices [to the spirits] and grant imperial grace. On the day that the Supreme Emperor returns [to the capital], we will take instruction [from His Majesty].” 今兩京無虞，三靈通慶，可以昭事，宜在覃恩。待上皇到日，當取處分

80 See the JTS (9, 235): “On the day of Ding-Wei, [Xuanzong] arrived at the capital.” 丁未至京師

81 See the JTS: 10, 249.
as an imperial preceptor, hence more credits for him to claim imperial patronage for his Buddhist cause. The emperor he inducted as a Buddhist cakravartin was then bound by Buddhist ideology to promote the Buddha’s teachings and arrest the religion’s decline.

In the first month of 758, Suzong sponsored a Buddhist feast at Bukong’s residence chapel inside the Great Xingshan Monastery. In the third month, Bukong requested an imperial order that the local governments scour Buddhist texts in Sanskrit that may have been scattered here and there. These texts, he said, could be used in discussion and to foster his translation project, and he was thinking to pick for translation those texts that would be spiritually contributory to the imperial governance. Bukong made this request because when the two capitals were occupied by the rebels, the extensive collection of the imperial libraries was destroyed, and the books, including the Buddhist scriptures, were either lost or scattered in the unrest.\(^8^2\) The implementation of this measure let Bukong monopolize the right of and the source for Buddhist translation.

In the next month, Zhang Liangdi 张良娣 (d. 762), the ambitious consort of Emperor Suzong, was created the empress. Bukong presented a memorial of congratulations, which may suggest a good association between Zhang and him.

In the sixth month, Bukong requested Suzong to permit him to translate the Buddhist scriptures that he had brought back to the Tang over a decade earlier, and the permission was soon granted.

In the ninth month of 758, Suzong issued a decree to build two imperial temples on Mount Wutai 五台: the temple of Yuhua 玉華 and the temple of Jin’ge 金閣. It seems that the former was completed during the reign of Suzong, but the court did not embark on the construction work of the latter until eight years later when Bukong launched a wave of construction projects in the mountain under the greater support of the next emperor.

Little is known concerning Bukong’s activities in the following year of 759, except that he produced a raw translation of the *Wenshushili pusa ji zhu xian suoshuo jixiong shiri shan’e suyao* 五臺入佛地諸聖行述經首山 entreprise.

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\(^{8^2}\) See FANG Guangchang 2006: 95-96.
jing 文殊師利菩薩及諸仙所說吉凶時日善惡宿曜經 (Sutra on Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva and the Transcendental Sages’ Teaching on Auspicious and Inauspicious Times, Good and Evil Constellations and Planets, T1299). This was done with the help of a local official Shi Yao 史瑤 (d. u.) of the Duanzhou 端州 Prefecture (the present-day Zhaoqing 肇慶, Guangdong), who turned out to be an incompetent Scribe. Shi was unable to divide the text into chapters, nor could he compose a preface for the sutra; and his language was too laboured and obscure to read. Five years later, in 764, under Bukong’s guidance, his commoner disciple Yang Jingfeng 揚景風 (d. u.) edited and annotated the draft, rendering it into the current version. The text is a divination guide and almanac for everyday life, and Bukong distributed copies of the manual among his followers. This may suggest that by the year of 759, Bukong had not yet gathered a group of scholar-monks to effectively pursue the translation program.

In the fourth month of 760, Bukong’s intimate supporter, Shi/Li Yuancong, requested the court to commission Bukong to set up an Abhiṣeka Sanctum for the state at the Great Xingshan Monastery, and Suzong gave his approval.

Yuancong had served in the Imperial Guards as an officer, and when Chang’an had been exposed to the assault of the rebels, he was among the Guards escorting Xuanzong in the flight to Chengdu. After Xuanzong’s return, he was granted a personal interview by Suzong, who, as was said, immediately found in him a congenial personality. From then on, Yuancong was frequently promoted and enjoyed the privileged access to the emperor and imperial commissions.

Later in this year, Bukong requested the court to allow him to retire to the mountain, prompting one to think that he may have scented some latent political troubles or that he was intending to distance himself from the political infighting in the court. The powerful eunuch Li Fuguo 李輔國 (704-762) replied to him with an imperial order, that he should go to the Zhiju 智炬 Monastery in Mt. Zhongnan 終南 and take up the duties of cultivating merit for the state. Accompanied by two disciples, he made a retreat there. It was said that during the retreat, Bukong

83 See the preface to the text, T1299.21.0387a10-16.
approached the spiritual state of nirvana, which he relinquished, for he must fulfil his salvific mission first.

From time to time, Suzong suffered from fragile health; records of afflictions and illnesses are repeatedly encountered when one goes through the annals of his reign in standard histories. Two critical moments occurred in 761, one in the first month and the other the third month; on both occasions, Suzong sought the healing power of Buddhist deities. The biographical sources of Bukong claimed that in this year, his exorcist ritual brought the emperor substantial recovery.

The tolerable condition of the emperor did not last long. Since the second month of the next year, his health worsened again, and eventually he died two months later, though quite suspiciously. In the interim period before the crown prince was enthroned, a bloody palace conflict was staged between the two cliques led by Empress Zhang and Li Fuguo. The conflict ended up with the failure and execution of the empress and her conspirators, including two princes. The death of Suzong was possibly a direct result of the infighting as well. The crown prince Li Yu 李豫 (726-779) became the new monarch, who would be posthumously called Emperor Daizong (r. 762-779). During the first months of the new reign, the imperial authority was seriously encroached upon by Li Fuguo, but Daizong soon managed to remove him from power and then possibly had him murdered.

2.6 The Reign of Daizong (I): 762-765

Daizong turned out to be the most fervent imperial supporter of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga and of Buddhism in general among the three emperors that Bukong had served.

The religious projects Bukong established under Suzong’s support were extended to the reign of Daizong. It seems that the palace chapel was still in operation after the transfer of power, and with Daizong’s help, Bukong now got a group of scholar monks to assist his Buddhist

84 See the JTS (10; 260, 262): “On the day of Jia-Wu [of the first month] (27 Feb. 761), the emperor was seriously ill, and Empress Zhang pricked her body and copied a Buddhist sūtra in her blood […] On the day of Bing-Shen [of the third month] (20 Apr. 761), the emperor was seriously ill, and [to cure His Majesty], the ministers arranged a feast at the Buddhist monasteries to feed the monks.” 甲午，上不康，皇后張氏刺血寫佛經…[丙申]上不康，百僚於佛寺齋僧
translation; patronage of the project, according to Daizong’s words, was an instruction left by Suzong. And Daizong, on his birthday of 762 (3 Nov.), was consecrated by Bukong as a Gold-Wheel Sacred King through an abhiṣeka ceremony. Since none of the primary sources however, reveal any prior association between Bukong and Daizong, the consecration points to the standing influence of the establishment of Buddhist ideology at court.

The secular sources claim that initially, the new emperor was not known as a Buddhist devotee; instead, he was keen on the practice of traditional ritual of sacrifice (cisi 祀祀). Because of the detrimental influence of the high-ranking ministers, the secular sources continue, Daizong became increasingly sympathetic to Buddhist doctrines and began to lavish patronage on Buddhist projects. Notwithstanding the laymen’s indoctrination, the secular sources seem to have obliterated the influence of clerics, particularly those as powerful as Bukong, and most significantly, the proselytizing effects of the Buddhist projects concerning the scripture Renwang jing (The Scripture for Humane Kings) that Bukong contrived in the first years of Daizong’s reign.

During the war against the An Lushan rebellion, the state had withdrawn the armies from the northwestern frontier to the inner land to resist its enemies. One of two greatest army groups, however, it was almost completely destroyed, and the broad area in the northwest that had become weakly garrisoned was annexed by the Tibetans shortly thereafter.

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85 That Daizong was consecrated by Bukong as a Sacred King is confirmed by the account in a memorial presented by Qianzhen in 771, which, however, does not specify when this act occurred: 轉輪駕極，灌頂稱尊. The memorial is preserved in the ZYL. See T2157.55.0888b27.
86 See the biography of Wang Ji in JTS (118, 3417): Initially, Emperor Daizong was fond of the traditional practice of sacrifice and did not value Buddhism very much, while Du Hongjian, Yuan Zai, and [Wang] Jin were fond of feeding Buddhist monks. On one occasion, Daizong sought the advice on the theory of blessings and retribution in the doctrine of karma. [Yuan] Zai, among others, thereupon presented their replies, and as a result, Daizong paid deviations [to Buddhism] more than was proper. 初，代宗喜祠祀，未甚重佛，而元載、杜鴻漸與縉喜飯僧徒。代宗憐同以福業報應事，載等因而啟奏，代宗由是奉之過當。
87 The standard histories tended to minimize or gloss over the traces of the Buddhist clergy in their historical narratives. For the detailed discussion of Daizong’s conversion to Bukong’s Esoteric Buddhism, see the investigation in Chapter 4.
In the tenth month of 763, the Tibetan force marched their way into the midland and attacked a city near the capital Chang’an, but the invaders did not encounter any resistance from the Tang armies. Even worse, this emergent issue was further concealed by Cheng Yuanzhen 程元振 (d. 764), the powerful eunuch that replaced Li Fugu in dominating the court. The emperor learnt the news only when the enemies were approaching the capital city. It became too late to arrange a defence, and the emperor was panicked into flight. (21 Nov. 763)

No military governors in the provinces took action to extend succour to the emperor or responded to the imperial deployment against the invaders, except for the eunuch Yu Chaoen 魚朝恩 (722-770), who, leading his army, came to invite Daizong to take refuge in his Command, the prefecture of Shanzhou 陝州. Chang’an fell in only two days. Gratified by looting and pillaging the city, the Tibetans were easily driven away, and the city was recovered within one week (30 Nov.), but Daizong remained in Shanzhou for another two months. (until 2 Feb. 764)

Bukong did not have the honour to join the imperial entourage. While Daizong stayed in Shanzhou, he sent a memorial requesting court’s permission to establish an Abhiṣeka Sanctum; the intended location, however, was not indicated. (23 Dec. 763) This was probably because up to that point of time Daizong had decided to follow the advice given by some officials to settle the court in the East Capital Luoyang so as to keep any further threat of the Tibetans at a distance. If the major capital changed, it would disrupt the Esoteric practices in the palace of Chang’an that had been established through the political credit he earned from the late emperor, when the new emperor had not yet shown him reassuring trust and support. By that request, Bukong tried to draw Daizong’s attention to his eagerness to extend imperial service. This memorial also suggests that

88 Daizong’s decision was prompted by Cheng Yuanzhen, who was found guilty for allowing the terrible situation, and in fear of the punishment, he tried to persuade the emperor to move the court to the East Capital. By the time that Bukong drafted the memorial, Cheng Yuanzhen had been banished (JTS: 10, 274), but the emperor was still inclined to support the movement. It was only after Guo Ziyi 郭子儀 (697-781) recovered the capital and sent his earnest dissenting opinion that Daizong abandoned the plan and immediately ordered to return to Chang’an. See the JTS: 120, 3456-58.
by that time, Daizong had not developed an adequate appreciation of the usefulness of the Esoteric rituals as a sort of alternative measure in military affairs.

The emperor granted his approval, and we know that around this time, Bukong’s yogin disciples, leading by Juechao 觉超 and Huihai 慧海, were installed at the chapel at the Changsheng 長生 Hall in the Daming 大明 Palace to practice the Esoteric rituals of invocation. Soon another piece of good news was heard: the court was returning to Chang’an in the next month.

In the first month of the next year, Bukong petitioned the emperor to install forty-nine monks as the Great Virtues (dade 大德) of the Great Xingshan Monastery and exempt the monastery from taxations. Additionally, he requested that the staffing never be reduced or left vacated. Among these Great Virtues, there were Bukong’s disciples, but most of them were from various monasteries in the two capitals, and the rest were summoned from the regions. These clergymen were selected for their outstanding learning and practices and had the indispensable duty to restore the religious life in the monastery that had been dislocated during the repeated pillaging and unrest caused by the Rebellion. They were going to constitute a pool out of which Bukong drew personnel when carrying out various Buddhist projects. The request was fulfilled in the same month.

Bukong made this selection not only because of his political power; a reputation for religious erudition also helped to acquire authorization for his action. During this period, he was the sole authority in studies of one tradition of Buddhist precept code, the vinaya texts of the Sarvástivāda School; in other words, he was able to be the judge of moral conduct of a monk and know who were the qualified clerics to serve the empire: only the monks of moral excellence could invoke the divine blessings.

89 This is noted in the memorial presented to Daizong by Juechao and Huihai fifteen years later, in 777, when they tried to resign their posts at this palace chapel. See “Qing ci neidaochang chenqing biao yi shou” 請辭內道場陳情表一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0854c03-05. See the discussion in Chapter Three. For the historical background of the Changsheng Hall as a palace chapel, see Jinhua Chen 2004.
In 764, he requested the permission to officially ordain seven monks on the birthday of Daizong. The request was granted. And these monks were likely to have been charged with Buddhist practices to promote the emperor’s well-being. From then on, clerical ordainment was repeatedly proposed by Bukong on special occasions.

A project mounted by Bukong that exerted far-reaching bearings on his Buddhist cause during Daizong’s reign was the re-translation of the Buddhist scripture *Renwang jing* (T246) and the ensuing chanting ceremony in the year of 765. This scripture was not alien to the Chinese audience, and according to the knowledge of the contemporaries, three translations had been produced by then. The earliest version was produced by Zhu Fahu (Dharmaraksā, c.233-310), and limited by the little accumulation of experience in that nascent stage of Buddhist translation, the translation was regarded as very crude; while the third one, produced most recently by the great translator Zhendi (Paramārtha, 499-569), had been lost. The second version (T245) was attributed to Kumārajīva (344-413); although canonical catalogues from previous times laid doubt on the claim as well as its authenticity, Kumārajīva’s translation seems to have gained considerable popularity. It had become a convention for the court to arrange collective recitation of the text by one hundred monks, a ceremonial practice instructed in the text.

In view of the immense value in political appropriation of this text, Bukong planned to update the current version in light of the Vajroṣṇīṣa teachings: he claimed that the prior translation did not perfectly convey the message of the Buddha that was present instead in a Sanskrit version available to him. He was also hatching a plan to hold a massive chanting ceremony of the scripture

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90 It was permitted on the nineteenth day. See "Jiangdanri qing du qi seng cibu chidie yi shou" 階誕日請度七僧祠部敕牒一首 in *BZJ*, T2120.52.0831a20-b19. The date of the original memorial is absent from the *BZJ* but provided in *ZYL*. See T2157.55.0884a27-a29.
91 For the changes made in Bukong’s translation and the summaries of every chapter of the two scriptures, see Orzech 1998: 68, 71-74.
92 The records in the *FZTJ* suggest that it had been a regular practice of the court of the Chen Dynasty (557-589). See T2035.49.0182e05-e07, c17-c18. Liangben also mentioned such time-honoured convention. See the *Renwang huguo bore boluomido jing shu* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經疏, T1709.33.0430b21-b22. And Yuanzhao reported in the *ZYL* a case during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong, that in the year of 739, one hundred Buddhist monks were selected to preach the doctrines of this sutra and the *Diamond Sutra*. See T2157.55.0878c11-c16. Cf. the discussion of Xuanzong’s frequent arrangement of such grand sermon. (T2126.54.0254a12-a15)
following the translation. In so doing, it seems that he intended to attract the support from an influential figure at the court, Yu Chaoen, and he achieved this end through the intermediary Liangben 良寛 (717-777), Yu’s private Buddhist preceptor.

Having flied to extend the succour to the court while no other military governors came to its rescue, Yu earned unquestionable military merit and political standing. He escorted Daizong back to Chang’an, and his army became part of the Imperial Guards and the most powerful force at the disposal of the court that could compete with the provincial powers. Yu himself took the place of the disgraced Cheng Yuanzhen and became the new eunuch-lord over the court.

Taking advantage of Yu’s influence, his personal preceptor Liangben seize a niche in the Buddhist community of the capital and even a position at the court. He was appointed as the head of the Qinglong 青龍 Monastery, and according to a source from a later time, he became an imperial preceptor who officiated at the ceremony in which Daizong assumed Bodhisattva Vows.

Yu Chaoen is caricatured as a pretentious dilettante in Buddhist and Confucian learning in traditional sources; he was always ready to take opportunities to act knowledgeable before scholar-officials and monks. It was said that due to his superficiality and self-conceit, he was humiliated by the famous sharp-witted Chan master Huizhong 慧忠 (675-775) during a debate staged before the throne. For Buddhist activities, Yu was a prodigal sponsor, arousing one’s suspicion of flaunting his power and wealth. He took pleasure in the generosity in offering grand feasts to feed the clergy, and he abused his power to complete the construction of the Zhangjing 章

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93 Liangben’s position as the Superior Incumbent (shangzuo 上座) of the Qinglong Monastery is revealed in the list of members of the translation team that was attached to a manuscript of the new version of the Renwang jing. See TOMONAGA Shoku 1994: 18. When introducing the team members, the ZYL has Liangben’s position as the Monastery Head (sizhu 寺主) of that monastery instead of the Superior Incumbent. See T2157.55.0884c21-22.
94 See the biography of Liangben in the SGSZ, T2061.50.0735b02.
95 Pandering to his arty-farty pose, Daizong let him act as the head of the state academy (guozi jian 國子監), where he was happy to take the lecturer’s mat and deliver lessons on Confucian classics. See JTS: 184, 4764; ZZTJ: 224, 7188-89.
96 Huizhong held the title of Imperial Preceptor (guoshi 國師) at Daizong’s court. For the story of the debate, see the recounting in the FZTJ (T2035.49.0378b17-20) and the FZLDTZ (T2036.49.0605b23-09).
Monastery, which was proposed as the tribute to the emperor’s late mother and became perhaps the most costly and sumptuous Buddhist structure at the time. But his support to Buddhism seems to have come from a mixture of political concern and religious faith, for sometimes his actions suggest a sort of piety. Indeed, he turned his mother into a nun.97

Back in 761, when his army was garrisoning at Shanzhou, Yu was said to have devoted his leisure time to the practice of Buddhist chanting and meditation. He was entertained by Liangben’s elevated discussion of the Buddhist theory on the spiritual stations dividing various sentient beings on the Buddhist path towards perfection.98 To give Yu a systematic explanation of the theory, Liangben composed a treatise titled Fansheng jiedi zhang 凡聖界地章 (Jp. Bonjō kaiji shō, lit. On the Realms and Stages from the Ordinary through the Sacred). To achieve his own understanding, he investigated various Buddhist scriptures, including the old translation of the Renwang jing, and he accommodated the idiosyncratic configuration laid out in that sutra to the theory of spiritual stations that was more popular and consistently presented in other scriptures.99

Bukong must have been aware of Liangben’s work and his doctrinal approach to the old version of the Renwang jing. And he must have made an exchange with Liangben before proposing the re-translation project in the third or early fourth month of 765, promising him the authority to decide how to amend the theory of spiritual stages that he was versed in.

Daizong granted his permission to the project and Yu Chaoen offered his support, increasing the personnel and taking the responsibility of project supervisor with his political ally, the eunuch Luo Fengxian 駱奉先/仙. Thus, the translation was finally carried out at the Abhiṣeka Sanctum at the hall of Chengming 承明, covering the second half of the fourth month of 765. The patronage of the “re-translation” of the Renwang jing could bolster the eunuchs’ status as the staunch loyalists

97 To acquire enough materials to complete the Zhangjing Monastery, Tu Chaoen ordered the destruction of some imperial, public, and private buildings. See the biographies of Yu Chaoen in the JTS (184, 4764) and the XTS (207, 5864).
98 See Liangben’s account in the Fansheng jiedi zhang 凡聖界地章 (Ryōbi sen Bonjō kaiji shō): 5, 69.
99 The date of the compilation of the work could not be determined. Roughly, it was completed after Liangben and Yu Chaoen settled in Chang’an, between late 762 and the re-translation of the Renwang jing in the fourth month of 765. See the discussion in the Ryōbi sen Bonjō kaiji shō: 1, 16-17.
of the empire and might also broaden political operating space for him. To Yu, the grand chanting ceremony instructed in the text, however, should be much more attractive.

Another sutra that underwent re-translation was the Dasheng miyan jing 大乘密嚴經 (the Ghanavyūha sūtra, T681, 682). Daizong, in the next month, composed a preface for each of the two new translations. At first, circulation of the new translation was restricted to the palace and was not spread to the outside society. In the sixth month, Du Mian 杜冕 (d. u.), uncle of Du Hongjian, donated a large amount of money to support and augment Bukong’s translation team.

Within four months after the re-translation, it seems that one hundred of the monks had been prepared by the monk Chengru 乘如 (d. u.) and Liangben for the chanting ceremony. Chengru was the Superior Incumbent (shangzuo 上座) of the Great Anguo 安國 Monastery and one of the forty-nine Great Virtues of the Great Xingshan Monastery that had been installed by Bukong in early 764. He sent a memorial to Daizong on behalf of monastics in the capital, requesting the publish of the Renwang jing and the arrangement of a grand preaching ceremony.

Daizong was supportive of the proposal; he selected a date for the ceremony and was glad to bear all expenses. The imperial reply coupled the Renwang jing with the Miyan jing, which were to be recited jointly. Because of incessant rain, the ceremony was postponed again and again.

On the first day of the ninth month of 765 (20 Sept.), the ceremony was finally started. The officers of the Imperial Guards, led by Yu Chaoen, dressed themselves up as the protecting deities of Buddhism and escorted the scriptures out of the palace to the locale, the monasteries of Zisheng 資聖 and Ximing 西明. It was said that when the sutras were carried out of the palace gate, colourful clouds appeared in the sky. This was celebrated as a numinous and auspicious sign of the texts’ holiness, for which we have congratulatory memorials composed by Bukong and the eunuch Liu Xianzhi 劉仙智 (d. u.).

The officials of the court, under imperial instruction, were waiting at the palace gate and then joined the parade. In each of the two monasteries, tokens of pomp and circumstance were arranged

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100 The memorial was kept in the XKY (T2156.55.0751b26-c14) and the ZYL (T2157.55.0885b05-b22).
beside the fifty elevated seats set out for the monks participating in the recitation. 101 The group of monks at the Zisheng Monastery was headed by Liangben, while the group at the Ximing Monastery might have been in the charge of the monk Huaigan 懐感 (d. u.), a regular participant in Bukong’s translation. 102

While the recitation ceremony was being conducted, the country was invaded by an allied force led by Pugu Huaien 僕固懷恩 (c. 716-765) and consisted of the Uighurs, the Tibetans, Tanguts, as well as other ethnic groups from the northwest of China.

Pugu had established himself as a national hero during the battle against the An Lushan rebellion. He had displayed enormous valour and unflinching loyalty to the empire, and most of his kinsmen had sacrificed their lives on the battlefield. It was he who repeatedly acted as the imperial agent when requesting the Uighur king to send armies for assistance, which proved to be the vital factor for the victory. While sending the Uighur troops back, Pugu was refused of a reception of his soldiers by Xin Yunjing 辛雲京, governor of Taiyuan, because Xin suspected that the Pugu, with Uighur troops at his disposal, would take the opportunity to seize his city. Having finished the mission, Pugu once again was kept outside the city by Xin. Therefore Pugu sent a memorandum to the court to denounce Xin’s insufferable offence. In return, Xin, joined by Yu Chaoen, Luo Fengxian, and possibly Li Baoyu 李抱玉, accused Pugu of colluding with the Uighurs against the court. 103 The emperor tried to mediate in their dispute, but to no avail.

In the twelfth month of 763, Pugu Huaien was divested of military authority and replaced by Guo Ziyi 郭子儀. He had asked his son to attack the Taiyuan city, and while engaging with Xin Yunjing, the son was murdered by a subordinate, who, like many officers under Pugu, was a former subordinate to Guo Ziyi. For these reasons, Pugu openly rose up against the court. In the

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101 See the XKYL (T2156.55.0751c19-b23) and ZYL (T2156.55.0751c19-b23). Cf. ZZTJ: 223, 7176.
102 Liangben’s leading position is revealed in an imperial decree preserved in the XKYL (T2156.55.0752e01-05) and the ZYL (T2157.55.0886b16-19). Huaigan was also a participant in the re-translation, and he was the Superior Incumbent of the Ximing Monastery as well. It was he who was responsible for presenting to the throne a concluding report of the ceremony held at the monastery. See the XKYL (T2156.55.0752b10-16) and the ZYL (T2157.55.0886a26-b09).
103 As pointed out by NAKATA Mie (2007), Xin Yunjing and Li Baoyu were both fellow Sogdians of Bukong.
tenth month of 764, he led the Tibetans and pushed deep into the Tang territory. Then they attacked Fengtian 奉天, which was only five miles away from Chang’an, and the court panicked. The loyalist commander Guo Ziji adopted a strategy of non-engagement and attrition, and Tibetans were soon worn into retreat.

Pugu Huaien launched the next assault while the monks were holding the chanting ceremony of Renwang jing in the capital in the ninth month of 765. Once again, the Tibetans penetrated deep into the vicinity of Chang’an and threatened a three-pronged attack. Shortly thereafter, Pugu was suddenly stricken by an acute illness and died an unexpected death on the eighth or ninth day of the month (27 or 28 Sept. 765).

The unexpected death of Pugu seemed to be taken as the first proof of the mysterious power of the new scriptures. On the fifth day of the month (4 Oct.), the ceremony at the Ximing Monastery was concluded and the court held a celebration. But on the same day, the Tibetan invaders struck Fengtian and threatened the capital again. On the next day, Daizong ordered the monks of the monastery to join the chanting assembly at the Zisheng Monastery, and thus the ceremony continued. During the night hours, the monks convened in a hall to chant in a chorus the words “Mahā Prajñāpāramitā”. All the other Buddhist monasteries in the capital, as well as Daoist temples, were ordered to devote themselves to religious ceremonies to boost the Buddhist deities’ protection at the same time.

The next day, an adventurous Tang commander called Hun Jian 浑瑊 employed shock tactics and inflicted a bruising defeat on the enemy. From the seventeenth day until the twenty-seventh day, the rain poured down without stopping and thwarted the Tibetans’ attempt to launch a further attack.

On the third day of the tenth month (21 Oct.), the Tibetan army, reinforced by the Uighur force, marched into Fengtian again. The Tang army was far outnumbered, so the commander Guo Ziyi decided upon a highly risky strategy. He had been on friendly term with the Uighurs’ late ruler,

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104 The practice might have been inspired by the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, see T0220.05.0568a25-28.
and accompanied by few guardsmen, he ventured into the headquarters of their camp, asking for a meeting with their king. Guo successfully persuaded the king to abandon the military operations and brought the Uighurs around to the side of the Tang. The united force was turned against the Tibetans, who soon suffered a crushing defeat on the fifth day and then again only three days later. The victory was decisive, and on the twenty-third day (10 Nov. 765), the court called off the alert in the capital.

The chanting ceremony continued into the intercalary tenth month and concluded on the twenty-third day (10 Dec. 765), exactly a month later, with a celebration ceremony and a Buddhist feast arranged by the court.

The colourful clouds that appeared when the scripture was carried out of the palace, the surprising death of Pugu Huaien, the heavy and persistent rainfall in favour of the Tang army, the heroic assault launched by Hun Jian, and most of all, the unbelievable success of the tactics chosen by Guo Ziyi—all were unusual happenings—may have been attributed by the monks to the fathomless might of the Renwang jing, especially the Esoteric deities and the mantra featured in the new version “translated” by Bukong.

The divine power of the new translation turned out to be appealing to the emperor, who was convinced of the superiority of Bukong’s Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga from which elements were derived to bolster power in the new translation. To reward the monks for their service through the chanting ceremony, Daizong granted each of them thirty bolts of cloth, while to distinguish Bukong’s contribution to bringing about the text, the grant to him was thirty times more, and even the junior monks who attended to him were each granted fifteen bolts.

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105 See Daizong’s reply to Bukong’s memorial “Xie yuzhi ‘Renwang jing xu’ biao yi shou bing he baizuo jian qingxun” in the BZJ, T2156.55.0752c24-26: “Recently, being edified by His Reverence, We built the master-disciple relationship with Him. Now witnessing this miraculous resonance, [We] become all the more reverent to Him.” 傾因指喻，早結師資；覩此感通，彌深頂敬

106 See XXYL (T2156.55.0752c24-26) and ZYL (T2157.55.0886c10-12). The former numbers fifty bolts in the grant to Bukong’s attendant disciples.
By the eleventh month of 765, Daizong had developed sufficient understanding of the Vajroṣṇīṣa philosophy, had been initiated into the tradition by Bukong, and became a practitioner of Yogic practices centreing on the bodhisattva Samantabhadra. To show imperial reverence, he accorded to Bukong and the late Vajrabodhi imperial titles and honorary official ranks, who, from then on, were addressed as “Da Guangzhi” (the Great Wisdom-Broadening) and “Da Hongjiao” (the Great Dharma-Promoting) respectively. Thus, the teachings of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga and the lineage of its transmitters were elevated to an official status and national prestige.

In the second month of 766, to gain a better understanding the doctrine of the Renwang jing and the Miyan jing, Daizong ordered Liangben to create an exegetical work for each scripture. For the dhāraṇī in the Renwang jing, Bukong dictated instructions on the sequence of the Esoteric ritual, which Liangben reworked into the manual, the Renwang bore jing tuoluoni niansong yigui 仁王般若經陀羅尼念誦儀軌 (T995). In the eleventh month, Liangben presented these three texts to the emperor.

2.7 The Reign of Daizong (II): 766-774

In the fourth month of 766, Bukong requested Daizong to sponsor the construction of the Jin’ge Temple on Mt. Wutai that had been scheduled back in Suzong’s reign. This turned out to be the prologue to a cascade of projects promoting the cult of Mt. Wutai and/or Mañjuśrī.

Prior to this, it seems that Bukong had done some work for this project. His most senior disciple, Hanguang, was sent to the mountain to develop dharma merit for the royal house, holding the official title the Śramaṇa of Merit Cultivation (xiugongde shamen 修功德沙門).

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107 For Daizong’s Esoteric practice, see “Chi Huisheng yi qing zhi yi shou” 勅惠勝依請制一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0850c18-19.
108 See “Ze Jìng Jin'gang Sanzang Kaifu ji hao zhi yi shou” 贈金剛三藏開府及號制一首 (T2120.52.0832b13-21) and “Bai Bukong Sanzang Tejin Shi Honglu Qing jian ci hao zhishu yi shou” 拜不空三藏特進試鴻臚卿兼賜號制書一首 (T2120.52.0832c28-18).
109 The other two texts are the Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing shu 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經疏 (T1709) and the Chengming Dian jiang Miyan jing duiyu ji 承明殿講密嚴經對御記 (missing). See Liangben’s memorial preserved in the XKYL, T2156.55.0758b23-c05.
The construction project of the Jin’ge Temple was inspired by a vision experienced by a monk called Daoyi 道義 during his pilgrimage to the mountain in 736. Daoyi had been guided by Mañjuśrī, who showed himself in the form of an old monk, into a conjured temple called Jin’ge 金閣 (Gold Pavilion). It was a magnificent, golden-coloured, glittering building complex that was comprised of thirteen chapels and housed ten thousand monastic residents. Daoyi depicted this visionary temple in a painting and presented it to Emperor Xuanzong, apparently in the hope of the imperial sponsorship for its construction. Not until 758 was the project put on the agenda, but for nearly a decade, governmental support remained unseen. Although Bukong repeatedly appealed the court to fulfil the agenda, until he turned the emperor into his disciple, the court withheld its approval.

Bukong brought up this issue again because of a situation in the mountain, which was probably reported to him by Hanguang. When Hanguang was undertaking the imperial commission in Mt. Wutai, a monk called Daohuan 道環 was resolved to bring into being the divine temple shown in Daiyi’s vision. Out of admiration for this noble ambition, Bukong decided to donate his personal possessions and to seek the support from Daizong, Yu Chaoen, and other officials to fulfil the mission. The emperor granted his request, and Hanguang delivered the imperial decree to the mountain and took over the responsibility for the construction.

According to GQLZ and SGSZ, Daizong ordered ten provincial military governors to set aside an amount of money from the revenue to sponsor the construction. And the JTS mentioned that Wang Jin 王縉 (700-782), the chief minister at the time and a well-known lay Buddhist, offered the project special support.

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110 For Daoyi’s miraculous experience, see the accounts in the Guang Qingliang zhuan 廣清涼傳 (T2099.51.1113a15-1114a05, hereafter GQLZ) and his biography in the SGSZ (T2061.50.0843c22-0844a02). Cf. Birnbaum’s recounting of the story and his translation of a couple of episodes. (Birnbaum 1983: 14-16) See also my translation of Bukong’s account, Appendix A: 304-07.
111 See GQLZ, T2099.51.1113a15-1114a05, and also SGSZ, T2061.50.0843c22-0844a02.
112 See the biography of Wang Jin in the JTS: 118, 3418.
In the same year of 766, several months after the proposal to build the Jin’ge Temple, Bukong requested Daizong to allow the renovation of the Yuhua Temple according to the layout of the former, and he proposed that the Superior Incumbent of the temple, a certain Xingman 行滿, take charge of the project. The request was fulfilled. Another letter of request followed up to suggest that Hanguang become the overall director of both of the two large projects, besides six universal monastic quarters used to accommodate the pilgrimage monks (putong gongyangchu 普通供養處).\(^{113}\) Due to Bukong’s suggestion, the military governor of Taiyuan, Xin Yunjing, was assigned the responsibility for governmental assistance and protection.

By early 767, a hall in the Huadu 化度 Monastery in the capital had been completed, whose structure was modeled on the Gold Pavilion, the central piece of the envisioned Jin’ge Temple. The hall was titled “Huguo Wan Pusa Tang” 護國萬菩薩堂 (the Hall of Ten Thousand State-protecting Bodhisattvas, hereafter “the Mañjuśrī Hall”), indicating a dedication to the ten thousand residents of the conjured temple or the well-known retinue of Mañjuśrī of the same number told in the Avatamsaka Sutra.\(^{114}\) Under Daizong’s instruction, Bukong selected fourteen monks to conduct the sutra-recitation or Esoteric ritual performance in the hall for the welfare of the nation.

In the same month, a pavilion called Wenshu-ge 文殊閣 and dedicated to Mañjuśrī had been completed at the Qingliang Temple on Mt. Wutai. This structure may have been a replica of the Golden Pavilion of the Jin’ge Temple as well. Daizong agreed to create a piece of calligraphy for the temple’s nameplate.

Bukong requested Daizong’s permission to staff each of the six imperial temples on Mt. Wutai with twenty-one monks. Besides the temples of Jin’ge, Yuhua, and Qingliang, another two were the temples of Foguang 佛光 and Huayan 華嚴. The monks in these five temples assumed the duties of reciting the Renwang jing and Miyan jing and to undertake other Buddhist practices

\(^{113}\) For the institution of putong gongyang yuan in Mt. Wutai, see TAKASE Natsuko 2013.

\(^{114}\) See the Dafangguang fo huayan jing 大方廣佛華嚴經 translated by Buddhabhadra (T1185.20.0797c21) and also the version produced by Śikṣānanda (T0279.10.0241b21-b22).
for the state. The last temple under request was a certain Wumozǐ 吳摩子 Monastery; Bukong suggested to rename it “Dali Fahua 大暦法華 Monastery” (lit. the Dharma-Lotus Monastery of the Dali Era), where the monks would recite the scripture of the Lotus Sutra.

In the sixth month, Bukong, through the governmental decree, assigned his disciple Zilín 子鄰 to start scriptural preaching at the newly established Mañjuśrī Hall in the Huadu Monastery. Bukong’s last known activity in this year was his request to Daizong for the permission to ordain five monks on the birthday of the emperor, all of whom were of Sogdian origin and good at reciting sutras and dhāraṇīs.

In the second month of 768, Bukong discovered beneath a stupa in the Great Xingshan Monastery a little multilayered casket, which dated from the fourth century and contained “holy relics”. The stupa was under repair for the damage from the earthquake that struck Chang’an earlier. Bukong reported this exciting discovery to the throne, which then ordered to escort the relics to the palace chapel for worship.115

In the sixth month, Bukong requested the court to grant official priesthood to four Esoteric practitioners who had served Vajrabodhi and were then residing at the chapel enshrining his relic stupa at Longmen, Luoyang. Daizong granted the request, generated a calligraphic title for the stupa, and financed a grand Buddhist feast on his death anniversary to remember the later patriarch.

In that memorial presented by Bukong, the name Li Xianchéng 李憲誠 occurred for the first time in all sources, with the post of the Inspecting Commissioner (jianshi 監使). Li’s commissioner post (shizhi 使職) indicates that a certain office around Bukong had already been at work. In all likelihood, it was related to the institutionalization of the Abhiṣeka Sanctum at the Great Xingshan Monastery that had been established under the Daizong’s order sometime before that month. All the ministers were ordered to ascend the altar and receive Bukong’s initiation, and

115 It is said that on the casket, there was inscribed a eulogy composed by Yin Zhōngwén 殷重文 (d. 407), a historical figure of the East Jin Dynasty. See CFYG: 52, 576-77.
altogether, the source boasts, there were some five thousand attendants, clerical or lay. This grand inauguration ceremony lasted two weeks. The grand arrangement and the involvement of the emperor and all ministers suggest that in all likelihood this Abhiṣeka Sanctum was a permanent institution.

On the emperor’s birthday in this year, Bukong ordained three monks of Sogdian origin.

In the sixth month of 769, Bukong’s disciple, the meditation master Huiyin 惠隱, had made some wares and requested permission to donate them to the Jin’ge and other temples on Mt. Wutai, and, thanks to the court’s assent acquired by Bukong, he was allowed to personally carry the wares to the mountain. At Bukong’s request, Huiyin residence chapel in the Guangtian 光天 Monastery in Chang’an was officially designated as the accommodation for monks who were journey to and from the mountain to send offerings.

In the twelfth month of the lunar year, Bukong, as the representative of monks in the capital, requested an edict that all monasteries in the country should install an image of Mañjuśrī above the existing image of Piṇḍola as the Seat of Honour (shangzuo 上座) in the refectory. Citing such practice in India as the paradigm, Bukong urged the court to set it as the norm for all the monasteries of the Tang.

In the fifth month of 770, a white comet appeared in the northern sky above the capital, apparently being perceived as a baneful sign to the state. According to the astrology of the time, it was a portent of grave warfare and famine. Bukong assumed the imperial obligation to travel to Mt. Wutai and organize a session of ritual performance with the aim of averting the imminent disasters. It is said that when the ceremony concluded, the sinister comet disappeared.

During the journey, Bukong visited several local monasteries, and for three of them he acquired special commissions or support from the emperor. In the seventh month, while on the way back to Chang’an, Bukong stayed in Taiyuan for some time. By an imperial instruction, he

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116 See the imperial annual of Daizong’s reign in JTS: 11, 296.
117 See for the portent of the comet, see the analysis given in Goble (forthcoming).
arranged a grand feast for ten thousand Buddhists, with the expense covered by the Taiyuan government, which, it is worth noting, was presided over by Wang Jin, one of Bukong’s chief official supporters. Having visited the Zhide 至德 Monastery, he sent a letter to the court asking to establish a chapel of Mañjuśrī (wenshu yuan 文殊院) there, which would be staffed by fourteen learned monks to promote the fundamental teachings of that bodhisattva. The prototype of this Mañjuśrī Chapel may have been one of thirteen chapels, which was Mañjuśrī’s residence, in the visionary Jin’ge Temple. Bukong also inducted a monk called Daoxian 道憲 and tasked him with the regular duty of delivering scriptural sermons in that monastery.

In the tenth month, Bukong proposed institutional arrangements at a politically significant monastery in Taiyuan, the Datang Xingguo Da Chongfu Si 大唐興國大崇福寺. The hall of Haoling Tang 号令堂 in the monastery had been the place where the founding emperors of the Tang, Gaozu 高祖 (566-635, r. 618-626) and Taizong 太宗 (598-649, r. 626-649) declared the uprising against the regime of the Sui Dynasty. Bukong intended to install in the hall a statue of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra, the Principally Venerated One for Emperor Daizong’s yogic practice.

The monastery was to be exempted from taxes, corvée, and the land levy, and the savings were to be used to fund Buddhist feasts and ceremonies held on the death anniversaries of the seven past emperors of the Tang. For them, all monks of this monastery were commissioned to chant the Renwang jing on fixed dates.

Within the chapel of Jingtu Yuan 淨土院 of this monastery, an Abhiṣeka Sanctum had already been established, and then Bukong requested permission to select fourteen monks committed to the Esoteric practices related to the Uṣṇīṣavijaya Dhāraṇī (foding zunsheng tuoluoni 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼).

Yet again, two years later, in the third month of 772, Bukong solicited the imperial promotion of a monastery in Fenzhou 汾州 that he had visited en route from Mt. Wutai back to Chang’an. Being founded and maintained by the local Buddhists, the monastery seemed to have undergone harassment from the government and therefore turned to Bukong for help. Thanks to
Bukong’s intervention, the monastery received the emperor’s calligraphy on its plaque, hence the imperial status.

In late autumn of 770, Bukong was back in Chang’an. Daizong was greatly gratified by Bukong’s service, and eunuchs took the order and came forth from the city to welcome him with the great honour to ride the emperor’s personal mount. Bukong’s followers were all awarded and entertained with a banquet in the palace.\(^{118}\)

In the second month of 771, Bukong requested the court’s permission for Huilin 惠林, a monk of the Zhangjing 章敬 Monastery, to undertake scriptural sermons at the Baoshou Monastery. In the third month, Daizong approved Bukong’s proposal to establish a Universal Platform of Mahāyāna Precepts (shijie fangdeng daochang 施戒方等道場) at the Great Xingshan Monastery, and various provisions were granted to hold the twenty-one-day intensive session of Esoteric practices. In the next month, the vinaya expert Huiche 慧徹 requested the court to sponsor another ceremony for Bukong to instruct precepts.

The day before the emperor’s birthday in the tenth month, Bukong collected a portion of the Buddhist scriptures that he had translated and presented them to the throne. Considering these one hundred and one texts, either Mahāyāna or Esoteric, proper to be publicized, he requested Daizong to include them in the imperial Buddhist canon and announce them to the country. The request was fulfilled, and Daizong lavishly rewarded Bukong as well as members of the translation team, the so-called Ten Great Virtues of Translation. In return, the monk Qianzhen 潛真 (718-788), on behalf his fellow members, composed a response to express their gratitude.\(^{119}\) The team continued to produce more translations until Bukong’s late bedridden days.

In 772, there was a drought from spring through summer. In the fifth month, Daizong issued a decree ordering Bukong to pray for rain, and it says that only if the rain fell in seven days would it be regarded as the result of his work. The arrival of the rain did not miss the deadline, and as

\(^{118}\) The standard history records that the comet disappeared in the next month, and Daizong issued an act of amnesty for all convicts in the country. See \textit{JTS}: 11, 297.

\(^{119}\) See Qianzhen’s memorial kept in \textit{XKYL}, T2156.55.0750b28-07.
rewards, Daizong hosted a feast for a thousand monks and granted each of Bukong’s disciples seven Buddhist robes.

In the sixth month, Daizong granted Bukong’s request to draft fourteen renowned monks from various monasteries to staff the Guangfu Monastery in Luoyang. The monastery had been the residence of Vajrabodhi, and two chapels remained inside which he had established: a stupa-chapel (*tayuan 塔院*, Skt. *caitya*) established with Emperor Xuanzong’s patronage and a chapel enshrining a stone ordination-platform according to the norm of the Sarvāstivāda tradition (*yiqieyoubu gu shijietan yuan* 一切有部古石戒壇院). In each chapel, as Bukong designed, seven monks would be installed to practice Esoteric Buddhism for the state and enjoy exemption from all kinds of labour services.

By the eighth month, six statues of bodhisattvas were inaugurated in the Huadu Monastery. These statues were cast under Daizong’s instruction and Bukong’s superintendence. Bukong asked the court to commission the monk Chaowu 超悟 to deliver a public lecture on the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*.

In the tenth month of 772, Daizong issued an edict to all prefects across the country, ordering them to build a chapel enshrining the statue of Mañjuśrī in each Buddhist monastery and nunnery in their prefectures. The chapel was called Dasheng Wushushili Pusa Yuan 大聖文殊師利菩薩院 (the Chapel of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī, hereafter Mañjuśrī Chapel) and in all likelihood, Daizong had been inspired by the prime chapel of the Jin’ge Temple. And one such chapel had been established inside the Zhide Monastery in Taiyuan at the request of Bukong two years before. A copy of the edict was also delivered to Bukong, for which he composed a response to thank the emperor for such an unusual imperial promotion of the cult of the bodhisattva.

In the same winter, Bukong proposed another large-scale project to promote the cult of Mañjuśrī. He suggested building a Mañjuśrī Pavilion to safeguard the country at his residence

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120 It was called “Dasheng Wenshu Zhenguozhi ge” 大聖文殊鎮國之閣 (the State-Protection Pavilion of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī), or better known as Wenshu-ge 文殊閣 for short.
chapel in Great Xingshan Monastery. This pavilion, according to Bukong’s conception, should become a model for the structures to be built in other monasteries. This project may have been designed to be part of the nationwide construction of the Mañjuśrī Chapels; in other words, the pavilion would be built within the Mañjuśrī Chapel. Again, the idea must have been drawn from the structure standing in the center of the visionary Jin’ge Temple.

According to Bukong’s design, the upper floor of the pavilion in the Great Xingshan Monastery was to hold the Sanskrit and Chinese scriptures and the lower floor was to enshrine the statue of the bodhisattva. In the second month of 773, a decree was issued to launch the construction.

Early in this year, at Bukong’s request, the monks Yuanying 元盈 and Daoye 道液 were ordered to perennially preach on the new translation of the Daji Daxukongzang pusa suowen jing (The Great Collection Sutra of the Questions of the Great Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha, T404). Each of them had completed an exegesis for the sutra.

In the fifth month, Bukong presented the translation of a certain sutra that had been done by the emperor’s order. One month later, Bukong sent a memorial to Daizong, proposing that each monastery in the country should set up three or seven permanent posts at the Mañjuśrī Chapel, depending on the size of the monastery; holders were to perennially lecture on this sutra. The main body of Bukong’s memorial is contained in the BZJ, which reveals that the theme of this translation concerns various aspects of Mañjuśrī. The title of this memorial is missing, however, which would otherwise indicate the scripture in question. In the same year, according to the XZ, Bukong prepared the translation Nie lutu wang jing (The Sutra of the Garuḍa King) upon the emperor’s orders, which seems to have never been spread out of the palace.

Four months later, on the emperor’s birthday, Bukong presented another sutra, the Dasheng Wenshushili pusa focha gongde zhuangyan jing (The Sutra on the Adorments of the Merit of the Buddha Land of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, T319), which revolved around the various merits of Mañjuśrī. Once again, Bukong requested the court to
circulate this text across the country and to set seven or three permanent positions for monks preaching on the sutra at the Mañjuśrī Chapels. The emperor’s approval came only in the second month of the next year.

The construction of the pavilion at the Great Xingshan Monastery was near completion in late 773, and all expenses were covered by the generous donations of Daizong and his royal families. The emperor set a banquet to feed one thousand monks to celebrate the moment.

Sometime around the seventh month, Bukong received an official report from the monk Ruqian 如謙 (d. u.) concerning a recent scandal about the Head of the Monastery (sizhu 寺主) of the Great Xignshan Monastery, the monk Yuanjing 圓敬 (729-792). Yuanjing seems to have resigned from the official post of the Overseer of Monastic Affairs (jianjiao sengshi 檢校僧事) and then, on Bukong’s recommendation, was imperially appointed as the Head of the Great Xingshan Monastery.

According to Ruqian’s account, Yuanjing blatantly abused his power in his new post, damaging the monastery’s property in order to refurbish his own dormitory, exploiting the lay workers, and even flagrantly having nuns stay overnight at his place. At the time, Yuanjing was interrogated and convicted by the city government of the capital.

Considering that the criminal penalty laid upon Yuanjing according to the secular code would degrade the whole Buddhist community, Bukong appealed to Daizong’s for imperial leniency. He requested that the court retain Yuanjing’s priesthood and sent him back to his original Siyuan 思遠 Monastery in the Luhun 陸渾 County, Luoyang, a chance for him to reform himself and continue religious practice for the sake of the state. The imperial approval was granted.\footnote{The Secretariat-Chancellery issued the imperial approval on 13 vii (6 Aug. 773). See “Bian Xingshan si sizhu Yuanjing 圜敬 gui Henan Siyuan si zhi yi shou” 貶興善寺寺主 圜敬歸河南思遠寺制一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0842b22-c12. For more information of Yuanjing, see CHEN Jinhua 2010: 185-86.}
Later on, Bukong filled the vacancy left by Yuanjing with the Administrator (duweinuo 都維那) of the Great Xingshan Monastery, the monk Daoyu 道遇.\(^{122}\)

In the tenth month, Daizong granted Bukong a complete copy of Buddhist canon that was named after the Daoist title of princess Huayang 華陽, the *Qionghua Zhenren yiqie jing* 瓊華真人一切經 (5050 juan). Later on, the manuscripts were enshrined in the new Mañjuśrī Pavilion in the Great Xingshan Monastery.

This beloved daughter of Daizong had been suffering chronically from a serious disease, and Daizong must have taken various measures to bring her religious blessings. He made her Bukong’s nominal daughter and regularly had recourse to Bukong’s Esoteric healing art. The princess must have received some yogic teachings from Bukong as well, for she also held the Esoteric title “Zhenru Jin’gang” 真如金剛 (lit. Thusness Vajra). Her Daoist title Qionghua Zhenren 瓊花真人 (lit. The Perfected One of Gem Flower) suggests an association with a certain Daoist priest, perhaps out of the same concern over her health. The compilation of this Buddhist canon in her name must have been another step taken to develop religious merits for her. On the twenty-seventh day of the fourth month of the year, the princess’s condition worsened, and she died while Bukong was hurrying to provide spiritual care.

By the time, Bukong himself had been ailing for some time. Ever since the spring of 774, the infirmities of old age had kept him in bed. It is said that he ceased eating or sleeping and devoted his final time to giving instructions and exhortations to his students. The emperor frequently sent eunuchs and doctors to visit him.

In the fifth month, he made his last instructions to his disciples concerning various issues. The major audience included his six Dharma successors, disciples living in his residential chapel, the Fanjing Yuan 翻經院 in the Great Xingshan Monastery, and his followers scattered in two other monasteries in the capital, the Baoshou Monastery and the Huadu Monastery. And his final

\(^{122}\) See “Qing bu qian duweinuo Daoyu 道遇 充寺主制一首” in *BZJ*, T2120.52.0843a03-15. The Secretariat-Chancellery issued the imperial approval for Bukong’s proposal on 4 viii. (14 Sept. 779)
instructions involved mainly the passing down of the teachings of the Yoga, exhortation concerning spiritual cultivation and the admonishments about maintaining the community order, the operation of the sacred institutes, the arrangements of personnel from the leaders of the next generations down to the servants in his chapel, and the disposition of his properties. He bequeathed his cherished instruments for Esoteric practices to his three most important and powerful lay disciples and patrons, Emperor Daizong, Shi/Li Yuancong, and the eunuch Li Xiancheng.\(^{123}\)

In the sixth month, he sent a letter to Daizong requesting the creation of twenty-one standing positions at the two sanctums in the Great Xingshan Monastery. Seven disciples were assigned to conduct Esoteric practices at the Abhiṣeka Sanctum, and fourteen to recite the imperial Buddhist canon at the Mañjuśrī Pavilion. In the same month, Daizong promoted Bukong to the highest level of the prestige rank and ennobled him as a state-duke (guogong 國公), which he firmly declined.

On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, Bukong sent a farewell memorial to Daizong and passed away.

Back in the late winter of 773, anticipating his last days, he had dictated to Zhao Qian a brief text containing the directives for his cremation rites, which, he hoped, would be followed by his disciples in dealing with his body and funeral. In the testament, he forbade his disciples from various funeral arrangement that he deemed wasteful and redundant: no funeral procession, no tomb, no portrait of him, no mourning apparels, and no wailing. The disciples should cremate his body according to his instructions and scatter the ashes after invoking divine blessings. For the funeral, Daizong issued his own instructions three days after the master’s death, which were quite against Bukong’s own will.

Thus, supplies of food and funds were granted to construct a stupa at a good site and on an auspicious date. In the seventh month, the day before the cremation and burial, Daizong created for Bukong the posthumous title “Da Bianzheng” 大辨正 (the Great Authenticity-Distinguishing) and the position of Minister of Work (zeng sikong 賛司空). And the next day, the funeral ceremony

\(^{123}\) For the translation of the testament, see Appendix A: 344-54.
was held at the open land of Shaoling Yuan 少陵原 in southern suburb of the capital, which was regarded as an ideal place for contemporary well-off people to build cemeteries. A funeral oration composed by Daizong was read out in public, and then a piece composed by the chief minister, Yuan Zai 元載 (d. 777). The Merit Commissioner, the powerful monk Daji 大濟, postured as Bukong’s successor and asked the monk Feixi 飛錫 (742—805+), a famous writer, to compose a biographical text that would be carved on the stone-stele at the stupa. His hope, however, was not realized.

Daizong suddenly decided to choose a better location for the stupa. Nine days after the funeral, Li Xianchong announced the imperial instruction to Li/Shi Yuancong; both of whom had been appointed as the supervisors of the construction work. At the end of the eighth month, the site was decided, which turned out to be Bukong’s residence chapel in the Great Xingshan Monastery, the Fanjing Yuan.

A stupa (yingta 影塔) bearing Bukong’s image had been erected, but the stone-stele remained blank for an extended period of time. In 776, Huilang 慧朗, who was imperially designated as the successor of Bukong, reminded the throne of the unfinished undertaking. The result of Huiliang’s request may have been a eulogy to Bukong’s image (yingzan 影讃) composed by Yan Ying 嚴郢 (d.783). It is quite baffling that not until the year 781 did Yan Ying complete the biography that was carved on the stone-stele, with the calligraphy executed by the official Yu.

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124 For some discussions about the area of Shaoling Yuan among many other cemetery zones in Chang’an, see CHENG Yi 2011: 73.
125 See the account in XB, T2120.52.0849b20-22. The monk Daji was a meditation master, and his Dharma name was Kuoqing 廓清. He was favoured by the emperor and held the position of Acting Palace Directorate (jianjiao dianzhongjian 檢校殿中監) ever since 769. To monks in the capital, he was an intimidating figure. See CFYG: 52, 577. It seems that he used to abuse his power and meddle in the commemorative work of the renowned monks that had recently died. When Huizhong died in 775, he repeated the doing, asking Feixi to compose a biographical inscription for him. Feixi accounts the background of the composition in the hypercritical words: “Although [Master Daji] was not [Master Huizhong’s] disciple, his sorrow surpasses that of his Dharma heirs.” 虽非門人哀逾法嗣 The inscription composed by Feixi is kept in the SGSZ. See T2061.50.0763b13-15.
126 See the edict of “Tingxiu jiu ta di zhi yi shou” 停修舊塔地制一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0850c22-25.
127 See the decree of “Chi yu dangyuan qi lingta zhi yi shou (bing shidie)” 勅於當院起靈塔制一首 (并使牒), in BZJ: T2120.52.0850c27-0851a01.
128 The eulogy is preserved in BZJ, T2120.52.0847a03-b07.
Hao 徐浩 (703-783). The stele was erected in the Great Xingshan Monastery, and the inscription articulates that it was Huilang who succeeded to the position of the Abhiṣeka Master.
Chapter 3: Mutual Consecration: New Ruler and New Role

Traditional accounts extol Bukong as an Abhiṣeka Master revered by three successive emperors—namely Emperors Xuanzong, Suzong, and Daizong. Even Bukong himself occasionally spoke with gratitude and pride of such long-lasting and “unbroken” imperial grace. He performed the abhiṣeka rites—the emblematic service as an imperial abhiṣeka master—for each of the three emperors.

In fact, such rhetoric is the result of a retrospective compliment, stretching the great glory from his heyday of imperial favour to cover the initial nadir of his career under Xuanzong, when he was repeatedly forced to the political periphery to further develop his politico-religious cause. The great turning point of his career appeared only when the An Lushan rebellion overturned political order and led to the usurpation of the Crown Prince, Li Heng 李亨. The abhiṣeka rites performed for the two emperors were disparate in terms of both their politico-religious significance and their historical implication.

The abhiṣeka of the Five-Division (wubu guanding 五部灌頂) that Bukong performed for Xuanzong was purely spiritual in nature; it empowered the recipient with access to the highest teachings of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga. This ritual—otherwise limited to only the most advanced of yogins—may have been performed on the emperor’s whim for exotic religious practice and grandiose things. By contrast, the abhiṣeka rite for Suzong was performed in order to legitimize his sovereignty by transforming him into a cakravartin—a sacred Buddhist archetypal king. This ritual exalted Bukong to a pope-like position and accorded him significant political and religious power, probably far above other religious masters in connection with the emperor.

Yet, how could Bukong have achieved this prominence? Previous studies by Fujiyoshi (1988), Nakata (2007), and Goble (2012) have each pinpointed this historical moment as the turning point of Bukong’s career. However, they provide different explanations regarding the main factors contributing to his success.
Fujiyoshi and Nakata approach the issue from a purely historical perspective, and their scopes expand to Bukong’s service in the Hexi military government under Geshu Han. Fujiyoshi argues that Bukong’s prominence under the new reign owed little to Geshu, however, stressing that Bukong’s stay at Hexi was brief and his association with Geshu must have been less than intimate. Moreover, Geshu suffered a humiliating military failure and died in battle against the rebels—a result that overshadowed his previous military prestige and merits. Instead, Fujiyoshi argues, Bukong’s rise owed to his own personal efforts seeking every opportunity to serve emperor Suzong. He assumes that part of these efforts involved Bukong providing military intelligence to the Tang army that helped them recover the rebel-occupied capital.129

Nakata emphasizes the wide association of Bukong with Sogdian military forces, built through his religious activities in Hexi, and becoming a major force of support for Bukong’s Buddhist cause after the An Lushan rebellion. As she explains, during the rebellion, these Sogdians had moved to the heartland to resist their enemies; when the Hexi area was lost to the Tibetans, they were stranded in the capital of Chang’an and formed a special bond with the eunuchs who controlled the Imperial Guards and proved to be another major force in support of Bukong.

The cases provided by Nataka date from the reign of Daizong, however. In regards to the reign of Suzong, in her 2006 article, she emphasizes the importance of the support from the eunuch Li Fuguo and the imperial consort Zhang Liangdi—an understanding derived from the historical context of the alliance among eunuchs, palace women, and Buddhist monks. There were precedents by which eunuchs, imperial consorts, and princesses tried to take advantage of Buddhist ideology to open up a political space.

Both analyses are informative; their argumentations, however, are flawed due to the assumption that Shi/Li Yuancong was a eunuch. Fujiyoshi is correct in pointing out that Suzong’s coronation as the new emperor was the key factor in Bukong’s political rising. His interpretation of

Bukong’s usefulness to Suzong, however, seems presumptive and inaccurate. He fails to understand Bukong’s contribution in light of Suzong’s most urgent concern, namely to legitimate his own sovereignty. This chapter demonstrates that Bukong’s performances—both with his secular talents and Esoteric “techniques”—converged on relieving Suzong’s political predicament.

Although Nakata fully appreciates the importance of the eunuch Li Fuguo and Lady Zhang Liangdi at court, she seems to have missed the even greater role played by Suzong himself. Similarly, she could point out the importance of the Sogdian military, but neglects people in higher positions within the Hexi government: they were not Sogdians but Bukong’s Han Chinese colleagues who had assisted Bukong in Buddhist translation. Moreover, Bukong cooperated with them in inciting the crown prince to assume the throne, and thus they all became the architects and guardians of the new reign. Needless to say, they wanted to extend their support to Bukong’s Buddhist projects that served their common political cause.

The support from Li Fuguo and Zhang Liangdi indeed seems indispensable, given their staggering infringement upon imperial authority. However, there is no substantial evidence that can directly reveal personal associations between them and Bukong. What needs to be pointed out is that these two figures were among the creators of Suzong’s reign and were the natural comrades of Bukong in this sense, at least before the two turned against each other and court matters became complex.

Goble (2012) intends to interpret Bukong’s rise by balancing historical and religious approaches. He correctly points out that before the recovery of the capital, the support Bukong received from the emperors and Geshu Han had been limited to the personal level. He argues that one of the primary reasons for the later institutional support achieved from Suzong and the ruling elites was the Esoteric lethal rites whose usefulness in the massive killing was accentuated by the military quagmire.\(^{130}\) This theory remains to be supported by the illustration of concrete cases, but

\(^{130}\) See Goble 2012: 45, 132-72, 226.
it may be challenged by the considerations of IWASAKI Hideo (1986) in his discussion of Suzong’s appreciation of Daoist spiritual power.

Iwasaki challenges the view that there is a lasting, special relationship between Bukong and Emperor Suzong. He believes that Suzong’s favor of Bukong was not that special, and this is evident from the emperor’s close association with other Buddhist monks such as Wulou 無漏, Daguang 大光, and the well-known Chan master Huizhong.

Iwasaki further points out that in the BZJ, there is only one decree issued to Bukong from 759 until the emperor’s death in 762, and other sources report no important activities during this period. He argues that this abrupt decrease in correspondence suggests that Suzong began to distance himself from Bukong. Iwasaki believes that the cause of this lies in antagonism from the Daoist priests, especially Wang Yu 王璽 (d. 768), who had been promoted as the chief minister in 758. He demonstrates that Suzong’s letter to another Daoist, Li Hanguang 李含光 (683-769), exudes a more intimate relationship and more apparent acknowledgement of his spiritual service in military affairs. It seems that Iwasaki did not take into consideration that the disproportion between the letters before and after 759 may have just as easily been a result of the incomplete nature of the BZJ.

This chapter investigates these issues by more carefully exploring the related historical background and pivotal events. It also demonstrates that political and ideological conditions seem more immediate and important for Bukong to gain any stage to capitalize on his Esoteric skills. In that course, his interpersonal networking and political savvy paved his way onto the political and ideological stage and resulted in the greatest turning point of his life.
In this perspective, Bukong’s situation under Emperor Xuanzong serves as a contrasting case. Having completed his study in Sri Lanka and gaining royal patronage there, he remained resolved to return and serve the Tang state. He asserted his identity with a large collection of Buddhist texts, tributary gifts from the king of Sinhala, and with the Sanskrit Esoteric name “Amoghavajra”. During the following years in Chang’an, however, many of those Buddhist texts remained untranslated, and his Esoteric background was underappreciated; he only played some wonder works for the court and performed an initiation ritual for the throne. During that age, the emerging teachings of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga that he disclosed before Xuanzong held no practical value for political or ideological appropriation.

The political world was reshaped by An Lushan Rebellion (755-762). Emperor Xuanzong fled, the capital fell, and the court scattered; an heir apparent came to the fore, but found his own court poorly staffed. Bukong and his colleagues in the Hexi government seized the opportunity and became the founding members of a new court, acting in concert with each other to champion a new emperor against any threats, either material or ideological. Bukong’s Buddhist activities became a distinctive part of the collective efforts and won him high approval from Suzong and the prominent courtiers, a bloc sharing the same interests and fortune. The abhiṣeka ritual to consecrate Suzong was the climatic point of the story, declaring both the sage-king identity of the emperor and the sacred position of the master.

The following examinations delve widely and deeply into the historical circumstances surrounding Bukong and Emperor Suzong, in a generally chronological sequence: at Xuanzong’s court (746-749), at the military government of Hexi (754-755), and during Suzong’s reign (756-762). It charts the transformation of his identity, from Vajrabodhi’s follower to an independent, widely reputed imperial master.
3.1 Appellations and Identity under Xuanzong: The Underappreciated Esoteric Master and the Hampered Religious Mission

When Bukong made his first attempt to gain imperial appreciation and open a space to display the strength of the Yoga, Emperor Xuanzong seems to have quickly run out of his personal appreciation after his initial hospitality, and then forced him out of the capital. During Bukong’s three years in the capital, he had only few chances to display his Esotericist craft before an audience of the selected few. Apart from this, no public activities were reported by authentic sources. It seems obvious that he did not acquire the permission to carry out significant activities or develop a wider network to niche this role, and his Esoteric Buddhism remained distanced from the public audience and disengaged from public agendas.

While under the tutelage and guidance of Vajrabodhi, Bukong was a monk of little independence and influence. He was known by the name of Zhizang, a Dharma name created by Vajrabodhi. This is how Zhisheng 智昇 (fl. 700-740) first acknowledged Bukong when listing a couple of texts translated by Vajrabodhi in which Bukong played a part.\(^{131}\) When he returned from Sri Lanka, he was presented to the Tang court via a diplomatic mission with the Sanskrit Esotericist name “Amoghavajra” and the religious title “Abhiṣeka Tripiṭaka” presumably accorded by the king of Sri Lanka and/or the authority of the Buddhist sangha of Abhayagiri Vihāra.

The secular source *CFYG* retains perhaps the original, official documentation of this diplomatic event. It is a scholarly consensus that compilers of *CFYG* frequently employed the contemporary historical archives such as the *Guoshi* 國史 (National History) and the *Shilu* 實錄 (Verifiable Records) to deal with the content related to the Tang history.\(^{132}\)

\(^{131}\) See Appendix A: 236-37.
\(^{132}\) For some preliminary discussion, see HUANG Yongnian 2002: 262. For the record in *CFYG*, see Appendix A: 257.
Bukong’s unique title, Abhiṣeka Tripiṭaka, and his Esotericist Indic name each appealed to the Tang court for the attention to Bukong’s new identity and background that he gained through the three-year study in South India. He seemed to act as the head of the delegates of King Silāmegha.

We have other clues—also found in secular sources—that suggest the same intent of the application of the appellation; on these circumstantial occasions, Bukong preferred to identify himself as Amoghavajra or its shortened Chinese rendering, Bukong.

In an inscription text written by renowned Tang stylist Li Hua 李華 (715-778+) for a Buddhist monk called Lanruo 蘭若 (673-751), it mentions that Lanruo received a visit by a Tripiṭaka master from Sinhala:

Tripiṭaka Mogha of the Land of the Lion came on a visit, and [he] signed, “When hearing of your name in India, I thought you were an ancient. I have held you with veneration [since I was] in my own country and have borne you in mind for long.”

And this foreigner Tripiṭaka master refers to Bukong, the name “Mu-qie” being the Chinese transliteration of “mogha”, an elision for “Amogha”.

The text was composed after 758 and probably after 765, when the original information for this short account was provided by master Lanruo’s followers to Li Hua seeking a fine piece of writing to remember their master. By 758, Bukong had gained and enhanced his national fame,

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133 See “Jingzhou Nanquan Dayun si gu Lanruo heshang bei” 荊州南泉大雲寺故蘭若和尚碑, QTW: 319, 3237.
134 So far, no exact date has been worked out for the composition of the text, but it could be determined very roughly. After the third year of the Tianbao Era (744), it was decreed that the measure word zai 載 replace nian 年 to number the years. As the text uses “the tenth nian of Tianbao” to refer to the death year of Lanruo, it was probably written after 758, when Emperor Suzong restored the previous use of nian.

By that time, Li Hua had been demoted from an office in capital to a petty post at Hangzhou in the Jiangnan area. According to one of his biographical sources, the poor health led Li into the plight of unemployment and poverty in 765, and he began to frequently write memorial texts to seek generous remuneration. Owing to his great reputation as a literary giant, many came to him from the middle and lower reaches of the Yangzi River for artistic pieces, just as the disciples of the monk Lanruo did. See “Jianjiao Shangshu Libu Yuanwailang Zhaojun Li gong Zhong ji xu” 檢校尚書吏部員外郎趙郡李公中集序 by Dugu Ji 獨孤及, QTW: 388, 3947. For a chronological study of Li Hua’s life, see CHEN Tiemin 1990 and Vita 1988.
being reverently addressed as “Bukong” by Emperor Suzong, and in late 765, he was granted the imperial title Da Guangzhì by Daizong (765) that demanded application. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider that the lines quoted above were written based on original records of the old days and reveal how Bukong introduced and identified himself on the very occasion of their meeting. A chronological mapping of Bukong’s presence allows only two years in which the visit could be placed: 746 or 749.¹³⁵

The name “Mogha” seems peculiarly short, but it was echoed by an instance where the corresponding, single character kong 空 was used to call Bukong, and thus they lent each other some sensibility. A poem dedicated to the famous Tang official and poet, Gao Shi 高適 (c. 702-765), speaks of a certain Master Kong (Kong shangren 空上人 or Kong heshang 空和尚) and his performing abhiṣeka (moding 摩頂), which Gao Shi had received several times. Since Gao Shi and Bukong both served in the Hexi military government in 753 and Bukong held a massive ritual for all officials and officers in the government, this “Master Kong” in all likelihood refers to Bukong.¹³⁶

All in all, the appellations of “Tripitaka Mogha” and “Master Kong” both refer to Bukong, and they indicate how he liked to be perceived after his religious and official mission to Sri Lanka: an Indian Tripitaka and Esoteric master. Indeed, the appellation Tripitaka Bukong was used by Geshu Han in 752 in a memorial to Emperor Xuanzong.¹³⁷ In this way, by avoiding his Chinese Dharma name he diluted the previous identity as Vajrabodhi’s disciple and stressed his experience of elevating his Esoteric expertise. For although it is unclear whether the Esotericist name

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¹³⁵ Throughout the whole life, Bukong made three trips to or from the south, the route of which may have passed Jingzhou allowing him to pay a visit to master Lanruo. The first trip was his return from Sri Lanka to Chang’an in 746, the second was in 749 when he was ousted from the capital under orders of deportation, and the third in 752 when he was summoned back from Shaohou to Hexi via Chang’an. Since Lanruo died in early 751, the 752 trip can be omitted. Therefore, it could have happened in either 746 or 749.

¹³⁶ The title of this poem is “Remembering Gao Shi, the Thirty-Fifth among Siblings, in an Autumn Night: Also Presented to Master Kong” 秋夜有懷高三十五適兼呈空上人. It was ascribed to the official and poet Liu Changqing 劉長卿 (ca. 718-ca. 790) or Huangfu Ran 皇甫冉 (716-769). See Quan Tangshi: 151, 1575. It is dated to sometime after 764. For a historical analysis of the poem, see ZHOU Xunchu 1987.

¹³⁷ An excerpt of the memorial by Geshu Han is recorded by Yuanzhuo in ZYL, T2157.55.0881b15-17.
Amoghavajra was created by Vajrabodhi decades ago or by Samantabhadra more recently, it is the experience of studying abroad or the partaking of the diplomatic service that put this title into practice.

All of this should have freed him from the shadow of his late master. The emperor’s reactions, however, do not seem quite attentive in this regard, paying insufficient appreciation to this Esoteric master and his supposed religious mission. To reward Bukong’s miraculous skills in harnessing the forces of nature, Xuanzong conferred upon him an imperial title: Imperial Preceptor Zhizang.

The services recognized with this conferral were his breaking of a severe drought and quieting fierce winds. The latter scene appears to be a rather casual or even an entertaining arrangement. Both events were intended, at least partially, to test Bukong’s magic crafts that had allegedly earned him the great royal patronage in Sri Lanka. Suffice it to say that they did not involve any political agendas. Before he was expelled from the capital, no grand abhiṣeka ceremonies were available to the multitude of officials, no translation work was sponsored by the court, and no Buddhist programs were launched, let alone the establishment of any Buddhist institutions.

The only seemingly remarkable service that Bukong had made during the three years was that he conducted for Xuanzong a ceremony of abhiṣeka that was reserved only for the most advanced Esoteric practitioners. Throughout his apostolic career, only eight yogin disciples obtained such a top-level initiation, and the two more devout Emperors, Daizong and Suzong, did not receive such special treatment. The genuineness of Xuanzong’s spiritual interests in the Yoga teachings, however, was rather questionable. He seems to have been attracted by the ritual ministry.

The many Buddhist scriptures that he brought back from Sri Lanka and India, moreover, were not actually granted support to be translated, despite Bukong claiming Xuanzong’s imperial permission. On one occasion, he stated that Emperor Xuanzong ordered him to organize a sanctum inside the palace, and all those Sanskrit scriptures were permitted to be translated. While on a much earlier occasion, he confessed that since he returned to the capital, he did not work on any translation, for he not only lacked the staffing of scribes but also was not allowed various necessities for the practice of the teachings. See “Zhi xu fanyi jinglun cibu gaodie yi shou” 制許翻譯經論祠部告牒一首, in BZJ, T2120.52.0829a07-09.
that boasted speedy attainment of Buddhahood and the efficacy in bringing about worldly benefits. Apparently, the emperor soon became weary of the bewildering symbols, cryptic spells, and laborious rites.

The SGSZ preserves several anecdotes about Bukong’s thaumaturgic feats during Xuanzong’s reign. One of them relates that still a student of Vajrabodhi, Bukong had drawn a marked appreciation from Xuanzong through his penetration into the mystifying law for rain praying. The anecdote is, however, fictional.

According to Bukong’s own statement, by the beginning of early 758, he had been serving the Tang court for ten years; it dates his first commission by the court to 748, the third year since his return from Sri Lanka. In fact, he was immediately given assignments by the court at the very year of his arrival (746). Therefore, it had been twelve years instead of ten years by early 758, and his own calculations are literary and rough, only to round down the figure to the whole number that makes the sentences into a perfect couplet. However rough Bukong’s statement is, it definitely refutes a starting point back in the Kaiyuan Era (713-741) when Vajrabodhi was still alive; otherwise the time would almost double the actual total duration, and Bukong would have rounded it up to twenty years.

Other anecdotes told in the SGSZ and other sources, if historically true, may have happened during his three years in capital since his return from Sri Lanka. One concerns a supernatural feat involving a military attack, which may have been typical of Bukong’s engagement in the subsequent reigns of Suzong and Daizong. It lauds how Bukong commanded celestial warriors to rescue Liangzhou from a siege during the Tianbao Era. Scholars have already demonstrated that the story is highly questionable from a historical standpoint. The original version appears in a ritual manual ascribed to Bukong, the Pishamen yigui (The Ritual of Vaiśravaṇa,

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T1246); it contains, however, several apparent anachronisms, and these fallacies all came to be avoided when being retold in the *SGSZ*.\(^{140}\)

There is in the *SGSZ* yet another scene set in Xuanzong’s palace that depicts how Bukong humiliated the prominent Daoist wizard, Luo Gongyuan 羅公遠 (fl. 712-13), in a contest of thaumaturgic skills. A slightly different version, with one more contest, is found in the *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎, a work of miscellany compiled during the ninth century.\(^{141}\) Scholars believe that sections of the work contain significant historical credit, but this instance regarding Bukong does not share that overall reliability.\(^{142}\)

In the various works of legendary literature of the late medieval period, Emperor Xuanzong and religious occultists are popular figures. Several such tales feature the displays of supernatural magic arranged in the palace to amuse Xuanzong, and those thaumaturgic contests tend to take place between the two sides of Xuanzong’s favourite Daoist priests, such as Ye Fashan 葉法善 and Luo Gongyuan, and the well-known Esoteric master Vajrabodhi or Bukong. Occasionally one finds that the same elements characteristic to one anecdote appear in others, suggesting emulative efforts at play in popular imagination of the rivaling of numinous power between Esoteric Buddhism and Daoism.\(^{143}\) The single fact that almost all tales of this kind of mythology—and indeed all those about Bukong—were set during the reign of Xuanzong considerably renders its historicity problematic and exudes the quality of popular mythological literature.\(^{144}\)

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\(^{140}\) The earliest discussion about this tale is made by the Japanese scholar MATSUMOTO Bunsaburō 松本文三郎 in his article “Tōbatsu bishamon kō” 兜跋毘沙門考, in which he points out five faults, of which I agree with the first four. See the summary by Yi-liang Chou 1945: 305 (fn. 103). For the story see T1249.21.0228b06-29. For recent studies on the cult of the deity Bishamen in the Tang and its relationship with Bukong, see KOMORO Junko 2003.

\(^{141}\) See *Youyang zazu*: 3 39. Besides the scene same as that in *SGSZ*, there is another game between the two set by Xuanzong over the rain praying, where Bukong also won out.

\(^{142}\) For introduction of the many aspects of the work, see Reed 2003.

\(^{143}\) For one instance that could be to be compared with the stories about Bukong told in *Youyang zazu*, see a legendary biography in *TPGJ* 22: 146-50. For a probe into the textual sources of some of legendary records of Luo Gongyuan, see DONG Guodong 2002. Cf. YAN Yiping 1991. For a study on the cult of Luo Gongyuan, see Verellen 1987. For the subject of Daoist priests and Esoteric monks contending in magical prowess in the Tang palace, please refer to KOBAYASHI Taichirō 1974.

\(^{144}\) I could only address the issue in passing and have to leave it for future dedicated studies. For some discussions, see HUANG Yangxing 2008: 115-127.
Even if the account of a contest between Bukong and Luo is trustworthy, it could contribute nothing aside from confirming that—like many Daoist priests kept in the palace—Bukong’s obligation was no more than to wait upon the royal families and provide entertainment as a petty man with some special skills; he had no part in any serious business.\textsuperscript{145}

The lack of a firm foothold at court made Bukong vulnerable to any happening that would be inimical to him and his foreign teachings. His ostracism from Chang’an, whatever the direct reason, attests to such a situation. His four-year seclusion at Shaozhou deprived him of many patrons and social resources in the capital that he might have otherwise utilized. The first attempt to carry out his mission through political authorities ended with a disgraceful failure.

\textbf{3.2 The Great Esoteric Master among the Frustrated Provincial People}

During the short period in Hexi, Bukong carried out some missionary work with the great support of Geshu Han. With the help of some literati-officials, he translated a couple of the Yoga scriptures, including the first chapter of the \textit{STTS}. The most important achievement for Bukong’s future development, however, turned out to be the interpersonal resources that he developed during this period. All officials and officers of the military government, as was boasted, became his “disciples”.

The literati who served as officials at military provinces, such as Hexi and Longyou, represented a special group of people, who shared some disappointments and suppressed aspirations for their political and bureaucratic prospects. Having been frustrated on the route towards positions in the central government, they decided to try their fortunes in the military government that enjoyed the autonomy in elite recruitment.\textsuperscript{146} The invitation for Bukong to come to the Hexi government happened in such a context; he was not alone.

\textsuperscript{145} My opinion is quite converse to that of some scholars. Not all such magic display could effect substantial patronage. As I will show in this chapter, the emperor would only likely offer institutional support as a reward if there were convincing proof to show that the spiritual power could aid the state in conditions of serious challenge. For observations made based on the present subject, see Manling Luo 2015: 51.

\textsuperscript{146} See SHI Yuntao 2003: 157-58.
One of these frustrated officials was Gao Shi—whose relationship to Bukong has been discussed above—and there were another two who surely kept personal association with Bukong, for we know that Tian Liangqiu 田良丘 (?-759+) and Li Xiyi 李希言 (d. u.) had helped him with Buddhist translation during the period. Another of these figures was the vital Pei Mian 裴冕 (704-770), who kept on good terms with the other three and must have been no stranger to Bukong, though there is no extant reference to their interaction. These were the four top-ranked officials in Geshu Han’s government. As we will see, excepting the dead Geshu and the retired Tian, this group offered concerted support to Crown Prince Li Heng, the future Emperor Suzong, venturing to eclipse the authority of Xuanzong.

The following section is devoted to revealing the interrelated background of these four figures. With the exception of Li Xiyi, about whom little is known regarding his experience before coming to Hexi, each of the rest three had suffered setbacks within the officialdom.

3.2.1 Tian Liangqiu’s Failures in State Examination and his Entry to Hexi Government

Although during the battle against the rebels, Tian Liangqiu was dispirited by the debacle of Geshu Han’s army and distanced himself from the higher official sphere afterward, given that his experience was typical to the elite of the provincial government and that it was he who recommended Gao Shi to Geshu, a brief synopsis of his background would be useful.

According to the ZYL, Tian Liangqiu personally took part in three of Bukong’s translation programs, in all cases acting as a scribe; at that moment, his post in the Hexi government was the Administrative to the Military Commissioner (jiedu panguan 節度判官), with the honorary court-title, Investigating Censors (jiancha yushi 監察禦史)\(^\text{147}\).

Tian had a family tradition of Confucian-oriented education, and during his childhood, he showed a special talent for reciting the *Shijing* 詩經. He was admitted into the state college Taixue 太學, but after several attempts to take the state civil examination, he finally gave up this regular

\(^{147}\) See Appendix A: 267-68.
route into official service with a disdain for the mediocre livelihood within the capital. Hearing that Wang Chui 王倕 (fl. 730s-740s) had become the head of Hexi command in 742, he went there to seek a credible career. Tian met with Wang’s appreciation, but following Wang’s removal in 744, Tian fell into idleness again.

During this period, Tian must have become known to Geshu Han, who had also served as an inferior officer under Wang Chui. Then upon Geshu’s gradual rising to power, Tian was offered a series of petty posts. After Geshu’s appointment as the Military Commissioner of Hexi in 743, Tian was chosen from a host of candidates as one of Geshu’s two administrative assistants, the third top position in the military government.

In early 756, Geshu was put in charge of the defense at the Tongguan Pass against the rebels, and Tian was promoted further to the post of Adjutant, probably to fill the vacancy left by Li Xiyan. Since disease greatly weakened Geshu, the entire military authority was entrusted to Tian, though we are told that his qualms encumbered the decisive and effective exercise of the power.

3.2.2 Gao Shi’s Frustration on the Way to Official Career and Experiences Under Geshu Han

Gao Shi’s acquaintance with Bukong can be inferred from the poem dedicated to them both that we have discussed above. During his early twenties, Gao went to the capital, Chang’an, in search of opportunities to serve state dignitaries, but his talent was never appreciated. Afterwards,

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148 The date for Wang Chui’s appointment as the Military Commissioner of Hexi is inferred from the accounts in ZZZTJ. In the entry of the second month of the first year of the Tianbao Era (762), it refers Wang as Dongdu liushou 東都留守 (Regent of Eastern Capital), while in the entry of the twelfth month of the same lunar year (January 763), Wang’s title becomes the Military Commissioner of Hexi. Thus, the designation must predate 763. See ZZZTJ: 215, 6852 and 6852.

149 For a sketch of Tian Liangqiu’s life, see his biography composed by Yu Shao 于邵 (c. 717-c. 797), QTW: 793, 4192-93. Yu Shao, however, did not provide Tian’s exact office in Hexi government. For a discussion of the office “Jiedu panguan” 節度判官, see the discussion by YAN Gengwang (1969: 187-94) and the additional remarks by SHI Yuntao (2003: 93-94).

150 For example see the biography of Geshu Han in JTS (104, 3213-14).

151 Ibid.

152 The possible author of the poem, Liu Chanqing, has also a poem written to Li Xiyan in the very year of 756, who we will turn to below. See “Ba sheguan hou jiang huan jiuju liuci Li shiyu” 罷攝官後將還舊居留辭李侍禦, in YANG & LIU 1999: 162-65.
he traveled to a couple of prefectural and provincial governments to find new opportunities, but these attempts were futile. He ended up with some measly offers in Liangzhou and Songzhou districts. With an unfulfilled and burning desire for better scope for political development, in 735, he returned to Chang’an to sit for the state examination. He was out of luck, however, and left the capital to again render temporary services to a number of local governments. In 749, at the age of fifty-one, he received the pivotal support of a prefect and finally passed an imperial exam. Then his first official appointment ensued, a petty county post at Fengqiu — a situation in which he found himself completely fettered. In 752, he resigned from office and returned to Chang’an. After some time of idleness, he was employed by Geshu Han’s government in the autumn of the next year, upon the recommendation obliged by Tian Liangqiu. In the military government of Hexi and Longyou, Gao frequently dedicated laudatory poems to Geshu Han or sent his artistic writings to his colleagues to address their friendship, which suggests that Gao found a wide circle of congenial literati and officials in the Hexi government. In the preface of a poem, he mentioned that together with Li Xiyuan and Pei Mian, he arranged a farewell party for one of their friends who had been transferred to another local government. It encourages one to include the three into this harmonious coterie.

In 754, Gao followed Geshu to the court, and on the request of the latter, a group of his subordinate officials and officers were promoted by the throne. Gao rose to the post of Chief Secretary (zhang shuji), the fourth highest position in the military government. When Geshu was commissioned as the commander-in-chief to repel the Rebellion after early 756, Gao was with Geshu in the command headquarters at Chang’an. Upon the routing of Geshu’s army at Tongguan, Gao fled back to the capital. Before the throne, he imputed the defeat to the eunuch-supervisors and denounced their wanton misuse of authority at the front, provoking a

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153 For detailed historical reconstruction of this subject, see ZHOU Xunchu 1980.
154 The text is titled “Song Dou Shiyu zhi Hexi Hedi huan jing xu” 送竇侍禦知河西和糴還京序. See the observation of ZHOU Xunchu (1980: 89).
155 For a discussion of this post, see YAN Gengwang 1969: 194-96; and SHI Yuntao 2003: 95-98.
dispute with Yang Guozhong. Upon learning of Xuanzong’s clandestine flight from the capital, Gao moved instantly and caught up the imperial company. He continued advising the emperor with concrete strategies when the court stayed at Chengdu.\footnote{ZHOU Xunchu 1980: 92-93.}

**3.2.3 Li Xiyan’s Obscure Background**

Li Xiyan held the office of Adjutant (xingjun sima 行軍司馬) in Hexi government, and while Bukong was translating the core scripture of the Yoga, the \textit{STTS}, Li served as the scribe. He might have been a collateral descendant of the royal family,\footnote{\textit{JTS}: 64, 2492. It should also be noted that the chief minister at Emperor Daizong’s court and one of Bukong’s supporters, Yuanzai, was offered a prefectural post by Li Xiyan during the tenure as a provincial governor at Suzhou.} but how he came to Geshu Han’s government we do not know. When Geshu was summoned to the capital in 754, Li did not accompany him but stayed behind together with Pei Mian.\footnote{Gao Shi wrote a poem speaking about this parting, see ZHOU Xunchu 1980: 89.} In 754, Tian Liangqiu replaced him as the Adjutant, when he must have been offered a promotion in the south, as the prefect of Wujun 吳郡 and a province-level supervisor, the Investigation Commissioner.\footnote{It was rendered as \textit{jiangnan dong dao caifang shi} 江南東道採訪使 or \textit{wujun caifangshi} 吳郡採訪使.} It was in this post that he, Gao Shi, and another official-general united their forces to guard the position of the new emperor.

**3.2.4 Pei Mian’s Forced Transfer from the Capital**

Although there are no direct accounts concerning Pei Mian’s personal interaction with Bukong, they were not strangers within the Hexi government. At the least, Pei must have received Bukong’s \textit{abhiṣeka} service and befriended Gao Shi and Li Xiyan, as mentioned above. In the eighth month of 753, Pei was employed by Geshu Han as the Vice Military Commissioner (\textit{jiedu fushi} 節度副使) in the Hexi military government.\footnote{Almost all the primary sources mistake Pei Mian’s post in Hexi government as Adjutant (xingjun sima 行軍司馬). Thanks to one of Gao Shi’s poems, we learn that his position should be Vice Military Governor, but the current edition of the poem renders the title strangely and falsely as \textit{fu jiezhi} 副節制. See Gao Shi “Song Dou Shiyu zhi Hexi hedi huan jing xu” 送竇侍禦知河西和糴還京序 (SUN Qinshan 1984: 322-24). The Adjutant at that time, as many sources concur, was Li Xiyan instead. The Vice Governor was the second top office in the military government of the Tang dynasty, Xingjun Sima the third; the former being placed in charge of military affairs while}
Pei was from a great family of the Hedong area. He was not a literatus, but gained his first office, though a petty post at a county, by virtue of hereditary privilege. His administrative calibre nonetheless brought him quite a reputation and eventually earned him the appreciation and promotion by Wang Hong 王鉷 (d. 752).

In 752, Wang Hong’s brother, Wang Han 王鎔 (d. 752), was involved in a military coup in the capital plotted by one of his close friends, Xing Zai 邢縡 (d. 752). The conspiracy was uncovered, and Wang Hong was ordered to capture the culprit. Aware of his brother’s doing, Wang secretly warned him to run away from Xing. Yang Guozhong believed that both of the Wang brothers were involved in the affair, but the emperor was not convinced of Wang Hong’s guilt. Yang, on the secret instruction of the emperor, advised Wang to denounce his brother’s guilt before the throne and then beg pardon for him, but Wang refused to do so, insisting instead on his brother’s innocence. Finally, Wang Han confessed and was flogged to death, while Wang Hong was ordered to commit suicide.162

Among all the subordinates and private advisors of Wang Hong, Pei was the only one who dared to stand out and ask for the interment of Wang’s body. Pei’s action won him widespread moral reputation, which made Geshu Han invite him to Hexi, as the traditional history implies.163

The transfer of office, nevertheless, was an unfavourable change; it transformed Pei from a court official to a local one. The point is that as an Attendant Censor (shi yushi 侍禦史), he had spoken up in defense of Wang Hong, and the fact that the latter had been proved guilty must have considerably affected Pei’s position and prospects at court.164

As we will see, except for Tian Liangqiu, these men proved to be bold enough to encourage the crown prince to take the throne to create a promising opportunity for their political promotion.

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163 For example, see JTS: 113, 335.
164 As is pointed out, much of the same could be said for the situation of Li Linfu, who had promoted Wang Hong and tried to defend him during the interrogation. See Pulleyblank 1956: 100-01; Twitchett 1979: 430.
The long-suppressed political aspiration gave them a strong sense of situation and drove them to extremities to continue their thwarted endeavor. They were Bukong’s colleagues in the provincial government, and altogether, they created a court that each of them had been yearning for.

3.3 Historical Context Concerning Li Heng’s Political Situations

3.3.1 Li Heng: An Isolated Crown Prince Constantly under Attack

Geshu Han’s early connections gave the political hue of Hexi government a tinge of affinity towards Crown Prince Li Heng, which might have predisposed his protege to the same inclination. Indeed, after his death, many of his subordinates chose to stand on the side of Li Heng instead of Xuanzong—including but not limited to Bukong, Li Xiyan, Gao Shi, and Pei Mian. Before turning to this subject, the political situation of the crown prince under Xuanzong and the new development in this regard after the outbreak of the An Lushan rebellion must be laid out.

Ever since he was installed as crown prince, Li Heng had been excluded from the governmental and political sphere. The institutional base of the crown prince was paralyzed, his activities were stringently limited and put under strict surveillance, and his friends who seemed to be growing into his political supporters were purged one after another. This was all to guarantee that the dictatorial position of his father would last and be free of any possible menace from a successor. Such political impotence made Li Heng constantly vulnerable to attack from the domineering ministers.

Back when Li Heng’s brother, Li Ying 李瑛 (706-737), was still the heir apparent, Emperor Xuanzong began to take the initiative to strip Li Ying of all political backing and official institutions. More importantly, the East Palace—the residence and government premise of the crown prince staffed by a group of ministers to develop the prince’s statecraft—was deliberately crippled during the period.

Firstly, Xuanzong uprooted the crown prince from the East Palace. Along with other royal princes, Li Ying had moved to a side-quarter near the emperor’s residence. Xuanzong moved his residence and court from Taiji 太極 Palace to the newly-built Xingqing 興慶 Palace in 728, but
there was no special quarters like the East Palace designed for the crown prince as in the case of Taiji Palace.

Secondly, the emperor further prohibited Li Ying from contacting his ministers; they were simply forbidden to meet each other. He was placed under the constant and immediate surveillance of the emperor’s personal scouts. This situation quickly became normalized for the crown prince.\textsuperscript{165} Without any bureaucratic space or resources, it is no wonder that throughout Li Ying’s career as crown prince, no remarkable political undertakings can be gleaned from various primary sources.

The major political support for Li Ying came from the chief ministers, who usually held concurrent positions in the East Palace and were liable to safeguard the political status of the crown prince from the encroachment of the emperor. Such an institutional bond appeared to be a vexing barrier for Xuanzong to exert the absolute sovereignty that he had become more and more engrossed in, and this institutional symbiosis was also destroyed by him in the process of deposing Li Ying.

During this time, the chief minister, Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (678-740), made the most steadfast protest to the decision for which Xuanzong had no warrant. Zhang’s doings had become more and more irksome to the emperor, resulting in his relegation and then banishment. The emperor replaced him with Li Linfu 李林甫 (683-753), who, unlike Zhang, never confronted the throne, always taking an ingratiating stance. Concerning the deposition of Li Ying, Li insisted that it was an imperial family affair, and as such, outsiders should never interfere.

The regime of Li Linfu saw an upheaval concerning the role of the chief minister and its relationship with the throne and with the crown prince. From then on, the chief ministers became henchman responsible only for the emperor’s personal will and became the chief executives in the central government, and the same time, their clout spread into almost all fields of state affairs.

\textsuperscript{165} JTS: 107, 3271-72. Cf. REN Shiying 2003: 21-42.
Zhang Jiuling became the last chief minister of Xuanzong’s reign that would struggle to have a hand in the decision-making on major state policies.

The extinguished institutional linkage between the chief ministers and the crown prince and their drastic unbalance in power led to constant attack from the former on the subsequent crown prince, Li Heng.

Thus, with the institutional shield of the Crown Prince removed, Xuanzong could freely continue with his agenda. In 737, on the day following Zhang’s banishment, Li Ying was formally deposed and murdered, together with another two princes. A new heir apparent needed to be selected between Li Heng and Li Mao 李瑁 (715-775). Li Heng was the third son of Xuanzong, by Lady Yang who had died long before; while Li Mao was the eighteenth son by Xuanzong’s favorite, Wu Huifei 武惠妃 (c. 690-738). Li Heng fit best into Xuanzong’s concern with undisturbed sovereignty, who had little connection with the imperial harem or much support from the court. Alternately, Li Mao held deep relations with other royal families and, most seriously, he enjoyed the joint support of both his ambitious mother and also Li Linfu, the exact scenario of coalition between the prince and chief minister that Xuanzong had just extirpated by deposing Li Ying. Simply speaking, there were far more favourable conditions to nurture Li Mao’s political strength.

Installed as the crown prince, Li Heng was supposed to be kept from soils rich for political growth, while the ambitious chief minister was powerful enough to subject all the court officials to his dominance. Taking advantage of Xuanzong’s hypersensitivity to the crown prince’s power, Li Linfu intrigued to remove of all his potential rivalries and disobedient officials and then to topple Li Heng per se. In doing so, he created a succession of false incriminations including one against Li Heng’s intimate friend, the general Wang Zhongsi 王忠嗣 (706-750), and one against Li Heng’s brother-in-law Wei Jian 韋堅 (d. 746) and another of his friends, Huangfu Weiming 皇甫

166 See REN Shiyin 2003: 53-64, 146-60.
Both accusations were leveled on the same ground, namely that they had been plotting to depose Xuanzong and enthrone Li Heng. As the result, all those accused were executed for lese-majesty, breeding a horrible political climate.\(^{168}\)

Although Li Heng’s own position was unaffected, it was clearly too dangerous for him to associate with any ministers, let alone to keep a sizable group of political adherents. Needless to say, the offices in his bureau of the East Palace had already been either made into sinecures or honorary positions or utterly left vacant.\(^{169}\) Li Heng had been completely alienated from the political sphere.

After the death of Li Linfu, Yang Guozhong grabbed the position and monopolized even greater power at court. As primary sources eloquently show, Yang harboured equal enmity towards Li Heng, deeming him as a latent threat to his position. There were no patent conflicts between the two parties reported in the sources, however, for the crown prince had carefully remained distanced from politics; but the exigency that arose from the war against the An Lushan rebels pushed him to the very fore of the political stage and thus threw Yang Guozhong and his families, including Xuanzong’s favorite imperial consort Yang Guifei (Yang Yuhuan 楊玉環, 719-756), into panic.\(^{170}\)

### 3.3.2 Li Heng: Coming to the Fore

Xuanzong’s efforts to contain the prince’s power continued as the effects of An Lushan’s rebellion became devastating. Before then, the position of commander-in-chief for the campaign to crush the rebels, which was wont to be offered to the crown prince, had been retained for the prince Li Wan 李琬 (d. 756). Although the title was merely a nominal one, it could still be

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\(^{168}\) Ibid: 97-145.

\(^{169}\) Ibid: 170-92.

\(^{170}\) The hostility of the Yangs to the Prince became most evident when Emperor Xuanzong initially decided to lead a military expedition to subdue the rebels in person and entrust the duty of regent to Li Heng, as the Prince Regent. Apprehensive that Li Heng would consequently seize the supreme power and take reprisal against them, Yang Guozhong prodded Yang Guifei to thwart Xuanzong from doing so. Because of Yang Guifei’s dramatic objection, Xuanzong perished the thought. See *JTS*: 51, 2180; 106, 3245. *ZZTJ*: 217, 6940-41. Cf. the analysis of LÜ Simian 1959: 216.
regarded as a source for reaping cachet and credit if the campaign could succeed. Xuanzong made his choice of candidate in line with his consistent strategy to hold back the prince’s rise and partly because of Yang’s opposition. However, the sudden death of Li Wan in the beginning of 756 finally made him think about allowing Li Heng to gain some of the glory that had been due to him so long, but some further unexpected occurrences finally led to Li Heng’s political rise.

In the following discussions, I render the historical context concerning Li Heng’s political rise and, at the same time, deal with the relationship between him and Geshu Han, the leader of the Hexi group of officials and officers and the commander-in-chief in resisting the An Lushan rebellion.

3.3.2.1 A Shared Friend and Foe of Geshu Han and the Crown Prince: Wang Zhongsi and Li Linfu

The chief minister Li Linfu’s ruthless assault on the general Wang Zhongsi brought about a possible affinity between the Li Heng and Geshu Han. Li Heng and Wang grew up as best friends ever since their childhood, while Geshu was Wang’s loyal and dauntless subordinate. Such an indirect association plus a shared foe in the person of Li Lifu made their unspoken concord more than likely. Geshu’s favorable attitude towards the crown prince may have an impact on those officials in the Hexi government that we discussed above. Li Heng’s first emergence from historical background came to be associated with Geshu Han, and his assumption of supreme power was realized by those unswerving champions that came from Geshu’s government.

Like Tian Liangqiu, Geshu Han originally worked under Wang Chui in the Hexi Military Command after spending three unhappy years in Chang’an. His tactical talent impressed Wang Chui, and after Wang Zhongshi was made the head (745) of both the Hexi and the Longyou commands, Geshu’s heroic exploits and outstanding skills in disciplining soldiers won him much more appreciation. After a succession of promotions, he became Wang Zhongsi’s second in command in less than two years.171 In return, Geshu repaid Wang’s kindness with fierce loyalty.

171 See the biographies of Geshu Han in JTS (104,3211) and XTS (135, 4569).
In 747, Emperor Xuanzong tried to have Wang Zhongsi recover a fortress near the Kokonor lake (i.e. Shibao Cheng 石堡城) that had been lost to the Tibetans for some time, but Wang responded with his dissent, considering that at best it would result in a pyrrhic victory. The emperor was displeased and entrusted the task to another officer, whom Wang was ordered to back up. Wang acted reluctantly and the mission failed. The officer then pushed the blame onto Wang.

By this time, Wang Zhongsi had already been included on Li Linfu’s list of potential rivals and was fit into the schedule to disgrace the crown prince. Li Linfu had just finished with a similar project but with only partial success: the downfall of Huangfu Weiming and Wei Jian. Now Li Linfu took advantage of Wang Zhongsi’s military faults and repeated the same tactics. He played up the intimate relationship between Wang and the prince and charged the former with plotting to install the prince on throne. Xuanzong, yet again, was not convinced of the prince’s guilt, but he became enraged at Wang and decided to execute him. Xuanzong’s decision to remove Wang Zhongsi was partly fueled by his suspicion that Wang might become the prince’s powerful backer in due time. With Wang’s dismissal, Geshu Han was promoted to the head of the Hexi and the Longyou commands, but he desperately begged the emperor for mercy to forgive Wang Zhongsi, even asking for his own disgrace as an exchange. As the result, Wang was banished rather than killed.\footnote{For a probe of this issue, see REN Shiyiing 2003: 106-22. See the biographies of Wang Zhongsi in JTS (103: 3199-201) and XTS (133, 4553-54), as well as the biographies of Geshu Han in JTS (104, 3212) and XTS (135:4570). The stele inscription of Wang Zhongsi written by Yuan Zai imputed Wang’s tragedy to Li Linfu’s sinister assault. For the stele-text, see QTW: 369, 3749. Cf. Twitchett 1979: 425-26} Some time later, it seems that Geshu had tried to avenge Wang Zhongsi when he joined forces with a couple of Li Linfu’s enemies in an effort to attack him.\footnote{See the discussion of Pulleyblank 1956: 101.}

### 3.3.2.2 The An Lushan Rebellion, a Possible Coalition, and another Shared Foe

The extreme disequilibrium between the forces of the chief minister and the crown prince was finally changed soon after the outbreak of the An Lushan rebellion.

In the eleventh month of 755, An Lushan, holding the governorship of three commands on the northeast frontier, declared rebellion at his headquarters of Fanyang 范陽. Within one month,
An Lushan’s armies swept the Hebei area with few counterattacks. The Tang court hastily levied armies and nominated Prince Li Wan as the nominal generalissimo and made general Gao Xianzhi the actual commander-in-chief. When Gao and Feng Changqing were executed by Xuanzong due to their retreat and defensive strategy, Gao’s duty was passed onto Geshu Han, and the sudden death of Li Wan in the twelfth month of 756 made caused Li Heng to become generalissimo. This associated Geshu with Li Heng, at least nominally.\(^\text{174}\)

Before then, Xuanzong had planned to lead an expedition by himself and leave Li Heng behind as the Regent Prince (jianguo 監國). As already mentioned, the plan was abolished because of the opposing of Yang Guozhong and Yang Guifei, with the dreadful anticipation that Li Heng would grab the opportunity to eliminate them by all means.

Geshu Han’s institutional affiliation to Li Heng made Yang Guozhong rather anxious. When Geshu was engaged in the deployment of the defenses at Tongguan Pass, one of Geshu’s subordinate commanders, Wang Sili 王思禮 (d. 761), who had been Geshu’s fellow under Wang Zhongsi, purportedly suggested to Geshu that they assassinate Yang Guozhong. The imprudent idea was rejected.\(^\text{175}\) Yang was convinced that Geshu would turn against him in due course, and as a precautionary measure, he made an excuse and persuaded Emperor Xuanzong to arrange a rearguard force to station behind Geshu’s army, which, in the charge of one of Yang’s own stalwarts, would guard against Geshu’s sudden attack against him.

\(^{174}\) Because of this, Geshu’s title of commander-in-chief underwent an adaptation. Originally as the successor of Gao Xianzhi and under the nominal leadership of Li Wan, Geshu’s post was called “Vice Marshal of the Eastward Expedition” (dongtao fu yuanshuai 東討副元帥), and now he was addressed instead by the title “Marshal of the Crown Prince Spearhead” (huangtaizi xianfeng bingma yuanshuai 皇太子先鋒兵馬元帥). For a historical reconstruction of the event, see REN Shiyi 2003: 211-18.

\(^{175}\) As is observed, Wang Sili might represent some officers under Geshu Han, who stood on the side of the Prince. After their army was destroyed by the rebels and Geshu was captured, Li Heng executed a major officer called Li Chengguang 李承光 but showed favour to Wang Sili. It is rather noteworthy that Li and Wang had been rivalling each other when the poor health prevented Geshu from carrying out the command by himself. See REN Shiyi 2003: 221-22. The recklessness of Wang Sili’s suggestion was pointed out by LÜ Simian, but his reasoning seems to have gone too far in denying the reliability of all sources telling the hostility of Gesh Han towards Yang Guozhong. See LÜ Simian 1959: 217.
Yang’s stalwart was killed by Geshu, so Yang designed another scheme. He persuaded the throne to order Geshu to abandon the Tongguan pass and make an offensive action towards the rebels, a step that would ruin the loyalist army altogether. The military complexion would require the Tang army to hold fast to the pass of Tongguan and avoid any head-on combat, as was the contemporary consensus, and any attempt of proactive strike would risk the loss of the pass and the imminent fall of the capital. In the sixth month of 756, Yang, however, took the advantage of a piece of intelligence and convinced Xuanzong that there appeared a perfect opportunity to destroy the rebels. Pressed by the repeated imperial order, Geshu Han led his army and left Tongguan. As would be expected, in the battle, the Tang army was shattered and Geshu himself was captured and murdered by the rebels.

The above historical context demonstrates that there were obvious frictions between Yang Guozhong and Geshu Han. Yang, as the common enemy of Geshu and Li Heng, made the official connection between the two into a plausible political alliance. This may have fostered a positive attitude of Geshu’s subordinates towards the crown prince, including Pei Mian, Li Xiyan, and Bukong.

3.4 Crowning the New Emperor

During Xuanzong’s flight from the doomed capital, Yang Guozhong was murdered in a mutiny of the palace army, and Yang Guifei was hanged. After the event, Xuanzong proceeded towards Chengdu, while Li Heng was left to recover the land, which led to the ending of Xuanzong’s reign. This happened through the instigation by a couple of people, among whom were the provincial literati-officials Pei Mian and Du Hongjian, Bukong’s fellow student under Vajrabodhi.

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178 A great deal of scholarship has been devoted to this issue, generating various theories about the masterminds of this coup and whether the Prince was among the conspirers. The subject is not germane to the topic here, so I leave it unsurveyed. Suffice to say, Li Heng could not easily escape from the suspicion of Xuanzong and feared the ruthless punishment of his ruthless father, the very point to which both various primary accounts and the contrasting interpretations of historians rightly attest.
3.4.1 A Prospective Ruler and Many Empty Posts: Li Heng Surrounded by the Provincial and Periphery People

Through the contextual discussion above, it is clear that the prince was in constant want of bureaucratic advisors and political backings ever since his installation. The situation had been exacerbated by the unprepared flight, which very few ministers managed to catch up to join in. Having stopped traveling with the court, the prince was left with only the company of his family and eunuchs. He had a small troop at his command and was not sure where to go next.

For people who had suffered setbacks in their official careers and had been confined to the margins of the political sphere, such a near bureaucratic vacuum was extremely exciting and seductive; it offered a rare chance for them to obtain political power and historical acclaim. Du Hongjian and Pei Mian, in this respect, were the typical examples.

Du Hongjian had been studying Esoteric Buddhism with Bukong’s late master, Vajrabodhi, and he authored one of the memorial texts for the master and then became one of Bukong’s major supporters. Since the late Tianbao Era, he held high positions in the Shuofang 朔方 command, and during the Rebellion, he acted as the representative of this military government in communication with the court. ¹⁷⁹

Upon the suggestion of one of Li Heng’s sons, all his followers agreed that they had to fall back on the Shuofang forces that lay not far off in the north. The north had stood out as the only military power that the court could summon to continue with the daunting cause of restoration after the greater military bloc of Hexi and Longyou was shattered in the battle at the gate of Tongguan.

¹⁷⁹ The posts are given as Capital Liaison of Shuofang Command (shuofang liuhou 朔方留後) and Vice Commissioner of General Accounts (zhidu fushi 支度副使). Du Hongjian was a nephew of Du Xian 杜暹, a former prime minister in the Kaiyuan Era. He passed the examination of Jinshi 进士 and was employed by An Sishun 安思顺 to Shuofang as an Administrative Assistant. See his biographies in JTS (108, 3282-85) and XTS (126, 4423). A circumstantial reference seems to tell that he had been a subordinate of Geshu Han, but further references are needed to verify this claim. See XTS (135, 4575): As [Geshu] Han was caught by the bandits, [Geshu Yao (the Son of Geshu Han)] wailed with indignation and grief. Over the view, the previous subordinates [of Geshu Han] Pei Mian and Du Hongjian, among others, heaved a sigh. (哥舒翰子曜) 以翰陷賊，哀憤號慟，故吏裴冕、杜鴻漸等見之歎息.
However, it seems that the lack of any information about the stance of Shuofang on the civil strife made Li Heng hesitate in making such a move.

Li Heng’s corps headed northward nevertheless and soon reached Ping Liang, when a number of officials of the Shuofang government—headed by Du Hongjian—sent a message inviting Li Heng to Lingwu, the headquarters of the Shuofang command. The Du’s proposal was further bolstered by the arrival of Pei Mian, who had remained at Hexi when Geshu Han was in charge of the defense at Tongguan and had lately received Xuanzong’s order to join up with Li Heng. Although still hesitating along the way, the prince arrived there.

After Li Heng arrived at Lingwu, Pei and Du repeatedly encouraged him to proclaim himself emperor, exposing themselves to the risk of being charged as the culprits of usurpation. The political status of founding ministerships, however, was too tempting for them; such a high-ranking position may have been beyond their boldest imagination.

It seems that such a scheme was too alluring to have been incubating in the minds of Pei and Du alone; the adherents of Li Heng were equally active in this regard. Li Fuguo, his favourite eunuch, would not miss the opportunity to seize the political initiative and showed equal enthusiasm in animating the Prince to ascension. Their intent was spelled out by Li Mi, a resourceful Daoist who had been Li Heng’s intimate friend ever since childhood and was recently sought out from the mountain for assistance. Li Mi disputed this drastic proposal, and when Li Heng had proclaimed emperor, he still insisted on postponing the creation of an empress, saying, “When in Lingwu, Your Majesty assumed the throne because the various

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180 See ZZTJ: 218, 6980-81.
182 Li Fuguo, as well as Li Heng’s consort Lady Zhang and his sons, had encouraged him to part company with Xuanzong while at the Mawei-yi post station. See the biography of Li Fuguo in JTS: 134, 4759.
183 Years before, Xuanzong appreciated Li Mi’s talent and wanted to offer him an official position, which was declined. Somehow, Yang Guozong grew viciously jealous of Li Mi and contrived to banish him. Later, Li Mi moved to Yingyang and lived in seclusion until he was summoned by Li Heng. See ZZTJ: 218, 2685. Cf. JTS: 130, 3621. XTS: 139, 4632.
ministers were longing for paltry merit, which was not prioritizing selfish consideration” 陛下在
靈武，以羣臣望尺寸之功，故踐大位，非私己也。184

The wish of “various ministers” was fulfilled; Pei Mian and Du Hongjian became the most
prominent ministers of the new court. Pei, in particular, was appointed as one of the chief
ministers.185

Besides those ministers, Bukong, the Buddhist master of the Hexi officials, was also
involved in the scheme to enthrone Li Heng. Bukong had been summoned from Hexi to the capital
in the summer of 756, and while at Chang’an, Li Heng immediately sent greetings and instructions
to him,186 suggesting a connection through Geshu Han. While Bukong was trapped in the fallen
capital, with Hanguang acting as the liaison, he kept an unimpeded communication with Suzong
all the while.187 Suffice to say, the network involving Bukong, Pei Mian, and Du Hongjian
functioned as a sort of mutual reference and their concerted action undoubtedly helped all of them
win full trust within a short while.

It seems quite abnormal that foreign religious figures could play any part in enthronement;188
however, this can be explained by Li Heng’s desperate demand for every sort of legitimizing
support—including the religious. After his departure from Xuanzong, he immediately sent people
to search for one of his most trustworthy and brilliant friends, Li Mi. And before marching far, the
Prince met a monk called Daoping 道平 (d. u.) in Jincheng 金城 county (the present-day Xingping

184 See ZZTJ: 218, 7000.
185 Du Hongjian was appointed as a Section Director of the Military Ministry (bingbu langzhong 兵部郎中) and the
Acting Secretariat Drafter (zhi zhongshu sheren 知中書舍人). Pei Mian became an ad hominem chief minister (tong
zhongshu menxia pingzhangshi 同中書門下平章事) and the vice president of the Secretariat (zhongshu shiliang 中書
侍郎). See JTS: 10, 243. Du soon became to be referred to as the vice president of the Military Ministry (wubu shilang
武部侍郎). See JTS: 10, 246. As Li Heng’s old personal servant, Li Fuguo was entrusted the imperial authority in
almost all fields of affairs.
186 The association between Bukong and Li Heng was roughly only one month, until the flight of the court in the sixth
month of the year. See Appendix A: 269-70.
187 See Appendix A: 270-71.
188 There was a precedent to Bukong’s involvement in creation of a new reign: a “barbarian” monk called Huifan 慧/惠范
(d. 713), active during the reigns of Empress Wu and her two successors. Like Bukong, he deeply involved in
court politics and maintained personal relationship with a variety of personages, including the royal families and
courtiers, and he was also enfeoffed as a duke. See the recent study by Jinhua Chen (2016).
and he appreciated the monk’s suggestion and appointed him as a general.\textsuperscript{189} His newly established court was staffed with fewer than thirty members, counting both civil and military.\textsuperscript{190}

Indeed, it is said that the new emperor issued an imperial edict seeking unusual talents across the country, and Li Gan 黎干 (716-779), an adept in astrology, black magic, and mystical soothsaying, was invited to Lingwu as a result.\textsuperscript{191} We are also certain that a number of Buddhist and Daoist priests were invited to the new court, and most of them—if not all—were asked to spiritually empower the Tang armies in the battle against the rebels. The weakness in military strength may have boosted Li Heng’s zeal for the otherworldly support.

Li Heng consulted a well-known Daoist master, Li Hanguang 李含光 (683-769), who had been the favorite priest of Xuanzong, and resorted to his spiritual operations to eradicate the evil forces that caused the great unrest,\textsuperscript{192} and the monk Biancai 辯才, we can also learn, was commissioned with sacred missions.\textsuperscript{193} In the year following Li Heng’s ascension, one hundred monks were selected and organized into a special group that was devoted to day-and-night services.

\textsuperscript{189} See the account in Dasong sengshi lüe (T2126.54.0248c21-25): In late Tianbao Era, the monk Daoping resided at a monastery in the county of Jinping. When [the state] encountered the rebellious turbulence caused by [An] Lushan, Emperor Xuanzong granted a favorable visit to the region of Shu 蜀, while Emperor Suzong visited the monastery en route. [Daoping earnestly cautioned [Suzong] to [proceed and] make the strategic planning at Lingwu, [in order to eventually] recover Chang’an. Thus Suzong put him in charge of a troop, appointing him as the General-in-charge of Jinwu Guards. When marching to Lingao 臨臯, they met with the rebels, and [Daoping] fought a fierce war [with the enemy].

\textsuperscript{190} See ZZTJ: 218, 6983.

\textsuperscript{191} See Li Gan’s tomb tablet in Tangdai muzhi huibian: 1861 (貞元 O 三四). “When the area of Heshuo (i.e. Hebei) being scourged not long ago and when armies were marshaled throughout the country, a decree was issued to seek extraordinary talents. It was ordered that His Excellency visit the whereabouts of the court by the post horse, and Suzong treated him as his teacher. Initially, he was appointed as Adjutant of the Left Xiao Guards, and soon transferred to The Crown Prince’s Secretarial Receptionist” 河朔初梗，天下徵兵，詔求非常之才。詔公乘騏詣行在，肅宗師焉。初拜左驍衛兵曹參軍，旋拜太子通事舍人

\textsuperscript{192} A letter addressed to Li Hanguang by Emperor Suzong reads, “We recently led the military forces and wiped out the murderous villain. [We] saved the masses and recaptured the two capitals... By virtue of the auspices from the [god] Xuanyuan 元元, [we] recreated the enterprise of the state. This also owes, master, to your vigorous cultivation of the power of vows, which has its contribution to it. 肅宗頃垂幹戈，掃除凶慝，保全萬姓，克定兩京 [...] 仰荷元元之祐，再成宗社之業；亦師精修願力，有以助之” See QTW: 44, 485.

\textsuperscript{193} The appointment of Biancai to the position of Guannei Jiaoshou 管內教授 (the preceptor disciplining the palace?) was upon the recommendation of Du Hongjian. See the record in FZTJ, T2035.49.0376c21-23.

\textsuperscript{189} C.f. the account in FZTJ, T2035.49.0375c21-23.
Buddhist chanting so as to invoke divine assistance. Some of them, such as Yuanjiao, would have followed the court and moved to Chang’an once the city was recovered.\textsuperscript{194} In the meantime, Li Heng asked his people to scout about for a thaumaturgic monk that had appeared in his dream to strengthen the chanting group.\textsuperscript{195}

Among these unusual talents, Bukong distinguished himself in his synthetic utilization of worldly sophistication and otherworldly resources to locate and address Suzong’s major political concern.

\textbf{3.4.2 Championing the New Ruler that was under Threat}

It took a month for the news to reach Chengdu (the eighth month of 756), where Xuanzong settled and gathered a sizable court. Xuanzong reluctantly accepted the unexpected ending of his regime and yielded part of his imperial power through a \textit{post hoc} edict of abdication. He would be sharing the authority over civil affairs and military deployments and promised that he would take full retirement after the capital was recovered.\textsuperscript{196} With the vast region in the south in control, which had become the major revenue source for the military expenses since the loss of the great
plain in the north, Xuanzong’s court in Chengdu continued to be a political centre, especially
taking into consideration the questionable rulership of Li Heng. Thus, there were two courts
rivaling each other. In such a situation, two of the Hexi officials discussed above, Gao Shi and Li
Xiyuan, showed express and steadfast favouritism towards the new emperor.

In fact, Xuanzong took several means to counterbalance the power of Suzong; he repeatedly
appointed his trusted confidants as chief ministers and sent them to Suzong’s court. Of the five
chief ministers, only Pei Mian was personally installed by Suzong and represented the latter’s
interests.197

Most importantly, Xuanzong became a rival for Suzong; he seems to have deliberately
entrusted the administrative and military autonomy over the vast south to another prince, Li Lin 李
璘 (c. 720-757). Before learning of Li Heng’s accession, and on the advice of Fang Guan 房琯
(697-763), Xuanzong divided the empire into four greater zones and assigned each to one of his
four princes. Li Lin’s power was the greatest; he was governing the four commands at the middle
and lower reaches of the Yangzi River, which constituted the vital source of revenue to the state. In
comparison, Li Heng was given the two commands on the front that were short of resource and
torn by war. Although Xuanzong revoked these appointments after recognizing the new emperor,
he did not urge Li Lin to relinquish his power and come back to the court, who were actively
recruiting officials, raising army, and stocking up on provisions.

No doubt, Suzong himself took countermeasures against Xuanzong’s hampering. The
ministers with suspicious commissions appointed by Xuanzong were alienated or ousted one after
another within fifteen months.198 The recalcitrant Li Lin caused much more serious a problem. In
the ninth month of 756, Li Lin lavishly made appointments and raised a massive army gathering at

197 These four chief ministers were Wei Jiansu 韋見素, Fang Guan 房琯, Cui Huan 崔渙, and Cui Yuan 崔圓.
198 That is until the fifth month of 758. See the related account in the biography of Wei Jiansu 韋見素 in JTS (108,
3278): Among those ministers appointed by the Retired Emperor, none was assigned the power to deal with state
(fl. 728-759), another officer once under Geshu Han, warned Suzong of the suspicious political stance of Fang Guan,
one of the chief ministers installed by Xuanzong. His observation is quite instructive concerning the contest between
the two courts. See JTS: 111, 3322.
Jiangling 江陵, which greatly depleted the state revenue that should have to be transported to the military front. Li Heng ordered him to abandon his operations and return to Xuanzong, but he flouted his brother’s imperial instructions.

As a result, two officials from Hexi, Li Xiyan and Gao Shi, extended concerted and resolute defence for Li Heng. When Fang Guan advocated Xuanzong’s scheme to separate the military power among the princes, Gao Shi was the only one among the ministers at Chengdu that raised a strong objection.199

In early 757, Li Lin led his majestic army and marched down the Yangzi River, aiming to seize the vast and richest area of Jiangnan. This move had no authorization from either of the two emperors. Once Li Lin’s scheme was fulfilled, he would hold the financial source of the military campaign against the rebellion. It would not only interfere with the military deployment of Suzong, but also challenge his imperial authority.

In such a situation, Li Xiyan addressed a letter, in which he affronted Li Lin’s princeship and castigated his ulterior motivation. Outraged by the letter, Li Lin ordered his troops to attack Li Xiyan’s seat, Suzhou, as well as Yangzhou which was governed by Li Chengshi 李成式. Li Lin smashed their forces and greatly shocked the Jiangnan area.200

Around the same time, Gao Shi was summoned over to Suzong’s court and granted a personal interview, probably owing to the recommendation of Pei Mian, his erstwhile colleague at Hexi and now the only trustworthy chief minister of Suzong’s. Gao was promoted as the military governor of Huainan, headquartered at Yangzhou, and united with another two lately appointed military governors, Gao was preparing an all-out attack on Li Lin.201 Before the plan was carried out, Li Lin’s subordinates changed to Suzong’s side and had him captured and murdered.202

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201 See ZHOU Xunchu 1980: 93-96.
202 Li Lin was pursued by a troop dispatched by Suzong. In ii 757 he was caught but killed by an officer without the imperial approval. See JTS: 107, 3265-66. XTS: 82, 3612.
Up to this time, besides the two contenders for the imperial authority, namely his father and brother, Suzong’s imperial authority was also impaired by an ideological factor. When urging him to mount the throne, Pei Mian and Du Hongjian played up several feeble excuses: that Xuanzong was far away at Chengdu, that the communication was blocked, that a lord responsible for the situation was imperative, and that his ascension for the purpose of subduing the rebellion was a historical inevitability and an act of great filial piety to his father. None of these excuses was able to exonerate Li Heng of usurping the throne. Every bit of gain in merit on the side of his rivalries would push him closer towards the trial accused of the heinous offense against his father and the rightful emperor. Much of the same could be laid on all of those instigators, who had cast their lots with that of the new emperor, and Pei Mian and Du Hongjian would be accused as the culprits. The longer any achievement remained unseen, the larger the hazard would loom. In addition, voices had already risen among some officials and the ordinary people to impugn the legitimacy of his position.

Gnawed by fear and anxiety, Suzong had to end these troubles as soon as possible and, ideally with one stroke. The most effective strategy was to recover the capital, which would yield many benefits. Firstly, it would shroud his sovereignty in an aura of heavenly support and, to a significant extent, prove the legitimacy of his imperial authority. Secondly, the ideological high-ground and actual control of the capital would end the contention for throne underway and turn the tables on any party still coveting the position. Lastly, it would press Xuanzong to fulfill his promise of relinquishing all the power.

This plan, however, was not quite worthwhile in view of the military situation. Instead, the resourceful Li Mi suggested ordering the armies hidden in the ridge along the western border of Hebei to take the rebels’ base at Fanyang, which was weakly defended—an idea that Suzong simply rejected, putting on a hypocritical pretext that he could not wait to welcome Xuanzong

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203 For detailed discussion, see REN Shiying 2003: 242-51.
204 For some officials’ view, see DENG Xiaojun 2012, and for the public opinion, see CHEN Lu 2003.
back to Chang’an and demonstrating his filial piety. This purpose Suzong wanted to achieve at any cost, including the terrible loss of lives and fortune of the populace. He hired an army of mercenary from Uighur, on condition that they may ransack the capital in return.

Bukong, in this respect, was much readier to pander to the throne than Li Mi, and he discerned Suzong’s most urgent concerns and helped him out of the plight, relying on his worldly resources and Esoteric tools. He frequently presented his observations on military tactics, and it seems that he had considerable military knowledge and had been gathering military intelligence that enabled him to do so. Suzong sought out occult Buddhist measures to generate supernatural assistance to his army, and Bukong presented an Esoteric text called \textit{Budong zun bafang shenqi jing 不動尊八方神旗經}. The text may have been put into practice at Suzong’s chapel; the sources, however, never gave any report on the application of the text, so it is difficult to appraise its efficacy and reception.

In contrast, the value of Bukong’s other efforts was much more appreciable to the emperor and much clearer to us. As the two major biographies state, he ventured to make a secret prophecy for emperor Suzong about the exact date that the Tang army would eventually retake the capital. In doing so, we can assume, Bukong staked his religious reputation and political future on the fulfilment of his divination—the possibility of which may have been remote, whatever military knowledge and information he may have based it on. Surprisingly, the prophecy was fulfilled. Whether this story was true or not is irrelevant, for only a few were acquainted with the facts. What mattered was that the emperor needed it be true, signaling that his success was preordained or at least supported by the transcendental authority. The publication and broadcast of this secret story would exert great ideological influence, which might help disperse the questioning of the legitimacy of his sovereignty and dispel the censure of the moral misdeed surrounding his usurpation.

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\textsuperscript{205} Li Mi repeatedly presented his remonstration against such step and carefully set out every reason. Suzong proved to be open to none of them but confessed his true anxiety very obliquely, saying that he could wait for conduct his dawn-dusk filial greetings. See \textit{JTS}: 10, 245; \textit{ZZTJ}: 219, 7018. Cf. the discussion by REN Shiying 2003: 279-80.
It should be added that the result was equally reassuring to the members of the new court, especially those who put Li Heng onto the throne, confirming that what they had done was in accordance with the divine will.

For Bukong, the fulfilment of his prediction testified his occult expertise as an Esoteric master and constituted a great favour to the new emperor as well as the co-founders of the new court. Thus, he secured a distinctive political position at the court and enjoyed a great reputation as a marvellous Esoteric Buddhist master.

3.4.3 The Buddhist Coronation of Suzong and Secular Consecration of Bukong

Bukong’s merit was officially recognized and rewarded. To prepare for the return of Suzong to Chang’an, Bukong was honourably commissioned to cleanse the evil influence left by the sacking that hanged over the palace.206 After Suzong and Xuanzong returned to Chang’an, the former passed judgement on the mass of officials in view of their performance during the rebels’ occupation of capital. In doing so, Suzong consolidated his old followers and widely induced new supporters; thus, he declared the end of the anomalous period of dual courts and the beginning of his own hegemony.

To acknowledge Bukong’s contribution, Suzong conferred on him the title of Imperial Master of Abhiṣeka; an abhiṣeka sanctum presided by Bukong appeared to be under preparation inside the palace, and four of his disciples were selected to be installed in it.207 Although Xuanzong had given Bukong an imperial title, Suzong created a distinction by using the signature term Abhiṣeka to indicate the Esoteric quality of the title. Accordingly, he avoided the name Zhizang, but utilized instead the Chinese translation of the Esoteric title “Bukong”.208 The name Zhizang was dismissed by Bukong on formal occasions ever after, and it passed into history.

206 See Appendix A: 275-76.
207 See Appendix A: 275-77.
208 See Appendix A: 275-76.
together with the reign of Xuanzong whose unstable imperial favour was symbolized by the very name.\textsuperscript{209}

The imperially-favoured title “Bukong” not only signalled Suzong’s new reign-era but also emphasized the Esoteric expertise that Bukong exercised in assisting Suzong to recover the capital and assert his sovereignty. Such a shift in title went beyond the literary relevance; it marked his political rise and the starting point of a politico-religious career that characterizes his remembrance in history.

The cooperation between Suzong and Bukong continued to benefit both sides and reached a climax in the performance of an \textit{abhiṣeka} ceremony to consecrate Suzong as the Buddhist sacred ruler, \textit{cakravartin}. It proved that Suzong’s anxiety for a brilliant profile of legitimate monarch recurred throughout his entire period of reign, and the apparent stain in his usurpation made him emphasize his legitimacy through exploitation of heavenly signs and manipulations of nomenclature and institutions.

In 760, based on an astrological omen, Suzong renamed the reign-era as Shangyuan 上元, despite the fact that this very name had been used by his great-grand father, Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (649-683). This unusual step was to announce a new epoch, distinct from the past reigns of the Tang.

In the ninth month of 761, Suzong took a set of evolutionary actions based on a more auspicious heavenly sign. It was interpreted that the Rebellion would soon be quelled and halcyon days were just around the corner. Therefore, he abolished the established practice of numbering years by era-name and began to reckon the year simply by ordinal numbers instead. In this new calendar, the eleventh lunar month was made the beginning month of the year, and months were named by a series of designations derived from the twelve sections of the celestial circle (\textit{tiangan}

\textsuperscript{209} The date that the court announced the massive reward and punishment was 1 xii 757, when Emperor Suzong began to reverently address Bukong by the name “Bukong”. In \textit{Biaozhi ji}, the last piece of memorial that Bukong signed with the name “Zhizang” was dated 27 x 757, and all of the pieces composed later (the next piece being on 9 xii 757) were signed with the name “Bukong”.

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天干), instead of by ordinal numbers. He dropped all honorary, grandiose words from his reign title and ordered that he be addressed simply as “emperor”. As is pointed out, these audacious policies were drawn from the institution of the ancient, ideal Zhou dynasty and reflect Suzong’s excessive eagerness to sanctify his reign. 

The Esoteric ritual that Bukong performed to sanctify Suzong in the year of 758—known as “Cakaravartin Abhiśeka of Seven Jewels” (qibao lunwang guanding 七寶輪王灌頂)—should be understood in such context. If the rite was not outstanding in glorifying the emperor given the latter’s many dramatic manipulations, for the part of Bukong, it was rather transformative.

According to the Buddhist theory of cosmology and rulership, there are five kinds of rulers in the world that are ranked according to the breadth of their realms within the Buddhist cosmology. To name them in decreasing sequence, they are the King of the Gold Wheel that rules all of the four continents (Skt. dvipa) of the world, the King of the Silver Wheel that controls three of the four, the King of the Bronze Wheel ruling two, the King of the Iron Wheel ruling one, namely the continent of Jambudvīpa, and lastly the Kings Like Scattered Millet (susan wang 粟散王), who own only part of Jambudvīpa. The greatest and true universal ruler, a King of the Gold Wheel, possesses seven jewels that are the testimony of this identity and help him to achieve the universal government. The primary jewel is the Gold Wheel.

It is no fresh extolment that emperors were regarded in terms of Kings of the Wheel (lunwang 輪王) by writers during the Sui-Tang period, Buddhist and secular alike. In some cases, the political implication should not be overestimated, however; they were no more than 

210 The change of the first month of a lunar year was a regular event when there was a dynastic shift. Empress Wu did so when establishing her Great Zhou. The political implication of such calendar change is instructive for us to understand Suzong’s intent to divide his reign from that of his father, Xuanzong. His new system lasted for only six months and was revoked in iv 762, when the court restored the established institutions and declared a new reign-era called Baoying 宝應. For a study on policies on calendar, see SUN Yinggang 2013a.

211 This theory of Cakaravartins could be found in many Buddhist sources. For the account given in texts related by Bukong, see the Renwang jing, T0246.08.0837b14-16.

212 The Seven Jewels are packaged roughly the same in various Buddhist sources. According to Jinlun Wang foding yaolüe niansong fa 金輪王佛頂要略念誦法 translated by Bukong, these are the Gold Wheel, an elephant, a steed, a gem, a concubine, the military strength, and a chancellor of treasury. See T0948.19.0190a28-b01.

213 See the survey in SUN Yinggang 2013b: 83-88.
flattering praise embedded in florid essays and carry little vindicable reference to any imperial governance on a par with the Buddhist ideal. They were merely writers’ trite rhetoric and embellishments onto the already grandiose profile of the monarchs, until Empress Wu (r. 690-705) blatantly posed as a Buddhist sacred monarch. In addition to fabricating scriptural content to prophesy her adventure as the divine ruler of China, she decorated the hall of her court with artificial, resplendent models of the Seven Jewels, to flaunt her identity as a King of Gold Wheel. She kept the very term *jinlun* 金輪 (golden wheel) in her imperial title for the most time of her reign (692-700), albeit with a sequence of modifications in the meantime.214

Female rulership appears heterodox in every way according to Sinitic conceptions of sovereignty, and Empress Wu’s usurpation stirred up pervasive questioning of her unprecedented rulership. To tackle this problem, she turned to Buddhist ideology for an alternative justification.215 Suzong’s situation was comparable, as his doing so also violated the traditional political and moral norms laid out by Confucian teachings. His political use of Buddhist and Daoist thaumaturgists, wondrous phenomena, astrological signs, and supernatural arts all embodied the effort to downplay the contemporary perception of his ascension shaped by the conventional norm of the succession of imperial power.

In this respect, Bukong’s strategy was distinctive; his Esoteric ritualism that had only become recently available to the Chinese rulers could effect a more expressive means than the rigid rhetorical adulation and scriptural adulteration, presenting Suzong as a sage king more directly and explicitly. Empress Wu’s project was carried out by the collective efforts of a group of

214 See SUN Yinggang 2015.
215 One of Empress Wu’s strategies was manipulating Buddhist apocrypha. A number of scholar-monks in support of her rulership compiled a commentary on the apocryphal *Dayun jing* 大雲經 (the Great Cloud Sutra); they interpolated a stanza that foretold Maitreya would have descended from the heaven to rule the world. Another apocrypha, *Baoyu jing* 宝雨經 (the Sutra of Rains of Jewels), was also inserted with a passage prophesying that a Buddhist goddess called Yueguan 月光 (moonlight) would govern the land of China. The Empress herself professed that these two prophecies made by the Buddha referred to no one but Her Majesty, and ten scholar-monks, in her cooperation, prepared a text insinuating that the divine revelations were pointing to her. The commentary equated the empress to Maitreya Bodhisattva and a *cakravartin*. (See Forte 1976) Recently, SUN Yinggang argued that the identity of Maitreya and that of a *cakravartin* are not compatible with the person, and that the more lasting and assured effort of Empress Wu was to depict herself as a *cakravartin*, rather than as Maitreya. See SUN Yinggang 2015.
scholar-monks and was based much more on the authority of the claimed author of scripture, the Buddha, than on the mastery of language and introduction of doctrine. In contrast, Bukong’s ritual performance was idiosyncratic, which underlined the authority of the ritual adept, the performer.\textsuperscript{216} There were dual protagonists on the stage, and the ritual threw both into limelight. Paradoxically, the ritual made Bukong and Suzong each other’s consecrator; this bestowed on Bukong a kind of pope-like divinity.

Although it is unknown whether the ritual was taught in an Esoteric text or an \textit{ad hoc} creation based on Bukong’s Esoteric professionalism,\textsuperscript{217} it seems that the ritual—formally called the Dharma-Gate of Abhiṣeka—was unique to Bukong’s Esoteric tradition. The knowledge and authorization to perform the ritual would be open only to those who obtained his personal initiation;\textsuperscript{218} in other words, only Bukong held the ultimate access to the Esoteric text in question and the authority in the Esoteric art. The term \textit{abhiṣeka} implies such a monopoly.

### 3.5 Conclusion

Under Xuanzong, Esoteric Buddhism was not opened to the masses but restricted to private practice within the initiated few, and it was given no bearing on the political or public affairs.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item A similar observation on the difference between the authority of scriptural translation and that of Esoteric ritual performance has been made by Martin Lehner (2012: 295).
\item Even the \textit{locus classicus} of \textit{cakravartin} lore, the \textit{Cakkavattisīhanādasutta}, mentions the \textit{abhiṣeka} rite only in passing, and the early Buddhist theory is overwhelmingly concerned with their mythic Seven Jewels or how the Buddha’s last rites and the offerings to his relics are patterned on rituals associated with the \textit{cakravartin}. See Davidson 2010: 186-87.
\item Of this particular coronation \textit{abhiṣeka} characterized by seven treasured items, we have no other information. Clearly in both India and Sri Lanka in earlier or at roughly the same time in both India and Sri Lanka, religious rituals of \textit{abhiṣeka} to coronate or consecrate the ruler as a \textit{cakravartin} were clearly being performed according to various scriptural authorities. For the cases in Indic texts, see the summary by Davidson 2010: 184, 186-87. In Japan, after the introduction of Esoteric Buddhism by Kūkai, a similar \textit{abhiṣeka} called \textit{sokui kanjō} 即位灌頂 or \textit{rinnō kanjō} 輪王灌頂 was regularly performed when a new emperor ascended the throne. The earliest reference to the performance under such title was found with the enthronement of Emperor Gosanjō 後三条 (r. 1068-1072), and it became an institution during the Kamakura period (1192-1333). See Abe 1999: 359-67. A manual for the paraphernalia and procedure has been found in the archive of Kongozō 金剛蔵 of Kanchi In 観智院 at Tō-ji; with the title “Sokui in” 即位印 (coronation mudrā), it bears the hand-copying date of 1272. The text has been discussed by ABE Yasurō 阿部泰郎 (1989). According to the essay, the ritual consists an array of rites, including the impartation of precepts. This verifies the account given in \textit{FZTJ}, which chose to report the episode with different concern, obviously to highlight the miraculous sign that happened at moment of the impartation of precepts. See Appendix A: 282-83.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the hyperbolic words of Kūkai, the influence of Esoteric Buddhism in the hands of Vajrabodhi was confined to the emperor only before the great promotion realized by Bukong.219

Emperor Xuanzong did extend certain favour to the Indian Esoteric masters Vajrabodhi, Śubhakarasimha, as well as Bukong, but the support for their religious mission was quite limited as indicated by the meagre imperial sponsorship for their translation activities.

Bukong’s situation under Xuanzong was more embarrassing than that of his predecessors, for it seems that he never received the imperial sanction, and certainly not any actual sponsorship, to translate the Esoteric texts that he had brought back from India and Sri Lanka. This appears ironic, but equally telling when considering that the emperor had technically been initiated into the highest level of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga practice, which ought to have been limited to the most advanced students. Therefore, the emperor’s zeal seems to have been highly idiosyncratic, and the transcendental achievement or worldly benefits that were claimed to have been realized quickly and easily by practicing the Yoga did not hold him for long.

During the second decade of his reign, Xuanzong began a Daoist ideological campaign that evolved until the outbreak of the An Lushan rebellion. He appropriated the various theoretical and cultic elements of Daoism to sanctify the imperium held by the Li family and reinforce his dictatorship, in pursuit of which he spared no expense. Somewhat brazenly, he propagated a semi-divine persona for himself, posing as a Daoist sage enjoying perpetual longevity and monarchy. Xuanzong’s devotion to the ideological appropriation of Daoism abruptly intensified and magnified since the very beginning of the Tianbao Era, and it was at such a time that Bukong returned to the Tang court.220

There is a disparity between the modest influence of Esoteric Buddhism during the reign of Xuanzong and the direct engagement with political and military affairs of Bukong’s Buddhist enterprise under the auspices of Suzong—and much more greatly, Daizong. These religious

219 T2161.55.1062c12-19.
220 For studies on Xuanzong’s ideological appropriation of Daoist philosophy and religion, see Benn 1977.
projects were mounted within the framework of official institution and for the sake of the state welfare and were carried out by a group of religious functionaries that was organized and mentored by Bukong. It is such an institutional association with the state that allowed Esoteric Buddhism to develop a more profound, substantial, and conspicuous social significance. This all began with the rise of Li Heng and was conditioned by the very pressing problems of royal legitimacy that arose from political and military crises surrounding his accession in the midst of the Rebellion.

The rapid and inexorable momentum of the rebels brought the court into a state of great panic and political disorder. It shattered the existing order demanded by Xuanzong’s imperial absolutism, which had been restricting the political growth of the crown prince and impeding Bukong’s religious mission. Although being pushed to the forefront of the political and military stage, Li Heng suffered from the desperate shortage of advisors, which, to an extent, should be regarded the legacy of Xuanzong’s policy to restrain the power of the crown prince. The prospective new ruler and a nearly vacant court held unusual appeal to a group of provincial officials who had endured political or bureaucratic frustration and were avid for political accomplishment. The major protagonists proved to be Bukong and his previous colleagues in the Hexi government. If it could not be ensured that this coterie had been holding a favourable attitude towards Li Heng, surely their friendship and shared political ambition eventually precipitated their concerted and coordinated moves to champion him. In addition to this resource of interpersonal connections, Bukong enjoyed another edge: Li Heng himself particularly appreciated religious people with unusual skills.

The usurpation ensnared both the new emperor and founding ministers of the new reign in grave trouble: the heinous accusation of disloyalty and illegitimacy. It is this problem that granted Bukong a further opportunity to distinguish himself. Wielding his professionalism in Buddhist

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221 As has been noticed, a great portion of the major subordinates under Geshu Han would become important officers and officials at the court during reign of Suzong and Daizong. These subordinates included such notables as Wang Sili 王思禮, Cheng Ruqiu 成如璆, Lu Jiong 魯炅, Guo Yingyi 郭英乂, Yan Wu 嚴武, Lü Yan 呂諲, etc. (See ZHOU Xunchu. 1980: 81-82) But there are negative instances as well: Huoba Guiren 火拔歸仁 seized Geshu Han and surrendered to An Lushan, and Hun Weiming 濤惟明 went over to the side of Prince Li Lin.
ritual and thaumaturgy, Bukong represented Suzong as a Buddhist sage-king supported by the Buddhist divinities, which, at the same time, officialized his own Buddhist authority via the position of Imperial Abhiṣeka Master.

Bukong’s propaganda efforts in support of the new emperor were thus hailed by all the mainstays of the new court, and prompted a universally positive attitude towards him. Although the court soon became riven with factional fighting, Bukong’s all-sided contribution and his subsequent engagement in spiritual enterprises in an institutional frame seems to have helped distance him from the political conflicts of the period.

One of the primary aspects of the governance of a cakravartin is his devotion to the promotion of Buddhist teachings; the consecration thus imposed on Suzong an obligation to support Buddhism. Apparently, Suzong was more sympathetic to Buddhism than his father, and during his reign, he enacted a couple of measures to promote Buddhism which seems quite remarkable.  

Taking advantage of the imperial auspices and using his own political astuteness, Bukong laid down the institutional basis of his Buddhist enterprise and tested an operational model for the following two decades. Perennial and core projects for the systematic institution that came to be realized during Daizong’s reign are rooted in the activities that Bukong undertook with Suzong’s authorization and sponsorship, including the setup of the Abhiṣeka Sanctum, the translation of Buddhist texts, the officiating of ordinations, and the promotion of Buddhist establishment on Mt. Wutai 五臺.

The project of ordination, obviously, was conducted to recruit new followers or to invest his old disciples with official clerical status. It was also a kind of performance that demonstrated Bukong’s authority with respect to the Buddhist law as well as his responsibility for disciplinary

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222 Buddhism under Emperor Suzong remains a subject for detailed survey and in-depth discussion. A mere consultation of the related section in the Buddhist chronicle FZTJ is rather impressive. For example, Suzong established an examination system of sutra-recitation to produce better clergy. This was modeled after one of the state examinations that tested the Confucian classics as well as, more remarkably, the examination to select able Daoist priests that had been established under Xuanzong. See the records in FZTJ, see T2035.49.0376a17-19. For discussions on the Daoist examination in Xuanzong’s reign, see Benn 1977: 294-317.
inspection and personnel management over the Buddhist community. As Zhao Qian articulated, he was the only vinaya master of the Mūlasarvāstivāda school at the time. 一切有部，獨為宗師223 Together with his repeated mass abhiṣeka services, this enabled Bukong to form a Buddhist community at his own disposal.

Under the indulgent auspices of Suzong, Bukong re-initiated the translation of Esoteric scriptures. The most recent wave of Esoteric texts had been imported to China before or during Xuanzong’s reign by Esoteric masters such as Puti Liuzhi and Śubhakarasimha, and Bukong had himself returned with the latest batch during the Tianbao Era. It seems that most of the former group failed to get imperial permission, and due to the war, Sanskrit scriptures were then scattered here and there, and allowed to fall into an old, tattered condition.

Each of these events took place to elaborate Bukong’s image of an imperial Esoteric master and to claim and carry out his authorities in other areas of Buddhist learning. His identity was not only enhanced but diversified: the unique conductor of Esoteric rituals, a peerless connoisseur and interpreter of Sanskrit Buddhist texts, the sole vinaya master specializing in one of the major monastic precept traditions. These authorities were exerted in unison and generated a Buddhist mission running under state administration and for state protection.

Without the extraordinary historical circumstances of the usurper Li Heng during the An Lushan rebellion, but simply with the patrons’ personal interests instead—as was the case at the court of Xuanzong and under the aegis of Geshu Han—Bukong could not have carried out various Buddhist activities and developed his identity in such an effective and multifaceted manner. The crises faced by the new court, in which the traditional ideological apparatus showed its negative power, are what offered Esoteric Buddhism an excellent opportunity to play its alternative role in the political world, albeit with untranslatable scripts and formulae, mystifying symbols and icons, and unintelligible rituals.

223 See T2056.50.0294b20-21.
Chapter 4: The Mobilizer of Monks and Money: Integrating and Institutionalizing Buddhist Missions

4.1 Introduction:

The political capital that Bukong had earned through encouraging and legitimating the enthronement of Emperor Suzong was quickly converted into imperial support for his Buddhist mission. Perhaps because the court was politically unstable, or because the country was too beset with the engagement with the rebels, the court could not afford more resources for the development of any religious causes on a larger scale. The component projects that proved to be integral during that period could find their inceptions in Suzong’s reign; it was not until the reign of the next ruler, however, that Bukong finally expanded and systematized his Buddhist enterprise.

It is unknown what scriptures Bukong had translated during Suzong’s reign and if any of these translations had been applied to long-term projects as would be seen years later. Actually, it seems that he had not organized a standing translation team to produce the bulk of his translations. Some Esoteric texts may have been translated and put to use in training yogin students at the palace sanctum, but the systematic application of the Vairoṣṇīṣa Yoga practices had not yet been established by this point. Finally, there are no records of monks sent to the Yuhua Temple or Mt. Wutai on specific imperial errands.

This chapter focuses on a military crisis early in Daizong’s reign, during which Bukong secured the emperor’s increasing trust, gained financial resources, and attracted a multitude of Mahāyānist followers to realize his Buddhist enterprise. It examines how Bukong—wielding his proficiency in various fields of Buddhist learning and motivated by his Esotericist view of Buddhist soteriology—augmented, integrated, and institutionalized each of these projects. Placed back into a historical context, Bukong’s undertakings take on a relevance to contemporary political, military, and economic circumstances that have not been fully appreciated. This chapter also reveals how the networks and undertakings in return shaped Bukong’s profile.
4.2 The Historical Background: Challenges and Chances

When the empire persevered into Daizong’s reign during the fourth month of 762, the rebel regime initiated by An Lushan, after two murderous usurpations, fell into the hands of Shi Chaoyi 史朝義 (d. 763) and was on the brink of collapse. Half a year later, the official army retook the Eastern Capital of Luoyang and drove Chaoyi to escape to Hobei, the principal domain of the rebels, for shelter. Rejected by the local military governors to take refuge, he ended up committing suicide in despair early in the next year. The civil strife was put to an end. The fallout left by the battle proved drastic, profound, and multifarious and threw the entire state under Daizong into disarray.

The provincial military powers established across the country during the Rebellion seriously undermined the central authority and left a latent source of further military trouble. Soon afterwards, hostilities arose between the clique led by the powerful eunuch Yu Chaoen and the meritorious general Pugu Huaien, which pushed the latter onto the path of revolt. Huaien drew support from the Uighurs and the Tibetans, and the allied forces began to mount intermittent incursions into the Tang. Time and again, the invaders attacked the capital city; eventually it was sacked, and Emperor Daizong was driven to retreat.

The problem caused by Huaien and the Uighurs was solved within two years, yet the Tibetans continued to harass the northwestern frontier for another three years. Once garrisoned by Geshu Han’s troops, the area was lost to the Tibetans while the major force had been manoeuvred to the interior to resist rebels. The threat became much less intense, though rather frequent; in most cases, the Tibetan army was effectively confronted before they could make further advance on the heartland.

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224 Cf. the historical sketch in Peterson 1979: 483-84.
225 See the analysis in LÜ Simian 1959: 242-245; and the detailed study in Peterson 1970. For a general discussion, see Peterson 1979: 490-91.
226 See LÜ Simian 1959: 246-47.
Domestic problems caused by the civil war against the rebels were more fundamental and
pernicious. Huaien was but one unruly military governor rising from the fall of the rebellion, and
the individual military commands under their control became semi-independent provinces that
claimed military and financial autonomy at the expense of central authority.

These military governors frequently refused to follow orders from the central government,
either because of their precaution against the spiteful eunuchs at court or out of other private
concerns. They contested against each other and engaged in military conflicts in order to expand
their power and domains, without due regard to the interventions of the court. On a couple of
occasions, the provincial governor raised open insurrection against the court. Besides, within the
provincial government, hierarchical order and military discipline were ravaged at the same time.
Subordinate officers murdered the governors, usurped their positions, and then requested the
formal appointment of the court only after committing the crime.227

Aside from the decentralization of central power, the emperor’s authority was emasculated
by a succession of the dictatorial individuals, particularly the eunuch Yu Chaoen, who, for much of
this period, controlled the only military force that the court could depend on to counteract those
provincial powers. He, as was caricatured in traditional narratives, tended to interfere in various
state affairs to prove his omnifarious knowledge and flaunt his dominance at court.228

The acutest consequence left by the prolonged civil strife lay in the state economy. The
warfare depopulated the great plain of central and northern China and disrupted the agricultural
productivity on the fertile land, thus depriving the state of its major source of revenue.229 The
battle drove people to flee from the region, which accelerated the shift of the centre of national
economic gravity from the north to the Huai and Yangtze valleys in the south.

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228 See the biographies of Yu Chaoen in JTS (184, 4764) and XTS (207, 5864).
229 For a historical survey of repercussions of the An Lushan rebellion on the state revenue of land taxation, see
The mass exodus shattered the population registration system, and the practice of land tenure based on it was abused. The officials, the powerful, and the wealthy occupied vacated farmlands and annexed or purchased the landed property of the poor. The tracts of farmland they had amassed were built into estates, on which tenant farmers worked for the landowners. All these resulted in the decay of the taxation system and a dramatic plunge in state revenues.\(^{230}\)

This situation was exacerbated by the exorbitant military expenditures. Each year, the state had to purchase hundreds of thousands of horses from the Uighurs, which had been promised as compensation for their assistance in recovering the two capitals from the rebels; this alone almost emptied the national treasury.\(^{231}\)

The standing armies established in the provinces also required sustenance, and this became the main burden on the national economy.\(^{232}\) To deal with this problem, provincial governments were left with autonomy in taxation, while it seems that this devolution of financial authority also resulted in disorders of practice at local level. The long-term shortage of provisions led soldiers to plunder local peoples of their property, as is repeatedly reported in the standard histories.

Beset with this financial predicament, the court was simply unable to feed the imperial guards in the capital, the military force at its own disposal,\(^{233}\) and the salary of civil officials remained unpaid for years.\(^{234}\) In order to reduce public expenditures, measures were taken to prune officials at all bureaucratic levels.

\(^{230}\) Cf. the survey given in Twitchett 1963: 17-20.
\(^{231}\) See the monograph on finance in XTS (51, 1348):

In that age, the Uighurs held the merit of assisting the Tang to recover the West Capital, and therefore Emperor Daizong treated them munificently. They were related to the central kingdom by marriage and every year sent one hundred thousand horses, for which they were repaid one million bolts of silk or cloth. Thus, the financial capacity of the state was exhausted, year after year indebted for the payment for the horses.

\(^{232}\) For the contemporary criticisms leveled at the huge drain of military spending caused the provincial troops across the country, see ZZTJ (239, 7165) and XTS (162, 4991-92).

\(^{233}\) For example, see the monograph on finance in XTS (51, 1347); and see also the biography of Liu Yan in JTS (73,3511-12).

\(^{234}\) See JTS: 11, 284.
During the early years of Daizong’s reign, the burden to support state expenditure largely fell onto the people of the metropolitan area, whom, however, had been ravaged by the war and undergone repeated pillages by the Uighur mercenaries and the Tibetan invaders. The recovery of agrarian productivity afterwards was further interrupted by droughts, floods, and the resultant famines and pestilence, when grain prices would soar to a level several times above the norm.\(^{235}\)

In the face of such a complicated impasse, Emperor Daizong responsively sought financial measures on the one hand and assumed a permissive approach in political affairs on the other. To increase the state revenue, private landholdings and household properties of people from all social classes were subjected to taxation.\(^{236}\) He employed the financial experts Liu Yan 劉晏 (716-780) and Diwu Qi 第五琦 (729-799). Thanks to their talents, a series of innovative steps were taken, bringing in a steady and substantial influx of revenue from indirect taxation on the salt and the transportation of grain from the south to the capital through improving the canal system.\(^{237}\) Even since 764, the financial situation of the central government was considerably alleviated,\(^{238}\) and the population, productivity, and income of revenue kept a steady growth down through the remainder of this period.

The income of state revenue, however, seems to have been streaming into the emperor’s personal pocket managed by the eunuchs.

When Diwu Qi served as the Commissioner of Public Revenue and Iron and Salt, there were imperious generals crowding in the capital, who rampanty sought and seized wealth, a situation that Qi was unable to prohibit. [As a countermeasure, Diwu Qi] channeled the income of revenue into the palace coffer Daying Neiku 大盈內庫, so as to pander to the expectation of the ruler. Because the Heaven’s Son made the convenience of this way of disbursement, [the duty of financial management] never came to be handled by the regular office again. Thereupon, the income of public taxation of All-under-Heaven became the monarch’s private hoard of money. The

\(^{235}\) For the analyses of the soaring grain prices during the famines that were seen almost once yearly during the reigns of Suzong and Daizong and the role played by currency inflation, see in LÜ Simian 1959: 823-


\(^{238}\) See the biography of Liu Yan in JTS: 123, 3513-14.
relevant office was unable to inquire into the financial conditions, and the national expenditures swelled and contracted without being charted, a situation lasting for nearly two decades. The eunuchs who held superfluous titles kept the accounts book and took charge of the affairs numbered three hundred, and they were all salaried. They were too intertwined and firmly rooted to be removed.

Although these were difficult times, the new imbalance in the national economy, it turned out, had a side effect that made it convenient for Bukong to attract financial support and other resources to fuel his religious mission. Since the revenue had became the emperor’s own discretionary fund, the regular financial department was deprived of all responsibilities with relation to public spending. To Bukong, it meant the preemption of any possible curbs on his proposal for funding from officials unfavourable to Buddhism; therefore, the support of the throne was paramount. Furthermore, under the imperial auspices, he could build landed estates for his monasteries in the state of economic confusion as the powerful officials did. Once he secured financial sources, the scarcity of resources suffered by the overall society made it much simpler to attract followers from the general Buddhist clergymen by virtue of job offers with state subsidies.

Emperor Daizong, it was said, was fond of the traditional sacrifice practice, and evidence shows that he held a positive attitude towards the moralizing value of religious practice in general.

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239 See the account in THY: 59, 1015.
240 The seculars sources report that at first, Daizong was favourably disposed towards traditional practice of sacrifice (cisi 祀祀), and later on he came under the influence of his major ministers Wang Jin and Yuan Zai, who, during regular metaphysical exchange on the fortunes of the Tang house, constantly elaborated on and validated the Buddhist theory of karma. They illustrated the theory by the mysterious and favourable developments in the recent rebellions, including the unusual deaths of the culprits such as An Lushan, Shi Siming, and Pugu Huaien, and the incredible retreat of the enemy effected by the general Guo Ziyi’s heroic declamation within the enemy’s headquarters. All added up to the trustworthiness of longevity of the dynasty predestined by the unalterable accumulation of good karma. See CFYG (927, 10941) and Wang Jin’s biography in XTS (145, 4716) Such observation is surely valuable in revealing the religious outlook of officials like Wang Jin, Yuan Zai. However, it turns out to be too crude, shallow, and even anachronistic, and the historical value of the narratives of the official histories is weakened by the ideological concern to efface the roles of Buddhist monks from Chinese history. Daizong’s conversion to Buddhism is one of the major
Four months after his accession, he issued a decree to rectify the abuse of temples and to keep the clergymen occupied with religious liturgy.

The teachings of Daoism and Buddhism have their value in moral inculcation; as for the facility of images, they must be held in awe and veneration. We learn that in prefectures and counties, people, for official or private ends, tend to lodge at Buddhist monasteries or Daoist temples, and thus desecration is committed. [This] must be absolutely prohibited, and [monasteries and temples] must be kept pure and solemn. In monasteries and temples, except for the three administrators, as well as the old and sick that are unable to support themselves, all should practice the Way and offer worship twice every day. Should there be anyone that is remiss and dilatory [in the duty], [the government] should mete out punishment. 道釋二教，用存善誘；至於像設，必在尊崇。如聞州縣，公私多借寺觀居止，因茲褻黻。切宜禁斷，務令清肅。其寺觀除三綱並老病不能支持者，餘並仰每日二時行道禮拜。如有弛慢，並量加科罰

In order to maintain the exhortative function of the two religions, awe had to be aroused in people towards temples and idols, and this in turn had to be exemplified in the first place by the clergymen themselves, through their devotion to worship. Daizong’s propensity for religious rites should stand out as one reason that he became so receptive to Bukong’s Buddhist ritualism.

From the very beginning, Daizong decided upon a tolerant principle against the backdrop of unruly military governors and corrupted political and social order. Years later, he found that the Buddhist wisdom fit with his laissez-faire approach to strategy for governing a country afflicted by various maladies. He confessed this thought in the preface to the newly translated Renwang jing:

We unworthily inherit this imperial cause and the Great Treasure (i.e. the sovereignty). Anxious about the people’s welfare, we do not relax vigilance even at night; 242 [in the morning] the pillow is just removed and we are just closed, but we cannot help but

241 See CFYG: 52, 576.
242 The term tuigou 推溝 alludes to the ruler’s care for the welfare of the people. It derives from the chapter of “Wanzhang I” 萬章上 in Mencius (SSJSZ: 170B [Legge 1875: 285]): He thought that among all the people of the kingdom, even the private men and women, if there were any who did not enjoy such benefits as Yao and Shun conferred, it was as if he himself pushed them into a ditch. 思天下之民匹夫匹婦有不被堯、舜之澤者，若己推而內之溝中
doze off. In order to safeguard the world, to resist the cruel enemies, to regulate the winds and rains, to practice non-interventionism in handling things, and to pacify the people [by advocating] moderation in this hard time, how can we be without the Buddhist wisdom of prajñā? 聿為嗣鴻休，丕承大寶。恃推溝以夕惕，方徹枕而假寐。夫其鎮乾坤、遏寇虐，和風雨、著星辰，與物無為，乂人艱止，不有般若，其能已乎？

The practical power of Buddhism in tackling various difficulties that was praised by Daizong above, it should be noted, was articulated in the Buddhist sutra, but it was a unique merit of Esoteric rituals boasted by Bukong that could better effect the divine power. Indeed, he emphasizes that it was the supreme mission of Esoteric and Mahāyāna Buddhism to counteract various disasters, and Daizong would fall under his inculcation and became very active in dealing with various problems by resorting to the Buddhist pragmatic measures devised by Bukong.

Before moving on to discussing how Bukong contrived to obtain imperial patronage and wide clerical support, I will briefly investigate the theological ground for him to uphold the Buddhist mission of state service so ardently.

4.3 Orienting the Buddhist Mission: Bukong’s Esotericist View on Mahāyāna Buddhism

Bukong identified himself as a practitioner and promoter of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga, and he made a clear differentiation between his Esoteric tradition and the ordinary Mahāyāna teachings. This differentiation was illustrated by his unswerving pursuit of royal support for his missionary work; to him, it seems that these two kinds of undertakings were inherently integrated. However, upon what theoretical basis did he ground such an approach and warrant the establishment of yet another Buddhist tradition in China? What exact characteristics made the teachings of Yoga surpass the established Mahāyāna schools and deserve special patronage? These questions should be answered by his target patrons—primarily the emperor and the powerful eunuchs—and the

243 The idea is articulated in Daizong’s preface to the Renwang jing, T0246.08.0834a20-23.
clerical supporters in and around the capital areas. He addressed the issues in the manners of discourse and practice.

The Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga teachings, also referred to by Bukong as simply “Yoga”, belonged to the division of Mantra or Dhāraṇī Teachings (tuoluoni jiao 陀羅尼教 or zongchi dajiao 總持大教).244 He outlies the essentials of the five systems of the Dhāraṇī Teachings in the Dubu duoluoni mu 都部陀羅尼目 (T903, The Synopsis of Various Systems of Dhāraṇī Teaching), ranking the Yoga in the highest position, followed by the Esoteric teachings in the Mahāvairocana-sutra, the Susuddhikara-sutra, the Subhāhu-pariprcchā-sūtra (Supohu tongzi qingwen jing 蘇婆呼童子請問經, T895) and the Dali sameiye jing 恒啇三昧耶經. The relation of this class of teachings with Mahāyāna Buddhism are made ambiguous by his many statements, which suggests that the Mantra teachings were in processing of gaining an identity as a form of Mahāyāna Buddhism while trying to keep a certain degree of independence. In general, he clearly differentiated the texts under the category of Mantra from those of Mahāyāna; when reviewing the translation work that he had done, he made them into two types:

Therefore, I kept busy day and night, engaging in the elaborate translation of scriptures of the Mantra and Mahāyāna classes, in order that I might make a trickle of a contribution and support the imperial sovereignty. [The scriptures of] the Dharma-gate of Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga that have been translated represent the express path to attain Buddhahood. Practitioners [following these teachings] will certainly transcend the worldly state quickly and reach the Other Shore. As for those scriptures under the other systems under the Mantra category, which feature the skillful means instructed by various Buddhas, there is a diverse range of them. Those Mahāyāna scriptures that have been translated are all conducive to the good of the state and can extinguish disasters; [they contain the power to ensure] the stars to follow their regular course and the wind and rain to observe the proper order. Let the might of Buddhas be piously relied on, so as to assist and accomplish the cause of the nation.

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244 In the writings of Bukong and his disciples, the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga is referred to by a few other names, such as the Dharma-gate of Abhiṣeka (guanding famen 灌頂法門) and the Five Divisions (wubu 五部).
一。所譯諸大乘經典，皆是上資邦國，息滅災厄；星辰不愆，風雨慎敘。仰恃佛力，輔成國家

The mantra teachings were characterized by pragmatic power, yet the Yoga further stood out from all the rest of Buddhist teachings because of its guaranteed quickest path towards Buddhist enlightenment. In another text, Bukong seems to understand the Yoga as a sort of Mahāyāna Buddhism and terms the quickest approach to Buddhahood as “instant attainment” which is far superior to the gradual cultivation undergone by Hīnayāna practitioners.

The terminology and classification discourse seem to largely correspond with those found in Indo-Tibetan tantras, where advantages were mainly accorded to the whole Mantra teachings versus the Perfection teachings, as two distinct forms within Mahāyāna Buddhism. There is a good reason to name those teachings by the term Mantra. The recitation of mantras is the core part of the ritual practice; it marks each step in the ritual sequence and gives a context for visualization. In addition, different ritual traditions allocated to a certain deity different mantras, and thus the mantra of a certain deity in a certain ritual could often indicate from which tradition the practice originates.

The above quotation suggests that the criterion held by Bukong when choosing Mahāyāna texts for translation was whether a text had the magical power to boost the welfare of the nation. He emphasized the salvific tenet that is essential in differentiating Mahāyāna Buddhists from Hīnayānists, the voice-hearers (Skt. śrāvaka) and the self-realizers (Skt. pratyekabuddhas):

245 See “Sanchao suofan jing qing ru mulu liuxing biao yi shou” 三朝所翻經請入目録流行表一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0840a29.
246 See his statements in “Qing zhi guanding daochang mochi yi shou” 請置灌頂道場墨勅一首, BZJ: “In respect to the teachings, there should be a distinction between that of subtism and gradualism. Gradualism refers to the subject to learn on the [precept] altar of the Lesser Vehicle practiced by the direct disciples of the Buddha, while subtism refers to the Abhiṣeka Dharma-gate practiced by the great beings of bodhisattvas. This (i.e. the latter) is the smooth route to reach the supreme attainment, thus the entry into the very rank of the Buddhahood. […] Of spiritual transcendence nor extrication, neither could be attained without following it!” 准其教，宜有頓有漸。漸謂聲聞小乘登壇學處，頓謂菩薩大士灌頂法門。是諸相之夷途，為入佛之正位……超昇出離，何莫由斯？(T2120.52.0830a16-20) During roughly the same period, different groups of Chan monks vied to claim that their practices enabled one to achieve awakening suddenly. Bukong used the same rhetorical and sectarian strategy to exalt his Esoteric tradition above all other Buddhist vehicles.
Mahāyāna followers should all apply themselves to bringing benefits and happiness to the sentient beings. It is this principle that makes scriptures of the Mantra class outstanding because they provide the various ritualized “means” inducted by Buddhist deities to carry out that mission. Further, among the several systems of Mantra, the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga not only offers various measures to deal with mundane problems, but also shows the quickest way to achieve the supramundane perfection. These are the step-by-step instructions of ritual procedures that are devoid from Mahāyāna texts.

These two points are elaborated in the treatise translated by Bukong on the significances of the Thirty-Seven Esoteric divinities populating the Yoga maṇḍala.

Therefore, this stupa [a solid maṇḍala?] could be regarded as encompassing the secret purport of the All-inclusive Vehicle, not to mention the teachings of the relative and the absolute, which are both complete here. As to the universally manifesting physical bodies through [the power of] various samādhi, the skillful means to benefit sentient beings through Four Immeasurable States of Mind, the order to operate the Six Perfections, or even visiting various Buddha-lands without rising from the [meditation] seat and then make offerings and service [to the honored-ones], and benefiting and gratifying sentient beings, covertly altering the realms of various beings by exerting the inconceivable percolating power, concerning such principles and applications, other sutras, at the best merely making their references, are devoid of any teachings; let alone how to effectuate them, which are all given in full in this gate of teaching. 故此率堵婆，可謂總領一乘之祕旨，何況權實之道，於是全焉。至如普現色身等百千三昧，及四無量心饒益方便，六波羅蜜運行次第，乃至不起于座遊諸佛剎，供養承事，利樂有情，以不可思議熏，而密移衆生界：如是理用，餘修多羅，或但有名目，而無其法。至於作用、儀軌，皆備此教門249

The meditative practice of the Four Immeasurable States of Mind is fundamental to both Hinayāna and Mahāyāna practices, while the Six Perfections and the universal salvation and benefit are signature doctrines of all Mahāyāna traditions. Although these practices were dictated

249 See the “Jin’gangding yuqie sanshiqi zun chusheng yi” 金剛頂瑜伽三十七尊出生義 (hereafter “Chusheng yi”), T0872.18.0298c23-0299a01.
within various Mahāyāna texts, they failed to detail how to attain those spiritual states and apply them in salvific practice.

This void was filled by the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga sutras. The teachings originate within the various Buddhist deities that are emanated from the ultimate Buddha, Vairocana, embodying various spiritual qualities of his enlightened mind. They are generated to execute various missions according to the spiritual and magical individualities, and they are ready in their palaces to receive the offerings from the yogins and to join them for practical undertakings. All that was needed were the concrete instructions of meditation and ritual sequences, following which the practitioners could successfully approach them and became their agents in this world. This is the hidden mechanism that determines the pragmatic superiority of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga.

Therefore, these sages (i.e. the Thirty-Seven divinities of the Diamond Maṇḍala) could not get leisure to enjoy; at their own palaces, they [worked] as swift as one flips the hand, so as to respond to the invocation [from the yogins] in various directions. As for those who sustain the practice of Mantrayāṇa, if able to enter such samādhi, they could fulfill the practice to make offering to [deities that are as numerous as] the clouds and the waters of the ocean, and thereupon accomplish the mission that benefits themselves and others. Thus the general import of the Thirty-Seven honored-ones in the middle [of the stupa]. 250

The superiority of the Yoga to various Mahāyāna traditions requires the relative difficulty for the student to obtain access to the teachings. One has to turn to an abhiṣeka acārya, who has the ability to examine the eligibility of the student and hold the authority to impart the secret methods:

Since [this type of teaching] differs from the [ordinary] Mahāyāna, the issue of impartation and reception becomes demanding. Even if [an acārya] finds a qualified student, [he] has to impart [to that student] the precepts of the nature of bodhisattvas and to lead [him] into the altar [which represents] the great assembly [of the Buddha and bodhisattvas] (i.e. the maṇḍala), where [the student] takes a sage of the Diamond Realm [as his Principally Venerated-One] and receives the empowerment [through the

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250 See the “Chusheng yi”, T0872.18.0297c18-25.
sage’s] sweet dew. And then [the acārya] shows [him the gateway] towards the Buddha-mind. 既異諸大乘，故難其授受。傳法阿闍梨，縫探得其器，必授以菩薩性戒，入以大會法壇，取金剛界賢聖，攝持金剛乘甘露灌頂，然後示以入佛心闕闕焉251

To come to the point, in agreement with Bukong’s theory, it is reasonable to say that the Yoga teachings highlight the Mahāyānist salvific spirit and complements concrete teachings on methods to achieve that goal. When translating the fundamental STTS, Bukong included in the title the words “dasheng xianzheng” 大乘現證, which means realizing the Great Vehicle in the present.252 The division of Mantra Teachings was the fully developed form of Mahāyāna, and the Yoga was the supreme.

Therefore, Bukong claimed that the Yoga teachings were practiced by the Great Beings, and it seems that he considered the Yoga should also be deemed as a type of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This is confirmed by the appearance of the term “the Esoteric Mahāyāna” (mimi dasheng 秘密大乘) in a piece of writing by his senior disciple Shi/Li Yuancong in reference to the category of Mantra Teachings.253 Indeed, the prerequisite for one to be initiated into the Esoteric practices of the Yoga was to take the precepts of the enlightened mind (puti xin jie 菩提心戒), also known as the Mahāyānist precepts or the Precepts of the Bodhisattvas’ Nature in Bukong’s words quoted above.254 To put it simply, as the highest system of Mantra or Dhāraṇī teachings, the Yoga is a form of Buddhism that most emphasizes the practicality and fulfilment of the two defining

251 See the “Chusheng yi”, T0872.18.0299a01-04.
252 INUI Hitoshi (1999) has demonstrated the altruist thought present in Bukong’s translation, the Jin’gangding yiqie rulai zhenshishe dasheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經 (T865), which was the first chapter (dapin 大品) of the primary text of the eighteen sutras of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga cycle.
253 Shi/Li Yuancong, one of Bukong’s senor disciples, subsumed the Yoga tradition or the Dharma-gate of Abhiṣeka under the category of “Esoteric Mahāyāna” in a memorial presented to Suzong: “臣竊觀度災禦難之法，不過秘密大乘，大乘之門，灌頂爲最 See “Qing yu Xingshan si zhi guanding daochang zhuang yi shou (bing mochi)” 請於興善寺置灌頂道場狀一首 (并墨勅) in BZI, T2120.52.0829b24-25.
254 This idea is touched upon by Lehnert, who made his point by interpreting lines from a treatise compiled from the account given by Bukong, the Jin’gangding yiqie zhong fa anouduoluosanmiaoanputi xin lun 金刚頂瑜伽中發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心論 (T1665). See Lehnert 2010: 353-54.
missions of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In this sense, it could be perceived as the most developed form of Mahāyāna Buddhism that could supersede all other traditions.  

The secret methods are known as the Three Mysteries (Skt. trīṇī-guhyāṇi), namely taking physical postures of mudrās, reciting the Sanskrit formulae mantras, and concentrating the mind on various subjects. The practices were termed “visualization and chant” (niansong 念誦), despite that it corresponds to only two elements of the combined practice. This term was used as a signature expression for the Esoteric practices, particularly those of the Yoga, which Bukong taught his disciples.

Bukong also used this term to entitle the Esoteric manuals that he translated, which were labelled as “the rituals of visualization and chant” (niansong yiguǐ 念誦儀軌, or niansong fā 念誦法, or niansong fāmen 念誦法門). As has been pointed out, when compiling new catalogues for the Buddhist canon decades later, the XKYL and the ZYL, Yuanzhao established a new bibliographical category as a niche for this new type of Buddhist scripture.

Since some Mahāyāna scriptures mention the importance to benefit the world without laying out the methods to bring the latent potency of the deities into due effect, a major agenda for Bukong’s translation project was to derive ritual sequences from the Vajroṣṇīṣa sutras to complement these texts. An exemplary instance was the re-translation of the Daji Daxukongzang pusa suowen jing 大集大虛空藏菩薩所問經 (T404, The Great Collection Sutra of the Questions of Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva) and the compilation of the matching manual of ritual procedure, the Daxukongzang pusa niansong fā 大虛空藏菩薩念誦法 (T1146). Yet another typical instance, which had far greater bearings on the contemporary world, is the re-translation of the Renwang

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255 Orzech presented an alternative logic in Bukong’s understanding of the inter-relationship among the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga, the Mantra teachings, and Mahāyāna Buddhism. See Orzech 2006: 47, 50-51; 2010: 282.

256 For example, see the “Sanzang heshang yishu yi shou” 三藏和上遺書一首: “至於念誦, 更倍精勤” “憶吾即勤加念誦，是報吾恩” T2120.52.0844c02, 0845a08. Cf. Appendix A: 349, 353. Notably, Emperor Daizong referred to the Esoteric practices that he learned from Bukong as the Dharma-gate of Visualization and Chanting (Niansong fāmen 念誦法門). See the “Huiguo Xingzhuang”, T2057.50.0295b14.

257 See Goble 2012: 273-75.
Amassing Support: Reconsidering the Significance of the Translation of the Renwang jing and the Grand Chanting Ceremony

Bukong’s revision of the Renwang jing and the ensuing debut chanting ceremony involving one hundred participant monks in the capital is a popular topic in academic discussions; taking different perspectives, scholars have uncovered a number of issues. Roughly speaking, the scholarly consensus is that the two versions of this scripture were pieces of apocrypha created in China to address political and cultural conditions that were adverse to the development of the Buddhist community. Studies have pointed out the suspect content as well as the differences between the two versions, and made interpretations concerning what reality the fabrication efforts aimed to tackle. Charles Orzech (1998) argues that the old version, a translation traditionally attributed to Kumārajīva, was composed during the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) after the great persecution of Buddhism launched in 446 by Emperor Taiwu 太武 (r. 424-452). The main concern of the compilers of this apocryphal work, Orzech says, was to respond to the sinicization of the northern ethnic group and the antagonism of the officials towards Buddhism. After analyzing the content, he garnered twelve pieces of evidence, several of which divulge the political and religious conditions adverse to Buddhism that had been caused by the contemporary policies of the state.258

In the new “translation”, Orzech shows, Bukong updated some content according to the Buddhist mainstream theories in Tang China, turned down the voice asking for clerical independence from the state administration, and removed the criticism of governmental interference that is evident in the old version. Most apparently, Bukong replaced deities that were assigned to protect the state in the old version with those he selected from the pantheon of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga and supplemented the dhāraṇī that entails the yogic practice to activate their

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violent power. Orzech also argues that Bukong produced the complementary ritual manual based on the structural template of the STTS.

Other studies focus on the chanting ceremony; they have contextualized the event and interpret it against the ongoing events and macro-historical trends, particularly the rising of the power of the eunuchs on the political stage. These studies differ from one another mainly in their conclusions concerning the relationship between Bukong and the powerful eunuch Yu Chaoen.

In his excellent study, YAMAGUCHI Shikyō approaches the subject matter from the perspective of a member of the translation team, the monk Liangben. His study reveals that Liangben’s role in producing a new version of the Renwang jing was just as important as that of Bukong. The discovery of this figure offers us a critical clue in understanding the association of Bukong and Yu Chaoen.

Inadequate effort, however, has been paid to fully appreciate the significance of the two projects around the Renwang jing to Bukong’s career and his Buddhist mission, and a more expansive and careful examination of the historical circumstances will reveal the contemporary impacts of the event. In Chapter Two, I have presented my own historical reconstruction of the events and the context. The following discussion shows that the re-translation project and the chanting ceremony were designed and carried out as a hype campaign for the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga, which reinforced the faith of Emperor Daizong in the power of the Yoga practices, induced patronage from the powerful eunuch Yu Chaoen, and pinned down the obeisance of the Mahāyāna monks in the capital. The success of the grand ceremony “testified” to the divine power claimed within the Renwang jing which has been enhanced by the Yoga, thus proving the sanctity of the latter; and it marked another turning point in Bukong’s missionary career, laying the groundwork for him to advance his politico-religious agenda to its apex.

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260 Ibid.: 174-80. For his discussion of the STTS as the source of modules for Bukong to build rituals, see Ibid.: 155.
As suggested in Chapter Two, by proposing a re-translation of the scripture of the *Renwang jing*, Bukong catered to Liangben’s need to display his Buddhist erudition before the scholar monks in the capital. Following the all-powerful Yu Chaoen, he came to Chang’an only recently from the local city Shanzhou 陝州; although already well-positioned in the capital, and perhaps having become a court monk as well, he had to prove that his sudden rise to prominence was not undue.²⁶² Liangben was an expert of Mahāyāna doctrines, especially good at syncretizing various theories on the spiritual stages through which one progresses to achieve enlightenment. Early on, he had composed a treatise on this subject for Yu Chaoen, in which he reinterpreted the theoretical structure set forth in the old version of the *Renwang jing* with reference to the popular variants that were presented in other Buddhist sutras.

During the re-translation project, Bukong offered Liangben the position of the scribe (*bishou 筆受*), which was second to the chief interpreter (*yizhu 譯主*) position, held by Bukong. It seems that the two men jointly dominated the project. While Bukong replaced the five state-protecting bodhisattvas in the old version with five bodhisattvas selected from the Thirty-Seven deities of Vajroṣṇīṣa pantheon and interpolated the *dhāraṇī* to invoke their power, Liangben modified the theory of spiritual stages outlined in the old version according to his understandings that had already been published in his treatise, as YAMAGUCHI Shikyō has convincingly demonstrated.²⁶³ It was Liangben’s original idea to align the Wheel-Turning Sage-King (Skt. *cakravartin*, Ch. *zhuanlun shengwang 轉輪聖王) with the first Bodhisattva ground.²⁶⁴

The practice sanctified Liangben’s scholastic thinking and granted him great prestige and authority as a Buddhist pundit. His consolidated position is suggested by his leading role in the subsequent chanting ceremony and the presumptuous attitude in dealing with the new translation and its related works. Later on, Liangben was ordered by the emperor to compose an annotation

²⁶² By the time, Liangben had been appointed as the Monastery Head of the Qinglong 青龍 Monastery. Prior to the translation, the *SGSZ* claims, he had become Daizong’s preceptor. See the *SGSZ*, T2061.50.0735b01-04.
²⁶³ See YAMAGUCHI Shikyō 2007A.
²⁶⁴ Ibid.
work on the *Renwang jing*, and at Bukong’s dictation, he also completed a ritual text to complement the teachings of the sutra (T995). He presented both works to the throne, as if he were the main author of the latter as well.

There was an exchange for sure. In return, Liangben acted as the go-between for Bukong to seek the sponsorship of Yu Chaoen, who then decided to gather a number of monks to support the project. Afterwards, Bukong presented to Daizong the proposal for the sutra’s re-translation, listing Liangben as a member of the team.

Yu together with the eunuch Luo Fengxian 駱奉先/仙 acted as the project inspectors. Their joint participation was rather telling; they tried to exploit the ideological value of the scripture to glorify and facilitate their political campaign against Pugu Huaien.\footnote{265 See NAKATA Mie 2006.} By that time, they had obtained their first success by forcing him into revolt, but with the support of the Uighurs, Huaien was powerful enough to defy the Tang army and could start another wave of battle at any time. To Yu and his allies, they needed to launch a more powerful operation to eliminate him.

Once translated, the silent scripture was not powerful enough; it awaited to be chanted in a ceremony by one hundred monks, as instructed by the text itself, so as to fully discharge its numinous power and save the nation from various imminent disasters. Such extravagant propaganda was far more promising in creating momentum for a military campaign against Pugu as the enemy of the state, and it seems that from the very beginning, Bukong had hatched a plan for a massive chanting assembly for the scripture. He and his clerical peers must have been impressed by a precedent ceremony held under the patronage of Emperor Xuanzong.\footnote{266 In the year of 739, at the request of monks in the capital, one hundred monks were selected to perform a large-scale sermon on the old version of *Renwang jing*. It was reported in *ZYL*, see T2157.55.0878c28.}

Another sutra that underwent re-translation at the same time was the *Dasheng miyan jing* (T681), and this collective chanting ceremony was designed to recite the two scriptures together.

The so-called re-translation of the *Miyan jing* was actually the re-editing of this text according to a Sanskrit original, and the difference showed by the new edition lay not in the
content but in the form: a majority of prosaic lines in the old version was rewritten into verses. Apparently, such inessential change only makes the text more easily memorized and recited and therefore suggests that Bukong already had in his mind the plan of a grand chanting ceremony before even proposing this re-translation project. The work was done by Bukong and his regular translation team, which usually did not include Liangben and the several monks convened by Yu Chaoen.

Presumably, the ceremony was very expensive. Not only large in scale, it turned out to be magnificent and prolonged. At a time in which resources were limited, the great expenses of such an event do not seem easy to defray. As shown above, the wealth of the capital city was concentrated in the hands of the emperor, powerful eunuchs, and military dignitaries. The secular historical sources reveal that wealthy people such as Yu Chaoen and Guo Ziyi 郭子儀 (697-781) would squander a tremendous amount of money in holding a single banquet; to them, feeding the one hundred chanting monks for two months meant merely sparing two handsome dinners. The involvement of Yu in the ceremony—playing the glamorous leading role in the procession that escorted the scriptures in the pageant from the palace to the ceremony sites—meant that there were no worries regarding the problem of expenses.

Also gratified were the Mahāyāna monks participating in the re-translation. To begin with, the re-translation of this scripture reiterated the principle that the rights and interests of the Buddhist church were sacred and inviolable. Secondly, the new version abandoned the idiosyncratic terminology and theories of the old version that had been causing confusion in

267 They would spend as much as one hundred thousand guan of cash to enjoy only one feast, which could meet the living expenses of one hundred monks for one month. For the cases of the lavish feasts arranged by Yu Chaoen and others, see LÜ Simian 1959: 837. In addition, Yu held the privilege in getting funding grants from the court. See Yu’s biography in the JTS (184, 4764): “[Yu] Chaoen was presumptuous and overbearing, asking for allocation [of funds] without satisfaction. Whenever presenting a request [to the throne], he always took the emperor’s approval for granted. There was not his like among those favoured ministers.” 朝恩恣橫，求取無厭。凡有奏請，以必允為度。幸臣未有其比

The living expenses of a monk for one year in the end of the Dali Era (766-779) was said to be only over thirty guan. This data was found in a contemporary memorial to Daizong from a provincial governor. See JTS: 127, 3850. For the analysis of the data against the contemporary salary level of the ordinary officials and the luxurious ethos of immoderate officials, see LÜ Simian 1959: 833-837.
understanding the Buddhist theory of spiritual stages. Finally, although the changes concerning the spiritual stages remained the intellectual property of Liangben, to others in the translation team, they were also the intellectual heritage left by their forebears, from which all Chinese Buddhist authors could draw insights to build their own theoretical structures. Liangben’s work was only one of the many cases. Therefore, the revision in the Rewang jing constituted not only the sanctification of Bukong’s Esoteric learnings but also the received intellectual resources that belonged to all Chinese Mahāyāna monks.

The success of the chanting ceremony brought great honour and reward to the general Buddhist community. The ceremony had initially been designed simply to debut the new translation, while the conjectural invasion of the Uighurs incited by Pugu Huaien posed a grim ordeal for the monks and finally turned the ceremony into a magnificent and breathtaking “testimony” of the text’s mystical power that the Buddha promised to protect the state. As shown in Chapter Two, the auspicious omen, the sudden death of Huaien, the heavy rain that checked the advance of the enemies, and the Uighurs’ retreat achieved by the personal effort of Guo Ziyi, could be all claimed by the Buddhist clergy as results of the intervention of Buddhist deities invoked through the chanting ceremony.

During a time that the state was subject to various military threats, the practical effects of the ceremony showcased the inherent usefulness of Buddhist clergymen, that a monk could serve the state as well as a warrior did. To recognize their contribution, the court granted each of the prominent monks in the capital a considerable sum of money.

268 Other changes made by Bukong were minor. The new version removes references to Prince Moonlight (yuèguāng tōngzǐ 月光童子) that was a feature of fifth-century Buddhism in China. It modified the strange elements such as the Three-Truths and the timing of the decline of the Dharma. The team also got rid of vocabulary with suspected Daoist origins. For the detailed discussion, see Orzech 1998: 68, 161-67, 275-88.

269 Each Great Virtue (dàdè 大德) of the capital were granted thirty bolts of cloth or silk. According to the ratio suggested in a memorial to account the expenditure in building the Mañjuśrī Pavilion in the Great Xingshan Monastery in 774, thirty bolts of silk would be converted to eighty-one guan, or the living expenses of a monk for 2.7 years according to the aforementioned consumption rate of the late Dali Era. Note that the price of cloth was lower than that of silk. For the source of the conversion ratio between the silk and cash, see “Jin zao Wenshu Ge zhuang yi shou” 進造文殊閣狀一首 in BZJ: The palace treasury disbursed a total of 13,052 guan of cash. (including an estimated 11,152 guan converted to from 1,117 bolts of silk, and another amount of 2,000 guan of cash added in) 内
To Bukong, this success was manifold and seminal. The monks were obliged to Bukong for the glory and benefits they were enjoying, for all these ultimately owed to the mastermind’s original engineering and management. In due time, they needed to repay Bukong’s kindness with their support.

The first step in Bukong’s efforts to build a network of his own Mahāyānist followers was seen one year earlier, when Bukong installed forty-nine monks in the permanent religious post of Great Virtues that he had created within the Great Xingshan Monastery. Only a handful of them were his yogin disciples, while the majority had been selected from the capitals and several provinces. This constituted an ecumenical effort to revive the Buddhist community of Chang’an in a mess left by the recent civil strife. With the capital city being repeatedly sacked, religious establishments had been seriously damaged and religious life disrupted; monks scattered around during the chaos and were forced to search for subsistence.

Bukong selected those monks because of their outstanding Buddhist learnings or practices, and these Great Virtues were financially supported by the court and exempted from taxes and labour service, they needed only to devote themselves to religious practice and the restoration of the religious order. Several of them were further selected to assist Bukong’s translation efforts, and it seems that these ten monks held the position of Great Virtues of Translation (fanjing dade 翻經大德).
Presumably, some of them had already become Bukong’s followers, while the indebtedness for prestige and the stable livelihood must have brought others to his instruction. In short, he had already won a prominence in the Buddhist community of Chang’an, and the great success of the chanting ceremony secured his cachet and expanded his sway. In this way, he prepared human resources to augment his Buddhist cause.

The emperor fully appreciated Bukong’s contribution; Daizong lavishly rewarded him and granted him as much as thirty times the money offered to the Great Virtues, even his attendant disciples receiving the imperial bounty. Daizong was convinced of the superiority of the Esoteric practices of the Yoga. The chanting ceremony made an excellent public debut for those new Esoteric elements added into the scripture—the five Esoteric bodhisattvas and the powerful dhāraṇī to invoke their might. Since this new content was derived from to the Vajroṣṇīṣa sutras, its teachings deserved imperial recognition.

Although he had shown his homage to the two translated sutras of the Renwang jing and the Miyan jing and had composed a preface for each, Daizong’s attitude towards Buddhism became all the more attentive after witnessing the “numinous power” of the sutras. He made in-depth consultations with Bukong regarding the Vajroṣṇīṣa doctrines and was converted to the most advanced Buddhist tradition. He was further initiated by Bukong into the Yoga tradition and became a practitioner of the Esoteric ritual devoted to the bodhisattva Samantabhadra.273

Daizong’s words revealed the recent development in the relation between him and Bukong: “Recently, We personally sought the instruction [of His Reverence] on the divine cause, and he magnificently demonstrated skillful means and decisively dispelled my doubts” 頃者，躬問勝因，

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273 This information is provided in the letter from Daizong to his fellow Esoteric Buddhist, Huisheng 惠勝, “Chi Huisheng yiqing zhi yi shou” 勳惠勝依請制一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0850c16-21.
弘示方便，永絕疑綱；“Recently, We have taken refuge in [Your Reverence] and received the entrustment [of the Dharma].” 頃得皈依，親承付囑

These words appear in the imperial letters to bestow clerical titles and honorary bureaucratic ranks on Bukong and posthumously on his late master, Vajrabodhi. The conferment brought the imperial exaltation of the tradition to a climax, according an imperial status to the entire transmission lineage begun in China with Vajrabodhi. In doing so, the emperor took the stance as a descendant of this spiritual ancestry.

Daizong’s religious enthusiasm in the practices brought Bukong to a hectic schedule of activities in the palace. According to Daizong’s statement, from then on he was a regular, and active student at Bukong’s lectures held in the palace, and he frequently resorted to the latter’s Esoteric services to solve various problems:

Ever since receiving his entrustment of the Dharma, We have constantly taken refuge in him. Every time he held scriptures in the hall of the palace and started the lecture sitting on the front mat, We rest ourself on the table as if students show the etiquette at school; We acknowledged our inferiority in the same manner as [Huangdi 黃帝 presented questions to his master Guangcheng Zi 廣成子] in Mt. Kongtong 崆峒. Thus, the wondrous message [of the Buddha] was perfectly expounded, and the secret practices were maintained internally. [He is always ready to be consulted, like a giant bell] waiting to be struck, and [when replying questions,] he answers in full flow; whether the farthest or the nearest, he understands everything. He cleanses and eliminates ignorance and illusion; he soothes and subjugates the demons and foes. The heavenly beings purify their mind in his gate of salvation, while nāgas and ghosts receive assignment under his divine seal. 及當付囑，常所歸依。每執經內殿，開法前廱，憑几同膠序之禮,順風比崆峒之問。而妙音圓演,密行内持；待扣如說，自涯皆晤。滌除昏妄，調伏魔冤；天人洗心於度門,龍鬼受職於神印

274 It is notable that when composing the prefaces for the two sutras, Daizong did not mention any close relationship that had formed by then between him and Bukong.

275 Bukong gained the title Tripiṭaka Da Guangzhi 大廣智三藏 and the promotion to the honorary bureaucratic rank of the “Specially Advanced” (tejin 特進), while Vajrabodhi was granted the posthumous title Tripiṭaka Da Hongjiao 大弘教三藏 and the honorary rank of “Opening Bureau and Unequalled in Ritual Status” (kaifu yitong sansi 開府儀同三司), a station higher than that of Bukong.

276 See “Jia Kaifu ji feng Suguo gong zhi yi shou” 加開府及封肅國公制一首 in BZJ, see Appendix A: 356-60.
Needless to say, these undertakings required Bukong to spend much of his time inside the palace. Actually, the emperor granted him a dwelling in the palace, a favour he had never enjoyed in the past, as he recalled in his last memorial sent to Daizong.²⁷⁷

Bukong conducted imperial services in chapels set up in the palace, which was called *nei daochang* 内道场, literally “inner sanctum”.²⁷⁸ The agendas of the palace sanctums, if they ever surfaced, would be of immense value to our studies, for such information would enable us to closely correlate Bukong’s activities with the contemporary goings-on in the military, political, and economic contexts. Unfortunately, these activities were deemed too confidential to be publicized, and the sources leave us only accounts that were as sketchy as that given by Daizong. The XZ clearly tells of the confidentiality of Bukong’s Esoteric mission conducted in the place sanctums:

> Formerly, [the great master] stayed in the forbidden palace and established sanctums, a commitment of years and years. He devoted himself to imparting the teachings and *mudrās*, invoking the divine blessing, and performing the sacrifice ritual of *homa*, for the aim of extirpating disasters and abnormal happenings and boost auspiciousness—these are secret undertakings that the Great Master never revealed.

毎在中禁,建立道場,頗積年歲。傳授法印,加持護摩; 殭除災異,增益吉祥, 祕密之事,大師未曾輒有宣爾²⁷⁹

In the palace sanctums, the Esoteric services were not undertaken by Bukong alone, and Daizong was not the only student to be inducted into the Esoteric doctrines and practices. As the head of these religious institutes—the Abhiṣeka Master—Bukong led a group of yogin students to perform various rituals and execute the projects that he devised to fulfilled imperial commissions.

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²⁷⁷ Bukong wrote with great gratitude, “Ever since Your Majesty had mounted the throne, the special favour [you bestowed upon me] turned out to be ever deeper: [Your Majesty] granted a place in the palace for me stay in leisure, and descend from the imperial residence to consult me about the Way.” 自從陛下臨御, 殊私轉深。賜黃閣以宴居, 降紫微而問道 See “Sanzang heshang linzhong chenqing cibiao yi shou” 三藏和上臨終陳情辭表一首 in *BZJ* (T2120.52.0846b06-0846b07). Cf. Appendix A: 360-63.
²⁷⁸ These sanctums were located at different places in the palace. See the discussion below.
²⁷⁹ T2056.50.0294b09-11. Cf. Emperor Daizong’s account in “Jia Kaifu ji feng Suguo gong zhi yi shou” in *BZJ*, T2120.52.0846a01-07. For the translation of the entire decree, see Appendix A: 356-60.
These yogins were full-time employees of the court and held the standing official post called *niansong seng* 念誦僧 (monks performing the Esoteric rituals of visualization and chanting).

### 4.5 The *Niansong Seng* Monks in Palace Sanctums

As discussed above, the term *niansong* held a specific reference to the Esoteric practices of Three Mysteries, designated by locution “rituals of visualization and chanting”. The ritual texts that Bukong translated tend to bear the term in the titles, and with the same connotation of Esotericism, it was used to designate a group of monastic yogins. Moreover, it took on an official and institutional overtone. It was created as a permanent post through governmental procedure and became part of the state institution. This post was installed at the palace sanctum and other Esoteric sanctums established by the state, and most of the posts, if not all, were given to Bukong’s disciples.

The earliest instance of this post that can be found in the historical sources was a group of twenty-one monks, organized in 758 under the direction of one of Bukong’s major disciples, Yuanjiao. The monks were deployed by Emperor Suzong at the Kaiyuan 開元 Monastery in Fengxiang 凤翔, where a sanctum of the Medicine Buddha (*yaoshi daochang* 藥師道場) was established to execute an imperial mission. It is unclear, however, whether it was a temporary or a long-term establishment.

By this period, the palace sanctum had already been established under Bukong’s direction where Esoteric rituals were regularly performed for the state. In early 758, under the imperial order, four of Bukong’s disciples were summoned to the palace to join Bukong in conducting rituals of visualization and chanting.

The institution was continued into Daizong’s reign, and it seems that the sanctum in the palace was increased in number. After the chanting ceremony of the *Renwang jing* and Daizong’s conversion to the Yoga tradition, it could be supposed that the activities at the palace sanctum

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280 See the biography of Yuanjiao in *SGSZ*, T2061.50.0864b23-b29.
281 The decree is preserved in *BZJ* (T52.0858b4-b10), and these monks were Huigan 惠肝, Quna 瞿那, Huixao 惠曉, and Huiyue 惠月. See the translation in Appendix A: 276-77.
became all the more intensive. From various sources, we learn there were at least four sanctuums in the palace, and three of them were known to have involved Bukong’s disciples holding the posts of niansong seng. These were the Abhiṣeka Sanctums (guanding daochang 灌頂道場) at the hall of Chengming Dian 承明殿 in the compound of Hanhui Yuan 含暉院, and the sanctums at the hall of Yanying Dian 延英殿 and at the hall of Changdeng Dian 長生殿. In formal writings to the court, the monks working at these palace halls identified themselves usually by the title “niansong seng of the palace sanctum of so-and-so”.

Some later sources claim that monks on the post numbered one hundred altogether, but according to contemporary sources, the number seems to vary from time to time. Bukong’s attendant disciple, Zhao Qian, stated that fourteen of Bukong’s disciples were always active in the palace. After the death of Bukong, his official successor, Huilang, became the leader of the monks in the palace sanctums, and according to his memorial presented in 778, there were fifty-three monks in service. Further, during the ninth-century, the Japanese monk Ennin 円仁

282 The three sanctums are mentioned altogether in a memorial by Bukong’s disciple Huixiao, a veteran monk of niansong seng: “Formerly, I constantly committed myself to the cultivation of Dharmic merit in the hall of Hanhui [yuan], the hall of Yanying, and the hall of Changsheng.” 每於含暉、延英、長生等殿常修功德。See “Wang Wutaishan xiugongde cixie shengen biao yi shou bing da” 往五臺山修功徳辭謝聖恩表一首並答 in BZJ, T2120.52.0858c01-02. Their names appear in other pieces collected in the BZJ. The sanctum in the hall of Changsheng dian was set up by Xuanzong as a Daoist shrine, originally called the Jiling T’ai 集靈臺 (the terrace to gather spirits). It was converted to a Buddhist chapel in 763. Cf. WANG Yongping 1999: 15. Yet another palace sanctum is said to be located at the hall of Wencheng dian 文成殿, but it is uncertain whether it was run by Bukong. See CFYG: 52, 577. A Buddhist temple is mentioned by Kūkai called the Shenlong Vihāra 神龍精舍 built in the palace by Bukong during Daizong’s reign. See the Go shōrai mokuroku 御請來目録, T2161.55.1062c17.

283 The FZTJ says, “[Emperor Daizong] decreed that one hundred monks conduct the rituals of visualization and chanting in the forbidden palace, and [the venue] was entitled the ‘palace sanctum’” 勅沙門百人於禁中行念誦法，謂之內道場 (T2035.49.0378a09-10). It agrees with the account in JTS and XTS. The JTS (18, 3417) says, “Formerly, [Emperor Daizong] ordered one hundred monks to furnish the palace with Buddhist images, where they practice visualization and chanting and meditative walking. It was called palace sanctum.” 當時令僧百餘人於宮中陳設佛像，經行念誦，謂之內道場。Cf. the record in XTS:145, 4716).

284 The original words of Zhao Qian read thus: “Fourteen monks were always present among the assembly in Heavenly Palace.” 二七僧人，常入天宮之會 T2056.50.0294b28. The disciples that are known to have been working in palace sanctums, according to various sources, include Tazhen 曽貞, Huiguo 惠果, Huixiao 惠曉, Yuanjiao 元皎 (Changsheng Dian), Juechao 觉超 (Changsheng Dian), Huichao 惠超, Huigan 惠肝, Huiyue 惠月, Quna 瞿那 [Skt. Guṇa?], Huijian 惠堅, and Huihai 惠海.

285 See “He chunxue biao yi shou” 賀春雪表一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0853c09-11.
(794-864) claims in his pilgrimage diary that the sanctum at the hall of Changsheng Dian alone housed twenty-one monks all the time since its establishment.²⁸⁶

Ennin also revealed that the monks in the palace sanctum took turns to render service, maintaining ritual performances day and night without intermission.²⁸⁷ This seems to agree with Bukong’s statement that the sanctums were operated according to a fixed schedule: “Every time we entered the sanctum, we practiced visualization and chanting on schedule.” 每入道場，依時念誦²⁸⁸

To fulfill such a workload, the monks working at the sanctums had to take regular, if not permanent, residence in the imperial palace.²⁸⁹ The monks’ living expenditures were allotted from the state treasury, which had become the emperor’s personal wealth, as was informed by the statement of Juechao 覺超, one of Bukong’s six successors:

Attending my late master (i.e. Bukong), I have been in and out the forbidden palace. Our board was dispensed from Your repast, and to garb us it consumes [the allowance] of Your Heavenly apparel. We come and go riding the horses from the imperial stable or taking governmental carriages. We did nothing but unworthily followed the advance of time, and it has been fifteen years. 隨侍先師，入出中禁。食分御膳，服減天衣；廏馬公車，往來乘駕。因循歲月，十五餘年²⁹⁰

These words appear in Juechao’s memorial requesting permission to leave the palace sanctum on behalf of his fellows serving at the sanctums; their preferential treatment was so generous, perhaps much better than that to the average officials, that it aroused voices of criticism after Bukong’s death. This issue continued to offend secular historians of later times, who made it more straightforward:

²⁸⁶ See the account in Ennin’s travelogue diaries: “As for the palace sanctum in the hall of Changsheng Dian, ever since the old days, there were Buddhist images and scriptures installed. From temples of the capital, twenty-one monks that knew the practice of visualization and chanting were drafted and sent into the palace in turns. Every day, visualization and chanting was practice, day and night without stopping.” 長生殿內道場，自古已來，安置佛像經教。抽兩街諸寺解持念僧三七人，番次差入，每日持念，日夜不絕 See the Nittō guhō junrei gyōki: 4, 436.
²⁸⁷ Cf. Ennin’s words given above in fn. 49.
²⁸⁸ See “Yishu” in BZJ, T2120.52.0844a26. For the translation of the whole piece, see Appendix A: 344-52.
²⁸⁹ Cf. the story of Tanzhen mentioned above.
²⁹⁰ The emperor denied the request. See the memorial “Qing ci neidaochang chenqing biao yi shou” 請辭內道場陳情表一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0854c03-05.
The board provided to them was rare and exotic to the extreme. Whenever getting in and out of the palace, they drove horses taken from the imperial stable, and the Department of Public Revenues paid for their living expenses. 其飲膳之厚，窮極珍異，出入乘廐馬，度支具廩給291

In short, monks employed as niansong seng in the palace sanctums were ritual functionaries of the state, and, residing in the palace, they attended the sanctum according to fixed working schedule and were supported by a special fund. Having witnessed the marvelous effects of the chanting ceremony of the Renwang jing, the emperor became all the more convinced that Esoteric Buddhist deities could help him to ameliorate the plight of the country. To bring their power to this world, the state had to rely on the professionalism of the yogins, and therefore, the institutionalization of niansong seng put the yogins at the court’s complete disposal.

After the death of Bukong, this institution in the palace was continued throughout the rest of Daizong’s reign. Right after the funeral, Daizong decided to scale up the program; he issued a decree to recruit more Esoteric practitioners to serve in the palace as niansong seng among Bukong’s disciples who were concentrating in monasteries of Huadu, Xingshan, and Baoshou.292

One of his six legitimate successors, Huilang, was imperially appointed as the Abhiṣekha Master of the next generation and summoned to the palace to take charge of the sanctums.293

4.6 Mañjuśrī, Monasteries, and State-Serving Monks

Various theories have been put forward to explain the reasons for the promotion of Buddhist establishments concerning the cult of Wutai-Mañjuśrī that featured prominently in Bukong’s

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291 See JTS: 18, 3417.
292 See “Zhao niansong seng zhi yi shou” 召念誦僧制一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0850c07-11. The decree was issued to Shi/Li Yuancong on the next day of Bukong’s funeral (7 vii 774).
293 In the year 778, when Huilang was appointed as the Head-Seat of the Great Xingshan Monastery, the Administrator of the monastery, Fagao 法高, presented a memorial of gratitude to Daizong, which indicates that by that time Huilan had already stayed in the palace to conduct imperial missions: He stays in the forbidden palace, but to remain there practicing visualization and chanting does not encumber [his duty to the monastery]; as the monastery is so near, just at the street before the palace, a Monastery Head on secondment would not result in the slackness [of monastic affairs]. 人從中禁, 留念誦而未妨; 寺邇天街, 借住持而無替 See “Xie zhi bu shamen Huilang chong Xingshan si shangzuo biao yi shou” 謝制補沙門慧朗充興善寺上座表一首, in BZJ, T2120.52.0859c28-29. This could be confirmed by the fact that earlier in the same year, Huilang, on behalf of fifty-three monks of niansong seng, presented a memorial to Daizong, celebrating their successful prayer for snow. See “He chunxue biao yi shou” 賀春雪表一首, in BZJ, T2120.52.0853c05-c15.
activities during Daizong’s reign. Much effort has been expended in the personal and devotional dimension; while Western scholars generally hold that Mañjuśrī was the deity that Bukong especially worshipped, recent Japanese scholars tend to approach the issue from the point of view of Emperor Daizong. The latter approach has sparked a debate over the exact theoretical connections between the bodhisattva and the emperor. The argumentation of both sides, as well as the criticism each hurls at the other, lacks the convincing support from precise doctrines.

Geoffrey Goble appealed to stop contemplating Bukong’s personal and devotional motives and to approach the issue against a larger background. Going through the many memorials sent by Bukong to Daizong, Goble created context for Daizong’s enterprise to expand the Buddhist establishments in Mt. Wutai and those dedicated to Mañjuśrī; he contends that this imperial project was driven by the emperor’s personal faith in Mañjuśrī as a powerful protector of his imperium. Bukong, he claims, took such imperial patronage of the cult as an opportunity to expand Esoteric Buddhism.

Daizong’s political concerns behind the official promotion the cult of Mt. Wutai and Mañjuśrī is beyond doubt; his initiative, however, should not be over-emphasized at the expense of Bukong’s active role and influence. A reconstruction of the whole context makes it fairly clear that Bukong was the architect of the series of projects.

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294 See the survey in IWASAKI Hideo 1993a: 40-41.
295 For example, see Birnbaum 1983: 34; and Weinstein 1987: 80.
296 IWASAKI Hideo (1993, 2011) argues that the promotion of the Wutai-Mañjuśrī cult owed to the Esoteric practice that Daizong learned from Bukong, which was devoted to the bodhisattva Samantabhadra. He says that whereas the emperor’s principal deity was not Mañjuśrī, the special link between the two bodhisattvas required the practitioner to direct great devotion to the latter. NAKATA Mie (2009) believes that the promotion of the cult was an ideological project to enhance the imperial authority of the throne, for it had been worn down by the rebellions. Her logic is that Bukong profiled Daizong as the incarnation of the Cakravartin of the Buddha’s Pinnacle (Skt. uṣṇīṣa-cakravartin, Ch. ding lunwang 顶輪王), and as all those who have attained Buddhahood, that cakravartin’s enlightenment owed much to the inspiration by Mañjuśrī.
297 It seems that the word enming 恩命 (literally, the emperor’s kind order) that frequently occurs in the relevant memorials written by Bukong leads Goble to assume the emperor’s initiative in promoting the cult of Wutai and Mañjuśrī. In many cases, pace Dr Goble, the term refers to the imperial ratification of Bukong’s request, instead of the imperial demand that represents the emperor’s personal will. In this regard, the BZJ, or the present incomplete version, fails to present all those correspondences between Bukong and the throne. The only piece that undeniably evinces Daizong’s initiative in promoting the Mañjuśrī cult is his edict that orders every monastery across the country to build a Mañjuśrī Chapel, as WANGSUN Yingzheng’s (2013) specialized
The performance of rituals was assigned to Esoteric practitioners of *niansong seng* to effect the potent force of Buddhist deities, but the number of competent practitioners at Bukong’s disposal must have been relatively limited. Apparently, Esoteric ritual procedures are very complicated and eccentric and therefore demand specialized training by a qualified master. There was a much greater pool of clerical personnel skilled at Mahāyāna practices that were less sophisticated. The Mahāyāna sutras that Bukong chose to translate were those that he claimed could generate merit to bolster the fortunes of the empire, and their potency could be realized by the mere practice of recitation prescribed in various Mahāyāna sutras.

As shown above, Bukong emphasized the soteriological mission upheld in Mahāyāna doctrines, and he articulated that it was an obligation of all monks to serve their state.\(^{298}\) To let the Mahāyāna monks have the opportunity to fulfill their duty and serve the state as well those Esoteric practitioners, Bukong created another official post as the counterpart for the *niansong seng*. Monks holding this type of standing posts devoted themselves to reciting a certain sutra or briefly reading (*zhuan* 轉讀) the whole Buddhist canon. As with the case of the *niansong seng*, they were given imperial commissions and enjoyed special stipends and an exemption from taxes and labour service.

To create those posts, good reasons were required, and religious facilities needed to be set up. The new construction projects that Bukong conceived for this end turned out to be combined with his campaign to promote the cult of Mañjuśrī and Mt. Wutai. This celestial bodhisattva was

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reading of the genre this edict has correctly suggested. As Chapter Three shows, Daizong’s move could not be free of suspicion of his master Bukong’s influence, so much so that Bukong’s colleague, Feixi, mistook that such nationwide institution of the Mañjuśrī Chapel was a link of a string of projects in promoting the cult: [the master] also requested [for the imperial order] that all monasteries across the country install Mañjuśrī as the Top-Seat [in refectory] and then establish a chapel and a statue for him. 兼奏天下諸寺以文殊為上座，仍置院立像 T2120.52.0849a16-17. This misunderstanding may have been quite common to many contemporary monks. This allows us to better understand why Bukong repeatedly made follow-up requests concerning how to make the chapel operate properly. \(^{298}\) See T2120.52.0833c18-19.
perceived as the prime preacher and practitioner of Mahāyāna doctrines and was widely worshipped by the Chinese monks for his superb enlightening wisdom.299

Since the middle of the fifth century, Mt. Wutai was believed to be the hallowed abode of the great bodhisattva Mañjuśrī as informed by a number of scriptures. By the middle of the seventh century, the interplay among the practice of scriptural translation and annotation, the pilgrimages made by Buddhists, and the spreading of tales about the miraculous manifestation of the bodhisattva in the mountain had refashioned this site into one of the holiest places of the Buddhist world.300 In one sutra, China was identified as the kingdom of Da Zhenna 大振那 (Skt. Mahā Cīna), a Buddhist land where the Buddhist teachings continued to be spread by Mañjuśrī in the mountain in the period after the Buddha’s nirvana.301

The identification of Mt. Wutai as Mañjuśrī’s abode was recognized by the Indian Buddhist community; legends about the numinous visions experienced by pilgrims sparked Indian monks’ enthusiasm to brave the arduous journey to China, only to pay homage to the bodhisattva and witness his numinous manifestation.302 Furthermore, it seems that not only Mt. Wutai, but also the entire Chinese land was deemed as a domain under the guardianship of Mañjuśrī. Vajrabodhi, Bukong’s late master, had embarked on his journey to China partly for the purpose of venerating Mañjuśrī. It is rather telling that Vajrabodhi had not visited Mt. Wutai, which implies that simply

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299 For the characteristics of Mañjuśrī and the roles played the bodhisattva in various Mahāyāna sutras, see the discussion in Tribe 1994 (part III).
300 There are a number of studies on this topic. French scholarship such as Étienne Lamotte’s “Mañjuśrī” (T’oung Pao 48, no. 1-3 [1960]: 1-96) is widely acknowledged in studies that appeared later. Lacking the knowledge of the language, I have only read the sources written in English. For discussions concerning Chinese sutras that devote to the promotion of Mañjuśrī and Mt. Wutai, see Birnbaum 1983: 11-13; Tribe 1994 (part III); Sen 2003: 76-79; and Cartelli 2013: 37-45. For surveys on the Buddhist pilgrimages to Mt. Wutai, see Tribe 1994 (part III) and Sen’s complementation (2003: 79, 278). Sen mentioned an extensive list of pilgrims made by DU Doucheng (1991: 233-86). As for the fashioning and refashioning of the image of Mt. Wutai as a sacred site by the practice of writing and rewriting stories, see Andrews’s (2013: Chapter 2&3) comparative studies on the mountain’s gazetteers compiled in different periods. For a historical survey of the political patronage of the mountain, see Cartelli 2013: 32-34.
301 The kingdom of Zhenna occurs in the Foshuo Wenshushili fabaozang tuoluoni jing 佛說文殊師利法寶藏陀羅尼經 (T1185A) translated by the South Indian monk Puti Liuzhi during Empress Wu’s reign. For the English translation of the related lines in the text, see Birnbaum 1983: 11-13; cf. the discussion in Sen 2003: 81-82.
302 For the contribution made by Indian monks in enhancing Mt. Wutai’s identity as the sacred realm of Mañjuśrī, see the discussion in Sen 2003: 79-81.
standing on Chinese land, he could gain access to the bodhisattva and his pilgrimage was done. Even earlier, this idea that China was the sacred territory of Mañjuśrī had been articulated in the biography of another famous Esoteric patriarch, Śubhakarasimha (637-735).\textsuperscript{303}

As has been pointed out, the exalting of Mt. Wutai and the entire soil of China to a Buddhist sacred realm through the holiness of Mañjuśrī was embraced by the Chinese clergy, for it relieved the inferiority complex that they had suffered for long.\textsuperscript{304}

The Chinese rulers would certainly espouse the veneration of Mañjuśrī and the heightened status of Mt. Wutai and China in Buddhist imaginary geography as well. Ever since the latter half of the fifth century, there were continuing flows of royal investment to the monastic construction in Mt. Wutai dedicated to this bodhisattva.\textsuperscript{305} The imperial patronage and political appropriation of this cult reached a climax during the reign of Empress Wu, who eagerly resorted to various elements of Buddhist ideology to legitimate her rule.\textsuperscript{306}

Mt. Wutai held special ideological significance for the royal clan of the Li family in view of the origin of their imperium, for the location of the mountain was near Taiyuan, where the dynastic founder, Li Yuan 李淵 (566-635, r. 618-626), started his military campaign to create a new regime. Therefore, this background suggests an inherent tie between Mt. Wutai/Mañjuśrī and the fortunes of the royal house.

Moving to Daizong’s reign, another wave to promote the cult of Mañjuśrī through developing projects in Mt. Wutai and even across the country was launched by Bukong and the emperor. Not removed from the capital city, the region was within the actual purview of the court during the post-Rebellion period, which, in the north, had shrunk to a couple of provinces

\textsuperscript{303} Vajrabodhi’s traveling to China was said to be instructed by the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara: he should head for China and pay worship to Mañjuśrī. See Vajrabodhi’s travelogue composed by Lü Xiang, T2157.55.0875b22. In the case of Śubhakarasimha, that China was a realm governed by Mañjuśrī is rendered through the words of a Buddhist deity. See Śubhakarasimha’s Account of conduct composed by Li Hua 李華: T1185.20.0791c11-14.

\textsuperscript{304} This is termed by Antonino Forte (1985: 125-28) as “border-land complex” that vexed Buddhist monks in entire East Asia, and the concept has been applied to the discussion of the significance of Mt. Wutai to Chinese Buddhists by Tansen Sen (2003: 80-81).

\textsuperscript{305} Cf. the survey in Certelli 2013: 31-36.

\textsuperscript{306} See Sen 2003: 80.
surrounding the capital. The governor of the province where the mountain lies was Xin Yunjing, who had acted as the political ally of Yu Chaoen in the campaign against Pugu Huaien and was Bukong’s fellow Sogdian and one of his supporters.\(^{307}\) Xin repeatedly extended administrative support to the construction and mission conducted in the mountain.\(^{308}\)

The great success of the *Renwang jing* chanting ceremony had earned Bukong enough credit to solicit institutional and financial support from the court and the protagonists of the campaign against Pugu Huaien. Half a year after the conferment of imperial titles to him and his late master, Bukong proposed to build magnificent structures on Mt. Wutai, as replications of the temple envisioned by the monk Daoyi 道義 decades before. The vision reported by this monk became the basis for Bukong to develop multiple construction projects to promote the cult of Mañjuśrī in the last decade of his life.

The first project that Bukong requested was the construction of the extravagant temple of Jin’ge on Mt. Wutai. Together with the temple of Yuhua, it was scheduled to be constructed by the court during Suzong’s reign, and probably with Bukong’s involvement, the former had been erected under Suzong’s support.

As Susan Andrews’s study shows, there had been antecedents of making “earthly counterparts” of temples manifested by the bodhisattva in Mt. Wutai, and the sacrosanct origin of the structures rendered them worthwhile for the rulers to grant imperial patronage and status.\(^{309}\) Among four other temples that had been constructed at Mt. Wutai with imperially accorded title plaques, which were mentioned in Bukong’s memorial to Daizong, at least three were built as replicas of visionary temples.\(^{310}\)

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\(^{307}\) This has been pointed out by NATAKA Mie (2007); another general Li Baoyu 李抱玉 (704-777), who was against Pugu Huaien together with Yu Chaoen, was also of Sogdian origin.

\(^{308}\) See T2120.52.0835b13 and T2120.52.0835c05-06.

\(^{309}\) See Andrews 2013: Chapter 4.

\(^{310}\) The three were temples of Qingliang 清涼, Huayan 華嚴, and Foguang 佛光. Andrews suggests that the Yuhua 玉華 Temple was also the earthly replica of a conjured temple (Andrews 2013: 162); but it seems doubtful, for if it had its own sacred visionary origin, Bukong would not have proposed to modify the temple modeling on the Jin’ge Temple.
To build a structure according to this fantastic vision must have been immensely costly and difficult; in his memorial, Bukong appealed to Daizong, the eunuch Yu Chaoen, and the ranking officials to each make contributions to the project. According to a later Buddhist source, provincial military governors, under orders from the throne, disbursed funds to facilitate the construction. Its monumental extravagance incurred denouncement in the secular history, which reveals that tiles of this temple were made of bronze and were yet painted with gold powder. Presumably, this was to imitate the visionary temple and represent the well-known golden-hued pure land of the bodhisattva. Soon after the proposal to build the Jin’ge Temple, Bukong gained the throne’s support to update the temple of Yuhua modeling the visionary temple as well.

The central and characteristic structure of visionary temple and its “earthly counterpart” was a pavilion called Wenshu Ge 文殊閣, or Mañjuśrī Pavilion, and it became the archetype for less expensive construction projects at monasteries on Mt. Wutai and in the capital. A copy of the pavilion was erected in the imperial temple of Qingliang 清涼 on the mountain.

In Chang’an, at the Huadu Monastery, a near replica was constructed under Daizong’s instruction and Bukong’s supervision, which was called “Huguo Wan Pusa Tang” 護國萬菩薩堂 (the Hall of Ten Thousand State-protecting Bodhisattvas). The title highlighted the ten thousand bodhisattva retinues referenced in the *Avatamsaka Sutra* and whom Daoyi claimed to have witnessed in the conjured temple he visited. Yet again, at the Great Xingshan Monastery in which

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311 See *FZLDTZ*: This year, [the court] constructed the temple of Jin’ge-si, and [Emperor Daizong] ordered ten military commissioners to sponsor the project with the revenue of the two taxes. See T2036.49.0600b01-02. The “two taxes” probably refers to the summer and autumn land levies enacted during Daizong’s reign, although its first appearance in secular materials was given in 769. See Twitchett 1976: 36.

312 The *JTS* (118, 3418) says, “There was the temple of Jin’ge-si in Mt. Wutai. Bronze was moulded into tiles, on which gold powder was yet painted. [The temple] glittered in the valley, costing an immense sum of money. [When the construction was in preparation, Wang] Jin held the position of the chief minister, and he issued an official document through the Secretariat, ordering tens of monks from Mt. Wutai to proceed separately to various prefectures and counties, where they gathered crowds of Buddhist believers and delivered sermons, so as to seek [the donations of] goods and money.”

313 Mañjuśrī’s pure land is one of the common motifs in the vision stories about Mañjuśrī in Mt. Wutai. See Andrews 2013: 146-48.

314 See the *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經 translated by Buddhhabhadra (T1185.20.0797c21) and the version produced by Śikṣānanda (T0279.10.0241b21-b22).
he resided, Bukong built a Mañjuśrī Pavilion using the lavish patronage of the royal family. This architecture, as Bukong planned, would serve as a model for other monasteries to build their own Mañjuśrī Pavilion. Since the work was completed only after Bukong’s death, it seems that larger plan to popularize the structure had not been realized.

The larger plan appears to have been designed as the project affiliated to the nationwide chain of “Wenshu Yuan” or “Mañjuśrī Chapels” that were under construction on the grounds of all Buddhist monasteries; this nationwide project was mounted by Emperor Daizong slightly before Bukong’s proposal to build a Mañjuśrī Pavilion at the Great Xingshan Monastery, and his imperial edict instructed that the local governors of the country took the responsibility for the building work in each monastery within their jurisdictions.

Daizong owed the idea to Bukong’s inspiration, if it had not been the immediate result of the latter’s influence. Prior to this, Bukong, leading Mahāyāna monks in the capital, had initiated a national promotion of Mañjuśrī of less magnitude; they appealed to the throne to set as a rule through administrative procedure that all monasteries should install the image of Mañjuśrī as the Seat of Honour in the refectory. In addition, the concept of the Mañjuśrī Chapel was not original, and its archetype was the principal part of the complex of the visionary Jin’ge Temple. According to Daoyi’s representation, the Mañjuśrī Chapel was the foremost of among the thirteen component chapels (yuan). At Bukong’s suggestion, a decision was made to establish the first replica of the Mañjuśrī Chapel at another monastery, namely the Zhide Monastery in Taiyuan. With these in mind, the emperor’s initiative in launching the national Manjusri Chapel project could hardly be broken away from the various projects proposed by Bukong in veneration of Mañjuśrī.

The association between Bukong and the promotion of Mañjuśrī was so strong that Feixi, when composing a biography for him, took as granted that the Mañjuśrī Chapels across the country were due to his efforts.

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315 Scholars seem to suggest that Daizong used his own initiative to launch the national promotion of the cult of Mañjuśrī. See Wangsun 2012 and Goble (forthcoming).
316 See T2120.52.0849a16-17.
These structures were not designed as ordinary religious institutions; like the palace chapels, they were premises to accommodate monastic functionaries recruited for state service. The hall at the Huadu Monastery was staffed by fourteen monks to undertake Buddhist services on regular terms; some of them were assigned to sutra recitation, while others to the performance of Esoteric rituals of visualization and chanting.

For each of the five imperial temples on Mt. Wutai, the Esoteric monk Hanguang, Bukong’s most senior disciple and the Head of the Jin’ge Temple,\(^{317}\) took the responsibility to organize twenty-one monks to engage in the constant recitation of the *Renwang jing* and the *Miyan jing*. At yet another temple on the mountain that had lately gained imperial status thanks to Bukong’s request, the same number of monks were arranged to recite the *Lotus Sutra*.\(^{318}\)

The monks installed in these monastic institutes held permanent posts. In the memorials presented to the court, Bukong always requested the court to ensure the number of the incumbent monks would not dwindle, as expressed by his set phrase: vacancies, if they occur, should be filled 隨闕續填 or 有闕續填. These religious functionaries were exempted from taxes and other labour services that would otherwise be exacted by the governments and disrupt their much more important undertaking.

At the Mañjuśrī Chapels, the religious activities conducted for the state were related to the devotion to that bodhisattva. At the Zhide Monastery in Taiyuan, fourteen monks that specialized in different fields of Buddhist learning were inducted in the chapel with the duty of “perpetuating” the teachings and practices centred on this bodhisattva.

In the year following the imperial decree to build Mañjuśrī Chapels across the country, Bukong produced two Mahāyāna sutras that amplified the background myth of the bodhisattva.

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\(^{317}\) Hanguang held the position of Commissioner of Merit Cultivation in Mt. Wutai (*wutai shan xiu gongde shi* 五台山修功德使). According to Ennin’s record, he established an Esoteric sanctum to perform rituals to boost the fortune of the royal family at the Jin’ge Temple. See *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki*: 3, 295.

\(^{318}\) This temple had originally been called Wumozi Si 吳摩子寺, and due to Bukong’s proposal, the “awkward name” was changed to “Dali Fahua Zhi Si” 大曆法華之寺. This name bears the title of Daizong’s reign, and the name plaque was made with the calligraphy executed by the emperor.
When presenting them to the throne, he proposed that each Mañjuśrī Chapel should be allocated seven or three permanent posts, depending on the size of the monastery, to preach and recite these two scriptures. As the constructions of these chapels were carried out by local governors, the expenses to operate these institutes and keep the monks were covered by the local government as well.

Before his death, Bukong created the last batch of permanent posts for the empire in the Great Xingshan Monastery. At the Mañjuśrī Pavilion, fourteen of his disciples, led by one of his yogin successors, Huiguo 惠果, were installed to conduct the visualization and chanting rituals and the brief-recitation (zhuandu 轉讀) of the Buddhist canon that had been bestowed on Bukong by the emperor. Another group were monks of the niansong seng set up at the Abhiṣeka Sanctum in the monastery, and they were seven of his yogin disciples led by another of his successors, Huilang.

Besides the Great Xingshan Monastery, Bukong established another two Esoteric centres out of the capital Chang’an, both carrying express ideological significance. One was located at the Great Chongfu 崇福 Monastery in Taiyuan, a monastery that held a unique political significance for the royal clan, for it was at this very spot that the dynastic founder Li Yuan had declared his military uprising to overturn the Sui Dynasty. Because of its political prominence, Bukong established an Abhiṣeka Sanctum and installed fourteen monks who were commissioned to the practice of the ritual of visualization and chanting of “Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī” and the periodic recitation of the Renwang jing for the past imperial ancestors.

Another Esoteric centre lay in the East Capital, at the residence monastery of Bukong’s late master Vajrabodhi—the Jianfu 薦福 Monastery. Seven Esoteric monks were installed at this chapel, which enshrined a pagoda erected by Vajrabodhi dedicated to Vairocana, the supreme Buddha of all Esoteric traditions, and another seven monks were affiliated to the chapel dedicated to an old stone ordination platform where Vajrabodhi had ordained Bukong in full. These monks were assigned to conduct Esoteric practices for the state.

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The posts established in these two Esoteric centres were permanent and full-time; holders were exempted from taxes, labours service to the government, as well as various duties to the monasteries.

An important part of perpetuating these state-serving posts was to ensure these institutes would never fall short of financial support. As discussed above, during this period, the powerful and the rich took advantage of the economic disorder to amass farmland and build large estates with tenants and serfs working for them. With the support of the emperor, Bukong joined the trend and built estates to ensure the financial security of Buddhist monasteries under his control.

For the royal temple of the Great Chongfu Monastery, Bukong requested the court to exempt the monastery from levies of its landed estate. The revenue thus spared would be used to finance the Buddhist service dedicated to the royal ancestors.

In his testament, Bukong made his final arrangements to lay the financial foundation for two institutes he had established. Recently, he had purchased two landed estates near Chang’an, which he bequeathed to the monks devoted to sutra reciting and Esoteric rituals at the Mañjuśrī Pavilion in the Great Xingshan Monastery. He also asked his disciples to build a landed estate for the cloister enshrining the Vairocana Stupa at the Jianfu Monastery in Luoyang.

It is likely that the estates Bukong had built were not limited to the above two that were clearly recorded in the sources. The secular historians were well aware of his financial activities; to them, such corrupt dealings of a worldly renouncer—accumulating landed property and seizing power at court—were deplorable.

The barbarian monk Bukong climbed to the official rank of chief minister and director and was ennobled as a state-duke. He enjoyed the special permit of free entry into the forbidden palace and asserted overwhelming influence over the dukes and chief ministers; he contended for authority and arrogated power, and he was committed to extortion from others. Much of the fertile farmland and abundant resources in the capital and the environs fell into the hands of the Buddhist temples and Daoist shrines,

319 It seems that during the period the landed estates owned by all classes were subject to taxation. See Twitchett 1963: 21.
a situation that officials were unable to remedy against. 胡僧不空，官至卿監，封國公。通籍禁中，勢移公卿；爭權擅威，日相凌奪。凡京畿之豐田美利，多歸於寺觀，吏不能制

The secular historians would never appreciate the monks’ commitment in the name of state service that motivated a barbarian monk’s voracious snatching of political power and agricultural property. Their denouncement confirms Bukong’s effort to financially support monks fulfilling their salvific mission under his direction.

4.7 Conclusion: The Abhiṣeka Master

During this period of hardship, Bukong successfully demonstrated the practical value of Buddhism—especially the Esoteric tradition he promoted—in helping the state to overcome various difficulties, and difficulties were turned into opportunities for the Buddhist monks to be employed by the state. Although it was a time of depleted resources, the economic disorder proved to be conducive for Bukong to acquire two sorts of resources. The income of state revenue became the free disbursement of the emperor, who quickly became Bukong’s yogin student and to some extent a co-director of Buddhist projects. Under the imperial auspices, Bukong created imperial institutes with official and regular posts to install Buddhist monks. And the monks, who were in need of means of subsistence in a society suffering economic distress, were more willing to make such exchange than if it were in normal times. In addition, following the trend of the amassing of landed property, Bukong actively built estates to place his religious institutes on a firm financial foundation.

The political, financial, and human resources collected by Bukong were all invested in the religious projects that he conceived upon the principle of universal salvation upheld in the Esotericist view on Buddhism. Earlier projects facilitated each other and spawned new ones. Buddhist texts were translated and then applied to the practices of recitation or Esoteric rituals; and these practices took place under religious premises that had been specially constructed to this end.

320 See JTS: 118, 3417.
The scriptural translation, the performance of Esoteric rituals, and the Mahāyānist chanting were only those great in scale and constantly undertaken.

These regularized Buddhist services necessitated the creation of permanent posts, which Bukong filled with monks at his disposal. Housed in the splendid buildings and sustained by state-paid stipends, these religious functionaries were immensely indebted to him. They were even exempted from the burden of taxes and corvée, a treatment better than that of the normal governmental employees.

The integration of different Buddhist projects and the coordination among different groups of monks substantiated the unique title that Bukong had probably earned from Sri Lanka, the Abhiṣeka-Tripiṭaka. The first part indicates his position as the officiator of the Abhiṣeka altar, which held the sole religious authority to induct monks into the practice of secret rituals and offer them official posts; while the second part speaks to his leading role in scriptural translation, which produced the texts that the monks would work on and constituted a prerequisite to developing other projects.

The Abhiṣeka Master was institutionalized as a state office of Buddhist projects, and the incumbent became the developer and director of imperial missions with a group of various Buddhist experts at his disposal. The responsibility of the office seems to have encompassed the national projects involving both the Mahāyāna and the Esoteric practices, which can be illustrated by two cases. When Daizong issued a decree ordering each Buddhist monastery in the country to build a Mañjuśrī Chapel, Bukong reacted by presenting a memorial of gratitude, which was meant to acknowledge the imperial support of the Buddhist cause under his stewardship. Further, in 776, Daizong ordered all Buddhist monks and nuns of the country to chant the Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī. Huilang, the successor to Bukong as the Abhiṣeka Master, reacted in a similar way.

It was this position that allowed Bukong to unfold his Buddhist enterprise, and the core of the enterprise was the institutionalized Yoga practices. The Abhiṣeka Sanctums were the headquarters where Esoteric personnel were trained and sent to various Esoteric sanctums on
missions. When concluding his Buddhist mission, Bukong said that all Esoteric practices constituting the Vajroṣṇīṣa system had been established during Daizong’s reign, which means that different groups of monks were assigned to performed rituals at different Esoteric institutes on a regular basis, and these practices covered all the eighteen sub-systems of the Yoga.  

It was the actual projection of Bukong’s power that gave birth to those posts and benefited Mahāyāna monks. The indebtedness was demonstrated and symbolized their loose discipleship under Bukong. A great many monks in the metropolitan region—as well as officials at court—received his abhiṣeka service and were initiated into Esoteric practices, and they addressed themselves as the master’s abhiṣeka disciples (guanding dizi 灌頂弟子).

Indeed, such master-disciple relationship between Bukong and his general followers was largely formalistic, much more a reflection of his established authority as the head of a semi-governmental department. No wonder that several of his close assistants in the translation project, including Huaigan 懷感, Qianzhen 潛真, and Feixi 飛錫, were well-known for insisting on Mahāyāna practices particularly during their last hours of life, despite the fact that they had been initiated into Esoteric practices and must have been versed at the doctrines.

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321 See “Yishu”: “The Yoga of Eighteen Assemblies, the most fundamental [Buddhist practices], has been all established, and rituals are performed towards each and every of the Thirty-Seven Venerated Ones.” T2120.52.0844a25-26.
Chapter 5: The Various Accounts of Bukong’s Background Places and His Ethnicity and Identity

5.1 Introduction

As have been shown in previous chapters, Bukong’s activities spanned multiple areas and won approval from his contemporary and people of later generations. As reviewed in the previous chapters, the discrete approaches to his activities undertaken by modern scholars reflect the manifold implications of his historical activities. His mixed ethnicity and colorful life experiences resulted in multiple and combined ethnicities and identities: an Indian monk, a Sogdian, a patriarch of Esoteric Buddhism, a productive Buddhist translator, an expert at Buddhist precepts, a courtier of the Tang emperors, and a one-time envoy between the courts of Tang China and Sinhala, or the Land of the Lion.

In the primary sources, we find that he was referred to by various identities. In this respect, the most blatant discrepancy occurs among the statements of the very basic information of his ethnic identity which was expressed through the homeland and ancestry—the two issues that writers had to begin with in the composition of a biography of any genre in Chinese history. Some of these sources state that he was a descendant of a North Indian Brahmin, and some say that he was from “the Land of the Lion, South India”, and still others claim that he was from the Western Regions (xiyu 西域). The homelands that were prefixed to his name in Buddhist canonical texts also, frustratingly, vary from one of those areas to another.322

The seemingly conflicting statements have been puzzling scholars since at least the thirteenth century.323 Acknowledging these statements as incompatible, both modern and

322 For a discussion on these different home countries that were attributed to Bukong in the lines of authorship of the canonical texts, see Togashi 1997. IWAMOTO Hiroshi has gathered various address forms from as many as twenty-three historical sources. Besides those immediately agreeing with the accounts discussed below, others include a hu barbarian (huren 胡人) or a hu barbarian monk (huseng 胡僧) and an Indian monk (fanseng 梵僧). See Iwamoto 1996a: 36-37. These address forms are from secular sources and Buddhist sources that appeared much later than those that will be focused on in the discussion below. They are geographically ambiguous and may carry some connotative appraisal of the subject.
323 For instance, see Shingon monk Yōkai’s comparison of those statements, Ruiju hasso ten: 4, 90-91.
pre-modern scholars must necessarily appraise and choose which are credible, but no efforts have yet been made to answer so many accounts regarding the most basic matter of such a well-known personality.

IWAMOTO Hiroshi published a dedicated study regarding Bukong’s native origin. He questions the authenticity and reliability of one of the major biographies—the XZ by Zhao Qian—and accordingly, in view of the contradiction of the related dates, he denies the account given in the XZ, that Bukong was a native of North India and came into the Tang from Central Asia by land. The recorded relationship that Bukong held with Sri Lanka leads Iwamoto to identify it as his homeland.324

Are these statements speaking of the matter of Bukong’s background in the same sense? Are they truly contradictory, as scholars have long supposed? We should consider, above all, what factors may have fashioned notions of ethnicity and identity that were expressed through geographical location in Tang historiography. It has been posited that various themes may have dominated Tang discourses related to ethnicity, including ancestry, kinship, homeland, origin, cultural and religious practices, physical traits, and politics.325 This chapter shows that in several biographical sources of Bukong, different factors that arose from his personal background, multifarious achievements, and even the Chinese historiographical convention dictated the perception of his ethnicity and identity. Factors that associate Bukong with foreign areas are not limited to birth and nationality; equally powerful were his diplomatic activity, pilgrimage, and his religious tradition.

324 For the assessment of the XZ, see Iwamoto 1996a; for his study on Bukong’s native place see 1996b. The earliest statement that bears on the relationship between Bukong and Sri Lanka was made by Bukong’s colleague, Liangben, during Bukong’s lifetime, where he described Bukong: Nantianzhu Zhishizi Guo guanding sanzang. 李天竺執師子國灌頂三藏 (T1709.33.0430b23-24) Liangben’s expression is also the earliest indication of Bukong’s background place. TOGANOO Shōun (1933: 109-10) reads it as “the Tripiṭaka who received abhiṣeka in the Land of the Lion, South India”, and this interpretation has received popularity. (For example, see Tanaka 1996:144) Iwamoto tends to believe that it means that Sri Lanka was the homeland where Bukong came from. According to the view in this dissertation, literarily it means “a [master of] Abhiṣeka and Tripiṭaka from Sri Lanka of South India”, but rather than Bukong’s secular homeland, it expresses his Dharma homeland. See the discussion below.

325 See Abramson 2008: xii-xiii.
Statements regarding Bukong’s background need to be understood against different historiographical contexts. The first is the formal requirement to report an identifying place for people appearing in medieval Sinitic historiography, which was supposed to convey the subject figure’s junwang 郡望, the local basis renowned for the success of one’s clan. Junwang was used in medieval China as a strategy to signal the socio-political credit of one’s pedigree and to distinguish his/her clan from other clans sharing the same surname. All clans of the nation were thus spread into the system of a conceptual geography that was founded upon a socio-political hierarchy. Bukong’s Sogdian background and the Sogdians’ successful appropriation of the juanwang system ensconced his fief into this socio-political geography when he was ennobled as a Tang duke, and such political success would rightfully claim a reconsideration of his ancestral homeland.

Different factors have been emphasized by different writers in accordance with their own backgrounds and various concerns when spelling out their own versions of Bukong’s ethnic identity. Such diversified accounts resulted in dynamics of perception of his historical role which appeared during his life and continued after his death.

In the light of the above factors at play in shaping Bukong’s ethnicity and identity, the various related accounts found in the primary sources can be divided into two groups. The first group includes the statements from three sources: [1.1] the XZ, Bukong’s (774) by Zhao Qian; [1.2] the YZ (774) by Feixi (742−805+); [1.3] the statements by Yuanzhao in BZJ and the XKYL (796); and finally [1.4] the statement given in the SGSZ (988). These statements share the same narrative formula and convey comparable intents; they are not addressing the homeland of Bukong but that of his ancestors, in line with the contemporary notion of junwang and the rule of historiography.

Although the account made by Yan Ying in the official stele inscription BM (781) is not couched in the typical formula expressing junwang, it probably complied with the norm as well. In
addition, it shows conformity to the Sinitic culture and another historiographical rule, insisting on indicating his paternal ancestry, albeit scantily known.

The primary feature of the second group of biographical sources is the regard paid to the root of Bukong’s Esoteric tradition in South India and his celebrated imperial mission to and from Sri Lanka. The related geographical vision originating from South India is vital to understand the accounts. This second group includes: [2.1] the statement by Liangben in the preface to the Renwang jing (766); and [2.2] Yuanzhao’s statement in the ZYL. The two accounts may also be made according to contemporary conceptions of foreign masters with diverse travel or diplomatic backgrounds.

As I will show, the XB by Feixi is the only source that references Bukong’s literal birthplace, but its heavily figurative description discourages one to take it seriously.

5.2 The First Group of Ethnic Statements: Ancestral Local Basis (junwang 郡望) and the Fief-Investment System (fengjue 封爵) in the Tang

5.2.1 The Formulation of Bukong’s Ancestral Local Base or junwang in the Primary Sources

In the opening verses of the YZ (20 Aug. 774), Feixi says thus:

The Son of Heaven’s Consecration Ācārya transmitted the Way to the superior country326 and had his ancestral origin at Qishe 耆闍 (Skt. Grīḍhr, the Vulture Peak). The impression he gives people was as [unfathomable as] a dragon, while his personality was [as gentle and lustrous] as the jade. With palm leaves (i.e. the Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures) in his hands, he was the focus of the attention of the Buddhist sphere. 天子灌頂阿遮梨耶, 傳道上國, 家本耆闍。其望如龍，其人如玉，貝多在手，梵字327攸矚328

In the XZ, Zhao Qian says thus:

326 The word shangguo 上國 could refer either to Tang China or to its capital. Here it means the former, in parallel with “India” expressed as Qishe 耆闍. See discussion below.
327 It should be an error for 宇. The term fanyu 梵宇 means Buddhist monasteries.
328 T2156.55.0756a16-17.
The great master had his ancestral base in the Western Liang Province, and he was from a Brahman clan of North India.

In the BZI, Yuanzhao says that

The Tripiṭaka of the Great Xingshan Monastery of the Great Tang’s [Dharma] name is Zhizang 智藏, and his [Esoteric] name is Bukong Jin’gang 不空金剛, or Amogavajra in Sanskrit. Ancestrally speaking, he was a native of the Western Regions.

Scholars are disposed to understand that these statements convey the basic information of Bukong’s personal homeland and consider them contradictory to one another, but the critical term *ben* 本 shared by these statements impose a specific reference to those place names which were sensible to only Chinese localities and may have required the writers to tailor the raw information in the case of Bukong. This is a term typically used to express one’s *junwang*—or one’s historic, celebrated local base—that writers in medieval China needed to address in biographical composition. To identify one with his/her *junwang* is equivalent to say that his/her ancestors were the natives of some local area or that one’s ancestral local base that symbolized the political and economical success of his/her clan lay in that region.

The above sources, in light of this historiographical context, intend to report the ancestral local base of Bukong, and they variously formulated it as Qishe or Mt. Grdhraṅkūṭa in India, the Xiliang province of the Tang, and the broad foreign area to the Tang, the Western Regions.

5.2.2 General Contexts

During the Tang period, writers always identified the subject figure’s background of ancestry by indicating his clan and the popularly reputed local base, as scholars have shown.
More often than not, people’s ancestral local bases were different from their native places, for in most cases, many clans, over time, had left their original local bases and settled into new regions for various reasons. The branch thus renewed the identity marked by their residence place, which was known as *xinwang* 新望 (the recent local base) as opposed to the *jiuwang* 舊望 (the old local base) or *junwang*.\(^{333}\)

The old local base, however, was still a significant marker to differentiate one clan from another that shared the same surname. In many cases, people would stick to the old local base in social situations as a strategy to manifest or claim a celebrated pedigree or a more refined upbringing to attract socio-political appreciation although they had moved out of those regions for generations. Moreover, people tended to court better reception by falsely labelling themselves by the local base of a clan of higher social standing.

For a serious historian, these practices are corrupted customs, shrouding the facts behind one’s actual native place and cause unnecessary confusions. It is among the historiographical abuses that invited harsh criticism from the contemporary historian Li Zhiji 劉知幾 (661-721). When serving in the Historiographical Office (*shiguan* 史館), he tended to note the subject figure’s native place in the biography, but this straight and “inexperienced” manner was mocked and “corrected” by a senior historian.

When the compilation the National History was under way, I was assigned to the “Biography of Li Yiyan 李義琰 (d. 688)”. [Yiyan’s family had remained in Changle about the case of the JTS are different. TAKEDA Ryūji tried to illustrate that the JTS shows no preference between the old and current hometown; while YAN Gengwang believes that the JTS tends to use the ancestral native places or *junwang*. See YAN Gengwang 1992: 206-207.

\(^{333}\) According to YANO Chikara’s opinion, the aristocratic clan in the pre-Tang period resided in a fixed locality and acquired socio-political prestige and economic success. When a clan generally grew larger and split into branches, these branches would be classified as the superior and the inferior based upon the extents of their success in maintaining hereditary glory. In the Tang, such a trend intensified, and the differentiation among branches of the same clan was sharpened by the different residence places and their socio-political performance. The branches became more independent from its original clan. The notion *wang* was used to signal their original and usually glorious social identity, such as in the terms of *junwang*, *jiuwang* 舊望, *zuwang* 族望, etc.; while in other occasions, it was used to note the branch’s new identity by showing its current residence place, such as the term *xinwang* 新望 did. The move of Tang clans resulted in the changing of the most popular reference of the character *wang* 望 from the clan to the place. See YANO Chikara 1972: 10-15.
[County] of Weizhou Prefecture for three generations; therefore I wrote that Yiyan was a native of Changle [County] of Weizhou Prefecture. The project supervisor gave a big laugh, regarding it to transgress the historiographical formality. Therefore in accordance with the old local base of the Li clan, I rewrote ‘a native of Chengji [County] of Longxi [Commandery (jun 郡)]’.

To Liu, the pretence of identifying a better clan through a renowned local base is even more abhorrent.

[…] As society values families of high standing and despise those of humble origin, they have been vigorously boasting about the localities where their clans arose. […] Since the recent past, such claims tended to be falsehoods. As for what were inscribed in epigraphs and eulogies and those made for investing and naming fiefs, [people] falsely cited others’ hometowns and pretended them as their own. (Nowadays there are many barbarians from the Western Regions who are surnamed Ming 明 and Bei 卑. When noble titles of the five ranks were to be conferred on them, they would be called by such titles as Duke of Pingyuan 平原 or Viscount of Dongping 東平. This is because the [Chinese] Ming family comes from Pingyuan [Commandery] and the [Chinese] Bei Family comes from Dongping [Commandery]) … When they were recorded in biographies of various Histories, [the accounts] usually conform the style. This is following cliché of vulgar vogue and neglecting the time-honored model of composing practice.

334 Longxi had been a place name for a jun 郡 or commandery in the pre-Tang period, which ceased to be in usage during the time of Liu Zhiji. It was a convention to use the old, outdated name of the place rather than the one currently in use when addressing people’s junwang, a practice also criticized by Liu Zhiji. Longxi was the well-known local base for one of the many Li clans, which was also claimed by the Tang house.

335 When the Son of Heaven enfeoffed someone, the earth was brought from the four cardinal directions, and was wrapped up in cogon (baimao 白茅) and was to be used to construct the altar (she 社) for state sacrifice.

336 Neither Pingyuan nor Dongping referred to places of the Western Regions. The Pingyuan Commandery was set up in Western Han, located in the northwest of the present-day Shandong province. Dongping Commandery was set up in the Southern Song Dynasty, and it is also located in the present-day Shandong province. After the An Lushan rebellion (755-762), the Sogdians that lived in the Tang became much more careful in speaking of their place-identity or junwang. This is because the rebellion had caused unprecedented disaster to the state, and the leaders of rebels, An Lushan and Shi Siming 史思明 (703-761), were both Sogdians. When the rebellion was quelled and the leaders killed, the Tang state became hostile to the Sogdians and occasionally slaughtered them. Thus, the Sogdians living in the Tang contrived to draw a line of division from them. The strategy may have been to avoid mentioning their characteristic Sogdian junwang or just claim one Sinitic, or more deceitfully, to disguise their Sogdian junwang with a culturally celebrated Chinese location of the same name. For a discussion about Sogdians claiming places of inner-China to be their own hometowns, see RONG Xinjiang 2004: 241-43, 254-56.
As Liu Zhiji reveals, the employment of false local base frequently happened in biographical composition, as well as on occasions of the enfeoffment, a topic that we will revisit later. These ill customs, along with the other two that Liu pointed out, led to discrepant claims of place identity in the case of a single personage, and eventually caused prolonged confusion and heated debate among pre-modern and modern scholars.\footnote{339}

Unfortunately, this problem also occurs when regarding the place identity of Bukong. We need to decipher the actual references of those place names and to interpret the underlying intents.

### 5.2.3 Determining Bukong’s Ancestral Local Bases.

The toponym Qishe given in the YZ by Feixi is an abbreviation of Qishejue 赦闍崛, transliterated from Mt. Gr̥dhraṅkaṭa-parvata. The mountain’s name is often translated into Chinese as Lingjiu 灵鹫 (and into English as Vulture Peak). It is located near the city of Rājagrha, capital of the ancient state of Magadha, in Central India. In Mahāyāna scriptures, the mountain is a place where the Buddha frequently delivered sermons. Here in parallel with shangguo 上國 (the superior country, i.e. China), Feixi uses it figuratively as a landmark to symbolize India as the Buddha’s homeland in general, rather than to designate an exact location. In short, what Feixi tried

\footnote{337 The character 在 was interchangeable with 占.}
\footnote{338 See the Chapter “Yili pian” 邑里篇 of Shi tong 史通. (5; 355-56, 353, 356) The other two problems Li Zhiji criticizes are the using the obsolete place names to refer to places known in current administrative system and prefixing the celebrated hometown of an unrelated clan or branch before one’s own name to fish for socio-political credit and appreciation.}
\footnote{339 The best-known cases are those of Li Bai 李白 (701-762), Han Yu 韩愈 (768-824), and Guo Ziyi 郭子儀 (679-781). I believe, however, the facts of their true native places were clear to their contemporaries, for people spoke with local accents. When Han Yu falsely claimed birth of a local Han clan that was higher than his own, he might have been merely displaying his commendation of the delicate culture and glorious history that noble local clans symbolized. TAKEDA Ryūji comments that unlike the Southern Dynasties, in the Tang the aristocratic birth alone ceased to secure one’s entry into officialdom due to the enforcement of the state examination system. Therefore, the political significance of noble pedigree was fading out and its cultural significance looming large. The politically and culturally superior class of shi 士 was no longer a rigid institution, and thus anyone could feel easy to assert the status of shi by claiming an honoured junwang. See TAKEDA Ryūji 1951: 40-42.}
to say is that Bukong’s ancestral native place is somewhere in India.

The XZ formulated both Bukong’s ancestry and ancestral local base, that he was a descendant of a North Indian Brahmin, and that his ancestral local base was the so-called “Xiliang Fu” 西良府.

More than half a century ago, Yi-liang Chou proposed that Xiliang Fu 西良府 was an error for Xiliang Fu 西涼府, for only the place known as [Xi]liang [西]涼 could be found in medieval sources; and studies published later generally accepted Chou’s assumption which seems to be the only sensible solution to the problem.340

Chou further identifies the Xiliang Fu as the prefecture Liangzhou 涼州, also known as the Wuwei Commandery 武威. He supports this explanation by the instance of Guang Fu 廣府, which was the abbreviation of Guangzhou Dudufu 廣州都督府 (lit. area command) and referred to the Guangzhou 廣州 Prefecture.341

Evidence from the Tang does show that Xiliang Fu or Liang Fu could refer to the prefecture of Liangzhou,342 but there are other occasions where they may either refer to a region larger than a prefecture or appear ambiguous in actual reference. Recent studies claim that the term fu in the Tang Dynasty was the abbreviation of dudufu 都督府; in other words, Guang fu or Liang fu means Guangzhou dudufu or Liangzhou dudufu.343 The dudufu in the Tang, especially in the first half of it,

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340 The character liang 良 rendered in the Taishō and Zokuzōkyō editions of XZ seems not to be a miswriting of the original manuscripts, because the character liang 良 also occurs in the quotation of the statement in Ruiji hasso den, which dates earlier than the canonical original.340 Chou’s assumption could be backed by an example from medieval period that used liang 良 as the homophonous character liang 涼. Wenyan yinghua 文苑英華 renders a verse by Wang Jun 王筠 of the Liang dynasty (502-557) as thus: “All of a sudden, I notice the Milky Way has turned its position, and then rejoice the coming of cool breeze by myself alone” 忽遇長河轉,獨喜良飈至. The versions of the same verse kept in Yiwen leiju 藝文類聚 and in Chuxue ji 初學記 both have 涼 instead of 良. Wenyan yinghua: 158, 749; Yiwen leiju: 4, 78; Chuxue ji: 4, 78.


342 For example, a Tang rhapsody is present in QTW (769, 8005-06) with the title “Yuanzong xing Xiliang fu guandeng fu” 元宗幸西涼府觀燈賦 (A Rhapsody about Emperor Yuanzong’s [i.e. Xuanzong 玄宗] Visiting Xiliang Fu and Sighting Festival Lanterns). According to the preface, the Daoist priest Ye Fashan 葉法善 (616-720) employed his magic and brought Xuanzong the spectacular view of lantern show in Wuwei Commandery, when they were in the capital Luoyang, thousands of miles away from Liangzhou.

functioned as an administrative division of provincial level, at least of an immature kind.\textsuperscript{344}

One such instance appears in a Buddhist source that was completed slightly later than Bukong’s time and concerns the journeys of Tripiṭaka Prajñā (Bore 般若, 741–798+) from India to China. It distinguishes Guang Fu from the Guangzhou prefecture, indicating that the city Guangzhou was only part of Guang Fu:

Then [he] raised provisions and funds and firmly repaired the sailing ships. [Afterward he] voyaged extensively in the Southern Sea and traveled through various countries. In the second year of Jianzhong 建中 era (781), he reached the domain of Guang Fu 廣府. [He] proceeded eastwards for half a month before finally arriving at Guangzhou 廣州 Prefecture. In the third year of the Jianzhong era (782), [he] arrived at the capital. 又集資糧，堅修航舶。備歷南海，路次國中。建中二年，垂至廣府。……東行半月，方達廣州。洎建中三年，屆于上國矣 \textsuperscript{345}

As for “Xiliang Fu” in the case of Bukong, it seems to be better understood as a province than a prefecture. This is because the court invested Bukong with a nominal fief, which lay not in Liangzhou but in the Suzhou 肅州 Prefecture, and his noble title was the Duke of Su 肅.

During the Tang dynasty, when conferring a noble title on officials and investing them with fiefs—be that nominal or actual—the state in principle had to find out the officials’ junwang or ancestral local bases and create the title and fief according to the place names.\textsuperscript{346} In this respect, we have already examined Liu Zhiji’s complaint about the people’s arrogation of more celebrated junwang. Furthermore, for the purpose of checking out the true ancestral bases of officials, a national compendium of clan names, Yuanhe xingzuan 元和姓纂, was decreed to be compiled in 812.\textsuperscript{347} The preface professes this purpose:

\textsuperscript{344} There is a debate among scholars concerning the administrative level of dudufu in the first half of the Tang dynasty. Some argue for the level of the prefecture, while some have more convincingly demonstrated its provincial quality. For those with the latter view, see, for example, GUO Shengbo 2006; AI Chong 2005: 42-52.

\textsuperscript{345} See T2156. 55.0891c26 -892a04.

\textsuperscript{346} There were two other ways to derive the title, usually for the princes and princesses. One is naming after the honored locations, which had no relationship with the royal family, and the other is to simply create a fine name without involving any places. See Matsu 1968: 126.

\textsuperscript{347} The work was compiled by Lin Bao 林寶 (9th c.), in ten juan, under the supervision of Li Jifu. It was missing after the Ming dynasty, and only the two pieces of preface are existent, both written in the same 812 when the work was compiled. Besides the author’s own preface, the other one was written by one Wang Ya 王涯. Entries of the work are
In the year of Renchen 壬辰 (812), Yuanhe Era, it was decreed to bestow peerage on the frontier officers, in order to award their achievement in garrisoning. There is a commander of a minor troop in the Shuofang 朔方 [military province], a certain Yan 閻 from Tianshui 天水 (the Qinzhou 秦州 Prefecture of the day, in the present-day Gansu province), and when the relevant office created a [nominal] fief for him, they pinned his commandery in Taiyuan 太原 (then the prefecture of Bingzhou, roughly the present-day Taiyuan of Shanxi province). The executive had already put the edict into practice, and Yan presented his words to the throne, “I am greatly indebted to the edict, which invests me with peerage and fiefdom. This is glorious for generations of my family, both those already gone and those to come; yet the location of the fief is not my original commandery base, and this might be against the canon. The next day, the emperor told the prime minister, the Duke of Zhao State 趙公, "Such a mistake by the relevant office will not be repeated. We should summon learned scholars who are conversant with the ministers’ pedigrees and surnames to compile a compendium of surnames. Let the task be commissioned to the departments, and make sure to trace their origins and lineages and locate their local bases. Information about descendants’ posts and ranks should also be collected. Whenever the peerage and fief are to be given, ask officials to consult it. Hopefully no omission or errors would be committed."

Conversely, the aristocratic title and the fief usually indicate the location of one’s paternal ancestral local base. In this way, we could learn from the title “Duke of Su” that Bukong’s junwang was perceived to be Suzhou.

found in Yongle dadian 永樂大典, and Qing scholars collected them into ten jun. The restored version was further complemented and corrected by scholars of later generations, resulting in other versions, including one by Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753-1818) and Hong Ying 洪瑩 (d. u.), and one by Cen Zhongmian 岑仲勉 (1885-1961). See Huang 2002: 120-21.

348 Zhaogong 趙公 was an abbreviation of Zhaoguo gong 趙國公, referring to Li Jifu 李吉甫 (758-814). He was also addressed by it with his surname Li prefixed (“Li Zhaogong” 李趙公), as showed by the title of his account of conduct, Li Zhaogong xingzhuang 李趙公行狀. See XTS: 58, 1485.

349 The Three Departments at the top of the central administrative structure of the Tang, namely the Department of State Affairs (shangshu sheng 尚書省), the Chancellery (menxia sheng 門下省), and the Secretariat (zhongshu sheng 中書省).
Suzhou was also known as Jiuquan Commandery 酒泉郡, and it was located further northwest than Liangzhou. For the most time, Suzhou fell under the jurisdiction of Liangzhou Dudufu. This is why Zhao Qian reports that Bukong’s ancestral local base was Xiliang Fu, and, in the same XZ, also applauds the conferral of the aristocratic title on Bukong.

Bukong’s paternal ancestry, according to the XZ however, was North Indian, a piece of information quite incongruent with the local base located at Suzhou. The factor that could reasonably link Bukong to Suzhou exists only on his maternal side. As shown above, Bukong’s maternal kinship was Sogdian, and moreover, he himself was brought up by his maternal uncle and actually took their surname, Kang 康, before he was ordained as a Buddhist monk.

By that time, the Sogdian immigrants had already been living in China for centuries, and they had acclimatized their life to Chinese society and culture. They could speak Chinese and took their Sinitic monosyllabic surnames according to the names of their original states in Sogdiana. After the Han custom of discussing people’s junwang, many Sogdians liked to articulate a junwang located somewhere on the Chinese map, only to claim their eligible membership of Chinese society and culture after centuries of assimilation, and to do so sometimes they would even assume phoney ones, just as Liu Zhiji criticized.

The surname Kang was normally taken by emigrants from the Sogdian state of Kang in Central Asia. The Sogdians traveled and resided across China, and the northwestern region, including the province of Liangzhou Dudufu, had been the major area of their settlement since at least the fourth century. Over time, the clans from Kang grew especially powerful in Suzhou and won the prestige of the leading position among all the Sogdian clans living in the region, and thus, they deemed the place as their local base for their success. Therefore, it is assumable that Suzhou had already become the well-known junwang of the Kang people in general, as was acknowledged by the Han people in the hinterland. Since Bukong was known to be a Sogdian and to have lived

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351 See RONG Xinjiang 2001b: 62-64.
under this surname, it could be rather reasonable for his contemporaries to take Suzhou as the most pertinent Chinese locality to fashion his identity via the junwang convention.

Thus, the Xiliang Fu described by Zhao Qian in the XZ, as a provincial area in general, implies where the local base of Bukong’s maternal ancestors lay. Further, the noble title granted to Bukong provides the concrete location of his “maternal junwang”.

Both clues, however, do not necessarily lead to the conclusion that Bukong’s maternal family actually lived in Suzhou or Xilang Fu and had achieved high social standing there. As Liu Zhiji and modern scholars remind us, in both systems of historiography and ennoblement of the Tang, pretending a celebrated juwang was a quite popular practice. The accounts of Bukong’s early travel experience into China imply that he had been brought up by his maternal uncle not in the territory of Tang, but somewhere exotic and more northwestern than the Liangzhou Prefecture. According to the XZ, it was not until the age of ten sui (at the age of twelve) that Bukong for the first time experienced the Chinese culture.

To confer upon a non-Han a Sinitic peerage, the office needed to locate him in the map of junwang, and to that end, they appropriated most applicable background of Bukong’s ancestry to fit into the Chinese convention and took the well-known local base of the Sogdian Kangs: Suzhou. In other words, the successful integration of Sogdian people into the social life of the Tang lent Bukong the potential to be perceived against the Chinese socio-political geography. With the consideration of representing Bukong more as a figure of Tang China, Zhao Qian formulated a local base and squared his information with the biographical formality.

This strategy, nevertheless, violates another Chinese normative stress on one’s paternal ancestry over the maternal in reporting the subject’s family background in biographical composition. The maternal ancestry was always worth no necessary mention and never played any significant part in marking one’s social station. Presumably taking account of this deficiency, Yan Ying, when writing an official stele inscription several years later in 781, and perhaps having Zhao Qian’s XZ for reference, insisted on addressing Bukong’s paternal ancestry. What was known of
Bukong’s paternal background, however, was only the race and social caste, which could not be counted as what Chinese regarded as *shizu*—one’s paternal clan name and ancestry—that should be reported in biography. Yan Ying candidly acknowledged the lack of this information. The master’s name is Bukong, and he was a person of the Western Regions. His clan name and ancestry are unknown to China and therefore are not recorded here. 和上諱不空，西域人也。氏族不聞於中夏，故不書

The above statement contains no keyword to express Bukong’s *junwang*; it could be understood as a formulaic expression to communicate Bukong’s own native place or his ancestral local base. The geographical notion of “Western Regions” did not have an exact referent, and could indicate either specifically Central Asia or a region as broad as encompassing all the foreign lands northwest and southwest of China, including India and Sri Lanka. In the many accounts related to Bukong, this toponym is used in the latter sense. Probably owing to the unclear homeland of Bukong’s paternal family, it was much safer to use a more general geographical notion when speaking of his native place. Yuanzhao’s two statements derived from Yan Ying’s BM and reflect such a concern.

As a result, Yan Ying’s and Yuanzhao’s specifications of the Western Regions do not contradict Feixi and Zhao Qian’s statements; they were meant to refer to the ethnic backgrounds of different clans out of different concerns and strategies, but all did so to comply with the Chinese notion to identify one’s ancestry in historical and geographical terms. Bukong’s remarkable achievement in official ranking and state service encouraged one writer to emphasize those elements and highlight his political Chineseness more than others.

Both Zhao Qian’s XZ and Yan Ying’s BM were composed to meet an institutional requirement. The XZ’s genre, an account of conduct, was the official biography composed for the deceased bureaucrat. Required by the central government, it was written usually within one year after the death of the official and by his family, or intimates who were familiar with his life. It

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352 T2120.52.0860a18-19.
353 For some illustrations, see IWAMOTO Hiroshi 1996b: 43-46.
would be reviewed by and archived in the Historiographical Office, and thus became the most detailed biography about the subject and the most important source for the production of his biographies in the official history, such as the Verified Record (shilu 實錄), and the National History (guoshi 國史), as well as in the standard histories. Zhao Qian’s composition of the XZ was conducted in such an institutional frame.

The composition of stele inscription was usually based on the account of conduct. In the case of Bukong, by the imperial order, Yan Ying composed the BM six years after his death, presumably with the XZ at hand. As a genre, stele inscription was more formal than the account of conduct, and its text was open to the public for reading and making rubbings. Therefore, details of the content were subject to a very careful discussion before the writer put his brush to paper. This genre was usually shorter, less detailed, and more selective, and the locution was more rhetorical and flowery than the account of conduct.

Texts with such a kind of official quality must conform to certain formality and ideology, to a lesser or greater extent. The emphasis on one’s paternal ancestry and the related local geographical origin by the complex of junwang were just two prominent aspects of this formalism.

5.3 The Second Group and Bukong’s Dharma Ancestry and Homeland

In the ZYL (800), Yuanzhao made another account on Bukong’s background:

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354 According to the provisions, only officials with an office above the third rank or with a prestige title (sanguan 散官) above the second rank were eligible to be written in accounts of conduct. In fact, many officials of lower ranks, or even those without official titles had their account of conduct, being considered for some reason worth of it. The main purposes of the account of conduct were to claim canonization by with a posthumous designation (shi 諡), request for the inclusion the deceased’s life into official history, and request for a state-commissioned Stele Inscription. It would be submitted to the Department of Merit Assessment (kaogong si 考功司) for scrutiny and then delivered to the Historiographical Office. The account of conduct was normally written by the deceased’s assistant official or cleric (zuoshi 佐史), but in fact very often was written by his descendant, intimate friends, or subordinate officials who would be familiar with his life. The stele inscription written for private reasons was also required to be submitted to the state for examination. For a study on the genre of accounts of conduct, see the discussion by Denis Twitchett. Twitchett 1992: 65-77.

355 In 776, two years after Bukong’s death, his heir disciple, Huilang, reminded the throne that his master’s stele was erected but the epitaph was not yet inscribed with a piece of biography. The request seems to have not got an immediate response. It is only after another four years, then already into a new reign, that Yan Ying was assigned to the composition. The reason for this prolonged delay after the death of Bukong or even from Huilang’s reminder to Yan Ying’s final composition of the text is rather elusive. For Huilang’s memorial see the BZJ, T2120.52.0853a04-18.

356 LI Nanhui 2009.
Tripiṭaka Master Da Guangzhi Bukong, the Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, and concurrently invested with Opening Bureau and Unequalled in Ritual Status, ennobled as Duke of the State of Su, posthumously accorded Minister of Work, and holding posthumous title “Da Bianzheng”, was a native of the Land of the Lion, South India. His Dharma name was Zhizang, and [Esoteric] name Bukong Jin’gang. Since his clan name and ancestry are unheard of, they therefore are therefore not recorded.大唐特進、試鴻臚卿、加開府儀同三司、封肅國公、贈司空、謚大辯正、大廣智不空三藏和上者，南天竺執師子國人也。法諱智藏，號不空金剛。不聞氏族，故不書之357

Again, Yuanzhao’s wording seems unoriginal, and the account is a patchwork of elements drawn from other sources at his disposal. The frank statement on Bukong’s unknown ancestry seems to be cited from Yan Ying’s writing, and the conflation of Sri Lanka and South India originates in Liangben’s preface to the Renwang jing shu 仁王經疏 (766): [Emperor Suzong] requested the Abhiṣeka Tripiṭaka from the Land of the Lion, South India, named Amogha(vajra) or Bukong in Chinese, to translate various Buddhist scriptures for the purpose of pacifying the country. 請南天竺執師子國灌頂三藏，名阿目佉，唐云不空，翻傳衆經，以安社稷358

5.3.1 Sri Lanka as Part of South India

So far, few scholars have questioned the perception of the relationship between Sri Lanka and South India. It appears quite strange to regard Sinhala, as part of South India. In the dedicated accounts written by Tang scholars, Sinhala is a sovereign and national country independent of India.359 As an isle adjacent to the subcontinent, divided only by a strait, Sri Lanka was constantly

357 T2157.55.0881a09-12.
358 For the translation of the entire passage, see Appendix A: 300-01.
359 For example, the earliest source that indicates the relationship between Sinhala and South India is Liangshu 梁書 (54, 800) which was completed in 636:

The Land of the Lion is a neighboring country of India. The climate is mild and agreeable, and there is no distinction of winter and summer. Crops could be grown at people’s will, not in accordance with seasons. Originally there were in the area no humans but ghosts, deities, and nāgas. When traders from various countries came altogether to make a deal, the ghosts and deities did not manifest their figures but only put out treasures and showed prices they were worth, and traders took treasures at the bidden prices. Learning the pleasantness of this land, people in various countries vied to come. Some settled here, and it finally became a great country. 師子國，天竺旁國也。其地和適，無冬夏之異。五穀隨人所種，不須時節。其國舊無人民，止有鬼神及龍居之。諸國商估來共市易，鬼神不見其形，但出珍寶，顯其所堪價，商人依價取之。諸國人聞其土樂，因此競至。或有停住者，遂成大國。
laid under the cultural and political influence of India, but it showed the consciousness of political independence and rivalry with the South Indian kingdoms. It was not until the end of the tenth century that the South Indian Cōla empire, annexed most of the island.

In spite of this well-known political independence, Liangben’s notion about the relationship between Sinhala and the South India appears in agreement with the suggestion given in Bukong’s own writings. In the memorials, Bukong never mentions Sinhala—where he stayed for most of the time, obtained the impartation of various Esoteric teachings from Ācārya Samantabhadra, and met with the great patronage from the royal house. What he speaks of when remembering his expedition and the place where he obtained the complete corpus of Vajroṣṇīṣa sūtras is only “the Five Indian Regions” or “India”.\(^{360}\) In the same way, Sinhala neither occurs in the accounts given by the emperor and Bukong’s follower Qianzhen concerning his travel experience, where the latter only lauds Bukong’s peerless achievement in Esoteric Buddhism in “South India”.\(^{361}\)

There is a more apparent example that occurs in the preface of a scripture attributed to Bukong, the *Dasheng yuqie jing* (T1177A). The preface identifies an Esoteric master who was the original teacher of Vajrabodhi in this manner: [Vajrabodhi’s] original master Ācārya Baojue (Skt. Ratnabodhi?) of the Land of the Lion, South India of the Five Indian Regions. \(^{362}\) The text seems to be apocryphal, and the preface contains glaring anachronisms, but the basic elements and notion employed in the narrative must have had

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This description derives from the biography of Faxian (法顯 (337-c. 422), the “Gaoseng Faxian zhuàn” 高僧法顯傳. (T2085.51.0864c15-19).
The authoritative *Datang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 does mention Sri Lanka by the name of Land of the Lion or Simhala when dealing with the various kingdoms of South India; however, a restriction is added, clearly explaining that Sri Lanka is included here not because it is a kingdom of India, but because it lies midway to India. 雖非印度之國路次附出 (T2087.51.0932b06, and *Datang Xiyu ji jiaozhu*: 11, 865)
The *XTS* (43, 1153.) also excludes Sinhala from the domain of South India. It pinpoints the southernmost state as “Molai Guo” 没來國, still on the subcontinent.
\(^{360}\) T2120.52.0846b14.
\(^{361}\) T2120.52.0830a09, T2157.55.0887c20-21.
\(^{362}\) For the translation of the whole passage, see Appendix A: 247.
some valid source.\footnote{See the discussion in Appendix A: 248.}

In addition, there is another Chinese source from medieval times that identifies Sri Lanka as South India, although it seems less magisterial than the reports given in the official histories and the \textit{Datang Xiyu ji}.\footnote{You 杜佑 (735-812) in \textit{Tongdian} 通典 (193, 5263) cites a line from the work \textit{Jingxing ji} 經行記, a travelogue composed by his cousin Du Huan 杜環 (d.u.): The Land of the Lion is also called Xintan. Still it is also called Brahman (i.e. India), i.e. South India. 師子國亦曰新檀, 又曰婆羅門, 即南天竺也 The account is rather dubious. Firstly, the name “Brahman” informally referred to India in general, not to Sri Lanka. The \textit{Datang Xiyu ji} gives the explanation as the following:  
\begin{displayquote}
In India, pedigrees and clans are separated into groups, among which Brahman is the purest and noblest. [The land was] addressed after that graceful name, which became so prevalent as to become a custom; if ignoring the boundaries [among different realms], as a whole it could be called the Land of Brahman. 印度種姓族類群分, 而婆羅門特為清貴。從其雅稱, 傳以成俗, 無云經界之別, 總謂婆羅門國焉。
\end{displayquote}

\begin{footnotesize}
(T2087.51.0875b24-26)
\end{footnotesize}

For this point, cf. the discussion in Forte 1985: 107-08.

Secondly, it sounds like that Du Huan immediately equates Sinhala with South India, not just part of it. These two points are too far from common sense, and Du You’s own account of Sinhala follows the \textit{Liangshu} and only cites Du Huan’s account in the note. Besides, Du You also differentiates Sinhala from “Brahman”:  
\begin{displayquote}
People in this country were capable of domesticating marvelous lions, and thus [the country] was named after it. The customs are like those of India, and the people particularly revere Buddhism. 能馴養神師子, 遂以為名。風俗與婆羅門同, 而尤敬佛法 (\textit{Tongdian}: 193, 5263)
\end{displayquote}

The \textit{FZTJ} boasts that within the single year of 634, one monk from each of the Five Indian Regions came to Tang to pay their sacred tributes. The one from the South is addressed as “Monk Miaode (Skt. u.) from the Land of the Lion, South India” 南天竺師子國沙門妙德. (T2035.49.0405c02-15) It intends to describe Sinhala as a state of South India and make up a neat quint pattern of all Five Indian Regions. Concerning the five kingdoms, the author, however, had little knowledge and consulted the \textit{Datang Xiyu ji}. He only found the record of Sinhala while neglecting the record that it does not belong to South India.\footnote{When relating Prajñā’s story in the \textit{ZYL}, Yuanzhao cites the \textit{Datang Xiyu ji} to explain a kingdom of South India, a fact showing that he had the consciousness to accord his accounts with the authority. See T2156.55.0756a04-07.}

Despite the political and national independence of Sri Lanka stressed by the Pāli chronicles and most Chinese sources, its relationship with South India was complicated and varied according to the view of different groups. As early as the third century B.C., the inscriptions of Aśoka lump the island kingdom together with four Southern Indian kingdoms. And when the Cōla kingdom invaded the island and annexed part of it, the conquerors claimed in the inscription that Tamil
Nadu was the motherland and the island was the childland.366

There were constant communications between the South Indian kingdoms and Sri Lanka from before the Common Era through the end of the Middle Ages. Religious contacts, in particular, were kept close and frequent. Buddhist communities of South Indian kingdoms and of Sri Lanka shared a certain group of scriptures, commentarial works, and personnel; they fled across the strait looking for support from their colleagues when suffering from political suppression at home; more commonly, monks travelled between in search for enlightened masters or better students. Famous masters from South India, such as Buddhaghoṣa (ca. 5th c.) and Buddhappiya (fl. 1229-1246), won enormous prestige during their lengthy residence on the island.367

Tamil people from South India had already settled on the island no later than the Sinhalese people, and Tamil Buddhism had played a significant role there from at least the beginning of the Common Era through the twelfth century A.D.,368 which stood in contrast to Sinhala Buddhism. The realm of Tamil people and their Buddhist community lay in the northern part of the island called Nāganadu, which, as a principality, collapsed in the fifth century A.D.; their traces have been found in the ancient capital city Anurādhapura. On this matter, the sectarian and ethnicist compilers of the Pāli chronicles were rather censorial, having expunged almost all information about the Tamils, which could only be gathered by combing the earlier Tamil literature and archaeological discoveries.369

The homeland of Tamil people—Tamil Nadu of South India—was also the origin of the Esoteric Buddhism that Bukong promoted. It was the supposed location of the legendary Iron Pagoda inside which the canon of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga was secretly preserved, and it was also the place where the Esoteric patriarchs, such as Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi (Ch. Longzhi 龍智), were active. It is from there that Vajrabodhi gained his Yoga lineage and introduced those teachings into

368 Veluppillai A. 1998: 45.
Throughout Sri Lanka, fragmentary manuscripts, artefacts, and iconography related to Tantric Buddhism have been found and investigated, showing that Esoteric Buddhism had once had an active existence on the island. The textual record claims that the introduction of a type of Esoteric Buddhism from India occurred in the ninth century, during the reign of Matvalasen (Sena I, r. 834-854), but clearly, sculptural evidence dating from the eighth century attests to the already considerable influence of the antinomian form of yoga practice before that time.

Especially, there is epigraphic evidence from the ninth century proving that the Esoteric teachings based on the STTS had been spread to the island. It corresponds to the fact that Bukong acquired Esoteric training on the island from some Ācārya Samantabhadra.

It seems to further imply that Sri Lanka had become a centre of Esoteric Buddhism by the eighth century. Beginning in the seventh century A.D., Tamil Nadu saw a revival of Hinduism; advocates of Śaivism launched violent campaigns against Buddhism and Jainism. The kings and people were converted to Hinduism, and a multitude of Buddhists emigrated to other areas, including Sri Lanka. Esoteric Buddhists, perhaps such as Vajrabodhi’s Ācārya Baojue and Samantabhadra, may have been among those immigrants. Their arrival on the island must have enhanced the popularity of Esoteric Buddhism, which may have already been practiced there.

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370 For the original account of the Iron Pagoda and the acquisition of the Vajroṣṇīṣa sutras, see T1798.39.0808a25-28. As for a discussion of the legendary Iron Pagoda as the origin of Esoteric Buddhism, see Orzech 1995. The biographical account of Prajñā, an Esoteric master coming to the Tang after Bukong’s death, also reports the reputation of South India as a place that Esoteric Buddhism was flourishing. See T2157.55.0891c20-23. For archaeological evidence for the popularity of Esoteric Buddhism in Buddhist centers in South India, see Subrahmanyam 2001.

371 This Esoteric Buddhism features sexual yoga, as the Sinhalese source, Nīkāyasamgrahaṇa, condemned. And those yogi monks were settled at the Abhayagiri Temple by the king, who was converted to this new tradition. See Ven Rangama Chandawimala Thero 2008: 98-100.

372 These are two tablets inscribed with dhāranīs of twelve goddesses, which derive from a certain version of STTS different from versions written in Nepali Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan. These two tablets, among another six, were found in the Abhayagiri Temple and had been probably enshrined into the Abhayagiri stūpa in the ninth century, which had been built by Mahārāja Vattagāminī Abhaya (r. 103-102 and 89-72 BC). Ibid. 93-97.


374 Accounts of Vajrabodhi’s pilgrimage to Sri Lanka mention no clue to the influence of Esoteric Buddhism there, nor any contacts with Esoteric masters. He was welcomed by the king and invited to dwell in the palace. The king, previously believing in Theravada Buddhism, after been indoctrinated by Vajrabodhi for some days, was finally
Buddhists from Tamil Nadu came to the island with their geographical vision. As has been commented, ancient religious texts in Tamil tend to define Sri Lanka as part of South India. The author of *Manimēkalai*, for example, imagined a broad and culturally coherent Buddhist world centering on South India but extending beyond the coast and into the distant ocean to cover Sri Lanka and some areas of Southeast Asia. The relationship of Sri Lanka and South India maintained by Bukong, and members of his circle may reflect the geographical view held in Tamil tradition.

### 5.3.2 Spiritual Homeland as Native Place

This religious concept of greater South India influenced the way that Bukong’s patron and friends—Emperor Daizong, Qianzhen, and Liangben—perceived his spiritual homeland. In addition to the religious linkage to Sinhala, Bukong held a diplomatic association with it. In probably 742, the king of Sinhala received him as the Tang emperor’s envoy, and in 746, when returning to China, he acted as the envoy of the king. This resulted in his first admission to the upper society of the Tang capital, and thus he may have impressed the court with the identity as a native of Sinhala. This logic could be illustrated by two biographical introductions of his master Vajrabodhi. In “Xingji”, Lü Xiang 呂向 (722–757) explains a mistake people often made concerning the homeland of Vajrabodhi:

> The master was originally the third son of the *kṣatriya* King Ḣanavarman. Later, as he was presented [to the court] by General Mizhunna 米准那, the king of South India and therefore became well-known, thus he was regarded as a person from South India. 和上本中天竺國剎利王伊舍那靺摩第三子也,後因南天國王、將軍米准那薦聞,遂稱南天竺人也

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converted to “Mahāyāna Buddhism”, which may refer to Vajrabodhi’s own Esoteric Buddhism. See T2157.55.0875c05-07.


376 Lü Xiang’s dates are unknown, but he became an official in 722 and died at some point between 744 and 752.

377 The name in Sanskrit is restored by TOGANOO Shōun 梅尾祥雲 as Madyana and by SAGAKI Ryōzaburō 榊亮三郎 as Mihr Żāda. See Toganoo 1933: 93-95; Sagaki 1942: 22-27.

378 See T2157.55.0875b01-03. The same explanation occurs in the “Taming” by a certain Hunlun Weng. See T2157.55.0876c04-06. For the South Indian king’s commission given to Vajrabodhi, see T2157.55.0876a16-20. The South India error also appears in Zhisheng’s 智昇 (669-740) KYL.
Vajrabodhi was regarded as a native of South India simply because it was the South Indian diplomatic mission that presented him to the court of the Tang, and eventually he became well-known at the court for that reason.

Yuanzhao seems to have followed this logic. He had no personal knowledge of Vajrabodhi, and chose the elements of his account of Vajrabodhi according to records. In fact, when making a biographical account for Vajrabodhi, Yuanzhao simply copied Zhisheng’s account in the KLY, claiming that Vajrabodhi was a South Indian. Only at the end, he attached several lines of his own but irrelevant words.\(^{379}\)

It seems that the monks’ travel experience before their arrival in China would shape people’s perception of their ethnic identity. This is revealed in Yuanzhao’s biographical account of Fayue in the ZYL:

Tripiṭaka Śrāmaṇa Dharmacandra, or Fayue in Chinese, was a native of East India. He had traveled to Central India, and therefore was also regarded as a native of the country of Magadha. 三藏沙門達摩戰涅羅，唐言法月，東天竺國人也。遊中印度，亦稱摩提國人焉\(^{380}\)

No evidence demonstrates that Yuanzhao had any personal contact with Bukong, and when constructing Bukong’s biographical account, he also showed considerable prudence. We have already seen his conservative use of the broad term “the Western Regions” regarding Bukong’s homeland. Yuanzhao’s policy of treating people he did not personally know seems coherent; he

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\(^{379}\) Yuanzhao’s appended words are about his regret for the lateness of his birth, which prevented him from ever meeting Vajrabodhi. See T2157.55.0877a22-25.

\(^{380}\) See T2157.55.0878b13. In the earlier compiled XKYL, Yuanzhao only tells of Fayue’s East Indian nationality and mentions nothing about Central India.
shunned responsible claims. This stands in stark contrast to his confident and tenable presentation of the homeland of his personal acquaintance, Prajñā.\textsuperscript{381}

Yuanzhao’s account of Bukong’s South Indian ethnic identity seems to have appropriated Liangben’s account through the logic that foreign monks could be regarded as natives of the country which held most special and immediate significance to them, either political or religious.

In short, Liangben’s account of Bukong’s ethnic identity may have been informed by the geographical notion held by the Esoteric masters who migrated to Sri Lanka from South India. Yuanzhao’s adoption of this view reflects the contemporary perception of the ethnic identity of a foreign monk, who usually had transboundary travel experiences and held political or religious association with the regions beyond his homeland. The identification of Bukong as a native of Sri Lanka was further enhanced by his diplomatic mission to China as a Sri Lankan envoy that brought him directly to the Tang court. The Esoteric Buddhism that he advanced in Sinhala further distinguished his position at court and in the Buddhist world. This well-known double linkage presents Bukong a native of Sinhala, South India.

\section{5.4 Approaching Bukong’s Birthplace}

None of the above-discussed accounts, however, intended to convey Bukong’s actual origin. References to the broad and uncertain Western Regions, India in general, and Sri Lanka each formulated Bukong’s ethnic identity with relation to his ancestry and religious genealogy, while the northwestern province of Xiliang Fu and the Suzhou prefecture were put forward to claim his Chineseness acquired through political merit in serving the Tang state. These varying statements were formulated out of different concerns and in accordance with various conventions, either Chinese or Indian, socio-political or religious.

Literally speaking, only Feixi addressed the birthplace of Bukong in the XB in an ornate, pithy, and allusive manner:

\textsuperscript{381} Yuanzhao’s account of Prajñā’s homeland is supported by modern scholar WANG Yarong (2005). Since Yuanzhao participated the translation program headed by Prajñā, there must have been personal association between them. Cf. Yoritomi 1980: 188-91.
The solitary moon flies in the void, while thousands of streams flow restlessly; a foretoken appeared in the Five Heavens, and the Tripiṭaka came to birth. What does this speak of? Our great master. The great master’s Dharma name is Bukong, and he was a descendant of a North Indian Brahman. 一月飛空，萬流不闕；五天垂象，三藏降生。曷其謂焉？我大師矣。大師法諱不空，北天竺婆羅門子也

“The moon” in the beginning verse alludes to India. According to the explanation given by Xuanzang in Da Tang Xiyu ji, the original meaning of the word hindu is nothing but “the moon”. Later, Yijing pointed out that it was mistaken as indu; it is indu instead of hindu that means “the moon”. Yijing’s correction and his comment reveal the popularity of this error among the learned monks. Judging from the context, the “solitary moon” joins the “Five Heavens” into a parallel: both are puns that refer literally to a natural entity (the moon or the sky), and could also refer to India.

Feixi’s verses therefore demonstrate that Bukong was born in India, and presumably North India. It is unknown whether the adoption by his maternal uncle brought about his removal from India to some place in Central Asia, because there were traces of Sogdian merchants and even communities in North India as well, where his maternal family may have been living. Given its figurative nature, we are not sure to what extent Feixi’s flowery words can be interpreted as factual statements.

In any case, the route that Bukong and his uncle followed to enter China during his youth suggests that he grew up in the Sogdian, commercial environment outside the cultural domain of Tang China. Rather than his native place, Wuwei or the Liangzhou Prefecture turns out to be the first area in China that Bukong visited. It was not only a landmark of the Chinese cultural realm but

382 See T2120.52.0848b18-20.
383 See Da Tang Xiyu ji jiaozhu: 161, 163.
384 Heaven in classical Chinese has the five names: huangtian 皇天, haotian 昊天, mintian 明天, shangtian 上天, and cangtian 蒼天; therefore it was called wutian or Five Heavens. The word wutian is also an abbreviation for wu tianzhu 五天竺 (the Five Indian Regions). The double references of wutian match the double references of [yi]yue.
385 The inscriptions discovered in the Upper Indus show that Sogdian merchants also marched towards India and Tibet at the same time when they headed for Tarim basin and inner China. See RONG Xinjiang 2005: 4-5. La Vaissière 2005: 71-87.
also a landmark of his whole life that came to increasingly coalesce with the fate of this empire, thus demanding a special mention in his biography.

To the extent that our sources allow, it can be concluded that Bukong was born as the descendant of a Brahmin, possibly in North India, and grew up in a Sogdian community. His frequent shifts in residence at early ages—from Central Asia to northwestern and inner China, and further to Southeast Asia—and his travelling back to the Indic world decades later with acclaimed achievements all diluted his association with the homeland of his paternal ancestry, North India.

5.5 Conclusion: The Different Concerns and The Acceptance of the Accounts of Bukong’s Ethnic Identities

The XZ informs the homeland and caste of Bukong’s paternal ancestry but fails to specify his clan by a surname. However, his maternal family comes from the Sogdian state of Kang, immigrants from which had been living in China under the surname of Kang.

In Tang biographies, the subject’s maternal background was usually downplayed, as it did not represent one’s pedigree. The XZ, however, articulates Bukong’s maternal surname and locates Bukong’s junwang according to it. The noble status and fief bestowed by the throne had institutional power that, to a degree, influenced the ethnic identification of Bukong in history. With the throne being the primary readership of the account of Bukong’s conduct, Zhao Qian needed to pay due regard to imperial grace and to formulate his ancestral base according to the Sinitic identification of one’s pedigree through its socio-cultural geography.\textsuperscript{386} Apparently, his Sogdian background could be squared into the convention far better than that of his Indian side. As a kind of official document, the XZ conveys the information in institutionalized language and formalism.

Nevertheless, such a tactic was unbecoming to Sinitic patriarchalism. Therefore, when composing the more formal and official BM, Yan Ying insisted on addressing Bukong’s paternal

\textsuperscript{386} The audience of the XZ was the throne, which could be learnt by the fact that Zhao Qian addressed himself as “your subject”. See T2056.50.0294b15.
ancestry. This inscriptional text was written under the eye of Huilang; the Indian background could boost his master’s profile as a Buddhist patriarch as well as enhance the Dharma heirs’ prestige. In addition, two centuries later, Buddhist historians of the Song dynasty made a compromise when compiling the SGSZ. Their account was based mainly on Zhao Qian’s XZ and stuck to the narrative formality of junwang. However, the authors chose to present Bukong’s paternal homeland, North India, and moreover, they deleted all the elements regarding his Sogdian background and changed his maternal uncle (jiu 舅氏) into a paternal uncle (shu 叔), who brought Bukong up in a Sogdian community and brought him to China.387

No matter how antithetical Zhao Qian’s and Yan Ying’s strategies appear, let us witness how Tang writers struggled to take an ethnic other who had a complicated family background but showed marked politico-religious attachment to Chinese empire and properly integrate him into the Chinese socio-cultural institution and convention. These reflect two different approaches to the ethnicity of a foreigner who had been a staunch servant to the Tang state both during and after the decade-long An Lushan rebellion led by foreigners. The underlying difference was whether to let political advancement cause a reconsideration of a foreigner’s ethnic identity. The BM was composed early during the reign of Dezong, during which time the new emperor manifested a hostile attitude toward Buddhism and had just demolished the institutions of Esoteric Buddhism in the palace. In such a political atmosphere, Yan Ying would not take the risk of overplaying the significance of Bukong’s political success; instead, he spent much of the space dilating his religious achievements and avoided recounting the subject’s activities involving political and military affairs.

387 The biography of Bukong in the SGSZ reads thus:
Shi Bukong’s Sanskrit name was Amoghavajra, and in Chinese it means Bukong Jin’gang. Being addressed by those two characters is for abbreviation. His ancestry was a Brahman [family] of North India. At the age of ten sui, he lost his father, and [later] he followed his uncle to view the glory of the Country of the East. 釋不空，梵名阿目佉跋折羅，華言不空金剛。止行二字，略也。本北天竺，婆羅門族。幼失所天，隨叔父觀光東國 See T2061.50.0712a24-26.
Perhaps being aware of these problems, religious writers avoided approach concerning Bukong’s blood lineage and happily played up another conspicuous dimension of his background to emphasize his religious success: his diplomatic experience and spiritual ancestry. In doing so, they adopted the newly imported geographical vision that was distinctive to the Tamil Nadu Buddhist tradition: that Sri Lanka was part of South India, the homeland of Esoteric Buddhism.

All in all, Bukong’s multiple achievements required that any biographical accounts of his life must carefully articulate his ancestral and/or ethnic origin. These accounts respectively correspond to different facets of his historical significance and would appear agreeable to people with various secular or sacred agendas.

This suggests that the historical identification moved through a spectrum whose opposite ends were respectively a venal, barbarian politician and a worshipped spiritual master. Bukong’s close and conspicuous cooperation with officers and eunuchs of Sogdian origin facilitated the perception of his half-Sogdian bloodline among secular historians with an ethnic sentiment and a negative attitude towards Buddhism—in which he was referred to contemptuously as a barbarian monk (huseng 胡僧). His engagement with the hallowed South India was embraced and advertised by his spiritual grandson, Kūkai. When transplanting this new Buddhist tradition into Japan, Kūkai must have found it most favorable to follow the account in the up-to-date, authoritative canonical catalogue of the Tang, the ZYL, and to highlight the Indian origin of their Esoteric tradition and display to the Japanese an unadulterated South Indian lineage: Nāgārjuna → Nāgabodhi → Vajrabodhi → Amoghavajra.
Chapter 6: Conclusion: Backgrounds, Networks, Institutions, and Identities

Scholars have shown that Buddhist monks, whether they were Chinese or non-Chinese, could exert considerable influence in ideological manipulation, court politics, and even military affairs in medieval China, and the historical conditions for such happenings tended to manifest some speciality and volatility. Warrior monks fought during the Tang dynasty’s campaign to topple the rule of the Sui Dynasty,\textsuperscript{388} and instances abound against the backdrop of the usurpation of the imperial authority by the only female sovereign and her subsequent efforts to legitimate her position—an abnormal episode in the entire Chinese history.\textsuperscript{389} There, we find foreign individuals were employed as private advisors or attendants to the emperor or were given a post in the bureaucracy and even the status of Chinese peerage.\textsuperscript{390} There were also occasions when the monarchs promoted Buddhism through launching nationwide projects, sponsoring magnificent constructions, and granting economic and ceremonial privileges. Precedents to the cooperation between the state and Buddhist church in medieval China constitute only discrete happenings and represent the \textit{ad hoc} resort to Buddhist projects due to the rulers’ idiosyncratic concerns. Such imperial actions involved little participation of an organized body of monastics in state life in a regular and substantial sense.

Bukong’s struggles greatly enriched the Chinese history of state-samgha cooperation by embedding religious missionary undertakings within the framework of the state institution. A group of monks was organized as a state apparatus under the direction of the Abhiṣeka Master, which was bureaucratized as an office. The monks held permanent posts and became the state’s clerical functionaries, and their services to the court were routinized, systemized, and institutionalized as a kind of state performance to fulfill the responsibility allocated to the \textit{samgha} for state affairs. Bukong’s story offers various well-reported cases that flesh out our understanding.

\textsuperscript{388} See the study by Sharhar (2010), and for a survey of monks’ engagement in military activities in medieval China, see Broy 2012.
\textsuperscript{390} An excellent example is the case of the monk Huifan 慧范 (d. 713), active at Empress Wu’s court. See the study by Jinhua Chen (2016).
In this sense, Bukong did not only import a new set of doctrines and religious practices to China, but also brought about a sort of coalescence of the state and the *samgha*—indeed, an unprecedented mode of imperial Buddhism.

The core and hallmark of this imperial Buddhist enterprise was the Esoteric sector. Monks’ involvement in state affairs—particularly military operations—were legitimized by the soteriological doctrines of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga and made possible by a host of ritual manuals that had been recently introduced by Bukong. Unlike the Mahāyāna practices that had already been familiarized and conventionalized within the landscape of Chinese religion, Esoteric Buddhism remained a system of jargons, texts, practices, symbolism, and iconography that had just become readily accessible to Chinese audiences and was also obtrusively unsuited to the official institutions of the state.

The significances of such a religious system were manifested through projects devised by Bukong to tackle urgent problems in critical situations when the court had few substantive measures upon which to fall back. Firstly, at the critical moment of Suzong’s usurpation during the military and political crisis caused by the An Lushan rebellion, Bukong achieved his political rise, which led to the institutionalization of the Buddhist projects. Then, in the consequent shambles faced by an exhausted state and enfeebled court, Bukong won ever-greater imperial support and enhanced and expanded the imperial Buddhist institutions.

These achievements appeared only later in Bukong’s life and represented the crescendo of his Buddhist mission. The timing of his success seems to have been determined by historical circumstances, but it could not have been achieved without the various qualities endowed by or developed from his multicultural and ethnic background.

Before that time, Bukong’s service to Emperor Xuanzong hardly went beyond the modes more often seen with the foreigners and/or clergy active at court in medieval China. Imperial summoning of Bukong was occasional and far from established, and it seems that the imperial reception he received was merely the continuation of the diplomatic influence and fueled by the
The emperor’s curiosity and amusement in exotic cultures, as well as in the superficial correspondences of Esoteric Buddhism and Daoism. As with his master Vajrabodhi, at the best moments he was called upon by the court to render alternative measures against extreme weather. His situation, however, was even worse, for he did not receive adequate support from Xuanzong to conduct the translation of Buddhist texts. Repeatedly, he was driven to seek opportunities on the cultural and political peripheries to carry out his religious mission, including the distant south and northwest of China. His departure for the Indic world—as well as its purpose of advancing his Esoteric learnings—also had a rationale in the unfavourable climate at court, a climate that exiled foreign masters from the country and continued into the days in which Bukong took over the role as the main propagator.

His mixed ethnicity and multicultural background endowed Bukong with a unique package of resources and a broader vista on the possibilities for developing his politico-religious career in the face of adverse situations. His Indian identity, language ability, and the network that he could claim through his paternal heritage and had developed under the tutelage of Vajrabodhi accounted for the spiritual pursuit and offered the pathway towards the long sojourn in South Asia. Meanwhile, the Sogdian cultural and social heritage he received from his early, travelling life among the Sogdian community facilitated his activities in northwestern China, a region heavily populated by the Sogdian and other non-Han ethnic minorities.

During most of his lifetime, he lived in Tang China and developed a good sense of the Chinese culture, society, and politics. His contemporaries often praised his excellent bilingual command of Chinese and Sanskrit. His rounded knowledge about Chinese culture allowed him to adroitly handle interactions with multiple groups of people in the Chinese society. Like the cultured Chinese elite, he was not content with remaining on the political periphery, but rather constantly spurred by an irresistible desire for imperial service.

Well-equipped with wide knowledge and aspirations, he was still in need of a platform to demonstrate the usefulness of his exotic and opaque religious techniques and the value of his
inter-ethnic networks before he could carry forth the politico-religious mission at the forefront of Chinese institutions. As the political careers of his precursors suggest, the welcome of religious figures to the locus of power requires an anomalous condition, let alone the institutional employment of an alien religious tradition. The opportunity for Bukong to rise to power emerged during the national disruption caused by the An Lushan rebellion.

The chaos caused by the Rebellion provided the hope to those officials who had been kept out of the central administration and were hungry for political power; it finally led to the end of Xuanzong’s reign and Suzong’s usurpation of the throne. Wielding his political savvy, Bukong joined his colleagues in the provincial government and strove to help found the new court. As such, he hacked an opening to infuse Esoteric ideology and practices within the court; these practices were supposedly able to boost the imperial cause. Thus, the Abhiṣeka Master consecrated the controversial emperor as a Buddhist sort of sacred king, while the Son of Heaven in turn consecrated the “barbarian” religious undertakings as a contributory add-on to the Sinitic official institution. The institutionalization of Esoteric practices opened up an imperially authorized space where Bukong began to enhance his network of followers and supporters, collect resources, and then launch projects for the purpose of realizing his soteriological goal of serving the state.

During the reign of Daizong, Bukong had to repeat his efforts to court support from the new emperor, and another critical moment of military crisis grew into a high-risk opportunity for him to fulfill this goal. As a result, he secured the emperor’s devotion, which greatly expanded and strengthened his network of supporters. Thus, his soteriological enterprise was carried into full swing.

A significant indication of Bukong’s Buddhist cause was a vast social network of supporters. The emperor’s regular participation in sessions of Esoteric rituals and their secret exchanges with Bukong greatly reinforced the latter’s religious authority and political influence, driving more powerful people to enter his institutional space and become members of his network.
This eclectic network encompassed both Esoteric and Mahāyāna monks, religious and non-religious, eunuchs and ministers, military men and civil officials, provincial and metropolitan figures, as well as Han and non-Han people. In addition to those figures that have been discussed in previous chapters, several Indian monks were also included in the personnel under Bukong’s direction. He also ordained a number of Sogdians on the special occasion of the emperor’s birthday; these Sogdians were presumably assigned to Buddhist practices that were designed to increase the dharmic merit of the throne. Bukong’s disciple and closest colleague Shi/Li Yuancong was of Turkish blood, and Li Xiancheng, his another most trustworthy colleague and crony, was also of non-Han origin. The two were praised by Bukong for their utmost deference. The most powerful figures of the time at court—such as Yu Chaoen, Wang Jin, and the military governor Xin Yunjing—readily extended their support for the exorbitantly expensive construction project of the Jin’ge Temple.

More significantly, the officials of the court and commanders of the Imperial Guards were ordered to be initiated into the Vajradhatu mandala and instructed in Esoteric practices; they became the nominal disciples of Bukong and ritual performers at the holy institution of Abhiṣeka Sanctum. Although their participation was irregular and pro forma, it meant the imposition of another layer of political significance of the Esoteric tradition of the Yoga. Further, the political loyalty of court officials to the dynasty needed to be expressed via a position in the mandala—or rather, in Bukong’s network—and this entailed their acknowledged allegiance to their Abhiṣeka Master.

The institutionalization of the Abhiṣeka Sanctum’s operations redefined the outlook of Bukong’s Yoga tradition, adding a governmental facet to its organization during the Tang. The yogins became state functionaries, and they were identified as holders of the standing posts of niansong seng working in the palace chapels and other Esoteric institutes. In this way, the former

391 Those mentioned in various places in the BZJ are Liyan 利言, Chuntuo 纯陀 (Skt. u. k.), Putinisha 菩提泥沙 (Skt. u. k., Ch. Yikuan 義寬), and Pāradāna 波羅檀 (Ch. Shan’an 善岸).
Esoteric title of Abhiṣeka Master was “empowered” by its secular authority as a state office supervising the entire enterprise of imperial Buddhism. Indeed, after the death of Bukong, it was the emperor that nominated the next generation of the Abhiṣeka Master from among his six Dharma heirs.

Paradoxically, the governmental institutionalization was also a source that despiritualized the influence of the Yoga tradition and Bukong’s Buddhist authority. Secular empowerment from the throne was much more tangible than the mystical empowerment of Vajrasattva, the signature deity of the Yoga tradition. According to primary sources, thousands of people, either laity or clergy, had been consecrated into the Esoteric practices. Despite the probable exaggeration of the number, this account is debilitated by the fact that the teachings of the Yoga may have had a very limited influence on the spiritual life of the multitudes.

Mahāyāna monks under Bukong’s direction that participated in his various projects would all claim to have been his disciples who had received his abhiṣeka service and thus learned some Esoteric practices, particularly those of the Yoga. The biographies and works of the best known of these monks—such as Huaigan 怀感, Qianzhen 潛真, and Feixi 飛錫—show few clear signs that they had interwoven these Esoteric teachings and practices into their spiritual practices. The former two monks adhered to the practice of chanting the name of Amitabha, even in extremis as a last-minute effort reach the otherworldly pure land. Thus, their reception of the Esoteric teachings and professions of Esoteric discipleship signal less their initiation into the divine assembly of the maṇḍala than their initiation into Bukong’s institutional space—the social assembly that offered them imperial prestige, state posts, a stable inflow of generous stipends, and other sorts of prerogatives.

392 For the biographies of the three monks, see the SGSZ, T2061.50.0721c03-20, T2061.50.0738c11-24, and T2061.50.0736b15-737a03. Feixi mentions the Yoga in passing in his famous Nianfo sanmei bao wang lun 念仏三昧王王論 (See the critical version presented in Taishō Daigaku Sōgō Bukkyō Kenkyūjo 2009), and no Esoteric keywords can be found in Huaigan’s Shi jingtu qunyi lun 釋淨土群疑論 (T1960).
The “pragmatic power” of the Esoteric rituals taught in the Yoga scriptures includes its application to various affairs the secular world. It did not necessarily mean, however, that the Buddhist soteriological cause needed to be mingled with the state governance. What occurred in South Asia during this historical period concerning the mode of interactions between the kingdoms and the yogin community remains to be uncovered. It is difficult to assess how Bukong’s pilgrimage there influenced his approach in his subsequent soteriological mission in China.

The eleventh-century Japanese Shingon monk Seizon 成尊 (1012-1074) claimed that the Tang court established the Esoteric institution of the palace chapel, modelling the convention on Indian precedents. However, Vajrabodhi’s undertakings give no suggestion of relevant endeavours. The biographical accounts of his experiences in India and Sri Lanka contain no references to the palace chapel or the regular engagement of monks in state affairs. Likewise, there is no report concerning any move on his part to initiate Esoteric projects to deal with state affairs, or to institutionalize Esoteric rituals in the palace chapel when serving as the imperial attendant of Xuanzong. We are similarly not informed of any similar undertakings by Prajñā, a promoter of the South Indian Yoga who arrived in the Tang decades later. Neither of these two Vajroṣṇīṣa masters, nor Śubhakarasiṃha, were called by the title of Abhiṣeka Master. It seems that Bukong’s diversified cultural equipment—especially his long exposure to Confucian political culture—was the force that transformed the active soteriological approach of the Yoga into an institutional state behaviour.

The Yoga school, in the sense of a group of his yogin disciples, took the form of governmental organization. The yogins were marked off not only by legions of exotic cultural symbols, but also by the imperial commissions in the Esoteric institutes headed by Bukong’s six Dharma heirs. Hanguang was the Head of the Jin’ge Temple in Mt. Wutai, being occupied with performing rituals for the sake of the royal house. Huilang and Huiguo led their fellow yogins at the two sanctums at the Great Xingshan Monastery. Yuanjiao, Hyecho, and Juechao were the

393 See T2433.77.0421b02-03.
senior staff at the palace chapels. The adjustments made by Daizong to the personnel allocation after Bukong’s death followed this pattern.

The perpetuation of the lineage of the Yoga tradition became largely a matter of perpetuating the institutes that bore the stamp of a distinctive school. Bukong requested the throne to guarantee the economic foundation and constant full-staffing for each of these Esoteric institutes. Before his death, he arranged for landed estates—a sort of active asset—to ensure the financial security of those institutes at the Great Xingshan Monastery and Vajrabodhi’s home monastery in Luoyang.

It is noteworthy, however, that Bukong was less concerned with establishing a provincial base for the Yoga tradition. The court granted him the two imperial temples of Jin’ge and Yuhua on Mt. Wutai, where regular services involving Esoteric practices were organized. Hanguang—Bukong’s most senior disciple and the Monastery Head of Jin’ge—did not develop a group of his own yogin successors, and following his death, the Esoteric services at this temple seem to have been discontinued.  

The institutionalization of the Vajroṣṇiṣa Yoga during Daizong’s reign should be understood against the broader context of the official institution history of the Tang dynasty. The Rebellion incapacitated the government institutions. The central administration gradually lapsed, many positions were cut back, some offices fell into sinecures or vacancy, and officials’ salaries were reduced or in arrears. Limited by the shortage of resources and military power, Daizong adopted a compromise policy and avoided tough action to confront various imperative problems that emerged from the confusion—which, otherwise, would rely on the normal functioning of the government and regular officials with a good deal of power and responsibility. Instead, the emperor preferred the security and flexibility to use his personal agents that showed different special abilities and advantages.

394 See Ennin’s records in Nittō guhō junrei gyōki: 3, 294-95.
Thus, the period saw the spawning of irregular commissioner offices (*shizhi* 使職) dominated by eunuchs and officers of the imperial guards.\(^{395}\) Examples of such offices encountered around Bukong’s Buddhist cause were those held by Shi/Li Yuancong and Li Xiancheng. As an officer of the imperial guards, Yuancong had been appointed by Suzong as the Patrol Commissioner for Imperial Parks (*gongyuan duxun shi* 宮苑都巡使) and Commissioner for Releasing Aquatic Creatures (*shuizu fangsheng shi* 水族放生使), and later by Daizong as the Commissioner of Palace Theatre (*liyuan shi* 梨園使) and the Commissioner of the Cultivation of Merits in the Capital (*jingcheng xiu gongde shi* 京城修功德使). The eunuch Li Xiancheng was appointed as the Inspecting Commissioner of Bukong, and after the death of Yuancong, he succeeded to the Commissioner of the Cultivation of Merits in the Capital.

It is within such a context that monks also were given commissioner titles for specific imperial errands that were carried out via religious activities. Huixiao, and perhaps Hanguang as well, bore the title of the Commissioner of Cultivating Merits at Mt. Wutai. In their memorials to the court, Huiguo and Huisheng each called themselves the Inspector of the Two Sanctums and Administrator of the Chapel (*jianjiao liang daochang zhi yuanshi* 檢校兩道場知院事).\(^{396}\) The monk Daji held the post of the Commissioner of Constant Cultivation of Merit (*chang xiugong de shi* 常修功德使).

The highest of such religious office, of course, was held by Bukong. Although the governmental nature of the Abhiṣeka Master did not receive its official expression worthy of various commissioner offices, the appearance of the allied Inspecting Commissioner held by Li Xiancheng was rather telling. The latter seems to be a generic name for eunuchs as the emperor’s

\(^{395}\) For this problem, see the observation in Twitchett 1979 (19-20), and the studies by TANG Changru (1983-84) and ZHAO Yule (1994).

\(^{396}\) Hanguang was called the Śramaṇa of Cultivating Merit (*xiugongde shamen* 修功德沙門), which might be a shortened form or prototype of the Commissioner of Cultivating Merit at Mt. Wutai that was later given to Huixiao. For Huixiao’s case see T2120.52.0859a03, a22. For Huiguo’s memorial, see T2120.52.0857c18, and for Huisheng’s memorials, see T2120.52.0858a09, a28. The two sanctums mentioned in Huiguo’s and Huixiao’s titles refer to the Mahājūrī Pavilion and the Abhiṣeka Sanctum, and the chapel refers to the Fanjing Yuan (Chapel of Scriptural Translation) of the Great Xingshan Monastery within which the two Sanctums were located.
agents monitoring various military and civil offices. However, because the first appearance of Li’s title follows the decree issued for the establishment of the Abhiṣeka Sanctum at the Great Xingshan Monastery, the equipment of such a supervisory agent indicates that a certain Bukong-oriented office had already been in operation. In all likelihood, this unnamed office corresponded to the title Imperial Abhiṣeka Master (guanding guoshi 灌頂國師) that various primary sources celebrate, and the emblematic institutes in the charge were the Abhiṣeka Sanctums inside the imperial palace and the Great Xingshan Monastery.

The Imperial Abhiṣeka Master held a close and clandestine relationship with the throne and was involved in secret decision-making. Bukong frequently received secret instructions from Daizong, which seem to have been executed by Bukong and the group of yogins installed at the palace chapels. These secret missions were not even allowed to be disclosed to Bukong’s personal secretary Zhao Qian, and Bukong’s cageyness concerning the politics inside the palace was well known among contemporary officials. The Esoteric institutes of Abhiṣeka Sanctums in the palace became a special and secret executive agency of the throne.

Daizong, as one of the intimate disciples and regular yogin members of the palace chapel, shared the responsibility for directing Buddhist projects with the two generations of Abhiṣeka Masters. We have seen that the emperor launched a massive program to construct the Mañjuśrī Chapel across the country. Further, shortly after the death of Bukong, he expanded the size of posts of niansong seng in the palace chapel. Two years later, he imposed another nationwide program, decreeing that all monks in the country devote themselves to the recitation of the Uṣṇiṣavijayā Dhāraṇī.

The rise of irregular offices at the expense of normal bureaucracy only reflected and intensified a milieu that demoralized regular officials. The ultimate authorization given by the

397 For a study on the secret decrees in the Tang, see WANG Xikun 2011.
398 This is revealed by Yan Ying in BM, T2120.52.0860b12.
399 See Daizong’s edict “Chi tianxia sengni song zunsheng zhenyan zhi yi shou” 勅天下僧尼誦尊勝真言制一首 in the BZJ, T2120.52.0852c09-15.
emperor to the Buddhist cause forced officials to realize the necessity to support Buddhist projects and involve themselves in Bukong’s “divine” network so as to ensure their positions at court and express their loyalty to the empire.

After all, the success of Bukong in mixing religious and political undertakings was realized by individuals’ contrivance, which was radical but far from culturally fundamental. When writers applied the institutional notions that were indigenous to China to achieve a proper historical identification of Bukong, they found it difficult to find a convenient paradigm in which to fit him. This problem surfaced instantly when they were about to articulate his ethnicity and open their writings. Out of his appreciation for Bukong’s meritorious service, Daizong conferred on him the highest prestige offices and ennobled him as a Chinese aristocrat. When writing an official biography for Bukong, Zhao Qian had to re-locate his ancestral homeland in Chinese cultural geography, making the already diversified accounts about his ethnic identity all the more confusing.

Moreover, the personal factors that Bukong’s Buddhist enterprise relied on formed a shaky foundation. An emperor that turned out to disfavour Buddhism could make things equally difficult. Upon his ascension in 779, Dezong closed the palace chapels, and in the first years of his governance, he made up a large plan to purge the Buddhist clergy across the country. The plan was aborted due to a military crisis caused by the rebellious provincial military governors, and like the previous emperors, Dezong was forced to flee from the capital at Chang’an. None of Bukong’s disciples managed to show the divine power of Esoteric Buddhism that would help the court out of the crisis. Instead, individuals such as the imperial secretary such as Lu Zhi 陸贄 (754-805), a Confucian official, had risen to power and seized the position of the throne’s confidential consultant and were advocating active measures to combat provincial separatism and reclaim central authority.⁴⁰⁰

⁴⁰⁰ For a study on Lu Zhi and the history of Dezong’s reign, see Chiu-Duke 2000.
Having survived the revolt, the emperor reversed his stance and gradually grew into a devout believer and generous patron to the Buddhist church. Nevertheless, his initial hostility had deprived Bukong’s disciples of the routine business and regular posts they had been enjoying. Despite that the palace chapel was reopened late in his reign, they seem to no longer have been in constant operation and ceased to be restricted to the yogins. Dezong withdrew the imperial commitment that had reified and spotlighted the efficacy and power of the Esoteric rituals boasted of in the Yoga scriptures and that justified the institutional status as imperial Buddhism and the monks’ identity as state servants.

The collapse of the Esoteric institutions in the palace also precipitated a crisis in maintaining the networking of the Yoga school. Along with the Esoteric institutions, Bukong also tapped the imperial patronage and instituted programs that involved translation, sutra preaching, and sutra-recitation and employed eminent Mahāyāna monks. Further, these institutions, staffed by those beneficiaries obliged to Bukong, became the outer structure of the whole institutional system and the cover of the Esoteric sector in the core.

We may also imagine that in this network—which involved eunuchs, the military officers, and civil officials—various exchanges were taking place. In addition to religious service and even political support that Bukong could provide, the institutional space could serve as a platform that was immune to hostile suspicions for all of the members to form associations with one another and to facilitated the passage of information and resources. In their midst, Bukong may have collected whatever may have been useful for decision-making that took place among the emperor and his trusted confidants in the forbidden space of the palace. All would repay Bukong with any form of support to his Buddhist agenda. The bond with the emperor remained the cornerstone of Bukong’s Buddhist cause.

402 Huiguo was called several times into the palace chapel to join Buddhist services. It seems that at the close of the sessions, the monks were awarded and then dismissed. In addition, Huiguo was not called by the title “Niansong Seng”, but as the Great Virtue in Attendance, a title that signals a casual duty to the court. See Huiguo’s Account of conduct, T2057.50.0295c03-06, c11-14.
Among Bukong’s first-generation disciples, no one appears to have been as knowledgeable, ambitious, and politically resourceful as he had been. Later, as Emperor Dezong became zealous to sponsor the Buddhist projects and services, former members of Bukong’s translation group joined a translation program led by Prajñā—a Tripitaka that recently arrived at Chang’an from India—and recitation projects were carried out using the newly translated texts. Bukong’s own yogin disciples seem to have faded from the historical forefront. They were faced with the challenge of maintaining their religious and social networks—to attract powerful patrons and better students—to keep the tradition thriving. It seems that eunuchs who rose as permanent dominating forces in court affairs were not ideal substitutes for the throne itself that could directly provide institutional support for the Yoga.403

Perhaps realizing the difficulty in reviving the Yoga institution during the Tang, Huiguo became willing to train foreign students. When meeting his talented Japanese heir, Kūkai, he lamented that the karmic bond between Esoteric Buddhism and the land of China had expired, and he expected another wave of great promulgation to appear in Kūkai’s homeland.404 Thus, he entrusted the exotic religious tradition to the periphery of Chinese culture to the east. As the testimony of the past glory days, the BZJ—the collection of Bukong’s and his disciples’ memorials as well as Emperor Daizong’s decrees—not only provided Kūkai with a model to promote Esoteric Buddhism but also informed the institution of the Japanese Tendai school established by Saichō 最澄 (767-822) and its cooperation with the Japanese court.405

The details regarding the actions of Bukong’s first-generation disciples, however, remains to be studied in-depth, but the sudden loss of its institutional heritage provides a perspective to start the investigation

404 See the Go shōrai mokuoku, T2161.55.1065b19-c02.
405 See Groner 2002: 269.
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Miyan jing 密嚴經 Dasheng miyan jing 大乘密嚴經


Renwang jing → Renwang huguo boreboluomiduo jing 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經

Renwang jing shu → Renwang huguo boreboluomiduo jing shu 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經疏


Renwang huguo boreboluomiduo jing tuoluoni niansong yigui 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經陀羅尼
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Appendix A

The Chronological Compilation of Primary Sources.

705 A.D., SHENLONG 1, 1 SUI

714, KAIYUAN 2, 10 SUI

XB: At the age of ten sui, following his maternal uncle, [Bukong] came to Wuwei. 十歳，隨舅氏至武威郡。

XZ: Initially, the great master followed his maternal relative to experience the customs of the great country; at the age of ten sui, he toured around Wuwei and Taiyuan. 初，大師隨外氏觀風大國；生年十歲，周遊巡歷武威、太原。

717, KAIYUAN 5, 13 SUI

XB: At the age of thirteen sui, he visited the Taiyuan Prefecture, and soon he entered Chang’an, in order to find the way out [of suffering]. When meeting the Tripiṭaka Great Promoter of the Teachings Vajrabodhi, he regarded him as a true teacher. In the early stages, [Vajrabodhi] tried teaching him Siddham stanzas, and asked him to recite Sanskrit sutras. The pronunciations of Sanskrit words would never slip [from his memory] once he heard them for the very first time. 十歳，隨舅氏至武威郡。十三遊太原府，尋入長安，以求出要。見大弘教金剛三藏，以爲真吾師。初試教《悉曇章》，令誦梵經。梵言賒切，一聞無墜。

XZ: At the age of thirteen sui, [he began to] attend to [the patriarch] Great Promoter of the Teachings. [The patriarch] introduced the Siddham stanzas and the Boluomen yu lun 波羅門語論 (the treatise of Sanskrit language), [and our master Bukong] soon turned back on the text and continued with recitation, and within a given date, he gained insight [in the teachings], at which the patriarch marveled. 十三事大弘教。祖師道《悉談章》、《波羅門語論》，輒背文而諷誦，剋日而洞悟，祖師大奇。

ZYL: Reaching the sixth year of the Kaiyuan Era (718), the year of Wu-Wu 戊午 in the Sexagenary Cycle, [Bukong] met Tripiṭaka [Great] Promoter of the Teachings Vajrabodhi, and

406 It was the posthumous title of Vajrabodhi conferred by Emperor Daizong in 765.
began to serve him as a disciple. [Afterwards, Bukong] attended [Vajrabodhi throughout the journey] on the South Sea, [together they] boarded the ship and rode out perils; amid the terrifying waves and rolling surges, he accompanied his master like the latter’s shadow. 至開元六年，歲在戊午，年甫十四，於闍婆國見弘教三藏金剛智而師事之。隨侍南溟，乘航架險，驚波鼓浪，如影隨形。

SGSZ: At the age of fifteen sui, [Bukong began] attend to Tripiṭaka Vajrabodhi. In the early stages, [Vajrabodhi] introduced to him a Sanskrit version of the Siddham stanzas and the Treatise on Śabda śāstra (the science of sounds), and both he mastered thoroughly in ten days. 年十五師事金剛智三藏。初導以梵本《悉曇章》及《聲明論》，浹旬已通徹矣。

Note: Scholars assume that the above account in the ZYL indicates Bukong’s native land was Sri Lanka and that he first came to the Tang through the southern maritime route. Such understanding, backed by other considerations, contradicts the accounts given in the XB and the XZ, that Bukong’s home country was North India and came to China through the Silk Road. See Iwamoto 1996a and TAGASHI 1997.

The four biographical sources give different years in which Bukong met Vajrabodhi, and the XB and the ZYL are discrepant concerning the place of their first meeting. These particulars cannot be satisfactorily reconciled.

Fortunately, Bukong left us a statement of his own in the “Linzhong biao”, stating that up to the death of Vajrabodhi in 741 (Sept., 29th), it had been twenty-four years since he began to serve as the latter’s disciple. This rules out the possibility of the age of fourteen sui (718) held in the ZYL and that of the age fifteen sui (719) held in the SGSZ as the starting point. It also confirms the age of thirteen sui (717) given in the earlier sources of the XB and the XZ.
Because of this point, the meeting of Bukong and Vajrabodhi at Chang’an as described in the XB becomes impossible, since in 717, Vajrabodhi was still on route to Tang China. Therefore, the meeting must have happened outside China and in some place along the marine route. In this regard, Yuanzhao in the ZYL located the site in the kingdom Shepo 閘婆 and may have been informed by some source available to him, although his dating should be wrong.

The historical location of Java or Shepo have been subject to academic debate for many decades. One side argues that for a while, this toponym refers to a locale on the Southeast Asia continent, while the other side maintains that it always means the present-day Java island. Regarding this issue, one may start with Griffiths 2013.

HAN Zhenhua’s (1985) study seems to me the most pertinent to the current case. Based on the definite accounts given in Chinese sources, he argues that the names “Heling” 詶(訶)陵 (Haren) and “Shepo” were used to mean Java since the the Song Dynasty, but in historical works from the Tang period, they referred to a different region, which lay at the lower Mekong region on the Southeast Asian continent. The conclusion agrees with the archaeological evidence from the Angkor period.

Since the Sogdian merchants were frequently on journeys and would travel to many remote areas, I see no necessary contradiction between the fact that Bukong entered Tang China and several years later appeared in Southeast Asia to meet Vajrabodhi.

The discussion here needs to involve the related dates about Vajrabodhi’s journey from Sri Lanka to China. And for that purpose, we must begin with introducing the four major biographical sources of Vajrabodhi.

Chronologically, the first composed is the “Xingji” by Lü Xiang, which could be dated between 744 and 752. The ZYL seems to include a part of the whole piece, which covers only

\footnote{Vajrabodhi finished the sea journey and disembarked in Guangzhou province in 719. See the section for that year below.}

\footnote{I follow HAN’s conclusion only because my language expertise allows me only to confirm his reading of the evidence in classical Chinese. There are, however, many items in other ancient languages on which other studies are founded. I extend my thanks to Jeffrey Sundberg for informing me the wealth of researches on the topic.}
Vajrabodhi’s life story from his birth to his arrival in the Tang.⁴⁰⁹ The monk Hengan 恒安 (937-975) mentions a complete version of “Xingji” 行記 (record of conduct) in his Xu Zhenyuan shijiao lu 續貞元釋教録 (T2158), which he failed to find.⁴¹⁰

The second source is the “Taming”, an epitaph inscribed on Vajrabodhi’s relic stupa written by a certain Hunlun Weng in 743. It was composed at Bukong’s request and thus largely represents his knowledge about Vajrabodhi. These two sources, however, fail to give any coordination of Vajrabodhi’s age and the year for us to locate the dates of his life.

The thirdly produced is a biographical text called the “Sanzang heshang ji” 三藏和尚記 (hereafter referred to as “Heshang ji”) attributed to Du Hongjian 杜鴻漸 (708-769), whose quotations are kept in the Ruiju hasso den that was compiled by the Japanese monk Yōkai 榮海 (1278-1347). Many accounts in this text are similar to those found in Kūkai’s Kō fuhō ten 広付法傳 and the SGSZ. The latter two sources each mention a stele inscription by Du, indicating that their accounts are based upon it. The authorship of Du remains problematic, however, for the very presence of Temple Title of Emperor Daizong (727-779) makes the time of its composition postdate the emperor’s death, when Du had already been dead for years.⁴¹¹

The fourth is Vajrabodhi’s biography in the SGSZ. The compiler drew heavily on “Heshang ji”, but it also had some other materials as supplements.⁴¹² The SGSZ is the only source that coordinates Vajrabodhi’s death age and death year: the age of seventy-one sui and the year of 742.

Concerning Vajrabodhi’s activities before he came to China, each of these sources narrate in accordance with his ages only. The “Heshang ji” and the SGSZ say that Vajrabodhi renounced his household at the age of sixteen sui, while the “Xingji” and the “Taming” say that it happened at the age of ten sui. As mentioned above, the “Heshang ji” and the SGSZ are similar to each other in the accounts; the narrations in the “Xingji” and the “Taming” either agree with each other or are

⁴⁰⁹ For a study on Vajrabodhi based on the “Xingji”, see Sundberg and Giebel 2012.
⁴¹¹ Cf. the detailed discussion in Iwasaki 2005: 675-77.
compatible. The narration and sequencing of Vajrabodhi’s other early experiences of the two groups are largely different.

None of these sources describes when Vajrabodhi embarked from South India for China. Concerning when Vajrabodhi reached the territory of Tang and disembarked at the Guangdong province, most of the sources put the year at 719.⁴¹³ The “Xingji” says that the voyage took three years, and therefore, it seems that he started his journey in South India in the year of 716, when Bukong was at the age of twelfth sui. And a year later, Vajrabodhi met Bukong in Shepo, the present-day southern Cambodia and Vietnam.

718, KAIYUAN 6, 14 SUI

*BZJ*: “A Memorial Requesting that the Scriptures [that I Have] Translated during the Three Reigns Be Included in the Catalogue [of the Imperial Buddhist Canon] and Be Put into Circulation” 三朝所翻經請入目錄流行表 (771): Since a tender age, I had been serving my late master, Tripiṭaka Great Promoter of the Teachings, and [under his tutelage] for twenty-four years, [I have been] learning the Dharma-gate of the Yoga. Afterwards, I traveled to Five Indian Regions… “不空愛自幼年，承事先師大弘教三藏和尚，二十有四載，稟受瑜伽法門。後遊五天……”

*XB*: Then [Vajrabodhi] allowed him to enter the altar and instructed him the precept of arousing Bodhicitta. 便許入壇，授發菩提心戒。

*XZ*: Another day, [the patriarch] imparted [to our master] the Precepts of Bodhicitta, and initiated him into the Great Maṇḍala of the Diamond Realm. [The patriarch] tested him by [observing the deity on the maṇḍala on which he] cast a flower and then realized that he gained a successor. 他日與授菩提心戒，引入金剛界大曼茶羅。驗之擲花，知有後矣。

*SGSZ*: Taking this as unusual, the master bestowed upon him the Bodhisattva Precepts and initiated him into the Great Maṇḍala of the Diamond Realm. [Then the master] tested him by [observing the deity on the maṇḍala on which he] cast a flower, and [the master] knew that he

⁴¹³ See the translations in the section for 719 and 720 below.
would greatly prosper the teachings. 師大異之，與受菩薩戒，引入金剛界大曼荼羅。驗以擲花，知後大興教法。

**NOTE:**

Bukong became a student of the Yoga ever since the initiation ceremony was held for him, the moment that he was led by Vajrabodhi into the Great Maṇḍala of Diamond Realm. Until Vajrabodhi’s death in 741, altogether he had been practicing the teachings of the Yoga for twenty-four years. Therefore, the initiation must have been held no later than early 718.

**719, KAIYUAN 7, 15 sui and/or 720, KAIYUAN 8, 16 sui**

**A. ACCOUNTS ABOUT VAJRABODHI:**

**KYL:** Thus [Vajrabodhi] set sail to journey east and reached the remote foreland [of Tang China]. Not until the eighth year of the Kaiyuan Era did he arrive at the capital. There, he widely promulgated the Esoteric teachings and established maṇḍalas; he accomplished [all those] according to the Buddhist teachings and conjured numinous omens. 遂汎舶東遊, 達于海隅。開元八年中, 方屆京邑。於是, 廣弘祕教, 建曼荼羅; 依法作成, 皆感靈瑞。

**“Taming”:** In the seventh year of the Kaiyuan Era, [Vajrabodhi] came into the court on the recommendation through a memorial presented by the envoy of South India, the General Mizhuna 米准那. Thereupon, he became known as a native of South India […] The great master (i.e. Vajrabodhi) came [to the Tang] from South India, carrying the scriptures of the Teachings of the Great Bodhisattva, totaling two hundred thousand verses, as well as the scripture of the Yoga in Sanskrit. 414 以開元七年, 南天竺國因節度使, 將軍米准那表薦入朝。遂稱南天竺人[...] 大師從南天竺大菩薩教本二十萬言, 兼瑜伽梵夾而至矣。

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414 It refers to the Lüechu niansong jing.
415 The character 度 is redundant. It was absent in one manuscript version used to produce the critical version of Taishō, see T2157.55.0876, Editorial Note 14. The manuscript version of the 金剛寺一切経 does not have the character as well.

The addition of the character turned the word jieshi into the term jiedushi 節度使, and this misled the compilers of the FZLDTZ into making a more detailed narration on this matter, saying that when Vajrabodhi arrived in Guangzhou, the Military Governor of Lingnan 嶺南 Command reported to the court, and an imperial decree was issued to invite him to the court. 廣州節度聞于朝, 有旨駕馳赴闕入見 T2036.49.0593a22-20.
“Heshang ji”: In the seventh year of the Kaiyuan Era, [Vajrabodhi] arrived at Guangzhou. After a brief sojourn, an imperial decree was issued, welcoming him to reside in Cien 慈恩 Monastery. Soon afterwards, he moved to Jianfu 薦福 Monastery.

ZYL: When it went into the eighth year of the Kaiyuan Era, for the first time, [Vajrabodhi] arrived at the East Capital; where he was granted an interview by the emperor (i.e. Xuanzong), when he reported to the throne every last affair. [The department concerned] received an imperial instruction and arranged accommodations [for him], supplying him with all necessities of monastic life. The Buddhist clergy requested from him various Buddhist teachings, and princes and dukes consulted him about the Way. From then on, [Vajrabodhi] remained attending the emperor and went back and forth between the two capitals.

Note:
Following the KYL, Yuanzhao says that Vajrabodhi arrived at the capital in 720, a statement added by him at the end of the narration of “Xingji” that he included in the ZYL. It seems that Yuanzhao mistakes Chang’an as Luoyang when relating Vajrabodhi’s reception by the Tang court, since from 718 to 722, the court stayed in Chang’an, the West capital.

“Taming” claims that Vajrabodhi arrived at the capital and was presented to the court in 719, and so imply the “Heshang ji” and the SGSZ (T2061.50.0711b17-18, c27-28), both noting that Vajrabodhi was installed in the Ximing 西明 Monastery and shortly moved to Jianfu 薦福 Monastery.

The year of 719 was confirmed by two contemporary sources by Vajrabodhi’s disciples Yixing and Bukong, the Jin’gangding jing yijue 金剛頂經義訣 (T1798.39.0808b25, hereafter the
Yijue) \(^{416}\) and “Jin’gangding sanshiqi zun chusheng yi” 金剛頂三十七尊出生義 (T0872.18.0299a11) respectively. Both claim that Vajrabodhi reached Chang’an the year of 719 rather than 720. What deserves mention here is that the former source puts the narration in the personal tone of Vajrabodhi and appears to be Yixing’s record of Vajrabodhi’s own statement.

Despite the discrepancy in the time that Vajrabodhi arrived at the capital, it should be safe to say that it was in 719 that Vajrabodhi finished the voyage and reached the Guangzhou province.

**B. ACCOUNTS ABOUT BUKONG:**

**XZ:** Early at the age of fifteen sui, [Bukong] was tonsured. 十五初落髮。

**XB:** Barely fifteen of sui, [Bukong] was allowed to become a household-renunciant. 年甫十五，與出家焉。

**ZYL:** [Vajrabodhi] followed the court back and forth between the two capitals, and conduct Buddhist translation by imperial edicts; in the meanwhile, [Bukong] kept himself closely with [the master]. (金剛智)隨駕兩京，應詔翻譯，（不空）不離左右。

**723, KAIYUAN 11, 19 SUI**

\(^{416}\) The Taishō edition attributes the *Yijue* 義詣 to Bukong, which should be an error that could be traced back to the Japanese monks in second half of the ninth century. The earliest source that mentions *Yijue* is Kūkai’s (774-835) catalogue, *Go shōrai mokurōku* (T2161.55.1064b03). Kūkai does not note the author of the *Yijue*, but he separates it from the works grouped to attribute to Bukong. It also appears in the catalogues compiled by other Japanese monks who went to China to collect Buddhist texts, but none of them tell who the author was. The Tang Esoteric monk by Haiyun 海雲 (d. 843+), however, explicitly lists it among Yixing’s works in the *Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi ji* 兩部大法相承師資付法記: 沙門一行，既傳教已，造《大毘盧遮那義譯》七卷（成分為十四卷，略譯二卷），《大毘盧遮那形像圖樣壇儀》一卷，《標幟壇儀法》一卷，《契印法》一卷；造《金剛頂經義決》三卷（上卷有本，餘兩卷闕本） T2081.51.0786c21-17.

It also notes that the *Yijue* consisted of three *juan*, and by that Haiyun’s time, only the first *juan* was extant. The Japanese Esoteric monk Enchin 円珍 (814-891) wrote to the Tang Esoteric master Zhihui Lun 智慧輪 (d. 876), to track down the other two *juan* he did not possess, but it seems that the latter did not have them as well. It is Annen 安然 (841-915) who, for the first time, ascribed the *Yijue* to Bukong by the name of Zhizang, and I assume he was erroneous.

As has been shown by scholars, when composing the *Yijue*, the author was quoting lines from an older, six-*juan* translation of the *Jin’gangding yuqie zhong lüchu niansong jing* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經 prepared by Vajrabodhi. Yixing may have participated in the translation group, and it seems that he edited the six-*juan* version into the popular four-*juan* version in the year of 726. Thus, the *Yijue* composed by him before 726. For studies on the *Yijue* and the six-*juan* version of *Niansong jing*, see KIYOTA Jakuu 1981 and ENDŌ Yūjun 1987.
Xu Gujin yijing tuji 續古今譯經圖紀 (730): In the eleventh year [of the Kaiyuan Era], [the year of] Kui-Hai [in the Sexagenary Cycle], and at the Zisheng 資聖 Monastery, [Vajrabodhi] translated the Jin’gangding yuqie zhong lüechu niansong fa 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦法, one text in four juan, and the Qi juzhi fomu zhunti daming tuoluoni 七俱胝佛母准提大明陀羅尼 in one juan. The Great Brahman Chief of East India, a functionary in Secretariat, Yishelu 伊舍羅, acted as the Term-Translator, and Wengu 溫古, a monk from Mt. Song, acted as the Scribe. 以十一年癸亥，於資聖寺，為譯《金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦法》，一部四卷，《七俱胝佛母准泥大明陀羅尼經》一卷，東印度婆羅門大首領、直中書伊舍羅譯語，嵩岳沙門溫古筆受。

ZYL: Not until the eleventh year [of the Kaiyuan Era] did [Vajrabodhi] start to undertake Buddhist translation. At the Jianfu 薦福 Sanctum in the Zisheng Monastery, four scriptures, were translated, totaling seven juan. In the year of Geng-Wu, the eighteenth year of the Kaiyuan, they were included in the Kaiyuan shijiao lu 至十一年方事翻譯。於資聖寺薦福道場，所翻譯成四部七卷。時庚午歲開元十八年,已入《開元釋教錄》也。

SGSZ: In the eleventh year, under the imperial order, [Vajrabodhi] translated the Yuqie niansong fa 瑜伽念誦法 in two juan, and the Qi juzhi tuoluoni 七俱胝陀羅尼 in two juan. The Great Brahman Chief of East India, a functionary in Secretariat, Yishelu 伊舍羅, acted as the Term-Translator, and Wengu 溫古, a monk from Mt. Song, acted as the Scribe. 十一年，奉勅於資聖寺薦出《瑜伽念誦法》二卷，《七俱胝陀羅尼》二卷。東印度婆羅門大首領直中書伊舍羅譯語，嵩岳沙門溫古筆受。

NOTE:

417 It is also known as the Jin’gangding yuqiezhong lüechu niansong jing 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經 (T866).
418 It may also be called “Zhi Zhongshu Sheng” 直中書省. The post belonged to no special category of officials in the Tang bureaucratic system, which was called zhiguan 直官. According to the Tang liudian 唐六典, posts of this category were set up in various bureaus of the central government, and in the Secretariat, there were ten posts that took the duty of “Term-Translator” (fanshu yiyu 翻書譯語). See Tang liudian: 2, 35. Cf. the discussion in JU Yan 2009.
419 An error for 提.
420 The Sanskrit name is restored by Yi-liang Chou as Īśvara. (Chou 1945: 281) This person had worked in the position of Sanskrit-Translator in the group headed by Bodhiruci for the translation of the Da baoji jing 大寶積經, which was finished in 706. For an explanation of the arrangement of translation office, see SGSZ (T2061.50.0725a01-0724b28) and FZTJ (T2035.49.0398b08-19). Cf Mochizuki Bukkyō daijiten: 5, 4886-4888.
Concerning the number of juel of the Lüchu niansong jing, the SGSZ is mistaken. The Taishō edition of the sutra is in four juel, corresponding to various historical records. The Japanese catalogues inform a version in six juel had been brought to Japan from China. A manuscript of this version from the eighteenth century has been discovered in Japan. It turns out that Yixing and Ennin were citing this six-juel version in their works, the Yijue and Kongō chō daikyōdo sho 金剛頂大教王經疏 respectively. See the discussion of the Yijue and its citations from the six-juel version see ENDŌ Yūjun 1987. For a comparative study on these two versions, see KIYOTA Jakuun 1981.

The Yijue is an explanatory work of the Lüchu niansong jing, and it was written by Yixing probably at Vajrabodhi’s dictation. It contains a passage recounting in Vajrabodhi’s own tone about how he lost the whole set of the Vajroṣṇīṭa Yoga sutras during the adventurous voyage and how the shortened version was translated in the Tang.421 It says that Yixing took the position of Scribe. It seems that the six-juel version was the original translation and was thus employed by Yixing in his work. By the completion of the Xu Gujin yijing tuji in 730, the four-juel version had been worked out and became more popular.

724, KAIYUAN 12, 20 sui

BZJ: “[A Memorial Requesting Great Virtues to be Drafted into the Stupa-chapel and the Chapel of the Stone Ordination-Platform of My Late Master in the East Capital with a Permitting Decree” 東都先師塔院及石戒壇院請抽大德制一首 (772): The foregoing Shi Jietan Chapel (the Stone Ordination-Platform Chapel) was built with the donation made by my late master of his personal possessions when he was still alive. On the day when I was advancing to take the full precepts, I, Bukong, made a devout vow, wishing to take my share of its [future] repair. 右件戒壇院是不空和上在日, 捨衣鉢興建。當不空進具之日, 亦有誠願, 許同修葺 XB: At the age of twenty sui, [Bukong] advanced to take the full precepts that are laid out in the Sarvāstivāda [vinaya] and became a great bhiksu. He was thoroughly conversant with the vinaya

421 See T1798.39.0808b26-27: 聞有此異希有法門乃令伊舍羅譯為漢文，一行等乃親自筆受。
system; although knowledgeable, he never applied it mechanically. 弱冠，從有部進具，成大苾芻。律相洞闢，知而不住。

XZ: At the age of twenty sui, [Bukong] advanced to take the full precepts and became adept in the vinaya of the Sarvāstivāda school. 二十，進具戒，善一切有部律。

ZYL: Upon turning the age of twenty sui, [Bukong] received the full ordination at the ordination-platform [that belonged to] the Sarvāstivāda school in the Guangfu Monastery. 方弱冠，於廣福寺依一切有部石戒壇所而受近圓。

SGSZ: By the time he took the full precepts, he became adept at interpreting the Sarvāstivāda [vinaya]. 涇登具戒，善解一切有部。

724-?, KAIYUAN 12-?, 20-? SUI

XB: Longing to learn the Treatise on Śabda śāstra (the science of sounds) and then make an exhaustive enquiry into the Yoga teachings, he confided the thought to his late master, but the master did not give his consent. 將欲學《聲明論》，窮瑜伽宗，以白先師，師未之許。

XZ: He knew the languages of various countries and read the writings of foreign nations. Initially, when translating scriptures, [Vajrabodhi] used to ask him to translate the [Sanskrit] terms; [thus he immersed himself into the practices of] weighing the Chinese words against the Sanskrit [counterparts] and of extracting the quintessence from the text and the import. When studying the Treatise on Śabda śāstra, he finished the devotion of normally twelve years within six months; the recitation of the Vows of Mañjuśrī, which is one year’s worth, he completed by the second night。

SFSZ: He was good at foreign written and spoken languages. When translating scriptures, his master often ordered him to join the work. When studying Treatise on Śabda śāstra, in six months, he finished the devotion of normally twelve years; the recitation of the Vows of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, which is one year’s worth, he completed by the second night. He was as
sharp-witted as this. 諳異國書語。師之翻經，常令共譯。凡學《聲明論》，一紀之功，六月而畢，誦《文殊普賢行願》，一年之限，再夕而終。其敏利皆此類也。

**Note:**

The wording by Zhao Qian seems to imply that Bukong’s knowledge was not limited to the two “foreign” languages that he was supposed to have understood due to his family background, namely Sanskrit and Sogdian. He may have understood the languages of other nations, a result inseparable from his wide travel experience in his youth. The Sogdians were well-known for their language learning skills.

In respect to the studying of *Treatise on Śabda śāstra*, the XB and the XZ make opposing statements, and clearly the XZ corrected the mistake in the XB.

The seemingly voluminous text *The Vows of Mañjuśrī* is unknown. The Taishō canon contains a sutra concerning Mañjuśrī’s vows called *Wenshu pusa fayuan jing* 文殊菩薩發願經 (T296), but the text is rather short and definitely does not require one year for one to recite it. Bukong’s disciple Huixiao read out Mañjuśrī’s vows when he was ordered by Emperor Daizong to cultivate dharmic merit in Mt. Wutai, which may have been in reference to the sutra Bukong was able to recite.

**730, Kaiyuan 18, 26 sui**

*Xu Gujin yijing tuji*: Entering the eighteenth year [of Kaiyuan], the year of Geng-Wu 庚午 in the Sexagenary Cycle, [Vajrabodhi] translated the *Jin’gangding jing Manshushili pusa wuzi xin tuoluoni pin* 金剛頂經曼殊室利菩薩五字心陀羅尼品, in one *juan*, and the *Guanzizai Ruyilun pusa yuqie fayao* 觀自在如意輪菩薩瑜伽法要, in one *juan*, in the Great Jianfu monastery. Śramaṇa Zhizang (i.e. Bukong) took the position of Term-translator. Altogether, these are four titles in seven *juan* in total. [Vajrabodhi] added a new version of the spell to the old translation of [the scripture] on the [Mahā]pratisarā [dhāraṇī]. 至十八年庚午，於大薦福寺又譯《金剛頂
經曼殊室利菩薩五字心陀羅尼品》一卷， 《觀自在如意輪菩薩瑜伽法要》一卷， 沙門智藏譯語。凡四部合七卷。又於舊《隨求》中更續新呪。

SGSZ: In the eighteenth year, [Vajrabodhi] produced the translation of the Manshushili wuzi xin tuoluoni 曼殊室利五字心陀羅尼 and the Guanzizai yuqie fayao 観自在瑜伽法要, each in one juan; Śramaṇa Zhizang took the position of Term-Translator, and Yixing acted as the Scribe to edit the draft into a fine text. Then, [Vajrabodhi] found that in the old translation of the scripture on the [Mahā]pratisarā [dhārani] lacked some sections, [and therefore he] made them up and rendered the text complete. 十八年，於大薦福寺又出《曼殊室利五字心陀羅尼》、《觀自在瑜伽法要》各一卷，沙門智藏譯語，一行筆受，刪綴成文。復觀舊《隨求》本中有闕章句，加之滿足。

731+, Kaiyuan 19+, 27 Sui+

ZYL: When it went into after the eighteenth year [of Kaiyuan Era], [Vajrabodhi] produced the translations of the Jin’gangding jing yuqie xiuixi Biluzhena sanmodi fa 金剛頂經瑜伽修習毘盧遮那三麼地法, in one juan, the Qianshou Qianyan Guanshiyin pusa daschenzhou ben 千手千眼觀世音菩薩大身呪本, in one juan, the Qianshou Qianyan Guanzizai pusa guangda yuanman wuaidabeixin tuoluoni zhou ben 千手千眼觀自在菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼呪本, in one juan, and Budong Shizhe tuoluoni mimifa 不動使者陀羅尼祕密法, in one juan. The above four scriptures, in four juan altogether, are in existence. 至十九年後，又譯出《金剛頂經瑜伽修習毘盧遮那三麼地法》一卷，《千手千眼觀世音菩薩大身呪本》一卷，《千手千眼觀自在菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼呪本》一卷，《不動使者陀羅尼祕密法》一卷。右四部四卷其本見在。

Note:

Since these four texts were translated by Vajrabodhi after the publish of the KYL in 730, they were not included this catalogue, and it seems that Yuanzhao did not know the exact dates of their translation.

736, Kaiyuan 24, 32 Sui
**ZYL:** In the next year (736 or Kaiyuan 24), the desperado Liu Zhicheng 刘志成 furtively conceived a malicious scheme (i.e. a rebellion). To determine a day [that would be propitious for the uprising, Liu Zhicheng] consulted Tripiṭaka Baohua 寶花. Heaven never nurtures evil, and the rebels were crushed. It was decreed that all foreign monks must return to their own countries. Tripiṭaka Fayue was allowed to stay on by the emperor’s special favour. 

**SGSZ:** At that time, the emperor (i.e. Xuanzong) put his heart into the “Mysterious Opening” (i.e. Daoism) but did not give weight to “the Gate of Emptiness” (i.e. Buddhism). The office in charge [of Buddhist clergy], pandering the emperor’s intention, requested [the imperial order] that foreign monks go back to their own countries. When the decree had been in operation for quite some days, his attendant informed Vajrabodhi of it, but Vajrabodhi said, “I am an Indian monk and not a native of those barbarian regions, so I am not involved by that proclaimed edict. I will certainly not leave.” Several days later, suddenly he rode in a carriage and travelled to the pass of Yanmen 雁門, where he sent farewell [to the court]. The emperor got into a panic and sent his own handwritten degree to retain [Vajrabodhi]. 

**ZZTJ:** In the fifth month [of 736], Liu Zhicheng, a devilish soul and a native of the Liqun 禮泉 county, raised a riot, and [his gang] robbed and chased people on the road. When the gang approached Xianyang 咸陽, villagers ran to report to the county officials, who arranged to burn the bridges and cut off the road to resist them. The gang scattered. Several days later, all members
were captured and beheaded. 五月，醴泉妖人劉志誠作亂，驅掠路人。將趣咸陽，村民走告縣官，焚橋斷路以拒之。其眾遂潰。數日，悉擒斬之。424

X

Taming: In the twenty-fourth year [of Kaiyuan], [Vajrabodhi] followed the court to Chang’an. 二十四年，隨駕入長安。

BEFORE 740, KAIYUAN 28, 36 SUI

BZJ: “The Last Will of Master Tripiṭaka” 三藏和上遺書一首 (774): Since I renounced my household during my youth, I had been depending on [the direction of] my master and pursuing my studies. I had delved in Sanskrit texts for twenty-odd years—working day and night diligently and deferentially rendering my consultations and reports—and only then [my master] imparted to me the teachings of the Yoga in four thousand verses.425 吾自髫髥出家,依師學業。討尋梵夾二十餘年,晝夜精勤,伏膺諮禀,方授瑜伽四千頌法。

XB: Longing to learn the Treatise on Śabda śāstra and make an exhaustive inquiry of the Yoga school, he confessed the thought to his late master, who did not allow it. [Then his master] dreamed that the statues of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were all making their way east, and thus he declared, “I get the person to entrust my Dharma treasury.” Thus [his master] instructed him with Three Mysteries and discoursed on Five Wisdoms. [This is] an undertaking of twelve-year’s worth, but he completed it within six months. 將欲學《聲明論》, 窮瑜伽宗, 以白先師, 師未之許。夜夢佛菩薩像悉皆來426行, 乃曰: “我之所夢, 法藏有付矣。”遂授以三密, 談於五智。十二年功, 六月而就。

XZ: Afterwards, [Bukong] implored [the impartation of] the Three Mysteries of the Five Divisions of the Yoga from the patriarch. With three-year pursuit, his abiding desire remained unrealized; for the sake of the Dharma, [Bukong] attempted to return to India. One day, while he

424 Cf. JTS (8, 203) and XTS (5, 139). XTS also dates the event to the fifth month, while JTS dates it to the sixth month. For a study on the context of similar revolts in Tang dynasty, see WANG Yongping 2005.

425 This refers to the Lüechu niansong jing (T866).
426 It should be an error for 東.
stayed overnight at an inn in Xinfeng [on his way back to India], the patriarch (i.e. Vajrabodhi), quite unusually, had a dream at night, in which statues of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of all temples in the capital made their way east.\footnote{That is moving toward Xinfeng, which lies to the east of Chang’an. Obviously, the dream was understood to signal that the Buddhas and bodhisattvas were forthrightly taking the side of Bukong.} [The patriarch] awoke with a start and instantly sent an order asking [Bukong] to head back. Upon learning of [Bukong’s] return, the patriarch rejoiced, “My Dharma treasury will be entrusted to you without reservation.” On another morning, [the patriarch] inducted him into the teachings of Five Divisions. [Later,] teachings on performing abhiṣeka and homa, and teachings on acting as an ācārya [of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga], the rituals of the Mahāvairocana-sutra and the Susiddhi systems [of the Dhāraṇī Teaching],\footnote{According to Bukong’s knowledge, there are five divisions of the Dhāraṇī Teaching (tuoluoni jiao 陀羅尼教), and the Vajroṣṇīṣa sutras, the Mahāvairocana sutra, and the Susiddhi sutra represent three of them. See the Dubu tuoluoni mu 都部陀羅尼目 (T903) which was composed at Bukong’s dictation.} and teachings of the various Bodhisattva divisions—a multitude of Mantrayana practices—all were imparted and grasped one after another, and in each case all subtleness was penetrated.

SGSZ: [Bukong] sought to learn the teachings of the Three Mysteries of the Five Divisions of the newly [imported] Yoga, [an attempt] continued for three years, his master, however, granted no instruction. Thereupon, [Bu]kong planned to go back to India, and his master then dreamed that the statues of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of various temples of the capital made their way east. [The master] awoke, realizing that [Bu]kong was a true recipient of the Dharma. Therefore [the master] granted [Bukong’s] request and inducted [him] into the practices of the Five Divisions, the abhiṣeka, and the homa, and the teachings for acting as an acārya [of the Yoga], as well as the rituals for Mahāvairocana-sutra and the Susiddhi [systems of the Dhāraṇī Teaching], and so on: All were entrusted to him.
師夢京城諸寺佛菩薩像皆東行，寤寐乃知空是真法器，遂允所求，授與五部灌頂、護摩、阿闍梨法，及《毘盧遮那經》、《蘇悉地軌則》等，盡傳付之。

**NOTE:**

Bukong was tonsured and became a novice monk in 719, and he says that twenty-odd years later, he was instructed in the most advanced teachings of the Yoga. That is to say, the instruction must have happened after the year of 739. Since Vajrabodhi died in Sept. 741, it could be dated to either 740 or 741, which means that he studied the most advanced teachings for less than two years under Vajrabodhi. This reckoning is different from what is implied by the following statement in the XZ. After relating how Bukong obtained the highest instruction on the Yoga, Zhao Qian continues thus.

Several years later, on an imperial order, the patriarch (i.e. Vajrabodhi) set out the journey back to his country. When arriving at the Henan prefecture (i.e. Luoyang), the patriarch manifested illness and met his end. The time was the mid-Autumn day of the twenty-ninth year of Kaiyuan (29 Sept. 741). 後數年，祖師奉詔歸國，大師隨侍。至河南府，祖師示疾而終。是時開元二十九年仲秋矣。

Irrefutably, the Chinese word shu 數 (several) means an imprecise number more than two, though not many. Therefore, the statement made the event considerably earlier than 739. In this point, either Zhao Qian’s statement is wrong or that Bukong’s statement of “twenty-odd years” is inaccurate and means less than twenty. We have one instance which exactly confirms the existence of latter possibility. See “Qing yu Xingshan si dangyuan liang daochang ge zhi chisongseng zhi yi shou” 請於興善寺當院兩道場各置持誦僧制一首. 429

The so-called “the teachings of the Yoga in four thousand verses” refers to the scripture *Lüechu niansong jing* translated in 723, an abridged version of the *STTS*. Along with other Vajroṣṇīṣa sutras that add up to in one hundred thousand verses altogether, the *STTS* was mistakenly jettisoned by Vajrabodhi years ago during the treacherous journey across stormy seas

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429 See Appendix A: 354-56.
to Tang China. The fourth and last chapter of this text presents the instructions on the abhiṣeka of Five Divisions, and the rituals of other kinds of abhiṣeka and homa. It also mentions the so-called the practice of being an ācārya (asheli fa 阿闍梨法), but does not give any further explanation.

IV-XII.

Dasheng yuqie Jin’gang xinghai Manshushili qianbi qianbo dajiaowang jing bing xu 大乘瑜伽金剛性海曼殊室利千臂千鉢大教王經并序

Afterwards, on the fifteenth day of the fourth month in the twenty-eighth year of Kaiyuan, the year of Geng-Chen in the Sexagenary Cycle (15 May 740), [Vajrabodhi] apprised the sacred retired Emperor Kaiyuan 開元 (i.e. Xuanzong) of [this sutra] at the imperial sanctum in the Jianfu Monastery. On the fifth day of the fifth month (13 Jun.), he received an imperial instruction to translate this sutra. At the double-hour of mao (5 a.m.), insense was burned and the translation started. The Tripiṭaka (i.e. Vajrabodhi) interpreted the Sanskrit original, and Hyecho acted as the Scribe—that is the teachings of the sutra Mañjuśrī with One Thousand Arms and One Thousand Bowls of the Mahāyāna Yoga. Eventually, on the fifteenth day of the twelfth month (6 Jan. 741), the translation was completed. 後至開元二十八年，歲次庚辰，四月十五日，聞奏開元聖上皇於薦福寺御道場内。至五月五日，奉詔譯經。卯時焚燒香火，起首翻譯。三藏演梵本，慧超筆授，大乘瑜伽千臂千鉢曼殊室利經法教。後到十二月十五日翻譯將訖。

741, Kaiyuan 29, 37 Sui-743, Tianbao 2, 39 Sui

Taming: On the twenty-sixth day of the seventh month of the twenty-ninth year [of Kaiyuan], (10 Sept. 741) thanks to the imperial grace, [Vajrabodhi] was allowed to return to his own country. Upon reaching the Guangfu monastery in the East Capital, he developed a disease. […] On the fifteenth day of the eighth month of this year (29 Sept.), he entered into nirvana. […] On the fifth day of the ninth month (19 Oct.), it was imperially ordered to enshrine [the relics] at Longmen 龍

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430 Cf. Max Deeg had made the translation of the whole preface, but my translation of the lines quoted here is slightly different from his. See Deeg 2010: 207-08.
門 in the East Capital. When it went into the twenty-seventh day of the second month of the second year of Tianbao (27 Mar. 743), a stupa was erected [for Vajrabodhi] on the mound in the west of the Fengxian 奉先 Monastery.431 至二十九年七月二十六日，天恩放還本國，至東京廣福寺乃現疾……其年八月十五日證果矣。……其年九月五日敕令東京龍門安置。至天寶二年二月二十七日於奉先寺西崗起塔。

**BZJ**: “The Last Will of Master Tripiṭaka”: My late master’s life had come to an end; having no one to rely on, how could I make progress in my study? For that reason, I undertook the long journey to India. 先師壽終，栖託無依，憑何進業？是以遠遊天竺。

**XB**: Having enshrined [the relic of Vajrabodhi] into the pagoda, an edict was issued ordering [Bukong] to undertake a mission to the land of the lion with an imperial letter. 入塔之後，有詔令齎國信，使師子國。

**XZ**: Several years later, the patriarch (i.e. Vajrabodhi) received an imperial order to return to his own country, and the great master (i.e. Bukong) was in attendance. Upon reaching Henan Prefecture (i.e. Luoyang), the patriarch manifested illness and thereupon passed away. This was the mid-Autumn day of the twenty-ninth year of Kaiyuan. With the image-pagoda completed, [Bukong] departed for the land of the lion, to follow the last words of his late master. 後數年，祖師奉詔歸國，大師隨侍。至河南府，祖師示疾而終。是時開元二十九年仲秋矣。影塔既成，以先奉先師遺言，令往師子國。

**ZYL**: In the twenty-ninth year [of Kaiyuan], the year of Xin-Si 辛巳, a heavenly grace fell, allowing Tripiṭaka [Great] Promoter of the Teachings (i.e. Vajrabodhi) and his disciples to return to his homeland. They set out from the West Capital, and when reaching the East Capital, the great master caught a disease, which led to his demise. That was the fifteenth of the eighth month of the year. An auspicious date was decided when [the master’s relics] were laid to rest at Longmen. [Bukong] refused to eat even tolerable food and was sobbing his heart. He was like a calf being

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431 For the location of this monastery, see the discussion by WEN Yucheng (1990) based on the archaeological discovery.
bereaved of its mother. The imperial ordinance was time-restricted, so Bukong could hardly stay long. He bowed farewell to the tomb, and then made the way ahead. In his thirties, [Bukong] suffered such misfortune. Slowly they reached Guangzhou, and then continued to proceed by ship. They would press on without having layover if there was favorable wind. In less than one year, they arrived in the Land of the Lion. 

【ZYL】: Afterwards, [Fayue] suddenly felt homesick and requested the imperial permission to return to his homeland. On the twenty-sixth day of the twenty-ninth year [of Kaiyuan], he bid farewell to the court and set out on his long journey. 

【SGSZ (Vajrabodhi’s biography)】: On the seventh day of the eleventh month of that year (19 Dec. 741), [Vajrabodhi’s relics] were buried to the west of the Yichuan River in the south of Longmen, with a pagoda constructed later to express commendation. 

【SGSZ (Bukong’s biography)】: With the Image Hall constructed and a posthumous title granted, Bukong planned to make a long expedition to the Five Indian Regions and the Land of the Lion, an instruction from his late master. Upon their arrival at the Nanhai Prefecture, the Inspecting Commissioner, Liu Julin, made an earnest request for the abhiṣeka service. Thus, at the Faxing Monastery, [Bukong] converted a myriad of people. He, in front of [the image of] his Principally Venerated One, prayed for some ten days and aroused Mañjuśrī’s theophany. Before they boarded the ship, the Inspecting Commissioner summoned the great chiefs of the foreign

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432 This change is according to a manuscript that was used in creating the critical edition of this text for the Taishō canon. It is correct in putting the year at the twenty-ninth year of Kaiyuan, year of Xin-Si 辛巳 (741), instead of the nineteenth, year of Xin-Wei 辛未 (731). See T2157.55.0881, Editorial Note 9, 10.
residents in the region of Panyu 番禺, Yixibin 伊習賓, and others, and warned them: “Now the Tripiṭaka is going to the Land of the Lion, South India, you need to keep your shipmasters under control so that the Tripiṭaka and his disciples, Hanguan 含光 and Huibian 慧辯—in total, a group of twenty-one—as well as the national credentials reach there. Do not let them be remiss.” In the twelfth month of the twenty-ninth year [of Kaiyuan], [the party] took a Kunlun 崑崙433 ship and left Nanhai Prefecture. 影堂既成，追謚已畢，曾奉遺旨，令往五天并師子國，遂議遐征。初至南海郡，採訪使劉巨隣懇請灌頂。乃於法性寺，相次度人百千萬衆。空自對本尊，祈請旬日，感文殊現身。及將登舟，採訪使召誡番禺界蕃客大首領伊習賓等曰：”今三藏往南天竺師子國，宜約束船主，好將三藏并弟子含光慧辯等三七人國信等達彼。無令疎失！”二十 九年十二月，附崑崙舶離南海。

**Note:**

Taking into account the above information given in “Taming” and Vajrabodhi’s biography in the *SGSZ*, one can chronologize the details about the treatment of Vajrabodhi’s relic stupa as follows: On 19th Oct. 741, an imperial order was issued to sponsor the construction of the relic stupa at Longmen. Two months later, on 19th Dec., the relics were buried there. More than one year later, on 27th Mar. 743, the stupa was completed and erected at the burial site.

As for the date in which Bukong departed for South Asia, the accounts in the “Taming”, the XB, and the XZ jointly result a date that is contradictionary to that specified by Bukong’s biography in the *SGSZ* and implied by the *ZYL*. Both of these dates seem questionable to me.

The XB and the XZ both state that Bukong started his journey after overseeing the erection of Vajrabodhi’s stupa, which, according to the “Taming”—the inscription on that very stupa—was as late as 27th Mar. 743, one year and a half after Vajrabodhi’s death. This would mean that Bukong did not leave Luoyang until Apr. 743, well into the second year of the Tianbao Era. And the XZ continues to say that in the early Tianbao Era, Bukong reached Guangzhou, the

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433 The word *kunlun* refers to dark-skinned people of various ethnicity working as slaves, servants, or workers in the Tang China. They were often hired as sailors, and such ships were called Kunlun ships. See the discussion by LI Jiping 1983.
southernmost province of the Tang. It seems unnecessarily long for Bukong to wait more than one year before setting forth on the journey.

On the other hand, the SGSZ says that Bukong departed from Guangzhou some time between 12th Jan.-9th Feb. 742, the last month of twenty-ninth year of Kaiyuan, which means that Bukong did not wait to see the erection of Vajrabodhi’s stupa. Considering the date of the funeral given in the SGSZ, Bukong started the journey shortly after 19th Dec. 741. According to the same SGSZ, he appeared in Guangzhou roughly one month later and left there before 9th Feb. 742! Taking into consideration that Bukong stayed in Guangzhou for at least ten days, it leaves hardly one month for him to finish the journey from Luoyang to Guangzhou.

The ZYL does not provide an exact time concerning Bukong’s departure, only saying that Bukong bowed farewell to the “tomb”, which was not the stupa. The ZYL has another account relevant to this issue, saying that Bukong stayed another three years after finishing his studies of various Esoteric teachings at the Abhayagiri Vihāra and before returning to the Tang in early 746. This indicates that he arrived in the Land of the Lion in 742. And it also says that from Guangzhou to Sri Lanka, it took Bukong less than one year. Thus, it seems that the ZYL is roughly consistent with Bukong’s departure time indicated by the SGSZ.

By comparison with the arrival date derived from the accounts in the XZ and the XB, which must be no earlier than the middle of 743, the date implied by the ZYL arrival seems more acceptable.

Bukong’s biography in the SGSZ mentions a hall built to enshrine Vajrabodhi’s image and a posthumous title that was granted by the court, but these accounts appear to be fulsome rhetoric in speaking of the filial piety of a descendant or heir and the prestige of the deceased, and therefore they lack historical credibility.

Concerning the reasons for the travel, the accounts are also discrepant, though they can be reconciled. Bukong’s own statement and the account in the XZ mention only the aim to advance his studies of the Yoga, while the XB and the ZYL highlight the existence of a diplomatic
commission given by the court. Bukong must have reported Vajrabodhi’s death to the court and requested an imperial funeral arrangement. Since he had lost Vajrabodhi as his guide of the trip, Bukong may have elicited the court’s support, embodied by the credential mentioned in the XB, to facilitate the reception from the king of the Land of the Lion.

FUJIYOSHI Masumi puts forward a decisive piece of evidence to support that this was mainly a diplomatic mission: the presence of the eunuch-officer Shi/Li Yuancong 史/李元琮, who served as an overseer on this trip. (Fujiyoshi 1976: 833) This information was originally provided by Kūkai in the Kō fuhō den 広付法伝 (KBZ: 1, 20), however, the recently discovered tomb tablet of Yuancong denies the assumptions of both his eunuchism and his attendance to Bukong during the journey.

742, TIANBAO 1, 38 SUI

II.

Dasheng yuqie Jin’gang xinghai Manshushili qianbi qianbo dajiaowang jing bing xu 大乘瑜伽金剛性海曼殊室利千臂千鉢大教王經并序:

When it went into the nineteenth day of the second month of the first year of the Tianbao Era (31 Mar. 742), Tripiṭaka Vajra[bodhi] entrusted the Indian monk Muchanantuopoqie (Skt. Mokṣanandabaga?) with the Sanskrit text of this sutra and the letters to his acarya in the Five Indian Regions, asking the monk to deliver the Sanskrit text and the letters to [Vajrabodhi’s] original master, Ācārya Baojue (Skt. Ratnabudha?) in the Land of the Lion, South India of the Five Indian Regions. [The monk] has not as yet returned. 至天寶一年二月十九日，金剛三藏將此經梵本及五天竺阿闍梨書，並總分付與梵僧目叉難陀婆伽，令送此經梵本並書將與五印度南天竺師子國本師寶覺阿闍梨。經今不迴。(T1177A.20.0724b26-17)

Note:

Apparently, the dating of the above event was false, which was half a year after Vajrabodhi’s death. The preface also mentions that Hyecho 慧超 first learnt the teachings contained in the sutra from Vajrabodhi and that he restudied this sutra under the direction of Bukong in the tenth month
of the ninth year of the Dali 大曆 Era (774). The second date is wrong in a similar way, as it was four months after the death of Bukong.

It seems the sutra proper was spurious, and the author of the preface seems to have fabricated a story to gloss over the lack of the Sanskrit original that could otherwise show its authenticity. Therefore, to make the story credible, the author must have resorted to some well-known historical facts, including places, figures, and events, to insert the false elements. The falsehood of the detail concerning the Sanskrit version of the text does not exclude the possibility that Vajrabodhi maintained a connection with monks in Sri Lanka and India. This explains why Bukong traveled to Sri Lanka in seek of an Esoteric master capable of teaching the complete teachings of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga. It is interesting that the master Baojue in Sri Lanka seems to have acted as the relaying person between Vajrabodhi and his masters in India.

743, **TIANBAO 2, 39 SUI**

**II+**

**XZ:** When it went into the early Tianbao Era, [Bukong] reached the Nanhai Prefecture. The herald [pigeon] and the ship had not yet arrived [in Guangzhou]. The Inspecting Commissioner, Liu Julin (d. 749), importunately plead with our master to perform the abhiṣeka ritual. Our master gave consent. For reasons of expediency, [our master] established a sanctum at the Faxing Monastery. Thanks to Lord Liu, [people from] the Four Multitudes all found refuge in [our master], who, thus, converted numerous people. Before his departure, the great master entered the maṇḍala, and in the face of the image of his Principally Venerated One, he performed the Three Mysteries of Vajrayāna to invoke the divine auspice. Thus, he continued to practice mindful chanting and circumambulation (Skt. caṅkramaṇa) alternately, and in ten days, Maṇjuśrī granted a manifestation of his form. Indeed, [a man with] great vows is never alone; hence, his abiding wish was fulfilled. Subsequently, holding his ringed staff, [the master] led his disciples Hanguang and Huibian, [in a party of] twenty-one men, either cleric or lay, onto the ship. From the Inspecting Commissioner on down, people of both the gentry and commoners all over the prefecture, lavishly
assembled various offerings—Incense and flowers spread along the seashore, and the fanfare of conch-trumpets and Indic chanting resounded around this remotest corner of the land. [People] walked hundreds of miles, only to see off the great master. 至天實初, 到南海郡434。信舶435未至, 採訪劉巨鱗, 三請大師, 哀求灌頂, 我師許之。436建立道場。因劉公也, 四眾咸賴, 度人億千。大師之未往也, 入曼荼羅, 對本尊像, 金剛三密以加持。念誦經行, 未踰旬日, 文殊師利現身。因437誠大願不孤, 忿心已遂。便率門人含光、惠辯, 僧俗三七, 林錫登舟。採訪已下, 爲州士庶, 大會陳設。香438花遍于海浦, 螺439梵栝440于天涯。奉送大師, 凡數百里。

**ROUGHLY 742-745, TIANBAO 1-4, 39-41 SUI**

**A. SUBSIDING DISASTERS ON THE SEA OF HELING**

**XB:** [During the voyage,] frothy wave after wave ran [as high] as mountains, giant fish extended [so long as to divide] the water, giant billows surge violently, and fierce wind whip the water up. Whatever calamity emerged, [Bukong] vigorously raised the vajra-mallet, intoned the [Mahā]pratisarā Dhāraṇī, and vanquished the calamities with calm. Thereupon the ship arrived at that country (i.e. the Land of the Lion). His disciples Hanguang and Huibian both witnessed [the miraculous feat]. 白波連山，巨鱗橫海，洪濤淘湧，猛風振激。凡諸難起，奮金剛杵，諷《隨求》章，辟災靜然，船達彼國矣。弟子僧含光、慧辯皆目擊焉。

**XZ:** When approaching the boundary of the country of Heling 訶陵, [the ship] encountered an enormous Black Storm. The merchants were all horrified and carried out the rituals [to invoke the

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434 The Guangzhou 廣州 prefecture was renamed as Nanhai prefecture during the Tianbao era.
435 The foreign owner of commercial ships used to keep carrier pigeons. When ships set sail, a pigeon was released to inform people at the destination about their departure. Cf. the discussion in LÜ Simiam 1959: 1064
436 LUO Xianglin 1966.
437 The character 固 should be an error for 固.
438 The character 香 should be 香.
439 The character 螺 was identical to 梵. The combination of the two characters 螺 and 梵 into one word is instanced by an inscription from the Liao Dynasty. “Flowers and fruits were set out, and conch-trumpets and Indic [chanting] sounded in chorus.” 花菓並陳, 螺梵交響. See “Yunju si gong tadeng yi bei” 雲居寺供塔燈邑碑, in the Liaodai shike wen bian 遼代石刻文編: 615.
440 A transcriptional error for 括.
power] of their own deities\(^{441}\) to dispel it, but their efforts were in vain. They prostrated themselves to make obeisance to the great master and implored him [to extend succour]. Huibian, then a young monk, screamed [in a horror] likewise. The great master told them, “Now I have the antidote, so you do not worry.” Then, holding the Vajra-Mallet of Five-Wisdom Bodhi-Mind in the right hand and the \textit{Bore Fomu jing} \(\)般若佛母經 \textit{in} the left, he performed a ritual [to invoke] the divine might. [The master] intoned the Mahā-pratisārā [Mantra] merely once, and to the astonishment of even Huibian, the wind became gentle and the water clear—this was all because of the power of the master. Afterwards, they met with fierce wind, when a giant whale surfaced from the water and spouted mountainous billows, a catastrophe even more threatening than the previous one. The merchants and the like were so despairing that all were ready to give up their lives. Out of pity, the great master chanted and prayed as previously he had done. In addition, [he] asked Huibian to chant the \textit{Sujieluo longwang jing} \(\)娑竭羅龍王經. In no time, all disasters vanished. \footnote{The term of \textit{bentian} \(\)本天 as well as the related term of \textit{yutian} \(\)餘天 occur in Esoteric texts translated by Vajrabodhi and Bukong, and as the contexts indicate, they mean respectively “heavenly deities one principally worshiped” and “other heavenly deities”. See, for example, T0866.18.0225a16, T0955.19.0314b20, and T0241.08.0781b29.} 

\footnote{The attainment of three mysteries \(\)三密 \textit{of the Buddha by making a mudrā} with the hands, chanting a mantra, and contemplating an esoteric deity or symbol.}

\footnote{It should be a written variant of \textit{禳}.}

\footnote{It is interchangeable with \textit{刻}. See \textit{Dai kanwa jiten} 大漢和辭典: 2, 271.}
master practiced chanting and mindfulness as previously, and he asked, once again, Huibian to recite the *Sujieluo longwang jing*. Then [the evil force] was exorcised. 行至訶陵國，遇大黑風，遂右執五智菩提心杵，左持《般若佛母經》，令慧辯誦《大隨求陀羅尼經》攘除。後又遇疾風，大鯨出海，噴浪若山。大師如舊念持，仍令惠辯，誦《娑竭羅龍王經》，祓除之。

SGSZ: Approaching the boundary of the country of Heling, they encountered an enormous Black Storm. The merchants were all terrified, and each carried out the rituals of their own nations. The exorcism had no effect. They all made obeisance and beseeched [Bukong] to extend succour and protection. Huibian and the like cried bitterly as well. Bukong said, “Now I have the antidote, so you need not worry!” Thereupon, with a five-pronged Bodhi-Mind Mallet in his right hand and the palm-leaf scripture *Prajñā-buddhamārtkā sūtra* in his left, he performed a rite. He chanted the Mahāpratisarā [dhāranī] once, and instantly the wind was subsided and the sea became clear. Later, [the ship] came across a giant whale, which emerged from the water and spouted mountainous billows. It was even more threatening than the previous calamity. The merchants were so despairing as to give up their lives. [Bu]kong performed the ritual as before and asked Huibian to recite the *Suojie longwang jing*. At once, all disasters vanished.

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Although Yuanzhao did not have the “XZ” when compiling the *ZYL*, the similar wording in describing the great storm during the voyage suggests that they may have some common source, or that Yuanzhao had some source derived from “XZ” at hand.

**B. IN THE COURT OF THE LAND OF THE LION**

XB: The king of the Land of the Lion went to the suburb [of the capital city] to welcome [Bukong] to the palace, where a seven-day reverential entertainment [was arranged for him]. [The king]
bathed the great master with a vessel made of genuine gold, and he moved on his elbows in greeting, to observe the sacred etiquette. The royal kin, chief ministers and great advisors, as well as ranking officials, all paid him utmost reverence. 師子國王郊迎宮中，七日供養。以眞金器沐浴大師。肘步問安，以存梵禮。王諸眷屬、宰輔大臣備盡虔敬。

XZ: Next, they reached the city of Haikou 海口. The king of the Land of the Lion dispatched envoys to welcome him. When the great master met the king, the king rejoiced and invited the great master to stay in the palace and receive a seven-day reverential entertainment. Everyday, [the king] invariably filled a bathtub that was made of genuine gold with scented water, and then he personally bathed the great master. The crown prince, the queen, royal concubines, and ministers, [one after another] revered the great master in the same manner as the King had done. 次達海口城，師子國王，遣使迎之。大師見王，王大悅，便請大師住宮，七日供養。每日常以真金浴斛，滿貯香水，王為大師，躬自澡浴。次及太子、后、妃、輔相，如王禮大師。

ZYL: Hearing of [the arrival of] an envoy from the Tang, the king arranged a welcome reception with extraordinary protocol. 王聞唐使, 禮接殊常。

SGSZ: When [Bukong] arrived in the Land of the Lion, the king sent envoys to welcome him. When they were about to enter the city, the guardsmen on foot and horse [were already ordered to] line up to guard the street. When meeting Bukong, the king paid obeisance at his feet and invited him to stay in the palace to receive a seven-day reverential entertainment. Everyday, the king himself bathed Bukong using a gold barrel full of fragrant water. The crown prince, the queen, and the ministers paid the same homage as the king did. 既達師子國，王遣使迎之。將入城，步騎羽衞，駢羅衢路。王見空，禮足，請住宮中，七日供養。日以黄金斛，滿盛香水，王為空躬自澡浴。次太子、后妃、輔佐，如王禮大師。

C. STUDYING UNDER ACARYA SAMANTABHADRA

XB: In the country, there was a sage, Ācārya Samantabhadra, whose attainment was next to the Holy Ground (i.e. Buddhahood) and whose virtues were revered by contemporaries. [Deciding to] follow him around and made enquiries, [Bukong] had no way else to [better] express his piety and

XZ: On another day, [Bukong] discovered that Ācārya Samantabhadra and others and offered up gold and jewels, beautiful brocades, and the like. He requested [Samantabhadra] to disclose the teachings of the Vajroṣṇiṣa Yoga in Eighteen Assemblies and the rite to erect the altar of the [Dhāraṇī Teaching system] of Vairocana Mahākaruṇā Garbha. [The ācārya] permitted Bukong’s disciples Hanguang and Huibian to receive the service of the Abhiṣeka of Five Divisions as well.

BM: The master [i.e. Bukong] also made a journey to countries such as India and the Land of the Lion, where he paid a visit to Ācārya Nāgabodhi and explored the teachings of the Eighteen Assemblies.和尚又西遊天竺師子等國，詣龍智阿闍梨，揚攉十八會法。他日，尋普賢阿閦梨等，奉獻金寶錦繡之屬，請開十八會金剛頂瑜伽法門，毘盧遮那大悲胎藏建立壇法。并許門人含光、惠辯同授五部灌頂。

ZYL: [The king of the Land of the Lion] ordered to ensconce [Bukong] at the monastery of Buddha Tooth (aka. the Abhayagiri Vihāra), and thereupon he restudied [the Teachings of] Secret Dhāraṇī, the self-protection by the Three Mysteries, the mudrās of Five Divisions, the teachings concerning maṇḍalas, the yoga of the Thirty-Seven Venerated-Ones, and homa—in all [he

445 According to Bukong’s Dubu tuoluoni mu, as one of the five systems of Dhāraṇī Teaching, the Vairocana Mahākaruṇā Garbha, contained in the Mahāvairocana-sūtra, has only three divisions. (T0903.18.0899a13-c11) And the Five-Division was repeatedly used by Bukong to refer to the Vajroṣṇiṣa Yoga. Therefore, it seems that Feixi made a mistake in the XB in this respect.
achieved] minute proficiency. In the remaining three years, [Bukong] felt uneasy when either dining or sleeping. 便令安置於佛牙寺，因茲重學祕密總持、三密護身、五部契印、曼荼羅法、三十七尊瑜伽、護摩，備皆精練。經餘三歲，寢食無安。

**HGXZ:** The master (i.e. Bukong) said, “When in the land of South India, I cast a flower [on the *mandala*] and got this Venerated-One, exactly the same [one that you get] now. You, after my career, would greatly spread the Great Teachings of Dhāraṇī, with no differences from me. 和上云：“我於南天竺國, 散花得此尊, 如今無異。異於吾後。弘傳總持大教, 如我無異。”

**SGSZ:** When Bukong first met Ācārya Samantabhadra, he offered up gold, jewels, and beautiful brocades and requested to disclose the Dharma Gate of Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga in Eighteenth Assemblies, the rite to erect the altar of the [Dhāraṇī Teaching system] of Vairocana Mahākaraṇā Garbha. [The ācārya] also permitted Hanguang, Huibian, and others, to receive the service of the Abhiṣeka of Five-Division altogether. 空始見普賢阿闍梨, 遂奉獻金寶、錦繍之屬, 請開十八會金剛頂瑜伽法門、毘盧遮那大悲胎藏建立壇法, 并許含光慧辯等, 同受五部灌頂。

**Note:** In later sources such as the BM and Kūkai’s *Kō fuhō den*, the Esoteric master from whom Bukong restudied the complete teachings of the Yoga is said to be Nāgabodhi instead of Samantabhadra. Perhaps due to the disagreement, Yuanzhao, having no better basis to make a judgement, evaded this issue in the ZYL. Obviously, Kūkai may have preferred Nāgabodhi, the very lineage master of Vajrabodhi; this name would maintain the simplicity and purity of the Yoga lineage.

**D. Wide studying**

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446 The character 異 is rendered as 汝 in the related quotation kept in the *Darijing shu yan’ao chao* 大日經疏演奧抄 from an edition of the HGXZ that was brought to Japan from Tang China by Engyō 圓行 (799-852): At the age of nineteen sui (764), [Master Huiguo] implored the Tripiṭaka (i.e. Bukong) to perform the ceremony of *abhiṣeka* [for him]. Dropping the flower garland, [Huiguo] got the bodhisattva Dharmacakrapravartī. The master (i.e. Bukong) said, “When dropping the flower garland in South India, I got this honoured one, the same happening as this moment. After my demise, you will transmit and spread the great teachings of *dhāraṇī* as successfully as I would have done. 年十九，三藏邊求授灌頂，散華得轉法輪菩薩。和上云：“我於南天竺國散華得此尊，如今無異。汝於吾後，弘傳總持大教，如我無異。”
From then on, the great master (i.e. Bukong) pursued awakening [under the direction of] no regular teacher. Further, [he] searched all around for and procured various teachings of the Mantra and various other sutrās and śāstras, [altogether over five hundred titles]. Original samayas [of various Buddhist deities], the secret mudrās of various Venerated-Ones, their bearings, shapes, colours, and images, their altar rituals and signature symbols, the texts, the imports, the essences, and characteristics—[the master] got at the root of all these matters.

From then on, Bukong pursued his learning from no regular teacher but sought widely for [texts of] the treasury of Esoteric teachings, as well as various sutrās and śāstras, [altogether] over five hundred titles. The original samayas of [various Buddhist deities], secret mudrās of various Venerated-Ones, their bearings, forms, colours, images, altar rituals, signature symbols, the text, the substance, the essence, and the characteristics, [he] got at the root in all these matters.

E. SUBSIDING THE ELEPHANTS

On another day, the king arranged an elephant-taming show in order to test the great master (i.e. Bukong). The great master formed the Mudrā of Buddha’s Eyes, remained fixed in the Concentration of Compassionate Mind, and chanted a mantra so as to repel them. The elephants toppled over and could not advance upon him. The king regarded him with special respect. What difference is there between this event and [the Buddha’s] subduing a mad elephant with his finger!

Thus it is known that the seven-leaved flower has no scent and that the abode of Five Aggregates has no self—Thus he displayed such capability and wisdom in the state of samādhi.
調象戲以試大師。大師結佛眼印，住慈心定，誦真言門以卻之。其象顛仆，不能前進。王甚敬異。與夫指降醉象有何殊哉！則知七葉之花本無香氣，五陰之舍豈有我人，三摩地中示其能慧。

XZ: On another day, the king arranged an elephant-taming game, to be shown to people of the country. All ascended a height to have a view, and no one dared to approach [the venue] for a closer look. The great master stood in the middle of the street, silently chanting the mantra of Buddha’s Eyes, making the Great Mudrā, and remaining fixed in the Concentration of Compassion. The frantic elephants, ten-odd in number, abruptly turned back in few steps and then hurried to run away. The entire country was amazed.

SGSZ: One day, the king arranged an elephant-taming show. Everybody ascended to a height to watch, and no one dared go near. Bukong stood in the middle of the street, reciting [the mantra], making the mudrā, and practicing the Concentration of Compassion. The several frantic elephants suddenly stumbled down. The entire country was amazed.

F. TRAVELING TO THE FIVE INDIAN REGIONS

XZ: Besides, [the master] traveled to the Five Indian Regions and toured various states. Stories regarding this are many and various and thus omitted here. 又遊五天，巡歷諸國。事跡數繁，闕而不記。

SGSZ: Next, he visited the land of Five Indian Regions, where he had repeatedly caused the manifestation of auspicious omens.

Note:

Yuanzhao’s account suggests that Bukong stayed in the Land of the Lion for the entire duration of the travel. Bukong’s own words confirm the account in the XZ that he went further to
the Indian subcontinent and made a wide tour there. The experiences of Bukong in India have never been recounted in any known sources. Notably, a manuscript is existent in Japan, bearing the title “Fukū sanzō saiden daiji” 不空三藏再天大事 (the major events of Tripiṭaka Bukong’s return trip to India), judging from which the text should relate his story in India.

746, Tianbao 5, 42 sui

A. Returning to the Tang court

CFYG (941, 11412): In the first month of the fifth year [of the Tianbao Era], the king of the Land of the Lion, Śilāmegha (Shluoniqie 寅邏迷伽), dispatched the Indian monk, Abhiśeka-Tripiṭaka Amoghavajra to the court [of the Tang], presenting jeweled gold clothing accessories, a manuscript of the Mahāprajñā[pāramitā] śūtra written in Sanskrit on pattra leaves, and forty pieces of white cambric.

TPYL (282, 3690-91): Again, [document from the Tang] says, “During the Tianbao Era, the Land of the Lion sent an Indian monk, who was an Abhiśeka-Tripiṭaka, to present jeweled gold clothing accessories.” (唐書)又曰: “天寳中, 師子國遣婆羅門僧灌頂三藏, 來獻金寳瓔珞。"

XB: In the sixth year of Tianbao, [Bukong] returned from the Land of the Lion. 至天寶六載, 自師子國還。

XZ: In the fifth year of Tianbao, [the master] returned to the capital [of the Tang] (i.e. Chang’an). [He] presented [to the throne] a memorial from Simāmegha, the king of the Land of the Lion, gold clothing accessories, a Sanskrit manuscript of the [Mahā]prajñā[pāramitā śūtra] written on palm-leaves, various jewels, white cambric, etc. By an imperial edict, [he] was temporarily

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449 For Bukong’s claim, see “Xie enci xiang chenqing biao yi shou” 謝恩賜香陳情表一首, in BZJ, T2120.52.0827c28.
450 See Ōsu Kannon Hōshōin Shinpukuji bunko satsuei mokuroku 大須観音宝生院 真福寺文庫撮影目録: 3, 441.
451 Simāmegha was the throne name of Aggabodhi VI.
accommodated at the Court of Diplomatic Reception and Funeral Rites. 天寶五載，還歸上京。
進師子國王尸羅迷伽表及金瓔珞、般若梵甲、諸寶、白等。奉勅令權住鴻臚寺。

ZYL: At the time, the king paid obeisance at Bukong’s feet and made a request that with the help of Bukong, he sent some local tributes all the way to the great Tang. Those tributes were the lamps-tree with seven jewels, flowery reins, herbs, the wood of aquilaria and sandal, Borneo camphor. Carrying [the tributes and the Buddhist texts he obtained such as] the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga sūtras, as well as the Sanskrit texts of both Mahāyāna and Hinayāna treatises, accompanied by a boy-envoy, Mituo 彌陀 (Skt. mita?), [Bukong] returned to the Tang court in the fifth year of Tianbao, the year of Geng-Xu 庚戌。時彼國王稽首來請，憑獻方物，往至大唐。所謂七寶燈樹、花繡、藥草、沈檀、龍腦等。并自所獲《金剛頂瑜伽經》及大小乘論梵夾，與一小使彌陀，天寶五年，歳在庚戌，還至闕下。

SGSZ: Reaching the fifth year of Tianbao, [Bukong] returned to [the Tang] capital. He presented the memorial from the king of the Land of the Lion, Simāmegha, gold jeweled clothing accessories, a Sanskrit manuscript of [Mahā]prajñā[pāramitā sūtra], miscellaneous pearls, and white cambric. By an imperial edict, [he] was temporarily accommodated at the Court of Diplomatic Reception and Funeral Rites. 至天寶五載還京。進師子國王尸羅迷伽表，及金寶瓔珞、般若梵甲、雜珠白等。奉勅權止鴻臚。

B. THE ABHIṣEKA RITUAL OF FIVE DIVISIONS PERFORMED FOR EMPEROR XUANZONG

BZJ: On the gracious instruction of Emperor Xuanzong, I (i.e. Bukong) established a sanctum in the palace. As for the Sanksrit scriptures that I brought back, [His Majesty] granted permission for the translation of them all. 玄宗皇帝恩命，於内建立道場。所齎梵經，盡許翻譯。

XB: Emperor Xuanzong extended [an invitation for Bukong] to enter the palace and establish an altar, and [Bukong] personally conducted the ritual of abhiṣeka [for the emperor]. 玄宗延入建壇，親授灌頂。

452 For the duties of the office of Honglu si, see the JTS: 44, 1884.
Another day, there issued an imperial order, inviting the great master to enter the palace and establish a *mandala*. For Emperor Xuanzong, he [administered] the *abhiseka* service of Five Divisions. 他日有詔，請大師入內，建立曼荼羅，為玄宗皇帝，五部灌頂。

Another decree followed to summon [Bukong] into the palace to erect an altar, and he conducted the *abhiseka* ritual for the emperor. 續詔入內立壇，為帝灌頂。

**Note:**

The ZYL gives the same account as the Bukong’s self-statement in BZJ. It should be noted that although Bukong says here that Xuanzong allowed him to translate the scriptures that he obtained in Sri Lanka and India, according to his confession in a letter to Emperor Daizong, the court never provided practice support and the work was not started during this period.

**C. Days at the Jingying Monastery**

[Bukong] was residing at the Jingying Monastery. At the time, there was a severe drought, and the emperor felt as anxious as if it was himself that pushed [the people] into the plight. The great master (i.e. Bukong) establish an altar [to call rain] to meet the deadline [set by the court]. Dense clouds gathered from every direction, and soon the rain came down in torrents. Thereupon [the emperor] brought a treasure chest out of the palace as the reward and granted him a purple monastic robe and two hundred bolts of silk tabby in order to spotlight his work of wonder. On one occasion, there was a windstorm uprooting trees, and on another, there appeared a sinister abnormality that an ominous comet left its orbit, [Bukong] set his heart [on the purpose] and chanted silently; the effect showed up instantly.

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453 See T2157.55.0888a16-17.
454 See “Sanchao suofan jing qing ru mulu liuxing biao yi shou” 三朝所翻經請入目錄流行表一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0829a08-09.
455 This expression is couched in an allusion derived from the chapter “Wanzhang I” 萬章上, *Mencius* (SSJZS: 170B [Legge 1875: 285]): [Yi Yin] thought that among all the people of the kingdom, even the private men and women, if there were any who did not enjoy such benefits as Yao and Shun conferred, it was as if he himself pushed them into a ditch. (伊尹) 思天下之民，匹夫匹婦，有不與被堯、舜之澤者，若己納之溝中。
期，油雲四起，霈然洪澍。遂内出寶箱，賜紫袈裟一副，絹二百匹，以旌神用。或大風拔樹之災，祅星失度之沴，舉心默念，如影響焉。

**XZ:** The same year [Bukong] moved to the Jingying Monastery. Throughout the summer of this year, there was a scorching drought. The emperor invited the great master (i.e. Bukong) into the palace to pray for rain. The edict says, “The deadline must not be missed, and neither must the rain be torrential.” The great master replied with a proposal of “the Ritual of the Mahāmāyūrī Vidyārājñī sutra”. Before the end of the third day, the sweet beneficence widely soaked [the land]. The emperor rejoiced, and he carried a treasure chest with his own hands and granted the great master a Purple Monastic Robe—the emperor personally put it on [the master]. Also granted was two hundred bolts of silk tabby. On a later occasion, when a gale rose suddenly, a decree was issued asking the great master to stop it. The great master requested a silver flask [from the emperor] and performed the rite of invoking divine power. In a little while, the gale ceased. The emperor held him in exceptional esteem. Then, a goose in the pond accidentally bumped into the flask and knocked it over, and the gale buffeted just as before. Again, [the emperor] ordered [the master] to stop it. [He] worked to stop it with immediate effect. With doubled veneration, the emperor graced him by entitling him “Zhizang” 智藏.

**ZYL:** [Because of] a gracious edict, [Bukong] was ordered to dwell at the Jingying Monastery. The everyday objects and the residential quarters were arranged out of the will of Heaven (i.e. the throne), and chief ministers and close courtiers scurried to and fro in succession to pay visits. He undertook translation and set up the abhiṣeka altar by order of the emperor, and both the gentry and

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456 A text instructing this ritual was translated by Bukong, see T0983A. For the sutra per se, see T0982.
457 A transcriptional era for 日.
commoners vied to submit their queries and seek teachings about the Way. 恩旨遂令居浄影寺。四事祇給⁴⁵⁸，出自天心；宰輔近臣，往來接武。奉詔翻譯，開灌頂壇；士庶星馳，呈疑問道。

SGSZ: Later, [Bukong] moved to the Jingying Monastery. This year, throughout the summer there was a scorching drought. An edict was issued asking [Bukong] to pray for rain. The edict says, “The deadline must not be missed, and neither must the rain be torrential.” The great master replied with a proposal to erect an altar of Mahāmāyūrī Vidyārājī. Before the end of the third day, the rainfall had already become extensive and sufficient. The emperor rejoiced and carried the treasure chest by his own hands and granted [Bukong] a Purple Monastic Robe—His Majesty personally put it around [his shoulders]. Also granted was two hundred bolts of silk tabby. Another day, a gale rose suddenly, [the emperor] summoned Bukong to practice exorcism and stop it. Bukong requested a silver flask [from the emperor] and performed the ritual to invoke the divine power. Soon [the wind] was controlled and calmed down. Unexpectedly, a goose in the pond bumped into the flask and tipped it over, and therefore the wind went on again and all the more violently. Another edict was issued ordering him to stop it again. [He] worked to stop it with immediate effect. Thereupon the emperor granted him the title “Zhizang”.

FZLDTZ: This year, Tripiṭaka Bukong returned from the Western Regions and was summoned into the palace to built an altar and conduct the abhiṣeka ritual for the emperor (i.e. Xuanzong).

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⁴⁵⁸ The term qiji 祇給 may be an acronym for qishu jiguduyuan 祗樹給孤獨園 (Skt. Jetavanānatha-piṇḍikarama), which refers to the well-known monastic residence near Śrāvasti donated to the Buddha jointly by Prince Qituo 祇陀 (Jeta) and the rich merchant Jigudu 給孤獨 (Anāthapiṇḍika). By this allusion, Yuanzhao refers to the yard and buildings for Bukong to live in at Jingying Monastery.
Thereupon Bukong was granted the title “Imperial Preceptor Zhizang”. 阿是年，不空三藏自西域還，詔入內結壇為帝灌頂。賜號智藏國師。

**749, Tianbao 8, 45 sui**

**XZ:** In the eighth year [of Tianbao], an order of grace permitted [the master] to return to his native country and vouchsafed five post-horses. [The master] reached the Nanhai Prefecture, and later, a decree was issued that he should stay for the time being.

**ZYL:** In the eighth year of [Tianbao], the year of Ji-Chou 乙丑, there was a gracious edict asking him to retire to his home country. He set off from the capital and fell ill on the way. Unable to advance, he sojourned at Shaozhou 韶州. There, he worked vigorously and diligently and never put scriptures down, and supporting his weak body, he devoted himself to translation [of Buddhist scriptures], for the sake of his home and country (the Tang).

**SGSZ:** In the eighth year of Tianbao, he was allowed to go back to his homeland. Riding five post-horses, [the company] arrived at the Nanhai Prefecture, and then an edict was issued to retain him again.

**JTS (9, 223):** On the day of Wu-Zi 戊子 [of the fifth month] (14 Jun. 749), the governor of Nanhai Commandery [was convicted] embezzlement and executed.

**NOTE:**

LÜ Jianfu suggests that the deportation of Bukong was caused by the corruption case of Liu Julin that happened in the same year.

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459 The character 九 must be a transcriptional error for 八, for the cyclic term for this year given here is Ji-Chou 乙丑, which corresponds to Tianbao 8 (749), not Tianbao 9 (750).

460 It should be an error for 却.
In the ZYL, Yuanzhao claims that Bukong, in spite of his illness, devoted to the translation of Buddhist scriptures in Shaozhou. Yuanzhao made a similar account that Bukong conducted translation during the days at the Jingying Monastery, when confronted with Bukong’s own account, divulges the suspicion of formulaic and empty rhetoric. We don’t know what texts, if any, Bukong translated during this period.

752, TIANBAO 11, 48 SUI

“Li/Shi Yuancong muzhiming”: In the eleventh year, under imperial commission, [Yuancong] served as an envoy to the Nanhai [commandery]. Although he came into such “cave” that is full of pearls, jade, treasures, and assets and such a land teeming with the feather, fur, ivory, and leather, he took them [as worthless as] a straw since he was on being on an imperial errand. With master Tripiṭaka (i.e. Bukong), he consulted about the Ultimate Truth and gained [the instruction of] the Sanshiqi zhi xiuzheng limen 三十七智修證理門. Holding the scripture, he professed that “This is the true treasure, and what are gold and jade for?” Those making remarks highly admired his philosophy. 十一年,奉使南海。入珠玉寶貨之窟,羽毛齒革之鄉, 典職在斯, 視同草芥。於三藏和尚處, 諮詢真諦, 得《三十七智修證理門》。持執是經, 乃昌言曰: 斯即真寶, 金玉何為? 議者高服其道。

753, TIANBAO 12, 49 SUI

XZ: In the twelfth year, [the court] issued a decree ordering [Bukong] to proceed to the Hexi 河西 and Longyou 隴右 [Commands], which owed to the request by Geshu Han 哥舒翰 (700–757), the Military Governor [of the Commands] and the Hon President of Censorate. 十二載, 勅令赴河西, 隴右節度御史大夫哥舒翰所請。

ZYL: The Military Governor of the Hexi [Command], the Hon President of Censorate, and Commandery Prince of Xiping, Geshu Han by name, advised the throne that “Tripiṭaka Bukong caught disease during a sojourn on the journey, and currently he is recuperating in Shaozhou 韶州 Prefecture. Please order him to go to the frontier zone of Hexi and pray for a divine blessing over

461 An error for 隴.
the battleground.” The emperor granted his request and sent a decree to Shaozhou, asking Bukong to turn back to Chang’an, where he stayed at the Baoshou Monastery. Decrees and imperial agents came to extend greetings, and the bestowal was made over and over again. The supply of four necessities and residential quarters were granted by the Heaven (i.e. the emperor). Resting for over one month, [the emperor] ordered him to head for Hexi.

舒翰奏：“不空三藏行次染患，養疾韶州。令河西邊陲，請福疆場。”上依所請，敕下韶州，追赴長安，止保壽寺。制使勞問，錫賚重重。四事祇供，悉皆天賜。憩息踰月，令赴河西

SGSZ: In the twelfth year, an edict was issued ordering [Bukong] to proceed to the region of the Hexi and the Longyou [Commands], which was due to the request of Military Governor Geshu Han. 十二載，敕令赴河隴，節度使哥舒翰所請。

Note:

It appears that Yuanzhao included in the ZYL an excerpt from the original memorial sent to the court by Geshu Han.

754, Tianbao 13, 50 sui

XB: When it went into the thirteenth year [of Tianbao], there was an edict ordering [Bukong] to head for Wuwei; [this was for Bukong] to take up the invitation from the Military Governor Geshu Han. [In Wuwei, Bukong] set up a great sanctum and performed the abhiṣeka ritual of the Five Divisions for the Indian monk Hanguang and the lay disciple, Opening-Bureau Li Yuancong, and others, and imparted them in the teachings of Great Maṇḍala of Diamond Realm. In the meantime, the ground of the sanctum shook greatly for the ceremony. The scattered flowers refused to drop from those who had karmic hindrance. Above, [flowers] adhered to the canopies, as if a swarm of bees were savouring the fragrant stamen and refused to be dispersed. Only when the ceremony was over did [the flowers] fell. Is there anything that could be as wonderful as this!

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462 It should be an error for 給.
In the thirteenth year [of Tianbao], Bukong arrived in Wuwei, where he resided at the Kaiyuan Monastery. From the military commissioner to officials of the lowest rank, Bukong conducted the service of abhiṣeka for all; as many as several thousand people, both the gentry and commoners, ascended the altar [to receive the service of abhiṣeka]. Bukong imparted the teachings of the Five Divisions to his clerical disciple, Hanguang. Next, [he] administered the abhiṣeka ritual of the Five Divisions for Li Yuancong, now the Commissioner of Merit, [with the prestigious rank of] Opening Bureau, and instructed him in the teachings of the Great Maṇḍala of the Diamond Realm. On this very day, the earth where the altar located shook greatly, and stricken by the happening, the great master (i.e. Bukong) remarked, “This is effected by your piety.”

“Shi/Li Yuancong muzhiming”: In the thirteenth year of [Tianbao], under imperial commission, the great master (i.e. Bukong) went to Wuwei Commandery. Unable to fully appreciate the Way, His Excellency made further effort to go there in pursuit of Buddhist instruction. [Bukong] taught him the teachings of Five Divisions of Vajradhātu, and there were nothing that [Li] had not studied comprehensively and thoroughly, including the mudrās of the maṇḍala, the teachings of the Yuqie zhigui瑜伽指歸, the Five Wisdoms, the four emblems, and rituals of homa, and the teachings

463 A version has the character as 赴.
464 The character should be a transcriptional error for 于.
465 It refers to the Jin’gangding jing yuqie shiba hui zhigui 金剛頂經瑜伽十八會指歸, T869.
466 The term siming 四明 refers to the four mudrās that symbolize the four tools used in Esoteric rituals or the four vidyarājas (si mingwang 四明王): a hook (gou 鉤), a cord (suo 索), a lock (suo 鎖), and a hand-bell (ling 鈴). The hook is used to summon the divine deities, and the cord functions to guide them into the body of the practitioner or into the ritual venue, the lock is resorted to fasten them, and the hand-bell for entertainment.
of the Yaojue 要訣⁴⁶⁷. Indeed, it could be put like this: [Lord Shi/Li] boards the supreme vehicle and visits the [Pure] Land of Mysterious Adornment; [he] opens up the wonderful hoard of salvation and obtains the jewel of Bodhi-Mind. At the midnight of the instruction, His Excellency beat his chest [towards] the unfathomable sage (i.e. a Buddha), saying: “The Buddha had passed into history for ages, but isn’t he concerned with the Way he passed down! I, a foolish sentient being, could not realize it and [beg you to] graciously show the realm of the verity.” The ground of sanctum shook following his utterance. This was effected by his utmost sincerity. 十三年, 大師 奉使往武威郡。公以味道不足, 更往求之。授金剛界五部之法。漫陀羅印、《瑜伽指歸》、五智、四明、護摩、《要訣》，無不該究。實所謂: 登聚 上之乘, 遊宓巖 之國, 開解 脫妙藏, 獲菩提心寶。公授法中夜, 叩心玄聖, 曰: “佛隱歲久, 所傳之道, 得無累乎!愚 情未達, 垂示真境。” 道場之地, 隨言振動。斯至誠之感也。

ZYL: After arriving in the Wuwei city, [Bukong] resided at the Kaiyuan Monastery. The Military Governor (i.e. Geshu Han) prepared a welcome party, and everything in need had been prepared. [The Military Governor] requested [Bukong] to translate Buddhist scriptures and to avail them of the service of abhiṣeka. [He] expounded the teachings of the Yoga and arranged a maṇḍala. All the officials in the military government present their enquiries and received his instruction, and with the teachings of the Five Divisions or Three Mysteries, [they] went [to him] with their mind empty and returned with their mind fully laden. At the time, upon the request of the [Commandery] Prince of Xiping (i.e. Geshu Han), which was for the sake of the nation, [Bukong] translated the Jin’gangding yiqie rulai zhenshishe dasheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing 金剛頂一切如來眞實攝大乘現證大教王經, in three juan, and Adjutant Li Xiyan 李希言, [with the honourary court-title of] Director of Ministry of Rites, served as the Scribe. He also translated the Putichang suoshuo

⁴⁶⁷ This text probably is the Jin’gangding yuqie Yaoju 金剛頂瑜伽要訣 (one juan) that appears in Eun risshin sho mokuroku 惠運律師書目錄 (T2168B.55.1089b19), which Annen 安然 suspected to be the text Jin’gangding jing dayuqie mimi xindi famen yijue 金剛頂經大瑜伽祕密心地法門義訣. See T2176.55.1116a15.
⁴⁶⁸ It might be transcribed as 貴.
⁴⁶⁹ It should be an error for 廣.
yizi dinglunwang jing 菩提場所説一字頂輪王經 (T950), in five juan, the Yizi dinglunwang yuqie jing 一字頂輪王瑜伽經, in one juan, and the Yizi dinglunwang niansong yigui 一字頂輪王念誦儀軌(T954), in one juan, with Administrative Assistant Tian Liangqiu 田良丘, [with the honourary court-title of] Investigating Censor, worked as the Scribe. In the tenth month of the thirteenth year, or the year of Jia-Wu 甲午, an governmental mail was sent to the Anxi 安西 [Protectorate by the Hexi government], asking to pursue the monk Liyan 利言 (c. 707-788+) and bring him to Hexi to undertake translation. Feng Changqing 封常清 (ca.700-756), who then held the positions of the Military Governor of the Four Garrisons and the Yixi-Ting 伊西庭470, of the Vice Grand Protector of the Anxi [Protectorate], of Hon Acting Censor-in-Chief, and of Administrator of the Military Commission, [and who also held the highest military merit title] Supreme Pillar of State, provided two of his household horses, so that [Liyan] rode at a gallop, passing six posts daily. He departed Anxi on the twenty-second day of the eleventh month (11 Dec. 754), travelled through Yanqi 焉耆, Moheyanqi 摩訶延碛471, Jiaohe 交河, Yiwu 伊吾, Jinchang 進昌472, Jiuquan 酒泉, and finally reached the Wuwei Commandery. The time was the tenth of the second month of the fourteenth year (26 March 755). The Commissioner government [at first] settled [Liyan] at the Longxing 龍興 Monastery and [then] at the Baode 報德 Monastery; together [with Bukong, they] bolstered [the cause of] Buddhist translation. 至武威城, 住開元寺。節度使迎候, 是物皆供。請譯佛經, 兼開灌頂。演瑜伽教, 置曼473荼羅。使幕官寮, 咸皆諮受, 五部三密, 靈474往實歸。時西平王為國請譯《金剛頂一切如來眞實攝大乘現證大教王經》三卷, 行軍司馬、禮部郎中李希言筆受。又譯《菩提場所説一字頂輪王經》五卷, 及《一字頂輪王瑜伽經》一卷, 并《一字頂輪王念誦儀軌》一卷, 並節度判官、監察侍御史田良丘筆受。至十三載甲午十月, 使牒安西, 追僧利言河西翻譯。時四鎭、伊西庭節度使、安

470 For the military government of Yixi-ting 伊西庭, see LIU Anzhi: 2010.
471 More commonly written as Moheyanzī 莫賀延碔. The place is desert locating to the northwest of the present Guozhou 瓜州 county of Gansu province.
472 It is known as 晉昌, the government seat of Guozhou 瓜州 prefecture, locating at the southeast of the present Anxi 安西 county of Gansu Province.
473 The character 曼 is omitted. See T2157.55.0881, Editorial Note 26.
474 An error for 虛.
西副大都護、攝御史大夫、知節度事、上柱國封常清,給家乘馬兩匹,日馳六譯。十一月二十二日發安西域,路次烏耆、摩賀延磧,轉次行過交河、伊吾、進昌、酒泉,屆武威郡。即十四載二月十日也。使司安置於龍興寺及報德寺,同崇譯經。

SGSZ: In the thirteenth year [of Tianbao], [Bukong] arrived at Wuwei and stayed at the Kaiyuan Monastery. From the Military Governor to his guests and squires, all wished to receive the service of abhiṣeka. Several thousand people, of both the gentry and commoners, ascended the altar. Hanguang and other disciples were instructed in the teachings of Five Divisions. In particular, [Bukong] gave instructions to Li Yuancong, the Commissioner of Merits [with the prestigious rank of] Opening Bureau, and he also taught [Yuancong] the Great Maṇḍala of Vajradhārtu. This day, the ground of the sanctum shook, to which Bukong said that [it was caused by] the greatness of the audience’s piety. 十三載,至武威,住開元寺。節度使洎賓從,皆願受灌頂。士庶數千人,咸登道場。弟子含光等亦受五部法,別爲功徳使開府李元琮受法,并授金剛界大曼荼羅。是日,道場地震,空曰,群心之至也。

755-756, TIANBAO 14, 51 SUI

ZYL: In the seventh month of this year, the scourge [of rebellion] rose from Fayang 范陽. At that moment, the Prince of Pingxi (i.e. Geshu Han) was summoned by the emperor to the court. He was conferred on additional and higher posts, appointed as the chief minister, and put in charge of the Tongguan Pass. In the twelfth month, [the rebels] captured Heluo 河洛 (i.e. Luoyang). 其年七月,禍起范陽,時西平王奉勅追入,加官拜相,部領潼關。十月上,竊陷河洛。

NOTE:

Yuanzhao’s account is obscurely muddled. First, it was in eleventh month of this year, instead of the seventh, that the An Lushan rebellion burst out in Fanyang. Second, back in the second month of 755, he had already ensconced himself in his residence in Chang’an due to illness. (ZZTJ: 217, 6921) Third, it was in the end of this lunar year that Geshu Han was ordered to defend

475 This is a transcriptional error for 焉.
the pass of Tongguan. Fourth, it was not until 756 that he was promoted to honorary Chief Minister. (JTS: 104, 3213-14) Fifth, it was in the twelfth of this year, not in the tenth, that Luoyang fell to the rebels.

756, TIANBAO 15, 52 SUI

BZJ: “Xie en ci xiang chenqing biao shou” 謝恩賜香陳情表一首 in BZJ (presented in 758):

Devoting my pure earnestness for ten years, I have met with [two] brilliant sages [i.e. Xuanzong and Suzong] in succession. That year, when the Han[gu] Guan 函[谷]閘 Pass had not been breached, and when Your Majesty remained in your crown prince’s palace, cultivating the virtue [of non-action], I already received your gracious instruction, and You obliged me with visits and compliments. [Your Majesty] also granted me incense and herbs and secretly asked me to invoke the divine succour.

XZ: In the summer of the fifteenth year, [master Bukong] returned to the capital (i.e. Chang’an) under the imperial order, where he resided at the Great Xingshan Monastery.

ZYL: On the first day of the next year, there was a decree ordering that the Crown Prince act as the Prince Regent. When it went into the fifth month, an edict was sent to Hexi, summoning the Tripitaka (i.e. Bukong) to the court. He stayed at the Xingshan Monastery, and [the court] ordered him to commence to perform the abhiṣeka ritual; he devoted himself to reversing the calamity and

476 Geshu Han was appointed vice commander-in-chief of all troops of the empire in xii Tianbao 15. For a detailed exploration of the issue, see REN Shiying 2003: 211-18.

477 It seems that Bukong mistook the pass of Hanguan 函關 (aks. Hangu Guan 函谷關) as that of Tongguan 潼閘; there was no battle fighting over the possession of Hanguan between the Tang armies and the rebels led by An Lushan. These two passes were the two ends of the same valley Hangu 函谷, and they functioned together as the barrier between the region of Guanzhong 閘中 and the plain to its east. But Hanguan, the one built earlier, began to be gradually replaced by Tongguan ever since its establishment in the Eastern Han Dynasty. The Tang armies had been firmly garrisoning this impregnable pass of Tongguan and barred the enemies for quite some time from the invasion into the heartland of the state. It was in vi 756 when Geshu Han was eventually forced by the court to lead the Tang major forces to march out of Tongguan and to take an aggressive attack on the rebels stationed at Shanzhou 陝州. The battleground was at Lingbao 灵寶, a location near Hanguan, where the Tang armies suffered a bloody rout. Tongguan was thus seized by the rebels on 9 vi (7 July 757). Only four days later, Emperor Xuanzong hastily took the flight from Chang’an, and eight days later, the capital city fell to An Lushan’s forces. See Twitchett 1979: 459-60.
fending off the disaster and had no time to take a rest. 明年元日有制，皇太子監國。洎乎五月，
勅下河西，追三藏入朝。住興善寺，令開灌頂，轉禍禳災，未遑止寧。

“Li/Shi Yuancong muzhiming”: In the fifteenth year [of Tianbao], [Li Yuancong] escorted the
emperor to Bashu 巴蜀. He was promoted to the post of Commandant of Militia Garrison^478 and
appointed as a Vice Commandant^479 and was granted the Purple Bag of Gold Fish. 十五年，扈從
巴蜀。除折衝，授郎將，賜紫金魚袋。

**Note:**

In a memorial to the throne written in 774, Bukong claims that he had resided in the Great
Xingshan Monastery for “twenty-odd years”. Actually, counting from the year of 755, the exact
total should be nineteen. This counting should thus be understood as pompous rhetoric. See “Qing
yu Xingshan si dangyuan liang daochang ge zhi chisongseng zhi yi shou” 請于興善寺當院兩道
場各置持誦僧制一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0845c08.^480

**756(VII)-757, ZhHide 1-2, 52-53 sui**

**BZJ: “A Memorial to Thank for Granting Incense and Laying Out the Personal Feeling” 謝
恩賜香陳情表一首 (presented in 758):** When Your Majesty went on the royal progress to the
north,^481 whilst I, Bukong, was unable to be in attendance on you, my disciple Hanguang and
others—they first returned to join me and then exit [the capital] from the west—met up with Your
imperial equipage. Thus, amid the treacherous military trek, I was allowed to involve in the
discussion of your enthronement. Although being trapped to a barbarian environment, I, Bukong,
was always keeping the court at my heart. I frequently received secret edicts from Your Majesty,
and what I presented were all successfully delivered to You. Your Majesty single-handedly

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^478 The term *zhechong* 折衝 is an abbreviation for *zhechong duwei* 折衝都尉．

^479 See monograph on bureaucracy in *JTS* (44, 1899): 亲府、勋一府、勋二府、翊一府、翊二府等五府；每府中
郎一人、中郎将一人, 皆四品下。左右郎将各一人，正五品上。

^480 See Appendix A: 354-56.

^481 When reaching the post station Mawei 馬嵬 on the way towards Sichuan, Yang Guozhong 楊國忠 was murdered
and Yang Guifei 楊貴妃 was also killed on 14 vi 756. Then Xuanzong’s court proceeded onwards to Chengdu, while
Suzong, then still being the heir apparent, led part of the imperial cavalry turned northward to raise forces to
counterattack the enemies. The heir apparent reached Lingwu 靈武, where he proclaimed himself emperor less than a
month later. See Twitchett 1979: 460-61.
exercised your judicious resource, and the power of [Buddhist] Law mysteriously provided reinforcement. The gang of villains scattered to fly, and the sovereignty returned to its normal state.

及陛下北巡，不空雖不獲陪侍，弟子僧含光等歸從，西出又得親遇鑾輿。崎嶇戎旅之間，預聞定冊之議。不空雖身陷胡境，常心奉闕庭。頻承密詔，進奉咸達。陛下睿謀獨運，法力冥加。群兇散亡，宸象歸正。

XB: When it went into the era of Zhide and Emperor Suzong’s court-in-travel stayed at Lingwu, the great master (Bukong) secretly presented Budongzun bafang shenqi jing and prophesied the day that the capital would be recovered. The result accorded his prediction.

XB: When it went into the era of Zhide and Emperor Suzong’s court-in-travel stayed at Lingwu, the great master (Bukong) secretly presented Budongzun bafang shenqi jing and prophesied the day that the capital would be recovered. The result accorded his prediction.

ZX: During the Zhide Era, the imperial equipage [of Emperor Suzong] was at Lingwu and [later] at Fengxiang. The great master frequently and secretly sent people there through defiles to present “greeting” memorials. Moreover, [in the memorials he] frequently discussed strategies to recover [the capital]. Emperor Suzong, in response, also frequently and secretly dispatched envoys to the great master requesting Esoteric teachings and the prediction of the date that the capital would be recovered. It came out to be exactly as he had expected. 他令中, 諧軍皇帝行在靈武, 大師密進《不動尊八方神旗經》，并定收京之日，如符印焉。

“Shi/Li Yuancong muzhiming”: Then it had entered the epoch that Emperor Suzong was like a dragon flying up in the Shuofang Command in the north or a phoenix hovering over the

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482 The ZYL has the character 土. See T2157.55.0882c09.
483 Also known as the prefecture of Lingzhou 靈州, the headquarters of the Shuofang Command. Suzong arrived here on 9 vii 756, and it was here, he took the throne three days later. See Twitchett 1979: 461. Suzong stayed Lingzhou for some two months, until the ninth month when he appeared in Pengyuan. See JTS 10, 244: 九月戊辰, 上南幸彭原郡.
484 The Qizhou 岐州 Prefecture, also known as the Fufeng 扶風 Commandery. It was renamed by the new emperor of Suzong in the same seventh month of 756 that Suzong became an emperor. Suzong came here in ii 757. JTS 10, 243&245: 詔改扶風為鳳翔郡…二月戊子幸鳳翔郡.
485 An error for 峯.
486 It could also be an error for 間.
western area. After entering the heavenly palace of the capital, Suzong ordered him to come for a personal interview. The instant their communication started, [they found that] their ways were in agreement; such a meeting could only occur once in a millennium. The monarch and the minister were congenial to each other in principle just like fish to water. [Li] dedicated his loyalty and earnestness and came and went from the emperor’s bedroom. His office and commission were so important, and the imperial favour so deep. The emperor called him a minister of kin, a relationship of great closeness. He was transferred to the posts of Left Commandant of the Inner Guard Command, Patrol Commissioner for Imperial Parks, and Commissioner for Releasing Aquatic Creatures. He was also responsible for taking and issuing the imperial order and for recommending the worthy and dismissing villainous from office. Soon he was appointed to Executive Commandant of the Right Militant as Dragons Army and was promoted to the prestige rank of General for Pacifying Faraway Lands. With his military merits being imperially commended, he led the palace guard and kept alerted day and night. He also toiled away at the construction of the mausoleum of the late Sage (i.e. Suzong).

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487 Jingluo 京洛 literally means the capital city of Luoyang, but occasionally it is also used to refer to the capital city in a vague sense. It seems that during his reign, Suzong did not show up in Luoyang.

488 The original surname of Yuancong was Shi 史, and he was a Turk. He was granted by Suzong the surname of the royal house, Li, sometime after the fourth month of 760.

489 The Inner Guard Command or Neishuaifu 内率府 was the two military units protecting the administration of the heir apparent, the Left and the Right. The chief officer of each unit was the commandant or shuai 率. See TLD 28, 720, and cf. Hucker 1988: 352.

490 Yunge 雲閣 here refers to Yuntai 雲臺, which was originally the name of a lofty pavilion built by Emperor Guangwu 光武 (Liu Xiu 劉秀, 5BC-AD57) to house the portraits of those meritorious veteran officers who had helped him to restore the rule of the Han Dynasty. In literary writings, the term was used to highlight the military merits of the figures that had been imperially recognized or canonized.
薦賢黜惡。旋授右龍武軍將軍知軍事，秩加定遠將軍。雲閣起於丹青，禁衛警於晝夜。先聖山陵，植松負土。

**ZYL:** The defence of the Tongguan Pass failed, and on the twelfth of the sixth month, with the barbarian armies entering the [Tongguan] Pass, Emperor Xuanzong set out to “investigate the provinces”, and the honour [to be investigated] went south onto Chengdu. Emperor Suzong accompanied [Emperor Xuanzong] and later claimed emperorship at Lingwu. Soon he turned back [with the aspiration] to restore the governance and backed the imperial equipage to Fengxiang. Although falling into [the clutches of] the enemy, the Tripiṭaka [i.e. Bukong] surreptitiously managed to requite the state. Envoys were secretly sent back and forth, and he presented [to Suzong] his utter loyalty. 潼關失守，六月旬有二日，胡馬入關。玄宗巡狩，南幸成都。肅宗撫軍，建號靈武，旋歸整教，迴駕鳳翔。三藏雖陷賊中，竊申報國。潜使來往，具獻丹誠。

**SGSZ:** Early in the era of Zhide, when the court-on-tour stayed at Lingwu, and then Fengxiang, Bukong frequently and secretly sent “greeting” memorials. Emperor Suzong also secretly sent agents to seek Esoteric practices. When it came to the day that the capital was retrieved and the order of the empire was restored, things turned out to be as he had expected. 至徳初，鑾駕在靈武、鳳翔，空常密奉表起居。肅宗亦密遣使者求祕密法。洎收京反正之日，事如所料。

**Note:**

The Esoteric text *Budong zun bafang shenqi jing* (the Sutra on Venerated-One Acala and the Eight Deities and the Banners) never appears in any Buddhist catalogue. It seems that the secret teachings contained in the text were allowed to be taught only to rulers. In the *Dubu tuoluoni mu*, Bukong mentions a set of similar Esoteric teachings, if not those presented to Suzong, which involved eight deities and their banners and were contained in the *Ruixiye jing* 蓬呬耶經 (T897, 491).

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491 In the seventh month of 763, the court accorded to those who had helped him put down the palace coup the title of Meritorious Officials of Baoying (baoying gongchen 宝應功臣). Their images were painted in the Pavilion of Lingyan 凌煙 (lit. mist-transcending), a traditional institution to honour officials and officers with prominent merits. See *JTS* 11, 273. Cf. GU Xiaofeng 2007. For the location of this structure, cf. Xiong 2000: 63-64.

492 Actually, it was on the ninth day that the rebels took over the pass.
Sarva-mañḍala-sāmān ya-viḍhī-guhya tantra): In addition, concerning those deities in the eight directions, there are military teachings on their protecting and supporting the sovereignty in the army camp. [People of] kingdoms in the Five Indian Regions deeply revere and believe in the Buddhadharma, and therefore [the Esoteric teachings] could be imparted to monarchs.

757, Zhīde 2, 53 sui

XKYL: In the second year of Zhīde, [the imperial armies] recovered the capital cities Chang’an and Luoyang. The master (i.e. Bukong) personally received the imperial instruction to act as Abhiṣeka Master. The imperial concubines and princesses stepped down the stairway [of the imperial residence] in salute, and all imperial harem surrounded him and bowed in obeisance. He came to receive the imperial favour for three reigns and thereupon routinely organized Buddhist sanctums.

ZYL: Emperor Suzong promoted Buddhism and supported the clerical ordination; he governed All-under-Heaven according to the principle of filial piety. After only one year, Xianyang and Luoyang became tranquil. The altar of the national sacrifice and imperial ancestral shrine were back to peacefulness, and the masses joined to celebrate the joy. [The emperors] returned to the palace, and the clergy and the laity were brought to solace. This was the twenty-third day of the tenth month of the second year of Zhīde, the year of Ding-You丁酉(8 Dec. 757). 肅宗崇佛度僧, 孝理天下, 纔蹤周载, 咸洛底宁。宗社復安, 萬姓歡慶。復還宮寢, 繒素又安。即至德二載丁酉, 十月二十三日也。

II-X.

493 Bukong’s disciple Huilin 慧琳 (737-820) presents the full transliteration of the title as 掬呬耶亶怛囉經. See the Yiqie jing yinyi 一切經音義, T2128.54.0545c05. For the use of banners, see T0897.18.0767a02-06.
495 The city Xianyang, also called Xianjing 咸京, was the capital of the Qin Dynasty; since it was near Chang’an, the Tang people used it to refer to their own capital. See Hanyu dacidian: 5, 217.
**JTS (111, 3327): “The Biography of Zhang Gao” 張鎬傳:** With Emperor Suzong’s accession, Emperor Xuanzong dispatched [Zhang] Gao to the court-in-travel. After [Zhao Gao] arrived at Fengxiang, many memorials presented by [Zhao] Gao were advantageous, and he was promoted to Grand Master of Remonstrance (jianyi dafu 諫議大夫). Soon he was transferred to the Attendant Gentleman of the Secretariat (zhongshu shilang 中書侍郎) and the chief minister. At the time, monks-in-attendance gathered in the palace sanctum, chanting the Buddha’s name day and night, and more often than not, they were hundreds in number. The vocalization could be heard from outside of the palace. [Zhang] Gao reported [to Suzong], “I, your subject, have heard that for the Son of Heaven to develop blessings, of the essence is appeasing and nurturing the people and regulating and unifying the custom and morals. I have never heard that the petty monastic teachings could lead to great peace. I reverently hope Your Majesty to keep the principle of non-effort in mind and not to let such lesser vehicle mislead your sagely consideration.” Suzong very much agreed.

**X-XII.**

**BZJ: “A Memorial to Thank for Granting Incense and Laying Out the Personal Feeling” 謝恩赐香陳情表一首 (presented in 758):** I, Bukong, am of petty calibre and yet have dishonoured the imperial grace. In the tenth month [of last year], when the palace was to be lustrated, [I was ordered to] hold an apotropaic ceremony. After [Your Majesty] regrouped the reign and adopted the honorific title, [by imperial favour I continued to] preside over the altar of abhiṣeka. [Under Your instruction,] the palatial hall [of the palace] was painted and adorned and the side chambers

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496 On 5 i of 758 (17 Feb.), Xuangzong, now the retired emperor, decided an honorific title to Suzong. See JTS (10, 251): 三載正月...戊寅，上皇御宣政殿，冊皇帝尊號曰光天文武大聖孝感皇帝。上以徽號中有“大聖”二字，上表固讓，不允。
were modified and scented [for the Esoteric sacraments].\footnote{276} [Your Majesty] not only allowed me to conduct translation but also granted me [an official quota] of clerical ordainment. 不空微質，又忝朝恩。（至德二載）十月清宮，以建辟魔之會；正朝薦號，仍臨灌頂之壇。塗飾上宮，薰修別殿。既許翻譯，仍與度僧。

XII

\textit{ZYL:} The Grand-Supreme Emperor (i.e. the retired Xuanzong) had been at Shu 蜀, and [then Emperor Suzong] reverentially prepared a reception for His imperial equipage’s arrival from Chengdu. That was the first day of the twelfth month of the second year of Zhide.\footnote{498} Suzong, out of veneration of the Tripiṭaka Master (i.e. Bukong), avoided calling him by the Dharma name (i.e. the name “Zhizang”), and since that very day, he began to call his [adamantine] title (i.e. the title “Bukong”). 上皇在蜀，奉仰迎御，至自成都。至徳二載十二月一日也。肅宗以尊崇三藏，不斥其名；自今以來，但稱其號。

\textit{BZJ: “An Edict that Suzong Graciously Orders Huiguan 惠肝, a Disciple of the Tripiṭaka [Bukong], to Undertake Mindful Chanting in the Palace Sanctum” 肅宗恩命三藏弟子惠肝入內道場念誦制一首: Pursuant to the oral instruction of His Majesty, gatekeeper of Right Silver-Terrace\footnote{500} asks the four disciples of Tripiṭaka Bukong—Huigan, Quena 瞿那 (Skt. u.), Huixiao 惠曉, Huiyue 惠月—enter the palace. You bring the horses from the stable of Feilong jiu

\footnote{276} The word \textit{shanggong} 上宮 may refer to the Xingqing 興慶 Palace, which Xuanzong had been living in since he was the crown prince and which, after an expansion, became the actual imperial palace of his reign. After returning to Chang’an from Chengdu, Xuanzong continued to reside in the Xingqing Palace, and soon he was forced to move to the defunct Taiji Palace. Suzong chose the Daming 大明 Palace as the new imperial palace, and the word \textit{biedian}, literally “the side palace”, may have been used to refer to the Daming Palace. In the novel \textit{Dongcheng fulao zhuang} 東城父老傳 (The Story of the Elder of the East City) composed in a century later, the author clearly used the word \textit{biandian} in this sense: 治太上皇歸興慶宮，肅宗受命于別殿. See \textit{TPGJ}: 485, 3993. If this is the case, Bukong held apotropaic ceremonies for each palace, in preparation for the two emperors to come back to the capital. For a discussion of the Daming Palace, see Xiong 2000: 80-97.

\footnote{498} Xuanzong arrived at Chang’an on the fourth day of the twelfth month. See \textit{JTS}: 9, 235.

\footnote{499} It should be an error for \textit{迎}.

\footnote{500} The name \textit{you yintai men} 右銀台門 (the Right Silver-Terrace Gate) was the southern gate at the west side of the Daming Palace. “You yintai men jia” 右銀台門家, literally the Right Silver-Terrace Gater, was a self-styled address of Li Fuguo. During the reign of Suzong, Li sweepingly arrogated to himself the imperial authority in various sorts of state affairs. See the statement in \textit{JTS} (112, 3344): (乾元二年)每日於銀台門決天下事，須處分，便稱制敕。禁中符印，悉佩之出入。總有敕，輔國衙署，然後施行。For the gate, cf. Xiong 2000: 82.
飞龙厩 to the Tripitaka, for him to adorn the sanctum and carry out the project of mindful chanting.

On 26 xii of Zhide 2, announced by the eunuch official Yan Ruzhang 晏如障

奉敕語有银台門家喚不空三藏弟子惠肝、瞿那、惠曉、惠月等四人入內。將飛龍馬取與三藏建飾道場念誦。

至德二載十二月二十六日品官晏如障宣

758, ZHIDE 3-QIANYUAN 1 (5 II), 54 SUI

BZJ: A Memorial of Congratulations on Recovery of the West Capital 贺收復西京表一首

I, Zhizang, Tripitaka Śramaṇa of Great Xingshan Monastery, have this to say. According to my humble knowledge, only Heaven can be regarded as grand, and except for one of the premier sages, no one is able to follow Heaven[‘s will] and fulfill the campaign to destroy the rebels; only the king models himself after Heaven, and except for the enterprising king, no one else can nourish things on Heaven’s behalf. The historical achievement of Your Majesty, I humbly consider, surpasses that which is required to be established as the imperial supremacy, and the Way you practice is preeminent between Heaven and Earth. [Your Majesty] inherits the Precious Script from Yao and has performed a feat as great as that of

501 An error for 右.
502 The phrase was drawn from Chapter Taibo 泰伯 of The Analects: “It is only Heaven that is grand, and only Yao corresponded to it.” 唯天為大，唯堯則之 As a political rhetoric, it makes Emperor Suzong an equal of the sage kings of the antiquity.
503 The term baotu 寶圖 was employed as a trope for Heaven’s authorization of a ruler’s sovereignty, and this was exactly what Bukong meant to do here. The symbolism seems to have originated in two legendary occasions, about which Chuxue ji 初學記 quotes the following from Chunqiu hecheng tu 春秋合誠圖 (lost):

Huangdi sat in Xuanhu 玄扈, the stone chamber above the Luo River, overlooking the scenes with the Great Minister of War, Rong Guang 荣光. A phoenix carried a script in its beak and placed it before [Huang]di, who bowed twice and accepted the script. Yao sat in a boat, overlooking the scenes with the Grand Peace-Maintainer, Shun, and then a phoenix carried a script to Yao. It was three chi in length and eight cun in breadth, its slips were made of yellow jade, bound together with threads of the colour of white jade, the two ends were covered, and the seal read “The Seal of the Heavenly Chidi (Crimson Emperor)”, a composition of five characters. 黃帝坐玄扈洛水上，與大司馬容光等臨觀，鳳皇銜圖置帝前，帝再拜受圖。……堯坐舟中，與太尉舜臨觀，鳳皇負圖授堯。圖以赤為柙，長三尺，廣八寸，黃玉撿，白玉縫，封兩端，其章曰“天赤帝符璽”五字


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Yu.\textsuperscript{504} In the recent past, the villain of the rebellion was slayed,\textsuperscript{505} with the remnant rebels remaining perverse. Grounded in rightfulness, Your Majesty waits for the soldiers of the rebels to turn their weapons around\textsuperscript{506} and, out of leniency, prioritizes the practice of granting [a chance of atonement they need].\textsuperscript{507} For once [Your Majesty] mobilizes the valorous warriors for a short period, the vicious traitors will be wiped out eternally.

Now people of the capital have been pacified, and towers and elevated terraces are looking forward to your approach. [Your Majesty] graciously grants people’s desire and keeps in harmony with Heaven’s will. The landscape is not altered, and the gardens and parks are all as before. Now, Your Majesty has graced the capital with your presence, and the sacred governance is going to be reformed. [Your Majesty] is to present a clear announcement to [the God in] Heaven at the Circular Mound Altar\textsuperscript{508} and to elevate [the country] to the realm of benevolence and longevity.

\textsuperscript{504} This refers to the historic and heroic achievement of Yu in controlling the great flood that had been tormenting the people. It convinced the king Shun that he had won Heaven’s preference for him to be the next ruler, as is related in Chapter “Dayu Mo” of \textit{Shangshu}:

\begin{quote}
I (Shun) see how great is your virtue, how admirable your vast achievements. The determinate appointment of Heaven rests on your person; you must eventually ascend [the throne] of the great sovereign. 予懋乃德，嘉乃丕績，天之歷數在汝躬，汝終陟元后
\end{quote}

It seems that Bukong touted the recovery of the capital Chang’an as an exploit made by Emperor Suzong which could equal that of Yu, and thus he was claiming that the legitimacy of the former’s imperial authority came from Heaven’s will and was thus beyond questioning.

\textsuperscript{505} An Lushan was murdered by his son in the first month of Zhide 2.

\textsuperscript{506} The term \textit{daoge} 倒戈 means the soldiers’ joining their enemies to overturn the rule of a criminal ruler. It originally depicts such a case in the campaign of King Wu 武 of Zhou to end the power of the King Zhou 紂 of Shang. The story is kept in Chapter “Wucheng” 武成 of \textit{Shangshu}:

\begin{quote}
On Jia-zi, at early dawn, Shou led forward his troops, [looking] like a forest, and assembled them in the wild of Mu. But they offered no opposition to our army. Those in the front inverted their spears, and attacked those behind them, till they fled; and the blood flowed till it floated the pestles of the mortars. Thus did [king Wu] once don his armour, and the kingdom was grandly settled. 甲子昧爽，受率其旅 若林，會于牧野。罔有敵于我師，前徒倒戈，攻于後以北，血流漂杵。一戎衣，天下大定
\end{quote}

This household story was used here to compare Emperor Suzong’s campaign with the An Lushan rebellion. With loyalist forces that were far less powerful than the rebels, Suzong’s military operations went not as proactive and smooth as that of King Wu; Bukong, however,varnished the situation over with the emperor’s kindness to the rebels and placed him the rank of ancient paragon kings.

\textsuperscript{507} The term \textit{Shandai} originates in Chapter Forty-one of \textit{Daode jing}: It is the Dao which is skillful at imparting [to all things what they need] and making them complete. 夫唯道，善貸且成 Here it is used to Suzong for following the Dao in “giving chances” to the rebel soldiers to change side.

\textsuperscript{508} On the occasion that the emperor had returned to the imperial palace, he needed to hold a ceremony at the Circular Mound Altar, to tell the God in Heaven. See \textit{Tongdian}: 43; 110, 2864.
[Your Majesty] guides the Retire Emperor in his trip back to the capital and offers the sacrifice of Lei to the Lord on High. In order to ensure that the Buddha’s teachings will be taught for as many kalpas as the sands [of the Ganges River], [Your Majesty] sets the wheel of the Dharma in motion; to let thousands of worlds be illuminated, [you] hang the Buddha-Sun high in the sky. I, Zhizang, have been long bathed in your moral transformation and now witness the restoration of Sinitic rites. [Your campaign that] preserved the nation means so much [to us people], and by what service I might expect to repay your kindness!

I could not cope with my utmost joy, like a dabbling duck playing with water grass, and thus reverently approach the Gate of the Silver-Terrace, holding the memorial to present my congratulations. Fearing that it would be a sacrilege to Your stateliness, my shiver goes more deeply.

With great nervousness, I, Śramaṇa Zhizang, deferentially state.

On 24 x of Zhide 2, Zhizang, Tripiṭaka Śramaṇa of Great Xingshan Monastery, presents this memorial.

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509 The place Fenyang, literally the north of the Fen River, had been the capital of Yao; Yao made a tour to visit hermits, and when he returned to the capital, he felt as if he had lost the rulership. Here it is used allusively to refer to Chang’an, to which Emperor Xuanzong was returning, with an overtone that he had been forced to abdicate the throne. See chapter “Xiaoyao You” of Zhuangzi:

Yaò治天下之民,平海內之政,往見四子藐姑射之山,汾水之陽,窅然喪其天下焉

510 The sacrifice rite of Lei signals Shun’s reluctant acceptance of sovereign authority resigned by Yao. Through this pleasant case of the transition of royal power, Bukong intended to whitewash Suzong’s wrongdoing of usurping his father’s position. This story is related in chapter “Shundian” of Shangshu:

舜讓于德,弗嗣。正月上日,受終于文祖。在璿璣玉衡,以齊七政。肆類于上帝,禋于六宗,望于山川,徧于群神
大興善寺三藏沙門智藏言。竊聞，惟天為大，非元聖無以順天行誅；惟王法天，非興
王無以代天育物。伏惟陛下功超立極，道冠混元，繒堯寶圖，復禹丕績。自頃元兇已殄，
殘婪猶迷；陛下義待倒戈，恩先善貸。暫勞豼武，永滅豺狼。

自京輩肅清，樓臺望幸，陛下俯從人欲，克叶天心。山川不移，園苑如舊。今鑾輿既
降，聖政惟新。方將昭報昊穹，濟斯仁壽。導上皇汾陽之賀，類上帝圓丘之壇。演沙
劫而轉法輪，朗千界而懸佛日。智藏久霑王化，重覩漢儀。生成已多，報效何冀？不勝鳧
藻之至，謹詣銀臺門，奉表陳賀以聞。輕黷宸嚴，伏深戰越。沙門智藏誠惶誠恐謹言。

至德二載十月二十四日

大興善寺三藏沙門智藏上表

The Rescript of Emperor Qianyuan Guangtian Dasheng Wenwu Xiaoganu (The Emperor who is
the Great and the Originating, Shines All-Under-Heaven, a Great Sage, with Civil-and-Military
Achievements, and with the Filial Piety that Moves Heaven)(With the posthumous imperial title
“the Emperor who with Civil Brilliance and Martial Virtue, a Great Sage, Greatly Manifests Filial
Piety”) 乾元光天大聖文武孝感皇帝批（謚文明武德大聖大宣孝皇帝）

The horde of the wily and shifty has been committing atrocities for a prolonged period. Heaven
loathes their disasters, which led to their defeat and flight. City walls and gate-towers [of
the capital] look as before, and the cultured gentry and commoners have resumed their original
lives. What an utmost relief that we feel from the bottom of our heart. Your congratulations are
acknowledged.

狡猾之流，久為殘暴；天厭其禍，卒以敗亡。顧城闕而依然，臨士庶而咸若。感慰之
至，深在朕懷。所賀知。

511 The character 濟 should be an error for 躑.

512 ZYL and a version of BZJ have the character as 駕, which makes more sense. See T2157.55.0882a01 and
T2120.52.0827 (editorial note 12).
**BZJ:** “A Memorial to Express Thanks for Granting Incense and to Present a Self Statement” (presented on 23 i): Śramaṇa Bukong says thus. The eunuch envoy Wu Youyan 吳遊巖 came to announce the imperial decree, [according to which,] a Buddhist feast will be sponsored at my monastic quarters. Precious incense has been granted for the event, and imperial envoys has been sent [to offer assistance]. I wonder when the day would come that I shall be able to requite Your kindness! It is my deferential consideration that I must ceremonially bathe Buddhist images at the three divisions of the day and practice the sacrifice rituals of homa once every half a month. May the Thirty-Seven Venerated Ones [of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga] protect the land of Your Wise King, and may the sixteen protective deities [of the Tang] bolster the divine might of the Sacred Monarch. 沙門不空言: 中使吳遊巖至, 親宣聖旨, 以不空本院, 今日設齋。特賜名香, 兼降天使…報効何日! 謹當三時浴像, 半月護摩。庶三十七尊, 保明王之國土, 一十六護, 增聖帝之威神

**BZJ:** “An Edict Graciously Ordering Huixiao 惠曉, the Disciple of the Tripiṭaka, to Conduct Mindful Chanting for the State.” 恩旨命三藏弟子僧惠曉為國念誦制一首

An oral instruction from the emperor is received that concerns with the disciples of Tripiṭaka Bukong, the monk Monk Huixiao among others: Lately, when in the midst of the bandits, [you]

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513 The practice of bathing the Buddhist images is part of the ritual sequences of abhiṣeka, and Bukong used the former as an emblem of the latter.
514 They are the dawn, the noon, and the dusk.
515 The Esoteric ritual manual Zhuanfalun pusa cuimo yuandi fa 轉法輪菩薩摧魔怨敵法 (The Ritual of Bodhisattva Dharmacakrapravarti to Destroy Demons and Racorous Enemies) translated by Bukong reveals that a group of sixteen yaksas that commit themselves to the protection of the territory of the Tang Empire:

如此，大唐護國者，所謂毘首羯磨藥叉、劫比羅藥叉、法護藥叉、肩目藥叉、護軍藥叉、法護藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉、護軍藥叉，各有五千神將以為眷屬。(T1150.20.0609c06-07)

Note that Dharmacakrapravarti was the chief deity that Bukong worshiped (benzun 本尊). Bukong also called the Four Pāramitā Bodhisattvas, the Eight Offering Bodhisattvas, and the Four Guardian Bodhisattvas that are among the Thirty-Seven Venerated Ones as “the Inner and Outer Great Protectors in Eight Directions” (bafang neiwai dahu 八方內外大護). See the “Lüeshu Jin’gangding Yuqie fenbie shengwei xiuzheng famen” 略述金剛頂瑜伽分別聖位修證法門, T0870.18.0291c13.
endeavoured to practice [the Esoteric] mindfulness for us\(^{516}\), and with vigour and sincerity, you immersed yourselves in cultivating dharmic merit. Now, the country has been recovered, and it owes all to Buddhas’ power in response. From now on, you should work ever more vigorously and diligently to practice mindful chanting for us. Do not cease to be vigorous and diligent because of having been ordained.

On 18 i of Zhengde 3 announced by General Xia Qiaofu 段喬福

奉敕語不空三藏弟子僧惠曉等：比在賊中，為朕剋念，精誠潛修功德。今剋復天下，皆佛力之應也。自今以後，須倍加精勤，為朕念誦。莫以度取，即不精勤。

至德三載正月十八日將軍段喬福宣

XB: During the Qianyuan Era, [Bukong] was invited into the inner chamber of the palace to set up [an altar for] the homa sacrifice, and [he] personally administrated the service of abhiṣeka to the emperor. Imperial favour were heaped [on him] continually, which surpassed the normal etiquette.

乾元中，延入內殿建護摩，親授灌頂。渥恩荐至，有殊恒禮。

XZ: During the Qianyuan Era, the emperor invited the great master into the palace to set up a Buddhist sanctum and [to routinize] the sacrifice of homa. [The master] administrated to the emperor the “Seven Jewels Consecration of Wheel-turning King”.

乾元中，帝請大師於內建立道場及護摩法，為帝受轉輪王七寶灌頂。

SGSZ: During the Qianyuan Era, the emperor invited [Bukong] into the palace, [where he] set up a Buddhist sanctum and routinized the sacrifice of homa, and [where he] also administrated to the emperor the “Seven Jewels Consecration of the Rank of Wheel-turning King”.

乾元中，帝請入內，建道場護摩法，為帝受轉輪王位七寶灌頂。

FZTJ: In the first year of Qianyuan, (when it resumed calling the years by the character “nian” [instead of zai]), [the emperor] ordered Tripiṭaka Bukong into the palace. When administrating the

\(^{516}\) The term kenian 克念 is derived from the piece of “Duo fang” 多方 in Shangshu 尚書 (SSJZS: 257A [Legge 1879: 217]): “The wise, through not thinking, become foolish, and the foolish, by thinking, become wise.” 惟聖罔念作狂，惟狂克念作聖。
service of *abhiṣeka* and imparting precepts to the emperor, Bodhisattva Mahāpratibhāna\(^{517}\) was roused to emit light, as his testimonial to the impartation. 乾元元年 (復稱年) 勅不空三藏入内。為帝灌頂授戒法，感大樂説菩薩放光證戒。(T2035.49.0376a23-24)

*BZJ: “An Edict Accepting the Request for Scouting the Country for Sanskrit Buddhist Texts as well as for Their Repairs and Translation”* 請搜撿天下梵夾修葺翻譯制書一首 (the memorial presented on 12 iii)

The Cien 慈恩, Jianfu 賛福 and other monasteries in the Central Capital (i.e. Chang’an), and the Shengshan 聖善, Changshou 長壽, Fuguang 福光 and other monasteries in the East Capital, as well as the viharas, monasteries, villages, and residential wards in various prefectures and counties—there might be Sanskrit Buddhist texts that were brought to the Tang by the late Tripitakas such as Da Bianjue Yijing 大邊覺義浄 (635-713), Shan Wuwei 善無畏 (Skt. Śubhakarasimha, 637-735), Liuchi 流志 (Skt. Dharmaruci, c. 572-727), Baosheng 寶勝 (Skt. Ratnaketu?, d. u.), among others. 關於上述事項, 睿宗, The Tripitaka Śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, has the following to report. 由於上述所云之梵書, 出於前述之Tripitakas—many have not yet been committed to translation. Over so many years, the binding threads, in most cases, have been broken, and [the scriptures seem to have been] left in eclipse; being tattered and scattered, they are really miserable. Without making repairs, it would be against the holy instruction [of the Buddha]. Lately, I received Your graciously decree, permitting me to conduct Buddhist translation. The work [of translation] requires investigation and discussion, and the spiritual attainment must meet up with the subtle words [of the Buddha]. I hope [Your Majesty] let the local offices impose a check, collect the available, and make further search work. In respect to those broken and fragmented, let them make on-spot repairs. If finding those that are worthwhile to be promulgated

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\(^{517}\) The name of this bodhisattva literally means “being pleasant at discourse”; he occurs only in the *Lotus sutra* translated by Kumārajīva (344-413). See T0262.09.0032c04.
and can assist the moralization of the state, I will go on to produce their translations and report to Your Majesty. The blessings generated would promote Your sacred health and are the most surpassing. If Your Heavenly Grace allow [the request], please announce the commission to the relevant department.

中京慈恩、薦福等寺, 及東京聖善、長壽、福光等寺, 并諸州縣舍寺村坊, 有舊大遍覺義淨、善無畏、流支、寶勝等三藏所將梵夾。

右大興善寺三藏沙門不空奏。前件梵夾等, 承前三藏, 多有未翻。年月已深, 縱索多斷; 湮沉零落, 實可哀傷。若不修補, 恐違聖教。近奉恩命, 许令翻譯。事資探討, 證會微言。望許所在, 檢閱收訪。其中有破壞缺漏, 隨事補葺。有堪弘闡, 助國揚化者, 續譯奏聞。福資聖躬, 為最殊勝。天恩允許, 請宣付所司。

**FZTJ:** [The emperor] issued an imperial decree that orders to escort the relic of Buddha from the Famen Monastery in Fengxiang into the palace, where a sanctum was established and monks were ordered to stage the ritual of worship and hymn day and night.

760, QIANYUAN 3-SHANGYUAN 1(iv), 56 SUI

INTERCALARY IV.

**BZJ:** “A Memorial Requesting to Institute an Abhiṣeka Sanctum at Xingshan Monastery” 請於興善寺置灌頂道場狀一首 (presented on 14 the intercalary iv):

Requesting to build an abhiṣeka sanctum at the Great Xingshan Monastery.

Concerning the above request, I, your subject, present the following humble consideration. Among the Buddhist teachings about weathering disasters and withstanding scourge, nothing could surpass the Secret Mahāyāna, and within the category of Mahāyāna, Abhiṣeka reigns supreme. Currently, it is an intercalary month in the summer, when various flowers are in bloom. I submissively hope that [Your Majesty] orders Tripitaka Bukong to build an abhiṣeka sanctum at that monastery for the welfare of the state. The sanctum could give instructions [to the deities] to quell disasters and boost the welfare and has the power to subjugate [evil beings] and delight
[various beings]. Reverentially, depending on its dharmic merits and power, the state could ahhihilate the gang of villains. [In addition,] it could extend Your sacred life to infinity, and thereupon the myriad people would live in peace and prosperity.

I, your subject, have no talents or virtuous conduct and have unworthily get the honour to be at Your disposal. While scrupulously presenting my worthless loyalty, I feel myself ever more shivering and sweating. If [Your Majesty] allows this request, please issue an informal decree of approval.

On 14 intercalary iv of Qianyuan 3, presented by Shi Yuancong, Commissioner for Imperial Parks, Commandant Resisting Foreign Assault, Left Commandant of the Inner Guard Command, Supernumerary Paid as the Regular Official, Granted Purple Bag of Gold Fish, and Commissioner of the Palace Stable of Flying Dargon.

请大興善寺修灌頂道場

右臣竊觀，度災禦難之法，不過祕密大乘；大乘之門，灌頂為最。今屬閏夏之月，百花皆榮，伏望命三藏不空，於前件寺，為國修一灌頂道場。其道場有息災增益之教，有降伏歡喜之能。奉此功力，以滅群兇。上滋聖壽無彊，承此兆久清泰。

臣素無才行，忝奉驅馳；謹獻愚誠，倍增戰汗。如允臣所奏，請降墨勅依奏。

乾元三年閏四月十四日宮苑都巡使、禦侮校尉、右內率府率、員外置同正員、賜紫金魚袋、內飛龍使，臣史元琮狀進

VIII.

BZJ: “An Imperial Order for Cultivating Dharmic Merit at the Zhiju Temple and a Notification from the Headquarters of Generalissimo” 智炬寺修功德制書一首

The following imperial order has been received:

518 For this prestigious post of military officials, see JTS: 42, 1801; XTS: 46, 1197.
519 For a discussion of this post, see LAI Ruihe 2008b: 94.
520 An error for 人，as the Shōren-in version (23) suggests.
521 An error for 廄.
Tripitaka Bukong and his clerical disciples: You three persons should cultivate dharmic merit at the Zhiju Temple.

The decree is announced on 25 viii by Li Fuguo 李輔國, Opening Bureau, Unequalled in Honour, and Supervisor of Adjutant [of Headquarters of Generalissimo].

[Headquarters] of Generalissimo of All-under-Heaven issues the following governmental notification to Tripitaka Bukong.

The Governmental Notification:

The above is the imperial decree that has been received. Please make a copy of the decree and transmit its message to the various related offices pursuant to the decree. The errand will be relieved on the day that the work is finished, hence the governmental notification.

Li Fuguo, Opening Bureau, Unequalled in Honour, and Supervisor of Adjutant.

The Prince of Yue 越 (i.e. Li Xi 李係 [d. 762]) of Headquarters of Generalissimo (It is left unsigned because His Highness is currently inside the palace).

XB: Before long, [the court] ordered [Bukong] to conduct a mindful chanting [retreat] at the Zhiju Temple. He roused his Principally Venerated One to make a flash of illumination from his white

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522 The Taishō edition has the character as 宣, but the Shoren in version (24) has 冝, which is a handwritten form of 宜.

523 A short for the term “suoyou guan” 所由官, which indicates the related offices.
curl [between the eyebrows], shining the valley all around. 寻令於智炬寺念誦。感本尊玉毫劃然大明，照徹巖谷。

**XZ:** The great master presented a memorial requesting to retire to the mountain. Li Fuguo issued an edict ordering him to cultivate dharmic merit at the Zhiju Temple on Mt. Zhongnan 終南. One night while he devoted himself to mindful chanting, Bodhisattva Great Bliss (Skt. Mahāsukha?) spread his curl [between the eyebrows] and emitted rays; this was showing a sign to attest that he was approaching the state of Siddhi. The great master said, “The various sentient beings have not been delivered, and how could I seek the salvation of myself?” Thus, [he] ended [the retreat].

大師表請入山。李輔國勅令終南山智炬寺修功德。念誦之夕, 大樂薩埵, 舒毫發光, 以相驗之, 位隣悉地。大師又曰: “眾生未度, 吾安自度之?” 遂已。

**Note:**

The XZ places the retreat episode after Bukong’s curing of Emperor Suzong in 761 and says that it was due to Bukong’s personal intention. The *BZJ*, meanwhile, does not present Bukong’s original memorial but only a piece of the imperial order dated to 760. Therefore, the XZ must be mistaken. Nevertheless, the claim that the retreat was due to Bukong’s own request could still be true, for the regular processing of governmental documents during this period was seriously perverted by the imperious eunuch Li Fuguo 李輔國 (704-762). As a result, Bukong’s original memorial was not copied in the decree as it would have otherwise been done, hence its absence from *BZJ*.

And it is remarkable that in the XZ, Zhao Qian notes that this decree was issued by Li Fuguo, the eunuch who turned out to be one of the two dominating figures at Suzong’s court—the other 524 The term *siddhi* (lit. success) is typically used to refer to the supramundane or magical power pursued by a yogin, but here it seems to mean the enlightenment state that is known as Great Bliss. Cf. Snellgrove 1987: 130-31.

525 The SGSZ has almost the same account: [Later,] Bukong sent a memorial asking for the emperor’s permission for him to go into the mountains, and Li Fuguo announced a decree, ordering him to cultivate dharmic merits [for the state] at the Zhiju Temple on Mt. Zhongnan. One night while he devoted himself to mindful chanting, the bodhisattva Great Bliss was roused to spread his curl [between the eyebrows] and emit rays; this was showing a sign to attest that he was approaching the state of Siddhi. Bukong said, “The sentient beings have not been delivered, and how could I seek the salvation of myself?” 空表請入山，李輔國宣勅令於終南山智炬寺修功德。念誦之夕, 感大樂薩埵, 舒毫發光, 以相驗之, 位隣悉地。空曰: “眾生未度, 吾安自度耶?”
being Empress Zhang. The two had joint force in scheming to enthrone Li Heng in 756 in Lingwu. Afterwards, Li Fuguo seized the imperial authority to dictate to the court over various affairs; actually, he wantonly issued instructions in the name imperial edicts, without the due fear of the sovereignty. In 759, he suffered an impeachment for his devastating abuse of imperial authority in almost every domain and was divested of a number of posts. However, he retained the control over the Imperial Guards, the most critical power that determined his position at court. It seems that soon afterwards he managed to get rid of his enemies, and his malpractice went unchecked again.\footnote{See the biographies of Li Fuguo and of Li Xian 李峴 in JTS (184, 4759; 112, 3344); cf. ZZTJ: 221; 7074, 7076-77.} In the seventh month of 760, Li had just fabricated a decree and forced the retired Xuanzong to move his residence from the agreeable Xingqing 興慶 Palace to the long defunct Taiji 太極 Palace.\footnote{See ZZTJ: 221, 7094-95. For discussions of these two imperial palaces see Xiong 2000: 58-74, 97-105.} It is very likely that that the above imperial decree that ordered Bukong to go to Mt. Zhongnan was made by Li Fuguo, not by the emperor.

The Headquarters of Generalissimo was a nominal office in charge of the military campaign against the rebels. Li Xi 李係, then the Prince of Zhao 趙, was put in the position “the Head Marshal of All Armies of All-under-Heaven” (tianxia bingma zong yuanshuai 天下兵馬總元帥) in the seventh month of 759, and his princely title was changed into “the Prince of Yue” in the fourth month of the next year.\footnote{See JTS: 66, 3382-83.} Li Xi was replacing Li Yu 李豫, the future Daizong. To acknowledge his contribution to Suzong’s ascension, the emperor appointed Li Fuguo as the adjudant. This appointment continued into Li Xi’s tenure.

The fact that it is this office that transmitted the decree leads one to imagine that there was an official connection between the military office and Bukong. A careful consideration may suggest otherwise. Li Xi was off duty, and the post of the Generalissimo of all armies of the country was merely titular; and Li Fuguo was so powerful at the time that he could presume to act as the representative figure of the office.\footnote{According to Nakamura’s understanding, the piece is the transcription of an oral decree (kouchi 口敕) as a section of the official notification die 牒 that was transmitted between governmental departments. An oral decree was usually}
rather than the office _per se_, who simply preferred to ostentatiously identify himself with this only weighty position. Therefore, the presence of the Headquarters does not necessarily suggest any association between this office and Bukong. Coupling this point with Li’s domineering manner discussed above suggests that Li Fuguo made the order, issued it, and then delivered it to Bukong.

### 761. _Shangyuan 2, 57 sui_

**IX.**

_ZZTJ_ (222, 7115-16): On the day of Jia-Shen in the ninth month (5 Oct. 761), which was the festival of Heavenly Accomplishment and Earthly Peace,\(^5\) the emperor (i.e. Suzong) established a [Buddhist] sanctum in the Hall of Sandian 三殿 (lit. Three-Sided).\(^6\) He asked the palace women to dress up as Buddhas and bodhisattvas and the warriors of the Northern Guards to dress up as vajra-deities and deva-kings; he also summoned the officials to offer worship and perform the ritual of circumambulation. 九月，甲申，天成地平節。上於三殿置道場，以宮人為佛菩薩，北門武士為金剛、神王；召大臣膜拜圍繞。

**XZ:** At the end of the _Shangyuan_ Era, the emperor was in poor health and sent for the great master (Bukong). With [the power of] the “Mahā-pratisārā Mantra”, Bukong practiced exorcism seven times, and then, His Majesty received thousands of blessings [and recovered]. The emperor heaped extraordinary reverence [upon him]. 上元末，皇帝聖躬不康，請大師。以《大隨求真言》，拂除七遍，聖躬萬福。帝特加殊禮。\(^7\)

### 762. _Baoying 1, 59 sui_

dictated by the emperor and issued by his intimate servants; it was a kind of informal decree that was not processed through the central government, thus embodying the emperor’s own will instead of the authority of the state. Such a type of decree usually applied to inferior matters. See Nakamura 1991: 719-27. Nakamura considers that the Generalissimo was ordered to deliver the decree to Bukong.

\(^5\) Emperor Suzong made his birthday, the third day of the ninth month, as the festival. See the inline note by Hu Sanxing 胡三省.

\(^6\) It refers to the hall of Linde dian 麟德殿 in the Daming Palace, and the building had only three sides, hence the name “Sandian” or Three-Sided Hall. See the inline note by Hu Sanxing 胡三省. For a discussion of this structure, see Xiong 2000: 91-92.

\(^7\) Cf. the similar account in the _SGSZ_: At the end of the _Shangyuan_ Era, the emperor was considerably ill. Bukong, by [the power of] the “Mahā-pratisārā Mantra”, practiced exorcism seven times, and [the emperor] recovered on the morrow. The emperor heaped extraordinary reverence [upon him]. 上元末，帝不豫。空以《大隨求真言》祓除七過，翼日乃瘳。帝愈加殊禮焉。
X.

BZJ: A Memorial Presenting a Figurine of Marīci and a Sanskrit Manuscript of the Buddhoṣṇīṣa Mantra (with the imperial reply) 進摩利支像并梵書大佛頂真言狀一首 (并答)  
A white-sandalwood figurine of Marīci (lit. Awe-Light)  
A manuscript of “Buddhoṣṇīṣa Dhāraṇī” written in Sanskrit  
Concerning the above gifts: Obliged to Your sacred fortunes, I, Bukong, bask in Your grace and brilliance quite early on. Then on the birthday [of Your Majesty], I met with the Sun of Gold Wheel. On my humble consideration, a necessary correlation exists between that the longevity [of Your Majesty] would extend the imperial reign and that the figurine bears the name of Awe-Light; in parallel, Your Majesty is the head of all kings, and the mantra bears the title of Buddha-Crown (buddhoṣṇīṣa). In deferential accordance to the Dafoding jing 大佛頂 sutra, to attain the perfect, supreme enlightenment, all tathāgatas need to learn this mantra, and the case of the Gold Wheel-Turning Kings is alike—none of them would not act on the mantra. It comes to my humble thought that Your Majesty ascended the throne following [the will of] Heaven, thus refreshing the sacred governance [of the empire]. [Your Majesty] regulates the state under the correct teachings [of the Buddha], which coincides with [the doings of] the divinity. It is my humble wish that [Your Majesty] would make some reverential mindfulness before sealing up [the manuscript] into your belt. May [Your Majesty] broaden the perfect moralization just as Donghu Jizi 東戶季子 did and extend your sacred life as long as that of the South Mountain. […]  

533 It may refer to Dafoding rulai fangguang sidaduobodaluo tuoluoni 大佛頂如來放光悉怛多鉢怛囉陀羅尼 (The Dhāraṇī of the Light-Emitting Śitāpatra, Great Corona of All Tathāgatas; T944A, 1 juan), translated by Bukong.  
534 It is a figurative expression for the Kāñcana Cakravartin or the Gold Wheel Turning King.  
535 The Dafoding sutra may refer to the Śūraṅgama sūtra, and the Chinese version was the Dafoding rulai miyin xiu zheng liao yi zhu pusa wanxing shoulengyuan jing 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經 (T945) translated by Bolamidi (Skt. Pramiti, Ch. Jiliang 極量), which, concerning the point, states thus:  
536 The word donghu 東戶 is short for the name of Donghu Jizi 東戶季子, an ideal sage king of the great Chinese antiquity. The name appeared firstly in the chapter “Miucheng xun” 繼稱訓 of Huainan zi 淮南子, which extols the high social morality under his administration. See Huainan zi: 10, 331; cf. Major et al. [trans.] 2010: 371.
13 x 1 of Baoying

彫白檀摩利支像一軀 (此云威光)

梵書大佛頂陀羅尼一本

右，不空幸因聖運，早奉休明。遂逢降誕之辰，更遇金輪之日。伏惟，以陛下之廬延寶祚，像有威光之名；以陛下百王為首，真言有佛頂之號。謹按《大佛頂經》，一切如來成等正覺，皆受此真言，乃至金輪帝位，莫不遵而行之。伏惟，陛下承天踐祚，聖政惟新，正法理國，與靈合契。伏願少修敬念，緘而帶之。則廣至化於東戶，延聖壽於南山。……

寶應元年十月十三日

Note:

Although the wording is highly rhetorical and obscure, the writing seems to have a basis in historical fact. Very likely, Bukong performed an abhiṣeka ritual and consecrated Emperor Daizong as a Gold Wheel-Turning King on his birthday of this year. (13 xii, 1 Jan. 763) Bukong had done the same thing Daizong’s father Suzong; as birthday gifts, he had also presented to Suzong a Buddhist statue and an amulet piece with a dhāraṇī written in Sanskrit script, and early in that very year (758), Suzong was consecrated as a Wheel-Turning King alike.

It is an Esoteric practice for a practitioner to wear a ribbon written with buddhoṣṇīṣa mantras. For example, see the instruction given in the Putichang suoshuo yizi ding lunwang jing 菩提場所説一字頂輪王經 translated by Bukong, T0950.19.0194c10-15. Cf. the discussion in Shinohara 2014: 122.

763, BAOYING 2-GUANGDE 1(vii), 60 sui

XI.

BZJ: “Śramaṇa Bukong of the Great Xingshan Monastery Requesting to Establish an Abhiṣeka Sanctum for the Sake of the State” 大興善寺三藏沙門不空請為國置灌頂道場

[537] The South Mountain or Nanshan 南山 is a cliché symbol of longevity. The comparison finds its origin in the poem “Tianbao” 天保 in Shijing 詩經 (SSJZS: 331B; Legge 1876: 196-97).

[538] See “Jin hupo xiang bing fanshu Suiqiu zhenyan zhuang yi shou” 進虎魄像并梵書隨求真言狀一首 in BZJ, T2120.52.0829b02-b21.
Concerning the above request, I, Bukong, have heard that Vairocana Buddha encompasses myriad worlds, and the mudrā and the mantra incorporates [the teachings of] various scriptures.

In respect to the teachings, there should be a distinction between that of subtism and gradualism. Gradualism refers to the subject to learn on the [precept] altar of the Lesser Vehicle practiced by the direct disciples of the Buddha, while subtism refers to the Abhiṣeka Dharma-gate practiced by the great beings of bodhisattvas. This (i.e. the latter) is the smooth route to reach the supreme attainment, thus the entry into the very rank of the Buddhahood. The word ding 頂 (Skt. śikhā) refers to the top of the head, symbolizing the loftiness of the great practice [of this Dharma-gate], and the word guan 灌 (Skt. abhi) means imbuing and holding, representing the Buddhas’ protection and care. Of spiritual transcendence and extrication, neither could be attained without following this! Therefore, [I devote myself to the practice] self-denyingly and laboriously, without resting day and night; making a vow to penetrate [the Dharma-gate] with veneration, how dare I get slack in effort? I hope that during the annual Retreat Summer and the Three Whole Months of Abstinence as well, [the Abhiṣeka Sanctum] would be established in accordance with the scriptural teachings. Being ornamented with pure flowers, [it would] trigger the enlightenment [of sentient beings], and [it would] lead perceptive beings back to the truth. May the frontiers be pacified, and may Your Majesty longevity. I cannot overcome my utmost earnestness and preoccupation. I reverently approach the Gate of the Silver-Terrace of the Right, holding the memorial to present my thought to Your Majesty. If Your Heavenly Grace approve it, please issue an informal edict accommodating to my request.

14 xi of Guangde 1

Presented by Bukong, the śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery.

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539 In Bukong’s lexicon, it is a very formal name for the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga.
540 It refers to the summer season that Buddhist monks and nuns went into retreat. In India, in the three months of the rainy season, namely, from the middle of the fourth month through the middle of the seventh month, the Buddhist clergy stopped wandering around in the outside world and devoted themselves to intensive doctrinal study and meditation practice.
541 This refers to the first month, the fifth month, and the ninth month of the year, when the Buddhist clergy abstained from dining after the noon.
右不空聞，毘盧遮那包括萬界，密印真言納眾經。準其教，宜有頓有漸。漸謂聲聞小乘登壇學處，頓謂菩薩大士灌頂法門，是詣極之夷途，為入佛之正位。

頂謂頭頂，表大行之尊高；灌謂灌持，明諸佛之護念。超昇出離，何莫由斯？是以剋己服勤，不捨晝夜，誓志鑽仰，豈敢怠遑。冀每載夏中及三長齋月，依經建立，嚴淨花以開覺，使有識而歸真。庶邊境肅淨，聖躬萬壽。不勝懇念之至。謹詣右銀臺門，奉狀陳請以聞。天恩允許，請降墨勅依奏。

廣德元年十一月十四日
大興善寺三藏沙門不空狀進

764, GUANGDE 2, 61 SUI

BZJ: “A Decree Approving the Request for Installing Forty-nine Great Virtues of the Great Xingshan Monastery” 請置大興善寺大德四十九員敕一首

Concerning the above monks, I, Śramaṇa Bukong of the Great Xingshan Monastery, have the following to report. The aforementioned monastery was built back in the days that the Chang’an city was initially constructed—the first monastery that was built to provide the divine shield to the empire. Its edifices are vast, taking up the entire ward [of Xingshan]. From olden times, its Monastery Heads have always been renowned and virtuous. In these days, due to the passing of the worthy elders and the loss of the multitude of clerical residents, the august etiquettes and regulations have fallen destitute all together. For years and years, terraces and halls are left bleak. Think about the pure [monastic] rules, and they are indeed lamentable. Although there are Buddhists who were ordained later [in the capital], they have not yet grown versed in the precepts. In addition, now it is a hard time, and the situation needs blessing and protection [from the divinity]. The aforementioned forty-nine Great Virtues are all pure and noble in spiritual pursuit and conduct and hold a thorough understanding of the sūtra and the vinaya; they are admired and

542 Names of the forty-nine nominated monks are omitted here.
543 For the background of this monastery, see Jinhua Chen 2010: 171-78.
commended by the clerical crowd and qualify as preceptors and models. I humbly beseech to register them under this monastery and to fill the vacancies if they occur. May they jointly endeavour to rectify [the situation] and to uphold [the monastery] and rehabilitate its degeneracy and maladies. [And may they] eternalize the burning incense and candles so as to bring blessings to Your Sacred Constitution. As to the incumbent administrators of the monastery, I hope [Your Majesty could have their positions] determined accordingly.

In addition, considering the poverty and dilapidation of the monastery, I humbly beseech [Your Majesty] to kindly exempt the monastery from various types of corvée and taxation in kind\(^\text{544}\), so that the provisions will not be run out and that [the monks are able to] focus themselves on Buddhist practices and requite the kindness of the state. Should Your Heavenly Grace give permission, please announce it to the related offices.

23 i of Guangde 2

又大興善寺三藏沙門不空奏。前件寺是初置長安之日, 將鎮帝國, 首建斯寺。廊宇宏大, 全用一坊。古來住持皆是名德。比緣老宿淪沒, 僧眾凋殘, 威儀軌則並是廢絕。況綿歷多載, 臺殿荒凉; 瞻言清規, 實所歎惜。雖有後度, 戒律未閑。復屬艱難, 事資福祐。前件大德四十九人, 稱道業清高, 洞明經戒, 眾所欽尚, 堪為師範。伏乞隷名此寺, 有闕續填。庶勠力匡持, 葺理頹弊, 永修香火, 以福聖躬。其見任之綱維, 望並依定。

又緣寺之貧破, 伏乞矜放諸雜差科, 科\(^\text{545}\)得齊糟不絕, 報國行道。如天恩允許請宣付所司。

敕旨依奏

廣德二年正月二十三日

765. YONGTAI 1, 61 sui

IV.

\(^{544}\) For a study of the meaning of the term *chaike*差科 in the Tang Dynasty, see WANG Yongxing 1957.

\(^{545}\) Another two version has the word 科 as 庶. See T2120.52.0831, Editorial Note 2.

\(^{546}\) An error for 齊.
Concerning the above request, I, Bukong, the śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, submit the following report. According to my humble understanding, the wondrous purport of the Tathāgatatva’s teachings is benefitting and comforting the living beings, and the leitmotif of the precious scripture of the Renwang jing (The Scripture for Humane Kings) celebrates [the idea of] protecting the state. The translations prepared in the previous dynasty is not coherent and thorough in theoretical exposition; the mission of refinement requires [the appearance of] a brilliant sage. I humbly consider that Your Majesty, Emperor Baoying Yuansheng Wenwu (the Emperor who is Blessed with a Precious Omen, the Primal Sage, with Civil and Military Achievements), initiate the [dynastic] fortunes by your shrewdness and cultural accomplishment, and you are profound and wise and ride on [the characteristics of] the times; you enlarge and broaden the Words on the Reality and promulgate and laud the teaching of [the period of] Resemblance Dharma. The wind of your august civilization blows people living far away, and the Sun of Buddhism becomes shining again. Times and again, [Your Majesty] had sermons and chanting ceremonies opened up for the sake of the populace.

As for the scripture of Renwang jing, I hope to rework on the old translation according to the Sanskrit original so that the words on pattra leaves will not be omitted whatsoever and that the words from the golden mouth [of the Buddha] are rendered more minute and clear. I request to invite Huaigan 懷感, Feixi 飛錫, Zilin 子鏐, Jianzong 建宗, Guixing 歸性, Yisong 義嵩, Daoye 道液, Liangben 良賁, Qianzhen 潛真, Huiling 慧靈, Fachong 法崇, Chaowu 超悟, Huijing 慧靜, Yuanji 圓寂, and Daolin 道林 to the palace sanctum to prepare the translation. May the blessing

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547 For the English translation of the new version of the Renwang jing (T246), see Orzech 1998: 209-74.
548 It refers to the translation attributed to Kumārajīva (344-413) that this translation project aimed to improve. For the Taishō version, see T245.
549 Usually zhenyan 真言 was used as the Chinese translation of mantra, and when used as a proper noun, it refers to the Teachings of Mantra or Esoteric Buddhism. But here since it was in parallel with the Resemblance Teachings, that is, the Buddha’s teachings for the period of Resemblance Dharma, it holds an equally general denotation. Thus, it means the Buddha’s words on the Reality or simply the Buddha’s metaphysical teachings.
support the sacred reign, and may the beneficence reach the people. May the bandits be cleansed and the world become harmonious. With [the newly translated scripture] passed on for aeons, its redeeming and sheltering would prove to be profound indeed.

The Secretariat-Chancellery issues this governmental notification to Board of Sacrifice

The governmental notification [read thus]:

The decree has been received that says “The request should be accommodated”. When this notification arrives, [act] according to the decree. Thus this notification is issued.

Governmental notification issued on 2 iv of Yongtai 1

[Concerning the memorial] “The Scripture for Humane Kings: Hoping for Reworking on the Old Translation According to the Sanskrit Palm-Leaf Original”, the Board of Sacrifice of the Department of State Affairs issue the following governmental notification to the śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery Bukong:

The notification [reads thus]:

The above governmental notification based on the imperial decree has been received from the Secretariat-Chancellery. When this notification arrives, [act] according to the decree. Thus this notification is issued.

4 iv of Yongtai 1

右興善寺三藏沙門不空奏。伏以如來妙旨，惠矜生靈，《仁王》寶經，義崇護國。前代所譯，理未融通；潤色微言，事歸明聖。伏惟，寶應元聖文武皇帝陛下，叡文啓運，弘闡眞言，宣揚像教。皇風遠振，佛日再明。

每為黎元，俾開講誦。其《仁王經》，望依梵匣，再譯舊文。貝葉之言，永無漏略；金口所説，更益詳明。仍請僧懷感、飛錫、子翷、建宗、歸性、義嵩、道液、良賁、潛眞、慧靈、法崇、超悟、慧靜、圓寂、道林等，於內道場所翻譯。福資聖代，澤及含靈。寇濫永清，寰區允穆。傳之曠劫，救護實深。

550 This character is a variant for 濬.
中書門下牒祠部：
牒: 奉敕“宜依”，牒至准敕，故牒。
永泰元年四月二日牒

尙書祠部“《仁王經》望依梵匣再譯舊文”[牒] 興善寺三藏沙門不空
牒: 奉中書門下敕牒如右，牒至准敕，故牒。
永泰元年四月四日

V.

An excerpt from “Datang xinfan Huguo renwang bore jing xu” 大唐新翻護國仁王般若經序 (The Preface to the Scripture on Perfect Wisdom for Humane Kings to Protect Their Countries Newly Translated in the Great Tang), created by Emperor Daizong 代宗

The late Sage (Emperor Suzong) looked up to the Jade Urna (i.e. the Buddha) with devoutness and rarefied his mind in the spiritual realm of the verity; [His Majesty] manifested and promulgated the Perfect Teachings and scoured around for and fit together all broken [scriptural] texts. [His Majesty] decreed that Tripiṭaka Śramaṇa Bukong make critical examinations and elaborate translations of those texts, of which perfect editions had not yet been worked out. The Tripiṭaka penetrates the Two Truths in Buddhist learning and spreads the [teachings of] Three Mysteries for his mission; he thoroughly understands the ultimate import of the Buddhist doctrines and makes full and mellow enunciation [of the Sanskrit words]. He lifted the hem of his robe and headed for the West (i.e. India) and sailed across the South Sea.
Over the many years of his lone endeavor, his person was accompanied only by his shadow, and his diligence showed no diminution as time went on. He grasps the delicacy of India’s science of sound and masters thoroughly Chinese phonemes and tones. His sweet dew (i.e. his instruction) soaks me, and his fragrant wind (i.e. instruction) hold me enthralled.

Soon the Sanskrit texts were brought from afar, and [His Reverence] awaited to be questioned just like the giant bell awaiting to be struck. We longed for enlivening various aspects of the national life by virtue of the insightful teachings of the Buddha, and to obey the canon [of starting a new era] that initiates the Three Penal Canons. Tormented by the grief of

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558 The word *fanbei* 汛盃 literally means travelling by wooden cup cross the river. It alludes to the miraculous feat of the monk Beidu 杯渡 of the Liu Song dynasty (420-479) told in his biography in the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳. See T2059.50.0390b20-21. It had become a quite common word to express a monk’s travel by water.

559 The “assailing” (xi 襲) of aroma as a figurative expression derives from Qu Yuan 屈原 poem “Shao Siming” 少司命, one of his famous nine-poem set “Jiu ge” 九歌 (*Wenxuan* 文選: 33, 1533): Green are their leaves, blossoms lily-white. Their flooding fragrance assails me. 綠葉兮素華,芳菲菲兮襲予.

560 The metaphor is taken from the “Xueji” 學記 chapter of the *Liji* 礼記 (*SSJZS*: 655A [Legge 1885b: 89]): The master who skilfully waits to be questioned, may be compared to a bell when it is struck. Struck with a small hammer, it gives a small sound. Struck with a great one, it gives a great sound. 善待問者, 如撞鐘。叩之以小者則小鳴,叩之以大者則大鳴.

561 The original line means that daizong longed for the “heavenly aperture” (tianlai 天籟) that blow myriad apertures in nature (wanlai 萬籟). This expression is formulated based on the discourse in the “Qiwu lun” 齊物論 chapter of *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (45-50 [Legge 1891a: 176-77]):

[Ziqi said,] “You may have heard the notes of Man, but have not heard those of Earth; you may have heard the notes of Earth, but have not heard those of Heaven.” Zi-You said, “I venture to ask from you a description of all these.” The reply was, “When the breath of the Great Mass (of nature) comes strongly, it is called Wind. Sometimes it does not come so; but when it does, then from a myriad of apertures there issues its excited noise.” [...] Ziyou said, “The notes of Earth then are simply those which come from its myriad apertures, and the notes of Man may just be compared to those which [are brought from the tubes of] bamboo——allow me to ask about the notes of Heaven.” Ziqi replied, “Blowing the myriad [whose notes] differ [from one another], and let them make it by themselves. If all pick their own notes, who is it that stirs it all up?” [子綦曰: ]“女聞人籟而未聞地籟,女聞地籟而未聞天籟夫!”子游曰: “敢問其方。”子綦曰：“夫大塊噫氣,其名為風。是唯无作,作則萬竅怒呺。”...子游曰: “地籟則眾竅是已,人籟則比竹是已。敢問天籟。”子綦曰: “夫吹萬不同,而使其自已也。咸其自取,怒者其誰邪?”

Daizong’s phrase “the aperture that blows the myriad apertures” (chui wanlai zhi lai 吹萬籟之籟) suggests that he understood the “heaven aperture” as the source of the air streams blowing the myriad apertures in nature. And this heaven aperture seems to symbolize Buddhist teachings conveyed by the Sanskrit texts that Bukong brought to China that could advise Daizong’s new government, and accordingly, the myriad apertures are likened to the various aspects of the state and social mechanism.

562 As the preceding line could be rephrased as the aperture that blows the myriad apertures or chui wanlai zhi lai 吹萬籟之籟, by syntactical parallelism, this latter line should be rephrased as the canon that initiated the Three Canons kai sandian zhi dian 開三典之典. The sandian 三典 refers to the Three Penal Canons that is introduced in the “Qiuguan” 秋官 chapter of *Zhouli* 周禮 (*SSJZS*: 516A): The duty of the Great Minister of Justice (da sikou 大司寇): being in charge of the Three [Penal] Canons to assist the king to discipline the country and chasten [the barbarian states] in the four directions. Firstly, to discipline a new country, use the
bereavement, we are so anxious as to turn ever emaciated, and at the season of dew and hoar-frost, we were stricken by the sensibility of a sorrowful son. Having received the last imperial order [from my late father to support Bukong in translating Buddhist texts], we dare not dally with it; thereupon we summoned various monastic luminaries [to the palace] so that we would complete the unfinished work of raising a mountain of nine fathoms by contributing the last basket of earth.

[Yu] Chaoen, of the honorary rank Opening-up Bureau, devotes his career to the state and commits his spiritual pursuit to the Buddha; he patronizes the true teachings [of the Buddha] and helps to spread the wondrous gateway (i.e. Buddhism). [He] mustered the Great Virtue of Doctrinal Studies of the capital (i.e. Chang’an), Liangben among others, as well as Chang...
Gun 常袞 (729-783), the scholar of Hanlin Academy, among others, to gather at Nantao 南桃 Garden of the Daming Palace, to join the work of the elaborate translation of [the sutra of] Huguo bore 護國般若, which was thus completed. In addition, the editing work of the sutra Miyan jing 密嚴經 was finalized.

The time is the fifth month of the year of Danmeng 旃蒙 (765), when the hibiscus is flowering.568

An excerpt from “The Preface to the Commentaries to the Scripture on Perfect Wisdom for Humane Kings to Protect Their Countries” 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經疏序, by Liangben 良贲 (composed in 766):

Emperor Suzong of the Great Tang resurrected the ideal government of Yao 堯, and reformed the dysfunctional and resolved the crisis. [His Majesty] put the paramount concern on the
people and purified his heart during a fast. [His Majesty] requested the Abhiṣeka Tripiṭaka569 from the Land of the Lion, South India, Amogha(vajra) to be named, or Bukong in Chinese, to translate and transmit various scriptures for the purpose of pacifying the country. With this wish unfulfilled, His Majesty returned to heaven by his celestial equipage. Then, our Emperor Baoying 寶應 (i.e. Daizong) recreated the regime and refreshed the proprieties and music; [His Majesty] holds a thorough understanding of the four primary agendas of government570 and deferentially inherited the norms of the late emperor, and [His Majesty] accorded [Bukong] the grace by repeatedly requesting [for the translation]. When it came to the first year of the Yongtai Era (765), the year of Yi-Si 乙巳, the translation of this sutra was ordered. It was also ordered that Yu Chaoen, the Inspecting Commissioner of the Army Outlook, holding the honorary rank “Opening-Bureau”, was concurrently in charge of the project. [The team prepared] the translation in the Nantao Garden, starting on the first day of the lunar month and ending on the fifth day. At the Abhiṣeka Sanctum in the Chengming Hall, His Majesty read the new text against the old translation.

粵惟巨唐肅宗皇帝,重昌堯化,革弊救焚; 至憂黎元,澡心齋戒。請南天竺執師子國灌頂三藏,名阿目佉, 唐言不空,翻傳眾經,以安社稷。茲願未滿,仙駕歸天。我今寶應皇帝,再造乾坤,禮樂惟新; 明白四達,恭嗣先訓,恩累請焉。永泰元年,歲在乙巳,詔譯斯經。仍勅觀軍容使開府魚朝恩,兼統其事。於南桃園翻譯,起自月朔終乎月望。於承明殿灌頂道場,御執舊經,對讀新本。

NOTE:

569 The title “Abhiṣeka Tripiṭaka” occurs also in the official document on the diplomatic visit by Bukong and the corps from Sinhala in 746. It seems that the title shows some background in the recognition of Bukong by the secular or clerical authority of Sinhala. But this could not prevent the Tang court accorded their own recognition. In fact, the title represented a Bukong oriented religious office responsible for the religious projects in service to the Tang state. See the discussion in Chapter 3.

570 The term sida 四達 refers to the four essentials that a ruler should fulfill in order to effect good governance. They are set out the “Yueji” 樂記 chapter of the Liji (SSJZS: 667A [Legge 1885b: 97]):

Ceremonies afforded the defined expression for the [affections of] the people's minds; music secured the harmonious utterance of their voices; the laws of government were designed to promote the performance [of the ceremonies and music]; and punishments, to guard against the violation of them. When ceremonies, music, laws, and punishments had everywhere full course, without irregularity or collision, the method of kingly rule was complete. 禮節民心，樂和民聲，政以行之，刑以防之。禮，樂，刑，政，四達而不悖，則王道備矣。
The canonical catalogue ZYL listed the names of members on the translation team as well as the duties, three of whom are unseen in the group listed initially by Bukong in his memorial (marked with *).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of the Monks</th>
<th>Positions in the Translation Team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bukong 不空</td>
<td>Chief Translator (yi fanben 譯梵本)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fachong 法崇 of Dasheng Qianfu Fahua Monastery 大聖千福法華寺</td>
<td>Verifier of the Sanskrit Text (zheng fanben yi 譯梵本義)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liangben 良貞 of Qinglong Monastery 青龍寺</td>
<td>Scribe and Style Editor (筆受兼潤文)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilin 子鄰 of Great Anguo 安國 Monastery</td>
<td>Style Editor (runwen 潤文)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiaigan 懷感 of Great Anguo Monastery, Superior Incumbent of Ximing monastery 西明寺</td>
<td>Verifier (zhengyi 譯義)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jianzong 建宗 of Heen Monastery 菈恩寺</td>
<td>Verifier (zhengyi 譯義)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feixi 飛錫 of Dasheng Qianfu Fahua Monastery 大聖千福法華寺</td>
<td>Verifier (zhengyi 譯義)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yisong 義嵩 of Great Jianfu Monastery 大薦福寺</td>
<td>Verifier (zhengyi 譯義)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qianzhen 潛真, Superior Incumbent of Great Xingshan Monastery 興善寺</td>
<td>Verifier (zhengyi 譯義)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daoye 道液 of Zisheng Monastery 資聖寺</td>
<td>Verifier (zhengyi 譯義)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaowu 超悟 of Great Xingtang Monastery 大興唐寺</td>
<td>Verifier (zhengyi 譯義)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Yingzhen 應真 of Baoshou Monastery 保壽寺 (absent from Bukong’s list)</td>
<td>Verifier (zhengyi 譯義)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guixing 歸性, Administrator of Ximing Monastery 西明寺</td>
<td>Verifier (zhengyi 譯義)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huiling 慧靈, Head of Great Xingshan Monastery 大興善寺</td>
<td>Verifier (zhengyi 譯義)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huijing 慧靜 of Ximing Monastery 西明寺</td>
<td>Verifier (zhengyi 譯義)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuanji 圓寂 of Baoshou Monastery 保壽寺</td>
<td>Reciter of Verses? (fanyin 梵音)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daolin 道林 of Great Xingtang Monastery 大興唐寺</td>
<td>Chanter of Buddhist Hymns (fanbai 梵唄)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Yixiu 義秀 of Chongfu Monastery 崇福</td>
<td>Proofreader (jiaokan 校勘)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ZYL also provided a couple of eunuchs and scholar-officials involved in the translation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ma Fengxian 马奉献 (Eunuch)</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang Liyi 楊利益 (Eunuch)</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luo Fengxian 駱奉仙 (Eunuch)</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu Chaoen 魚朝恩 (Eunuch)</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chang Gun 常袞</td>
<td>Participator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Kang 柳伉</td>
<td>Participator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III-IV.

Dasong sengshi lüe 大宋僧史略: On 28 iii of Yongtai 1 during Daizong’s reign, there issued an imperial decree that all necessities of the Precept Platform of Universal Equality of the Great Xingshan Monastery be provided by the government. In the fourth month, a decreed was issued to install the Great Virtues on the Precept Platform, meeting the quota of ten monks and ten nuns, and to make it a permanent institution. Why is it called the Precept Platform of Universal Equality? The platform rite sequences originate in the vinaya-piṭaka of various traditions, which, in other words, are of Hīnayāna Teachings and, in Hīnayāna Teachings, every behaviour must be in conformity with the prescriptions [in the vinaya texts], and even a fractional breach of them would cause the recipient’s failure in gaining the impartation of precepts and the preceptor’s committing a sin. Therefore, it (i.e. Hīnayāna) is also called “the Precept Teachings”. As to the universal teachings of Mahāyāna, they do not exclude those whose faculty of wisdom is defective or karmic background is weak; in both cases, people are allowed to receive the impartation of [precepts], and
The preceptor needs only to let them activate the Great Mind.\textsuperscript{571} The term “universal equality” speaks of such a sweeping applicability. 代宗永泰年三月二十八日，敕大興善寺方等戒壇所須一切官供。至四月，敕京城僧尼臨壇大德各置十人，永為常式。所言方等戒壇者，蓋以壇法本出於諸律，律即小乘教也。小乘教中須一一如法，片有乖違，則令受者不得戒，臨壇人犯罪。故謂之律教也。若大乘方等教，即不拘根缺緣差，並皆得受，但令發大心而領納之耳。方等者即周遍義也。(T2126.54.0250b27-c05)

\textbf{766, YONGTAI 2, 62 SUI}

\textit{V.}

\textit{BZJ: “A Request for Imperial Permission to Donate [My] Personal Possessions to Aid Monk Daohuan 道環 in Building the Jin’ge 金閣 Temple”}\textsuperscript{572} 請捨衣鉢助僧道環修金閣寺\textsuperscript{573}

The Jin’ge Temple on Mt. Wutai

Concerning the above request, I, śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, called Da Guangzhi Bukong, make the following presentation. Regarding the aforementioned temple, the late Sage (i.e. Emperor Suzong) prepared a piece of calligraphy of the title [which would be inscribed on the plaque]; yet the edifice has not been completed. The genesis is the holy manifestation of Mañjuśrī witnessed by the monk Daoyi 道義 of Quzhou 衢州 in the twenty-fourth year of the Kaiyuan Era (736) when he travelled to Mt. Wutai, and thus the temple gained the title “Jin’ge” (lit. gold pavilion). There were thirteen chapels (yuan 院), in which, it was said, dwelled one thousand monks. Terraces, halls, arches, and high buildings were all of gold.

Presently, [Daoyi] drew the vision into a booklet and presented it to the court, which was kept in the palace. People under heaven all wish the Jin’ge Temple be completed; who would not wish it so?

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{571} The Bodhi-Mind or the Enlightened Mind, i.e. the aspiration for awakeness.

\textsuperscript{572} A translation of this piece has done by Raffaello Orlando (1981: 57-60). My translation is significantly different from his, but nevertheless I benefit from a number of his effective expressions.

\textsuperscript{573} This memorial has been translated by Orlando (1981: 57-60) and Goble (forthcoming), from both of which I adopt several expressions.
These days, the monk from the Zezhou 澤州 Prefecture, Daohuan 道環 by name, sent offerings to the mountain. Full of adoration for what the meditation master Daiyi had seen in the vision, [Daohuan] set his heart upon building the Jin’ge Temple according to the drawing for the sake of the empire. The number of chapels and edifices would exactly accord with what had been seen [by Daoyi]. He started the working this summer, and the craftsmen and the sundry materials are all raised privately. [His undertakings] will fullfil the imperial plaque accorded by the late Sage (i.e. Suzong) and conclude the divine resonance roused by Daiyi.

The vow of this monk, should I say, is not ordinary; some say that [he is] supported by Mañjuśrī who tries to lead [us] to complete this divine cause (shengyin 勝因). Additionally, for the sacred mountain of Wutai, there are five temple plaques [bearing the imperial calligraphy]. The four temples of Qingliang 清涼, Huayan 華嚴, Fuguang 佛光, and Yuhua 玉花(華) have already been completed, and the Jin’ge Temple becomes the only one that remains incomplete. Given that temple-to-be is derived from a holy trace, who would not look forward to [its completion] with a feeling of worship?574

I, Bukong, would like to contribute my possessions to aid Daohuan in accomplishing this magnificent work. I have been worrying that time and tide wait for no man and that I may fail to fulfill this abiding wish. Yet I have repeatedly reported on this matter, and Your Majesty has granted imperial permission. For such a divine trace of Mañjuśrī, Your Sage must be the chief benefactor; to structure the temple of Jin’ge, who but Your Majesty is the right one? Ridgepole and beam are what the edifice rests on, and limbs are what the head rests upon. Together [the sovereign and his subjeucts] make one organic whole and bring all regions to harmony. For the Jin’ge Temple of such magnificence, unless the chief ministers, the Commissioner of Monitoring Armies575, as well as all ranks of officials, all extend their support, how could the project

574 The expression juzhan 具瞻 was formulated from a line from the ode “Jie Nanshan” 節南山 in Shijing (SSJZS: 393B [Legge 1876: 224-25]): “Such thou, Grand-master Yin, before the nation’s sight!” 赫赫師尹，民具爾瞻。
575 It refers to the powerful eunuch Yu Chaoen.
symbolize the beauty of the relationship of the lord and his subjects and limelight the greatness of the Jin’ge Temple?

Since the Great Virtue of the Baoshou 保壽 Monastery, the śramaṇa Hanguang, holds the imperial commission to head for Mt. Wutai and cultivate dharmic merit [for the state], I humbly request that he announce an imperial decree at the site where the temple is being constructed. With such piety, I pray that divinities will light up [the darkness] so as to channel their great blessing; may [the gods] bring peace and prosperity to the realm and protect Your Sacred Person. If Your Heavenly Grace allow it, please announce this to those concerned.

五臺山金閣寺

右大興善寺沙門,特進試鴻臚卿,大廣智不空奏。上件寺,先聖書額,寺宇未成。准開元二十四年,衢州僧道義至臺山,所見文殊聖跡,寺號金閣,院有十三,間居僧眾,云有萬人。臺殿門樓,茲金所作。登時圖畫一本,進入在內。天下百姓,咸欲金閣寺成,人誰不願?

令澤州僧道環,日送供至山,遵慕道義禅師所見之事,發心奉為國家,依圖造金閣寺。院宇多少,一如所見。今夏起手,工匠什物,茲自營辦。將滿先聖御額,終成道義感通。

觀夫此僧,志願非小;或謂文殊所假,俾樹勝因。且五臺霊山,寺額有五。清涼、華嚴、佛光、玉花,四寺先成;獨唯金閣,一所未就。既是聖迹,誰不具瞻?

不空願捨衣鉢,隨助道環,建立盛事。甞恐歲不我與,愆于宿心;屢亦奏聞,天恩矜允。夫以文殊聖迹,聖者為主;結構金閣,非陛下而誰?棟梁者,大廈是依;股肱者,元首所託。共成一體,和叶萬邦。金閣斯崇,非夫宰輔贊成,軍容匡助,百寮咸續,千官共崇,則何以表君臣之美,以光金閣之大也?

576 An error for jin 今.
577 The Shōren-in version (52) has the character as 因, a variant for yin 因.
578 The Shōren-in version (52) has the character as jing 景.
579 An error for rong 容.
保壽寺大德沙門含光，奉使還，恭修功德，伏望便於造寺所，奉宣聖旨。祈所厥誠，庶霛神照明，以介景福；康寧寰宇，保祐聖躬。如天恩允許，請宜付所司。

(An edict was issued to ratify this request on 1 v of Yongtai 2 [12 Jun. 766])

766, DALI 1, 62 SUI

XI.

BZJ: “A Request for Imperial Permission to Donate My Personal Possessions and to Cooperate in Improving the Sacred Yuhua 玉華 Temple” 請捨衣鉢同修聖玉華寺

The Sacred Yuhua Temple on Mt. Wutai

Concerning the above request, I, āramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, called Da Guangzhi, Bukong, have the following to report. By the decree issued on 11 ix of Qianyuan 1 (17 Oct. 758), the aforementioned temple was instituted together with the Jin’ge Temple. [At that time,] I, Bukong, take the initiative to request [your permission for me] to donate my personal possessions—to make the beginnings [for the preparation of the project]. 582 I humbly pray that the Superior Incumbent 583 of that very temple, Xingman 行滿, take charge of the project of improvement which would be modeled on the design of the Jin’ge Temple.

五臺山聖玉華寺

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580 The majority of versions have the character hui 迴, but I follow the Shōren-in version (53) and one of the collated version of the Taishō edition which render the character as xun 巡. See Editorial Note 4, T2120.52.0834.

581 The Shōren-in version (53) has the character as yuan 愿, which makes more sense.

582 The word xian 先 in the original line is vital to determine the exact meaning of the this sentence. According to the usage of the word in other places in the BZJ, it means that an action had been done prior to the time that the statement was making. This is confirmed by the dictionary of the language of the period. See JIANG Lansheng and CAO Guangshun 1997: 381.

583 The Superior Incumbent (Ch. shangzuò 上座, Skt. sthavira) was one of the three administrators of the larger Buddhist monasteries. The other two were the Monastery Head (Ch. sizhu 寺主, Skt. vihārasvāmin) and the Administrator (Ch. duweinuo 都維那, Skt. karmadāna), and altogether they were known as the Three Cords (sangang 三綱). For the three positions in Chinese monasteries, see the account in the Dasong sengshi lü, T2126.54.0244c17-0245a08. Cf. the discussion of LIN Rouyun 2012: 178-81.
右特進試鴻臚卿大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空奏。前件寺准乾元元年九月十一日勅，興金閣寺同置。不空先請，自捨衣鉢，以為創首。伏望差當寺上座行滿，准金閣例，撿挍營造

(An edict was issued to permit the request on 21 xi of Dali 1[27 Dec. 766])

NOTE:

The construction projects of the Jin’ge Temple and the Yuhua Temple, as two imperial temples, had been approved by Suzong in 758. Until Bukong’s proposal to build the former, the latter had already been established, but it is unknown when the construction was finished. Was it during the the reign of Suzong (758-762) or in the first four years of Daizong’s reign (762-766)? Tha latter possibility seems unlikely, for it would be unwise strategy for Bukong to ask for two generous sponsorships from the same emperor for the same temple. In addition, had Daizong patronized the construction of the Yuhua Temple, it would have been an imperial grace that Bukong had to acknowledge with fulsome gratitude in the memorial, a normal practice that one must ensure when speaking to the throne.

Bukong’s special investment of his personal property at this point and, as once again we will see, before his death in this temple suggests that he had played a preeminent role in its original creation, just as in the case of the Jin’ge Temple.

767, Dali 2, 63 SUI

III.

BJZ: “A Request to Draft Monks and Ordain Persons for the Five Temples on Mt. Wutai”

請臺山五寺度人抽僧

The Temples of Jin’ge, Yuhua, Qingliang, Huayan, and Wumozi 吳摩子 on Mt. Wutai in the Daizhou 代州 Prefecture

Concerning the above request, I, the śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, Da Guangzhi Bukong by name, have the following to report.
The holy traces left by Mañjuśrī have been held in veneration from of old; now we are fortunate to see Your Majesty, with marked regard, expand and heighten [the monastic establishments to commemorate them]. To elaborately build monasteries, your gracious instructions issued thick and fast. Thus hundreds of deities extend protection covertly, and ten-thousand sages come and settle there. Whether in regard to the [quantity] of spiritual traces or the scale of construction projects, the present reign is magnificent.

Now that the site is august and pure, the personnel should be commensurate. Ever since the hardship (i.e. the period of An Lushan Rebellion), monks living there have been dwindling. Some wander hither and thither to evangelize people and thus remain in the midst of the masses, while others live in solitude making accommodations with various conditions and thus settle in other regions. Therefore, it makes the scheduel practices of liturgies and repentance neglected from one moment to another, and it leaves the meditation niches under the tree cobwebbed in darkness. With the field of merit [of the empire] unexpanded, [I] feel ashamed considering your expectation. I humbly pray for Your Heavenly grace. For each temple, please choose fourteen people from those practitioners and neophytes who have long devoted themselves to Buddhist practices vigorously and ascetically in the mountain and have them ordained; please also draft seven monks who are accomplished in the Way from various prefectures [into each temple]. Each temple would thus be staffed by twenty-one monks, who would commit themselves to sacred practices according to the Way for the state. Vacancies, if they occur, shouldd be filled.

In the five temples of Jin’ge and others, the sutra of Renwang huguo [jing] 仁王護國 and Miyan jing 密嚴經 are to be routinely chanted for the state. As for the temple of “Wumozi” 吳摩子, since the name sounds awkward, I hope it could be changed to the Temple of “Dali Fahua” 大

584 It refers to the ten thousand bodhisattvas that accompanying Mañjuśrī according the Avatamsaka Sūtra. See T0279.10.0241b21-23.
585 The term shizhong 時中, literarily striking opportuneness and appropriateness, conveys the Confucian ideal of personal cultivation. The locus classicus of this idea is the chapter of “Zhongyong” 中庸 of Liji (SJZS: 880A [Legge 1861: 250]): The superior man’s embodying the course of the Mean is because he is a superior man, and so always maintains the Mean. 君子之中庸也，君子而時中 Bukong uses this term in reference to the monastic routine practices according to the Buddhist prescriptions concerning precepts, liturgies, and etiquette.
曆法華, where the *Lotus Sūtra* would be routinely chanted for the state; just as the case of those five temples, those ordained [for this temple] should be exempt from any assignment of chores. I hope that the selection work be commissioned to Generals [Xin] Yunjing [辛]雲京 and Song Fengchao 宋鳳朝,586 Palace Envoy Wei Mingxiu 魏明秀, as well as the Śramaṇa of Merit Cultivation, Hanguang, and I expect that there would be no remiss in the work of selection.

In addition, the work to construct a pavilion for the Great Sage Mañjuśrī in the Qingliang Temple has been completed, and I pray that Your Heavenly Grace creates calligraphy for the temple’s plaque, and let the pavilion illuminate posterity eternally.

代州五台山金閣寺玉花清涼花嚴吳摩子等寺

右特進試鴻臚卿大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空奏。文殊聖跡，自古攸仰；今遇陛下，特更增修。精建伽藍，恩命稠疊。是可百神潛祐，萬聖來歸。靈蹤建興，於斯為盛。

處既嚴潔，人亦宜然。艱難已來，僧徒漸少。或經行化物，便住人間；或蘭若隨緣，周栖他處。遂使時中禮懺，鐘梵遞虧；樹下禪龕，蛛網交闇。福田未廣，有愧聖心。伏乞天恩，先在山中行人童子久精苦者，寺別度二七人，兼諸州抽道行僧一七人。每寺相共，滿三七人，為國行道，有闕續填。

金閣等五寺，常轉《仁王護國》及《密嚴經》。又“吳摩子”寺名且非便，望改為“大曆法花”之寺，常為國轉《法花經》；同五寺例，免差遣其所度人。望委雲京將軍、宗鳳朝，與中使魏明秀，又修功德沙門含光簡擇，冀無偷濫。

又，清涼寺為大聖文殊造閣已畢，伏望天恩，賜書一額，永光來葉。

(On 26 iii of Dali 2 [29 Apr. 767], an edict was issued to permit Bukong’s request)

768, DALI 3, 64 SUI

XZ: In the third year of the Dali Era, the great master (i.e. Bukong) established an [Abhiṣeka] Sanctum, [Emperor Daizong] granted the imperial sponsorship of twelve mattresses brocaded with auspicious patterns and thirty-two banners made of embroidered-silk, which could be priced at

586 Song Fengchao was a eunuch officer whose records are found in secular histories such as *JTS* and *XTS*. At the time, it seems that he was serving as the Inspecting Commissioner of Xin Yunjing’s command.
millions and millions [wen]; also granted were supplies to feast the congregation of participants in
the sanctum. The emperor’s close servants, ranking ministers, and various commissioners of the
Palace Guards were all ordered to enter the Abhiṣeka Sanctum. Besides, there were five thousand
persons from various walks of life [who attended the ceremony], either the clergy or the laity. 大
暦三年，大師於興善寺立道場，賜瑞錦褥十二領，繡羅幡三十二口，價直千萬；又賜二七
日入道場大衆齋糧。近侍大臣、諸禁軍使，勅令入灌頂道場；道俗之流，別有五千餘衆。

769, DALI 4, 65 SUI

BZJ: “An Edict Approving [the Request to Imperially Instruct] All Buddhist Monasteries of
the Country to Place Mañjuśrī as the Elder in the Refectory” 天下寺食堂中置文殊上座制一首

The Great Sage Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva

Concerning the above request, I, Great Virtues of the Capital City, the śramaṇa of the Great
Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State
Ceremonial, Da Guangzhi Bukong by name, among others, have the following to report.

Long since being unworthily admitted into the clerical community, we have devoted
ourselves to the pure practice; we study and translate the holy scriptures and have developed good
apprehension of the recondite teachings [of the Buddha]. The Great Sage Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva
thoroughly propagates both the Great Vehicle and the Esoteric Teachings. At the present time,
settling in Mt. Wutai, [the bodhisattva] maintains the peace [of the country], and his blessing
nourishes the myriad of beings. We humbly consider that Your Majesty, Emperor Baoying
Yuansheng Wenwu (the Emperor who is Blessed with a Precious Omen, the Primal Sage, with
Civil and Military Achievements), embodies the virtue that matches those of Heaven and Earth,
and your brilliance equals the sun and moon. Your boundless blessings content us the populace. I
humbly pray for an imperial order that from now on all monasteries across the country install the
image of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī above that of Piṇḍola in the refectory and as the Elder. Consulting
the sacred scriptures, one finds explicit terms concerning this point. Even the innumerable Buddhas undergo his instructions, and therefore it is unquestionably rightful for all clergy to pay their reverence. Even Avalokiteśvara and Samantabhadra hold the horsetail duster and serve as attendants; śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas pick up the sweeper and follow behind. This is universal in all kingdoms of India, instead of our foolish opinion. Please let it be an eternal principle.

大聖文殊師利菩薩

右，京城大德、特進、試鴻臚卿、大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空等奏。忝跡緇門，久修梵行，習譯聖典，頗悟玄門。大聖文殊師利菩薩，大乘、密教，皆周流演。今鎮在臺山，福滋兆庶。伏惟，寶應元聖文武皇帝陛下，德合乾坤，明並日月；無疆之福，康我生人。伏望自今已後，令天下食堂中，於賓頭盧上，特置文殊師利形像，以為上座。詢諸聖典，具有明文。僧祇如來，尚承訓旨；凡出家者，固合摳衣。普賢、觀音，猶執拂而為侍；聲聞緣覺，擁篲而居後。斯乃天竺國皆然，非僧等鄙見。仍請永為恒式。

Secretariat-Chancellery issues this governmental notification to Board of Sacrifice

This governmental notification [reads thus]:

The following decree has been received:

The Great Sage, Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī is the prince of the Dharma King (i.e. the Buddha), and his might and virtue enjoy exceptional veneration. [He is] the mentor of various Buddhas and cleanses the mental view of all sentient beings. [He] contents our people and saves innumerable beings. Without the tangible exaltation of him, how could people realize to pay their reverence? Lately the Great Virtues of the Capital presented their earnest petition about the above matter, which corresponds with the sacred texts. Their request should be allowed.

When this notification arrives, [act] according to the decree. Thus this document is issued.

19 xii Dali 4

中書門下牒祠部：
牒：奉勅，
XZ: In the winter of the fourth year [of the Dali Era], the great master (i.e. Bukong) presented a request to the throne that all monasteries across the country install [the image of] Mañjuśrī as the Elder. A favouring decree was issued to permit it, and soon it was pronounced to the whole country. 四年冬，大師奏天下寺食堂中，特置文殊師利爲上座。恩制許之，須宣宇内。

770, DALI 5, 66 SUI

XZ: In the fifth month of the fifth year [of the Dali Era], summer, [Daizong] summoned the great master to travel to Taiyuan and Mt. Wutai and cultivate dharmic merit there [for the dynasty]. [Earlier] this year, a comet had appeared, and on the conclusion of the sacrament, the demonic orb became subjugated. In late autumn, [the master was] approaching the capital city on his return, the emperor dispatched the eunuch envoy to welcome the great master outside the city, sending to him the emperor’s personal mount Shizicong (lit. Lion Steed), saddle, and bridle. The great master firmly declined, which was not allowed by the grace of an imperial order. Therefore, riding the horse, [the master] entered the royal presence and answered the throne’s questions, and the emperor rejoiced. All his clerical and lay disciples, likewise, were invited into the inner hall and feasted; and the bolts of cloth awarded them were rather munificent.

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587 The appearance of a comet was understood as a portent of warfare and famine to the Tang state. See Goble forthcoming.
588 Raoul Birnbaum (1983: 33) surmises that the name of this steed implies Bukong was identified by the emperor as Mañjuśrī. This theory is clearly untenable before the fact that it was the imperial mount of Daizong and sent to carry Bukong into the palace. In this case, it would be an over-association to relate Daizong in some way with the divinity of the bodhisattva.
589 The inner hall in the palace was where the emperor met ministers and dealt with various affairs.
以所乘師子

VII.

BZJ: “A Decree Approving the Request to Institute Mañjuśrī Chapel at the Zhide 至德 Monastery in Taiyuan” 请太原至德寺置文殊院制書一首

The Secretariat-Chancellery issues this governmental notification to Tripiṭaka Bukong.

This notification reads thus:

The following imperial decree has been received:

“Da Guangzhi Bukong, Lord Specially Advanced, and Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, presents the following report. [I] request to institute a Mañjuśrī Chapel at the Zhide Monastery in Taiyuan and to draft fourteen Great Virtues of the Three Buddhist Disciplines [to maintain the chapel]. Let them pass on and enlarge the fundamental teachings and perpetuate the “Dharma lamp”. Additionally, I request to commission Dharma Master Daoxian 道憲 to routinely preach in this monastery.” This request should be accommodated.

On the arrival of this notification, act according to the decree. Thus was issued the notification.

13 vii of Dali 5

中書門下牒大廣智不空三藏
牒: 承敕，

“特進試鴻臚卿大廣智不空三藏奏。請於太原府至德寺置一文殊師利菩薩院，並抽三學大德二七人，遞弘本教，以續法燈。仍請道憲法師於此寺長時講說者，宜依。

牒至准敕，故牒。

大曆五年七月十三日

NOTE:

590 An error for 驄.
On 5 vii, an edict was issued ordering Bukong to arrange a Buddhist feast for ten thousand persons, and the expenses would be defrayed by the government of Taiyuan Prefecture. On the 13th day of the same lunar month, Daizong wrote to Bukong a letter expressing his concern for the latters’s well-being. The letter may have been delivered together with the above governmental notification that was issued by the Secretariat-Chancellery on the same day, as a formal reply to the request Bukong presented to the throne earlier. On 4 ix, Daizong wrote another letter to Bukong enquiring about his welfare when it was the cold time of autumn.

X.

BZJ: “An Edict Permitting the Request to Install A Portrait in the Haoling 號令 Hall and to Draft Monks into the Jintu Yuan 淨土 Chapel in Taiyuan” 請太原號令堂安像淨土院抽僧制書一首

Pray install a portrait of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra in the Haoling Hall, which is in the Datang Xingguo Da Chongfu Monastery in the Taiyuan Prefecture and was the place where Emperor Gaozu 高祖神堯 (i.e. Li Yuan 李淵) started the righteous military campaign (against the rule of the Sui House), and pray select fourteen monks to routinely chant the “Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī” for the state at the Abhiṣeka Sanctum in the Jingtú Chapel.

Concerning the above request, I, Tripiṭaka Śramaṇa Da Guangzhi Bukong, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, present the following report. Having received your gracious order, I proceeded to Mt. Wutai to cultivate the dharmic merit; when reaching Taiyuan, I made the pilgrimage to the above monastery, and thus I got the opportunity to pay homage to the hallowed traces left by Emperor Gaozu and Emperor Taizong when launching the just campaign, which lies nowhere but in this monastery. Indeed, it is the fount where the imperial cause gains its prosperousness and should be distinguished from other monasteries. I humbly pray for your heavenly kindness to exempt all kinds of corvée and tax and to devote the resources to the incense-offering ceremony and feast held on the death anniversaries of Emperor Gaozu, Emperor Taizong, etc.—the seven late Sages—and to the refurbishment of the
Haoling Hall and the installment of [the portrait of] Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. Please still order that all monks of the monastery chant the sutra of Renwang huguo bore jing for the seven late Sages from Emperor Gaozu to Emperor Suzong during the three whole months of abstinence and the ten fasting days of every month. May the boundless blessing be generated of eternal benefact to the seven Sages, and may the Buddha’s infinite gospel tally with the longevity of Your Majesty. As for the mindful chanting monks, I beg to make rigorously selection and to present the name list to the court. I hope that those lay people that have been sojourning could be dispatched [to support the project].

太原府大唐興國太崇福寺中高祖神堯皇帝起義處——號令堂，請安置普賢菩薩像一鋪；淨土院灌頂道場處，請簡擇二七僧，奉為國長誦《佛頂尊勝陀羅尼》。

右，特進試鴻臚卿三藏沙門大廣智不空奏。先奉恩命，往五臺山修功德，至太原，巡禮上件寺，因得瞻覩高祖、太宗起義聖跡，並在此寺。實為國家皇業所興之源，固不合同諸寺例。伏乞天慈，蠲免一切差科及地稅，便迴充高祖至肅宗七聖忌日設齋行香，及修號令堂，安置普賢菩薩。仍於三長齋月、每月十齋日，令合寺僧奉為高祖至肅宗七聖，轉《仁王護國般若經》。庶得無疆之福，永資七聖；無盡法音，上符皇壽。其念誦僧，伏乞精加簡擇，具名錄奏。先停俗客，望即發遣。

Secretariat-Chancellery issues this government notification to Tripitaka Śramaṇa Da Guangzhi Bukong. This government document [reads thus]:

The imperial decree has been received, saying “[The above request] should be accommodated.” On the arrival of this government notification, act pursuant to the decree, hence the notification.

Issued on 1 x of Dali 5

中書門下牒三藏沙門大廣智不空
牒：奉敕“宜依”，牒至准敕。故牒。

大曆五年十月一日牒

771, Dali 6, 67 Sui
II.

XZ: In the clement spring of the sixth year [of the Dali Era], there issued an imperial order granting the [Abhīṣeka] Sanctum of the great master twenty-four banners made of embroidered silk, one embroidered silk canopy, and an embroidered plaque. 六年春玉二月，勅賜大師道場繡羅幡二十四口、繡繮天一，并繡額一。

III.

BZJ: “A Memorial Expressing Gratitude for an Imperial Kindness [in Permitting the Establishment of] Mahāyāna Precept Platform and in Granting Food Supplies and Other Materials” 謝恩賜大興善寺施戒方等井糧料表一首

I, Śramaṇa Bukong, have this to say. The eunuch herald Li Xiancheng announced your imperial instruction that [the court] specially granted rice, millet, oil, and firewood to the Universal Equality Arena of Imparting Precepts of the Great Xingshan Monastery. Of the various meal supplies no sort falls in short. Holding and facing the edict, I am ashamed and tense, and joy and fear mix together. Being permitted the establishment of the sacred arena, I have already been much favoured; furthermore, [Your Majesty] vouchsafes supplies to us monks, profound beneficence indeed! I feel guilty about having no gateway to render my requital, and all that I can do is nothing but work vigorously and diligently day and night, increasing my commitment to the practice of mindful chanting. Hopefully this would repay one in myriad kindnesses. With solemnity, in the coming twenty-one days, I will lead all the monks who seek to receive precepts to practice the mindful chanting ardently and devoutly and conduct the Way vigorously and intensively. This is aimed to cultivate surpassing blessings for the state. My the infinite dharmic merit contribute to the well-being of Your Majesty. I cannot overcome the jointed feeling of utmost guilty and gratitude. I just consign to the eunuch envoy Li Xiancheng this memorial that expresses my gratitude to Your Majesty.

In earnest joy and fear,

Respectfully stated by Śramaṇa Bukong
A memorial presented on 28 iii of Dali 6 by Da Guangzhi Bukong, a śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial.

沙門不空言：中使李憲誠奉宣聖旨，特賜大興善寺施戒方等道場粳糯、粟米、油、柴諸物等，無不備足，以充齋供。捧對惲惕，忻悚交并。許其道場，為幸已甚；更賜僧供，雨露實深。自愧無階，能上答効；但晝夜精勤，加功念誦，冀酬萬一。謹卛求受戒僧眾等，於三七日懇誠念誦，精馳行道；奉為國家，以修勝福。冀無邊功德，上資聖躬。不勝慚載之至。

謹因中使李憲誠，附表陳謝以聞。

沙門不空誠歡誠懼謹言。

大曆六年三月二十八日特進試鴻臚卿大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空上表

IV.

BZJ: “A Governmental Notification Requesting Tripitaka Guangzhi to Ascend the Platform”

Concerning the above request, I, Huiche 慧徹, a Great Virtue of Precepts of the Baoshou 保壽 Monastery, among others, have the following report to present. The Tripitaka Master, our national preceptor, we humbly consider, is like the rampart or the moat of the castle to our

591 An error for 戴, as supposed by the Shōren-in version (78).
592 At the end of the memorial is attached a piece of Daizong’s reply.
593 It means to officiate over the ceremony of precept impartation.
594 This title is taken from the Shōren-in version, which makes more sense than that given in the Taishō edition which reads “Zhongshu-Menxia die qing Guangzhi sanzang deng tan Cibu gaodie yishou (Zhongshu-Menxia die zhunci)” 中書門下牒請廣智三藏登壇祠部告牒一首 (中書門下牒准此). The title of the Shōren-in version (78) is followed by the words “祠部告牒（中書門下院准此）興善寺三藏大廣智不空”, which seem also somewhat strange. This is a government notification that was originally issued by the Secretariat-Chancellery to approve the request made by Huiche and other monks for Bukong to impart precepts to the monks. The approval document was made according to the imperial instruction and was transmitted to the Board of Sacrifice. The latter signed the document and further transmitted it to the Great Xingshan Monastery, which was the final piece received by Bukong. The sections of signatures at the end of the notifications are omitted here.
595 The Chinese original lintan 臨壇 literally means “preside over the ordination platform”. Thus the Great Virtue of lintan means those eminent Buddhist masters who were qualified and responsible to hold the ceremony on the platform to ordain monks and impart precepts to them.
596 For the association of this monastery and Bukong’s Esoteric Buddhism, see Jinhua Chen 2010: 183-86.
Buddhist community. [He] is looked up to by people within the Four Seas and revered as the leading patriarch by all Buddhists in the two capitals. The ordination platform is so pure, and the ceremony requires one of great seniority and virtues. We humbly request that Tripiṭaka Bukong ascend the platform and officiate at the ritual to impart precepts to the multitude.

The Secretariat-Chancellery issues this following government document to the Board of Sacrifice:

Issue a notification to the Tripiṭaka according to the following:

The notification [from Secretariat-Chancellery]: An imperial decree is received, which says, “[The request] should be accommodated”. On the arrival of this notification, act pursuant to the decree, hence the notification.

The Board of Sacrifice issues the following government notification to the Great Xingshan Monastery:

This government notification: A government notification based on an imperial decree and issued by the Secretariat-Chancellery is received as above. Issue a notification to the concerned person pursuant to the above decree, hence this notification.

9 iv of Dali 6

中書門下牒祠部:
牒三藏准此。
牒：奉勅宜“依”。牒至准勅。故牒。
祠部牒興善寺
牒：奉中書門下牒牒如右。准勅右牒所由者。故牒。
大曆六年四月九日

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597 The four seas that demarcate Chinese domain in the mythological geography held in the ancient Classics. In the narrower sense, the term was used as a common byword of the country, but it may also refer to the whole world. In parallel with liangjing or “the two capital”, here it means the Tang empire.
X.

*BZJ*: “A Request to Enter the Scriptures [that I have] Translated During the Three Reigns into the Canonical Catalogue and Put Them into Dissemination”  

I, Śramaṇa Bukong, have this to say. Since a tender age, I had been attending my late master, Tripiṭaka Da Hongjiao, and for twenty-four years [I have been] learning the Dharma-gate of the Yoga [under his tutelage]. Afterwards, I traveled to the Five Indian Regions to enquire into the teachings [of the Yoga] that I had not received [from my late master]; there, I also restudied various *sūtras* and *śāstras* in greater depth. In all, I obtained more than five hundred Sanskrit scriptures of the Yoga and the *sūtras* and *śāstras* of the Mantra Divisions. For the welfare of the country, I have elaborately translated the holy words so as to expand and bolster the blessing and protection [from the divinities].

In the fifth year of the Tianbao Era (746), I returned to the capital (i.e. Chang’an). Under the gracious order of Emperor Xuanzong, I established a Buddhist sanctum inside the palace. [And by the grace of His Majesty], all the Sanskrit scriptures I brought back were permitted to be committed to translation. When Emperor Suzong had become the correlate of Heaven and succeeded [Xuanzong] as the Sage, I received a special edict and established the sacrificial practice of *homa* and rituals of *abhiṣeka* in the palace chapel. In addition, I produced translations of Buddhist scriptures for the empire—to help to propagate the imperial transformation [of the country]. I received the gracious decrees from the two Sages, which commissioned me to seek out all Sanskrit texts left behind by the Tripiṭakas of previous generations. Among those found texts, if there were those which had broken bindings or had fallen apart, [they] ordered to have them repaired; if there were any that had not yet been translated, [I was authorized to] carry on [the late Tripiṭakas’ work] and present the translations.

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598 The translation here is produced on the basis of the work done by Raffaello Orlando (1981: 67-71), with quite a few modifications. The translated scriptures listed in the beginning of the memorial are omitted here.
According to my humble understanding, Your Majesty is carrying forth the imperial cause and massively sheltering the people; Your Majesty open up a field of merit and making the sun and moon [burst through the clouds and] shine once again. The waves of your grace reach afar, and the rain of the Dharma pours down and flows in all directions; people within the Four Seas consign their souls to you, and the myriad regions joyfully extend their acclaim. Thus it is known that the Buddha has entrusted [the Dharma] to you indeed, O Sacred Lord!

I, Bukong, have received Your Majesty’s great munificence, which I am not worthy of, and my honour and good fortune are truly deep. When I reflect on myself with earnestness, I wonder how I can ever requite the state. I received the sagacious decree from the late emperor (i.e. Suzong), which orders me to enlarge the subtle words [of the Buddha]; now again I receive the gracious instruction of Your Majesty, which deferentially conforms with the instruction left behind by the late emperor (i.e. Suzong), and so renew the imperial commission that asks me to carry on the Buddhist translation to benefit and save various living beings.

Although working vigorously and diligently at all seasons, I have not repaid [the imperial favour] one part in ten thousand. Driven by such concern, I kept busy day and night, engaging into the elaborate translation of scriptures of the Mantra [Teaching] and Mahāyāna [Teaching], which, I hope, might constitute a paltry service and advance the Imperial Way (i.e. the governance). The Dharma-gate of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga, of which scriptures have been translated, is the expeditious path towards Buddhahood. Practitioners [of this Dharma-gate] will surely be able to make a sudden transcendence of the worldly realm and reach the Other Shore. As for those translated scriptures under the other systems of the Mantra Teaching, they feature the skillful means granted by various Buddhas, and they vary from one to another. Those Mahāyāna scriptures that have

599 The original Chinese term, fangbian 方便, seems to allude to the practice of rituals. Such usage is illustrated by Yixing 一行 in his Da Pilushena cheng fo jing shu 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏 (T1796), as has been pointed out by Shinohara (2012: 158-59).

600 Bukong made a discussion of five classes of Mantra teachings in the Dubu tuoluo ni mu 都部陀羅尼目 (903). The five classes (bu 部) are those represented by 1) the eighteen texts of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga cycle, 2) the Mahāvairocana sutra of the complete version, 3) the Susuddhikara sutra, 4) Subhāhu-pariprcchā, and 5) a certain sutra called Dali sameiye jing 担喇三味耶經.
been translated are all conducive to the welfare of the state and able to quell disasters; [they have
the power to ensure that] orbs not deviate their right course and wind and rain observe their proper
order. Let us deferentially rely upon the might of Buddhas and thereby assist the empire and bring
it to a success.

With solemnity, I have compiled all scriptural translations that I completed ever from the
Kaiyuan Era until the sixth year of the Dali Era (771), which total one hundred and one \textit{juan}
or seventy-seven titles, in addition to a catalogue of one \textit{juan}, with the names of the Sribes included,
either the clergy and the laity. Having all written out, I solemnly present them to Your Majesty on
the occasion of your birthday. May the Mantra scriptures eternally bless and protect your Sacred
Person, and may the might of the Mahāyāna sutras bring permanent peace to the empire’s domain.
As for those Sanskrit scriptures that have not been translated, if there are any more that are able to
protect and support the state or benefit and nourish living beings, I will begin to prepare and
present to you the translations. With utmost, unbearable sincerity, I present this memorial.

With great nervousness, I, Śramaṇa Bukong, deferentially state.

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A Memorial Presented by Da Guangzhi Bukong, a Tripiṭaka śramaṇa, Lord Specially
Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial

沙門不空言。不空愛自幼年, 承事先師大弘教三藏和尚, 二十有四載, 積受瑜伽法門。
後遊五方, 寻求所未受者; 并諸經論, 更重學習。凡得梵本瑜伽、真言經論, 五百餘部;
奉為國家, 詳譯聖言, 廣崇福祐。

天寶五載, 却至上都, 奉玄宗皇帝恩命, 於內建立道場。所齎梵經, 適許翻譯。及肅
宗皇帝, 配天繼聖, 特奉綸旨, 於內道場, 建立護摩及灌頂法; 又為國譯經, 助宣皇化。
累奉二聖恩勅, 先代三藏所有梵文, 並使搜訪。其中有緝索脫落, 便令修補; 其有未經翻
譯者, 續譯奏聞。

\textsuperscript{601} An error for 天.
伏惟陛下繽承皇運，大庇含靈，廣闢福田，重明日月。恩波遠被，法雨分流；四海宅心，萬方欣戴。是知佛之付囑，允在聖君。

不空叨承渥澤，榮幸實深；切自思之，如何報國。奉先皇聖制，令闡微言；又奉陛下恩命，恭尊遺旨，再遣翻譯，利濟群生。

雖復四時精勤，未酬萬一；是以區區於日夕，詳譯真言及大乘經典，冀効涓微，上資皇道。其所譯金剛頂瑜伽法門，是成佛速疾之路。其修行者，必能頓超凡境，達于彼岸。餘部真言，諸佛方便，其徒不一。所譯諸大乘經典，皆是上資邦國，息滅災厄；星辰不愆，風雨慎敘。仰恃佛力，輔成國家。

謹纘集前後所翻譯訖者，自開元至今大曆六年，凡一百一卷七十七部并目錄一卷，及筆受僧俗名字。繕寫已訖，謹因降誕之辰，謹具進奉。庶得真言福祐，長護聖躬；大乘威力，永康國界。其未翻梵本經中，但有護持於國，福潤生靈者，續譯奏聞。不勝虔誠之至，謹奉表以聞。

沙門不空誠惶誠恐謹言。

大曆六年十月十二日

特進試鴻臚卿三藏沙門大廣智不空上表

The Rescript of Emperor Baoying Yuansheng Wenwu (the Emperor who is Blessed with a Precious Omen, the Primal Sage, with Civil and Military Achievements) 寶應元聖文武皇帝批:

You, my master, have long served the previous reigns and greatly promulgated the wondrous teachings; you expounded the Sanskrit scriptures and widely guided [sentient beings out of] the “ford of delusion”. We inherit the grand scheme of the imperial cause and deferentially follow the sagacious instruction [of my late father]; thus master, you make another endeavour to prepare elaborate translations, making the collection of scrolls (i.e. the Chinese translations of Buddhist texts) yet more complete. This will save the living beings of all times and deserves praise and exaltation indeed. The scriptures that you have translated are to be announced to both the capitals and the provinces and are to be entered into the catalogue of the Buddhist canon.
和上夙事先朝，弘闡妙教，演茲貝葉，廣示迷津。朕嗣繒丕圖，恭承叡旨；和尚再加詳譯，令卷軸續畢，永濟生靈，深可嘉歎。其所譯經，宜宜付中外，入一切經目錄。**XZ:** On the Sage’s [i.e. Daizong] birthday in the tenth month (13 x, or 23 Nov. 771), the great master presented all scriptures he had translated; then an edict was issued announcing [the translations] to the capital and provinces, and they were included in the catalogue of the Buddhist canon. [The master’s] clerical and lay disciples [were all rewarded] as well, and five hundred bolts of cloth were granted in total. 十月聖誕日，大師進前後所譯經，有勅宣示中外，編入一切經目錄。并僧俗弟子等，都賜物五百一十疋。

**XKYL:** On the twenty-second day of this month (2 Dec. 771), the eunuch herald Li Xiancheng announced an imperial decree, which vouchsafed Tripiṭaka Bukong patterned silk, multi-coloured silk, and silk tabby, eight hundred bolts in all, and vouchsafed those Ten Great Virtues of Scriptural Translation thirty bolts of multi-coloured silk as well. On the twenty-third day, the Superior Incumbent of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Śramaṇa Qianzheng, among others, presented a memorial to express their gratitude。 特月二十二日，中使李憲誠奉宣勅旨，賜不空三藏錦綵絹等共八百疋，同翻經十大德，各賜縑三十匹。十月二十三日，大興善寺上座沙門潛真等上表陳謝。

**NOTE:**

The term Ten Great Virtues of Translation (fanjing shi dade 翻經十大德) appears to be used in the sense of a title in the *XKYL*. It indicates that there were ten regular members on Bukong’s translation team who held the standing post as is referred to by the term.

**772, DALI 7, 68 SUI**

**III.**

**BZJ:** “A Decree to Grant A Title Plaque to the Fotang 佛堂 Temple at Xiyuan 西苑 Ward in the Xihe 西河 County of the Fenzhou 汾州 Prefecture” 勒賜汾州西河縣西苑房602佛堂寺額制一首

602 The Shōren-in (98) and Ishiyama-dera (Takeuchi 1992: 106) versions both have the character 房 as 坊.
The ancient Fotang (lit. Buddha Hall) Temple at Xiyuan Ward in the Xihe County of the Fenzhou Prefecture

Concerning the above monastery, I, Tripiṭaka Da Guangzhi Bukong, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, have the following to report.

The aforementioned Fotang [Temple] was collectively founded by the populace of a Buddhist society in the Xihe County and constructed during the Zhide Era. [By creating the temple,] they hope their wish to be fulfilled that the demonic and baneful force (i.e. the rebels) be annihilated and the country be recovered. In deference to the heavenly reaction elicited by the filial piety of the late emperor (i.e. Suzong), they created the name of their Buddhist society. They have never pestered the government [by asking for sponsorship], nor have they sought support privately. [The fact is that] members of that Buddhist society raised funds from their domestic wealth and collectively brought [the construction] to completion. Ever since then, its refurbishments went on without cessation. In the year before last year, I proceeded to Mt. Wutai and cultivated dharmic merit under your gracious instruction, and during the return journey, I visited this Fotang Temple. Enquiring about the story of its founding, I learnt all those facts. [At that time,] the whole complex of the temple had already been completed. In view of this, I make this special request that Your Heavenly Grace grant a title plaque [that bears your calligraphy].

汾州西河縣西苑房古佛堂院

右特進試鴻臚卿三藏大廣智不空奏。前件佛堂，西河縣社邑百姓於至德年中，創共修葺。志願妖孽喪亡，國家剋復。伏以先聖孝感，取為社名，並不煩擾公家，亦不私有求

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603 The Buddhist society was named after the first era name of Suzong’s reign, namely Zhide 至德 or the Supreme Virtue. Suzong created such an era name to articulate that his ascension, seemingly a usurpation of his father’s throne, was out of the most urgent requirement of the situation to resist the rebels and thus constitute a practice of the filial piety that should not be undstood in the general sense. It was the filial piety of the highest level, the supreme virtue. The intent is expressed by Du Hongjian and Pei Mian’s discourse in persuading Suzong to proclaim emperor and the latter’s decree on his ascension. See JTS: 10, 242.

604 An error for 興.
The Secretariat-Chancellery issues this government notification to Da Guangzhi Bukong.

The notification: A decree has been received saying, “A plaque bearing the title “Fajin (lit. Dharma Ford) Temple” should be granted”, and on the arrival of this notification, act pursuant to the decree, hence the governmental notification.

Issued on 4 iii of Dali 7 (11 Apr. 772)

BZJ: “A Memorial Acknowledging Your Gracious Order [for me] to Pray for Rain and Offering Congratulations on the Rain” 恩命祈雨賀雨表一首

I, Śramaṇa Bukong, has this to say. Eunuch herald Jiang Tinggui 姜庭瓌 came to announce the imperial instruction, which says, “Lately there is a severe drought, and [thus we] order to pray for rain. The time limit to get the rain is the seventh day.” I, Bukong, have heard that it is the lord who makes his utterance in accordance with [Heaven and Earth], while it is the ministers who must obey the imperial decree. It comes to my humble consideration that Your Majesty clears the vision and achieve the hearing [so as to reach far in] all directions [and learn

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605 An error for 辦.
606 The signatures by officials of Secretariat-Chancellery are omitted here.
607 The word zhun 準 may have been taken from “Xici” 系辞 of the Yijing (SSJZS: 147A [Legge 1882: 353]): “The Yi was made on the principle of accordance with Heaven and Earth, and shows us therefore, without rent or confusion, the course (of things) in Heaven and Earth.”《易》與天地準, 故能彌綸天地之道。
608 The words si 絲 (silk thread) and lun 綸 (cord) are both used to refer to the decree issued by the king. The common terms include siyan 絲言 (thread-words) and lunyan 綸言 (cord-words). Bukong’s phrasing of lunfa 綸發 (cord-decree) here has the same reference. This usage derives from metaphors found in the chapter of “Ziyi” 緋衣 in the Liji 礼記 (SSJZS: 928B [Legge 1885b: 354]): “The king’s words are [at first] as threads of silk, but when given forth, they become as cord. Or they are [at first] as cord, but when given forth, they are as ropes.” 王言如絲，其出如緝；王言如緝，其出如織。
people’s situations]. [Your Majesty is] heavenly lofty, while [you] listen to the [realm] below, worrying about the farming. Indeed, Your Majesty archieves the perfection of the head [of the nation].

Having received your heavenly decree, we immediately sanctified the altar; none of us did not summon all our forces and unite our minds. We took advantage of the heavenly perfection of Your Majesty\(^609\) and relied on the teachings left by various Buddhas, and [our] petty piety has been made extremely intensified, while [your] utmost piety moved the divinities. Well before swallows could flutter above, as the foretoken [of rain], there appeared a widespread precipitation, which fulfilled people’s yearning and met your sagely mind. I am so joyful that I cannot contain myself from gesticulating with hands and feet. Sincerely I present this memorial to state my congratulations.

Śramaṇa Bukong, in sincere joy, respectfully state.

A Memorial Presented on 1 vi of Dali 7 by Da Guangzhi Bukong, a Tripitaka śramaṇa, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial.

沙門不空言。中使姜庭瓌至奉宣聖旨: “屬以亢陽, 令祈雨, 限七日得”者。不空聞, 絲言必准者, 君也; 綸發必從者, 臣也。伏惟, 陛下明四目, 達四聰, \(^610\)天高聴卑, 憂心嫁穡, 可謂元首之至明矣。

\(^{609}\) The term tiancheng 天成 seems to have been drawn from “Yuyan” 寓言 of Zhuangzi 莊子 (956 [Legge 1891b: 145-46]):

Yancheng Ziyou said to Dongguo Ziqi, “When I [had begun to] hear your instructions, the first year, I continued a simple rustic; the second year, I became docile; the third year, I comprehended [your teaching]; the fourth year, I was [plastic] as a thing; the fifth year, I made advances; the sixth year, the spirit entered [and dwelt in me]; the seventh year, [my nature as designed by] Heaven was perfected; the eighth year, I knew no difference between death and life; the ninth year, I attained to the Great Mystery. 顏成子游謂東郭子綦曰: 自吾聞子之言, 一年而野, 二年而從, 三年而通, 四年而物, 五年而來, 六年而鬼入, 七年而天成, 八年而不知死、不知生, 九年而大妙。 It seems that this context of the term endows it with the connotation of the seventh year, which happened to be the numbering of the year that this event occurred. At the same time, the direct and literary of the term is “heavenly perfection” which could describe the virtue of the emperor. This double references, I believe, are both meant in the choice the term.

\(^{610}\) The wording “ming simu da sicong” 明四目達四聰 generally means to let all people’s voices be able to reach the emperor. It comes from the chapter of “Shundian” 聿典 in Shangshu 尚書 (SSJS: 43A [Legge 1879: 41-42]):

On the first day of the first month of the next year, Shun went to [the temple of] the Accomplished Ancestor. He deliberated with [the President of] the Four Mountains how to throw open the doors [of
既奉天詔，旋嚴道場；莫不勠其力，一其心。使陛下天成，依諸佛遺教，微誠懇極，至誠感神。無勞燕舞之微，已降普天之澤。下順人望，上赴聖心。足蹈手舞，無任抃躍。謹奉表陳賀以聞。

沙門不空誠歡誠喜謹言。

大曆七年六月一日特進試鴻臚卿大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空上表

The Rescript by Emperor Baoying Yuansheng Wenwu 寶應元聖文武皇帝批

The wondrous conduct of you, my master, is perfect and illuminating; your great mercy brings relief to the masses. [You] are profoundly concerned with the country, and your benevolence nurtures the living beings. Having the altar established elaborately and neatly, [you] prayed for sweet rain in utmost earnest. Day and night, [you] prayed diligently, and therefore Perfected Sages (i.e. the Buddhist deities) came down in all its glory. In less than ten days, [you] effectuated the falling of rain. The green seedlings grow exuberant, and a year of good harvest is expectable. Considering my thin virtue, I feel ashamed and spurred in heart. 和上妙行圓明，大慈弘濟；慮深家國，仁洽生靈。精潔壇場，至祈甘澤；晝夜勤請，真聖照臨。不踰旬時，克致零雨。緣苗恒茂，豐歲有期。顧惟薄德，載懷媿勵也。

SPRING-SUMMER

XZ: In the spring of the seventh year [of the Dali Era], it was imperially ordered to grant [the master] one hundred bolts of silk tabby. This year, a drought lasted from spring through summer, and there was an imperial order requesting the great master to pray for rain. The eunuch herald, Li Xiancheng 李憲誠, announced the gracious instruction: “If in next three days, the rainfall proves sufficient, that would be, master, your credit; if the rain comes after the third day, it would not be ascribed to your work.” Accepting the decree, the great master established an altar, and already one day had passed; however, it did not miss the time limit when [he succeeded in] praying following the scriptural teachings. The rainfall was abundant, and the emperor was greatly

communication between himself and the] four [quarters of the land], and how he could see with the eyes, and hear with the ears of all. 月正元日，舜格于文祖，詢于四岳，闢四門，明四目，達四聰。

611 An error for 綠.
delighted. [The emperor] arranged a feast for one thousand monks and awarded [each of the master’s] clerical disciples seven monastic garments in order to repay his merit. 七年春，勅賜絹一百疋。是歳春夏旱，有詔請大師祈雨。中使李憲誠奉宣恩旨： “若三日内雨足，是和上功；非過三日，關和尚事。”大师受制，建立道場，一日已終；及依法祈請，亦不過限。大雨豐足，皇帝大悦。設千僧齋，并僧弟子衣七副，以報功也。

VI.

BZJ: “A Request to Draft Great Virtues into the Chapel of Stone Ordination Platform and the Chapel of Pagoda [Established] by My Late Master in the East Capital” 東都先師塔院及石戒壇院請抽大德制一首

The Pagoda Chapel of Tripitaka Master Da Hongjiao 大弘教 (Great Teaching-Promulgation, i.e. Vajrabodhi) of the Jianfu Monastery 薦福寺 in the East Capital: Requesting to draft seven Great Virtues from various monasteries with renowned conduct.

As to the above request, my late master established the abovementioned pagoda chapel when still alive and under the special [aegis of] Emperor Xuanzong. As many years passed by, buildings broke and crumbled; it is devoid of the offerings of incense and lamps, and nobody takes care of the cleaning work. Now, I request to draft seven Great Virtues from various monasteries to maintain this chapel. [Let them] practice repentance and chanting during all six periods of the day and cultivate [their virtue] and advance [their spiritual commitment] for the welfare of the empire. [Let them] devote themselves to the practices of the Three Mysteries of the Yoga and carry on the time-honoured mission of the masters and students [in the lineage].

The Chapel Yiqieyou Bu Gu Shijietan Yuan 一切有部古石戒壇院 (The Chapel of The Ancient Stone Ordination Platform That Belongs to the Sarvāstivāda School) in the same monastery: Requesting to draft from various monasteries seven Vinaya Masters with renowned conduct and to establish the ordination altar every year for the monks.

The aforementioned chapel of ordination platform was founded by my late master, who donated his personal possessions while he was alive. When proceeding to receive the full
ordination, I made an earnest vow, wishing to co-sponsor the construction [of the chapel].

Unworthy of your gracious beneficence, I, Bukong, hope that the clear and bright reign would be resumed; with the great master’s (i.e. Vajrabodhi) lost institution rising before my eyes, I hope the Gold Wheel would be set in motion once again. Now, I request [Your Majesty] bestow a plaque bearing the title “Yiqieyou Bu Jietan Yuan” and to draft seven Great Virtues [into the chapel]. Let them preach the homily on the precepts for the clergy throughout all seasons and practice the Dharma-gate of the Three Mysteries throughout all the six periods of the day.

The above is sincerely submitted [to Your Majesty] because of the previous report made by Da Guangzhi Bukong, a śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, about drafting monks into the aforementioned chapel and granting a plaque. [I further] request that vacancies, if they occur, should be filled and that taxes and corvée exacted by the prefecture and county governments, as well as sundary monastic affairs, be exempted, thus making the monastery distinct from various other monasteries.

東都薦福寺大弘教三藏和上塔院，請抽諸寺名行大德七人。

右，不空先師在日，特蒙玄宗，置上件塔院。年月深久，廟宇崩摧，香火闕供，無人掃洒。今請抽諸寺大德七人，住持彼院。六時懇念，為國進修；三密瑜伽，繼師資之舊業。

同寺一切有部古石戒壇院，請抽諸寺名行律師七人，每年為僧置立戒壇。

右件戒壇院，是不空和上在日，捨衣缽興建。當不空進具之日，亦有誠願，許同修葺。不空叨承聖澤，冀玉鏡之重開，睹大師之舊規，望金輪之再轉。今請置“一切有部戒壇院”額，及抽名大德七人，四季為僧，敷唱戒律，六時奉為國，修行三密法門。

612 In is unknown whether the vinaya of the Sarvāstivāda School held a special connection with the Yoga practices. Vajrabodhi was fully ordained according to this precept tradition, and it seems that Bukong’s ordination happened on that ancient stonel platform that had been constructed according to the vinaya. Vajrabodhi built the chapel to enshrine the platform.

613 The metaphor yujing 玉鏡 alludes to the clean and bright government. See Hanyu da cidian: 4, 520.

614 The ideal government of the Sage King of Gold Wheel.
以前特進試鴻臚卿大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空奏。前件院抽僧及置額等，請有闕續
填，其府縣差科，及一切僧事，並請放免，不同諸寺。謹件如前。

The Secretariat-Chancellery issues the following government notification to Da Guangzhi Bukong:

The notification: A decree saying “It should be accommodated” has been received; act pursuant to the decree upon the arrival of this notification, hence the notification.

A notification issued on 16 vi of Dali 7

中書門下牒大廣智不空:
牒：奉敕“宜依”，牒至准敕。故牒。大曆七年六月十六日牒

VIII.

BZJ: “A Decree Allowing the Request That Dharma Master Chaowu 超悟 Undertake Sermon in the Huadu 化度 Monastery, the Cultivation [of Dharmic Merit by Virtue of] the Six Bodhisattvas” 請超悟法師於化度寺修六菩薩講制一首

The Statues of the Six Great Bodhisattvas for the Huadu Monastery

Concerning the above [statues], I, Da Guangzhi Bukong, a śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, have the following to report. Previously I have received your gracious instruction and thus made the aforementioned [works of] dharmic merit; now, I request that Dharma Master Chaowu preach on the scripture Da boniepan jing 大般涅槃經 (the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra) before the statues for the sake of the state. I hope Your Majesty would uphold this arrangement and therefore clear the vision and hearing of the living beings, so that I, [your subject of] petty earnest, would fulfill my wish.

化度寺大菩薩像六軀

615 The Hudu Monastery was one of the three monasteries that Bukong’s yogin disciples concentrated, the other two being the Great Xingshan Monastery and the Baoshou Monastery.
The Secretariat-Chancellery issues this government notification to Da Guangzhi Bukong (The Board of Sacrifice [issues another notification] according to this)

The notification: A decree saying “[The request] should be accommodated” has been received. Act in accordance with the decree upon the arrival of this notification, hence this notification.

Notification issued on 2 viii of Dali 7

The Board of Sacrifice issues this government notification to Da Guangzhi Bukong:

The notification: As above, a government notification issued by the Secretariat-Chancellery including an imperial decree has been received. Act pursuant to the decree upon the arrival of this notification, hence this notification.

4 viii of Dali 7

BZJ: “An Imperial Decree Ordering [All Buddhist Monasteries across] the Country to Institute the Mañjuśrī Chapel” 敕置天下文殊師利菩薩院制一首

The Secretariat-Chancellery issues this government notification to Tripitaka Bukong:

The notification: The following imperial decree has been received:

“Each monastery and convent in the capital and in the whole country as well must select a fine place within the grounds and build a Chapel of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī. The work of
construction is commissioned to the chief governors of the prefectures. Sculpt a statue of Mañjuśrī, and on the completion of colourful painting and decoration, make a drawing and present it to the court. It is not allowed to construct [the chapel] outside the monastery or the convent.”

Act pursuant to the imperial decree upon the arrival of this notification, hence the notification.

Notification issued on 16 x of Dali 7

中書門下牒不空三藏:

牒：奉敕：“京城及天下僧尼寺內，各簡一勝處，置大聖文殊師利菩薩院。仍各委本州府長官即句當修葺，並素文殊像，裝飾綵畫功畢，各畫圖其狀聞奏。不得更於寺外別造。”

牒至准敕，故牒。

大曆七年十月十六日牒

NOTE:
The genre of this piece is called chidie 敕牒, which is a notification issued by the governmental department based on the emperor’s instruction. (Cf. the discussion of WANGSUN Yingzheng 2013)

The Board of Sacrifices must have issued the government notification to the local governments, which then may have transmitted the notification to the monasteries and convents. It is remarkable that Bukong received the government document as well, as Bukong was not the administrator of the Great Xingshan Monastery. In all likelihood, this was because he held the quasi-governmental post of Abhisheka Master that was responsible for designing various national Buddhist projects. The decision for the nationwide establishment of the Mañjuśrī Chapel was on Emperor Daizong’s own intitiative, though his formulation of the idea was never free of Bukong’s influence.

BZJ: “A Memorial of Gratitude for the Imperial Decree Ordering [All Buddhist Monasteries across] the Country to Institute the Mañjuśrī Chapel (the Imperial Rescript Attached)” 謝敕置天下寺文殊院表一首(並答)
I, Śramaṇa Bukong, have the following to say. The special decree comes to my humble sight, which was issued on the sixteenth day of this month (15 Nov. 772) ordering each monastery and nunnery in the capital and across the country to select a fine place within its grounds and build the Chapel of Great Sage Mañjuśrī, and which also requires sculpting the statue of Mañjuśrī and applying colorful painting and decoration. I, Bukong, have heard that only when a sage promotes the Dharma, his virtue would move Heaven, and his imperial largess benefits the living beings, just as the sun and moon hanging [in the sky] do. I feel truly happy and grateful, dancing with joy.

Your Majesty, I humbly consider, is opening up a world of the Dharma King and an extraordinary field that yields dharmic merit, [You] install the true countenance of Mañjuśrī to let All-under-Heaven behold. To us the clergy, the sense of honour is especially profound. The holy Mañjuśrī is the ultimate teacher of various Buddhas, and out of his great vows of compassion, he refuses to take the ultimate enlightenment. [Steering] the Great Vehicle, he guides the sentient beings [to the other shore], he grants benefit and happiness [to them] without end.

In the days of yore, Śākyamuni Buddha made a prophecy that the Buddhist Scriptures of One Vehicle would prevail in China, where sovereigns of the greatest sages would appear who were to rule the country according to the teachings of Mahāyāna throughout a period of over eight hundred years. There are many sages and worthies among the sovereigns of the past times, whereas none of them is the equal of Your Majesty, indeed. How fortunate I am, living in this sacred reign and being responsible for spreading and practicing Mahāyāna and serving Mañjuśrī. From time to time I practice the mantra of this sage for the sake of the empire. Many times, I come under his protection and care, and his grace becomes increasingly profound. I have been pondering this day and night, and struggling with that I find no way to requite his kindness.

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616 The One Vehicle means the ultimate, true mode teachings of the Buddha, and all other teachings are various expedients derived from it, such as vehicles of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. This idea is popular among various Mahāyāna traditions, which claimed itself to be the very One Vehicle. According to the context here, it is clear that Bukong uses the term to refer to Mahāyāna. His understanding of Mahāyāna, however, was different from the traditional sense, for he held that only the Yoga represented the true and complete teachings of Mahāyāna. See the discussion in Chapter 3.

617 It should refer to the Esoteric ritual of mindful chant centered on Mañjuśrī.
Beyond all expectations, your heavenly beneficence covers the whole land! I shed tears for my abiding piety, forgetting to dine or to sleep. I cannot cope with my joy and sorrow, and cannot overcome my extreme gratefulness. I sincerely entrust this memorial to the eunuch herald Yang Guizhen which expresses my congratulations.

In sincere joy,

Śramaṇa Bukong respectfully stated.

Presented by Da Guangzhi Bukong, Tripitaka Śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, on 27 x of Dali 7 (26 Nov. 772)

沙門不空言。伏見今月十六日特敕, 京城及天下僧尼寺內, 各簡一勝處, 置大聖文殊師利菩薩院, 并素文殊像, 裝飾綵畫者。不空聞, 惟聖作法, 其德動天; 澤潤生靈, 憲之日月。不空誠歡誠荷, 轉忻轉躍。

伏惟, 陛下開法王之玄造, 開非常之福田, 建文殊真容, 使普天瞻仰。在於緇侣, 光幸尤深。且文殊聖者, 即諸佛祖師, 大悲弘願, 不取正覺; 大乘引導, 利樂無期。

昔釋迦如來, 先有懸記, 一乘典語, 興在中華; 當有至聖帝王, 必以大乘理國, 八百餘載。歷伏帝王, 聖賢多矣; 實未有如陛下者也。不空何幸, 生遇聖朝, 介修大乘, 奉事文殊師利。常以此聖真言, 奉為國家特誦。每蒙護念, 恩德逾深。日夜思之, 無階上報。不謂忽然, 天慈普洽! 垂淚宿誠, 廢寢忘食。無任悲喜, 不勝戴荷之至。謹附中使揚貴珍, 奉表陳賀以聞。

沙門不空, 誠歡誠悦謹言。

大曆七年十月二十七日特進試鴻臚卿大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空表進

The Reply of Emperor Baoying Yuansheng Wenwu 宝應元聖文武皇帝批

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618 It should be an error for 誥, as the versions of Shōren-in (103) and Ishiyama-dera (Takeuchi 1992: 102) confirm. The term diangao 典誥 is a reference to the chapters “Yaodian” 堯典 and “Tanggao” 湯誥 of the Shangshu 尚書. Cf. Hanyu dà cidian: 2, 117. It was often employed to allude various Confucian classics, but here it means the Buddhist scriptures.

619 It should be an error for 代.

620 An error for 持.
The great sage Mañjuśrī had attained perfect enlightenment for aeons. He has since then been delivering human beings appearing in the Three Realms and confined the poisonous dragons on Five Peaks (i.e. Mt. Wutai). He is merciful and compassionate and his Way unfathomable, his salvific mission is universal and his merit everlasting. Therefore, we order all Buddhists to take refuge in him.

Tripiṭaka, you are a patriarch in the pure sphere [of Buddhism] and would surely feel comforted and gratified. Your congratulations are acknowledged.

大聖文殊，久登正覺，拯生人於三界，鎮毒龍於五峰。慈悲道深，弘濟功遠。故令釋眾，同此歸依。

三藏梵域宗師，當深慰愜也。所賀知。

**WINTER**

XZ: Winter, the great master requested for the imperial permission to create the Mañjuśrī Pavilion. His Majesty himself acted as the Pavilion Lord (i.e. the chief benefactor), the Senior Concubine, Prince of Han 韓 (i.e. Li Jiong 李迥, 750-796), and Princess Huayang 華陽 (d. 774) patronized the construction. Funds were disbursed from the state treasury and amounted to thirty million, only for the purpose of construction. 冬，大師奏造文殊閣，聖上自爲閣主；貴妃、韓王、華陽公主贇之，凡出正庫財，約三千萬數，特為修崇。

**773, DALI 8, 69 SUI**

L

**BZJ: “A Decree Permitting the Request to Arrange the [Sutra] Preaching at a Monastery of Each of the Two Streets” 請京城兩街各置一寺講制一首**

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621 That is, the three realms that the sentient beings transmigrate from one into another: The Desire Realm (Skt. kāma dhātu), the Form Realm (Skt. rūpa dhātu), and the Formless Realm (Skt. ārūpā dhātu).

622 A eulogy dedicated to Mañjuśrī preserved in the Dunhuang Cave suggests that the myth was circulating at the time that Mañjuśrī confines poisonous dragons that made disastrous rainfall to the mountain. Cf. Cartel 2013: 90.

623 During the period, the budget authority of the state revenue fell into the sole hand of the emperor, Daizong. See the discussion in Chapter 3.
[With respect to] the newly translated *Da Xukongzang jing* 大虚空藏經, please commission Great Virtue, Dharma Master Yuanying 元盈 of the Zhangjing 章敬 Monastery to preach [on this sutra] at the Baoshou 保壽 Monastery, and commission Great Virtue, Dharma Master Daoye 道液 of the Zisheng 資聖 Monastery to preach at the Ximing 西明 Monastery.

Concerning the above request, I, Da Guangzhi Bukong, a śramaṇa of Great Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, have the following to report. The aforementioned scripture has been published by an imperial edict but has not yet been expounded on. Without exalting the sutra, how could we advertise its holy dhammic merit? The above two Great Virtues have completed their works of exegesis, and I request that they regularly preach the sermon on the scripture: one at the monastery of the East Street and the other at the monastery of the West Street. May the river of blessing flow latently and contribute to your sacred longevity.

新譯《大虚空藏經》，章敬寺大德元盈法師，請保壽寺講；資聖寺大德道液法師，請西明寺講。

右特進試鴻臚卿大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空奏。前件經奉詔頒行，曾未開闡；若不稱讚，寧表聖功？上件大德，並述疏已成，請東西兩街，各於一寺，常講此經。冀福河潛流，上資聖壽。

**The Secretariat-Chancellery issues the following government notification to Da Guangzhi Bukong:**

The notification:

The document reads thus: An imperial decree saying “[The above request] should be accommodated”. Upon the arrival of this notification, act pursuant to the decree, hence this notification.

Document issued on 8 i of Dali 8 (4 Feb. 773)\(^{624}\)

624 Signatures below the date are omitted here.
牒：奉敕“宜依”，牒至准敕。故牒。

大曆八年正月八日牒

BZJ: On the twenty-fifth day of the second month (22 Mar. 773), there was a decree that the Fanjing 翻經 (lit. scriptural translation) Chapel of the Great Xingshan Monastery take the lead to construct the State-Protection Pavilion of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī and that Great Virtue Xiuyan 秀巖 act as the Construction Commissioner and Šramaṇa Huisheng 慧勝 be the inspector. 二月十五日,有勅於大興善寺翻經院起首, 修造大聖文殊鎮國之閣。大德僧秀巖充使修造使, 沙門慧勝同檢校。

SPRING

XZ: In the spring of the eighth year [of the Dali Era], [His Majesty] vouchsafed the great master two hundred bolts of silk tabby, to subsidize stalactite-medicament. 八年春, 賜大師絹二百疋, 充乳藥。

V.

XZ: In the fifth month, [the master,] under the imperial instruction, had prepared the translation of the Nielutu wang jing 羅路荼王經, a scripture in one juan. [His Majesty] rewarded with two hundred and twenty bolts of silk-tabby. 五月奉勅, 譯《羅625路荼王經》一卷, 賜絹二百二十疋

VI.

BZJ: An Untitled Memorial By Bukong

I, Šramaṇa Bukong, have the following to say. Deferentially I received your gracious instruction to translate this scripture; thanks to the heavenly support, the transalction has been completed. The names of Verifiers and Scribes and those of others, either the clergy or the laity, and the date and translation venue are all listed at the end of the scroll. On the Duanwu 端午

625 The original has the character as 萊, an error for 羅. The term nielutu 羅路荼 is one of the several Chinese transliterations of garuda. Cf. Yiqiejing yinyi 一切經音義, T2128.54.0499c14.
festival of last month (30 May 773), I presented the scripture to the court; Your Sacred Consideration has given support and vouchsafed your consent to announce [the scripture]. I am held in true happiness and awe, and I am full of the feelings of unworthiness and gratitude.

I have heard that the Buddha set forth the Teachings, while it is the monarchs who could enlarge and disseminate them. Other than the sagely sovereign, who could put the Buddha’s teachings into [extensive] implementation? It is my deferential belief that Your Majesty pull the sun and moon back to the regular orbit and shower the people with the rain and dew of gracious bounty. Although [your grace] nurtures all sentient beings, it is we, the Buddhist clergy, that receive special favour; basking in your largess. I ask myself, hand upon heart, but do not know with what I could requite it. This scripture is the ultimate fount of various practices and becomes the epithet for the Pure Land; the great vows of the bodhisattva (i.e. Mañjuśrī), his august merit, the samādhi and numinous penetration [he has achieved], as well as the seal of approval given by the Buddha, all are contained [in this sutra]. One would receive inexhaustible blessing if hearing the sutra merely for a little while and reacting with joy, not to mention reading or reciting it and learning and practicing the teachings: how could the dharmic merit of such commitment be limited? I hope to requite [Your kindness] one part in the ten thousand by the benefits of the Dharma. For the very purpose, I hope that Your Heavenly Grace orders all larger monasteries in the country to install seven monks, and all smaller monasteries three monks, to routinely preach on, read out, and recite [this sutra] in the newly established Mañjuśrī Chapel for the sake of the state, and that vacancies be filled if they appear. This is to ensure that the voice [preaching on the] Dharma and [the transmission of] Dharma-lamp never cease, which, in turn, will bring eternal prosperity to Your Majesty’s land and eternal protection to your sacred well-being. I could not cope with the most earnest wish and present this memorial.

In sincere hope and deference, Śramaṇa Bukong stated.

626 It means that Daizong brought the empire from the vortex of civil strife back to a peaceful state.
A Memorial Presented by Da Guangzhi Bukong, Tripitaka Śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, on ? vi of Dali 8

二月十五日有敕，於大興善寺翻經院起首，修造“大聖文殊鎮國之閣”。大德僧秀巖充使修造使，沙門慧勝同撿校。

沙門不空言。伏奉恩旨，翻譯此經；天力護持，卷軸功畢。證義、筆受僧俗名字，年月、處所，咸列終篇。去月端午，進奉已訖；聖情恩造，許賜班宜。不空誠歡誠悚，載媿載荷。

不空聞，設教者如來，弘傳者君上；施行佛事，非聖主而誰。伏惟，陛下迴月日於黃道，垂雨露於蒼生；霑潤物情，僧侶偏幸，修渥撫己，未知何報。然此經者，眾行之本源，淨土之殊稱；菩薩大願，功德莊嚴，三昧神通，如來法印，無不具足。暫聞隨喜，福尚無窮，況讀誦受持，功德何限？冀茲法利，酬恩萬一。特望天恩，令天下大寺七僧、小寺三僧，於新置文殊院，長時為國，講宣讀誦，有闕續填。務使法音，傳燈不絕，永康率土，長護聖躬。不勝懇願之至，謹奉表以聞。沙門不空，誠請誠悚謹言。

大曆八年六月日，特進試鴻臚卿三藏沙門大廣智不空表進

BZJ: “A Memorial to Present the Wenshushili focha gongde jing”進文殊師利佛剎功德經狀一首

The Dasheng Wenshushili focha gongde zhuangyan jing 大聖文殊師利菩薩佛剎功德莊嚴經 (The Scripture on the August Merit of the Great Sage Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī’s Buddha-land), one text in three scrolls (presented with a jeweled casket)

In regard to the above [scripture], I, Bukong, had received your imperial instruction to translate it, and thanks to your heavenly grace that was bestowed in many ways, [the translation] has been completed. We have edited the Chinese translation against the Sanskrit original and

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627 The title of this memorial is not given by Yuanzhao in the BZJ.
628 This is an error for 優.
meticulously determined the wording and transliteration, and the date, translation venue, the names of all Scribes, Verifiers, and others, either clerical or lay, are all listed on the scroll. The background story of Mañjuśrī, the original causation [of his spiritual pursuit], from the very beginning of taking great vows to his final attainment of the perfect awakenness, and the magnificent pure land [he will accomplish in the future] are all detailed in this scripture. The entity of principle of various Buddhas, bodhisattvas’ gateways of practice, the sentient beings in the realm governed by the law [of cause and effect], and the unborn absolute are all put into clear exposition. The dharmic merit [that this scripture generates] is so vast that other scriptures hardly equal it.

I wish such a superb cause could strengthen your sovereignty. I humbly pray to announce [this scripture] to the whole country so as to bring blessing to the living beings. Out of this very consideration, I hope that Your Heavenly Grace orders all larger monasteries to arrange seven monks and smaller ones three monks to routinely preach on, read out, and recite the sutra, as well as to practice the teachings at those newly established Mañjuśrī Chapels for the sake of state and that vacancies be filled if they occur. This would surely perpetuate the illumination the Dharma-lamp; of all deities and various sorts of living beings, who would not be pleased? Taking the opportunity of the birthday of You, the King of the [Gold] Wheel, a day when celestial beings and human beings join in happy gathering, I send the wish that this bountiful source of blessing would contribute to your longevity. May the Dharma stream make some influx into the holy ocean.629 Sincerely, I attach [the scripture and the casket] to this memorial and present them to Your Majesty. Should Your Heavenly Grace allow it, please issue an informal decree.630

629 The metaphor refers to the whole body of existing Buddhist teachings and practices.
630 The mochi 墨敕 is a genre of rescript to ministers’ reports or decrees announcing his decisions on various affairs. It was issued without being processed by the central government and was delivered directly to the recipient, thus reflecting the emperor’s personal will only. For discussion of this genre, see NAKAMURA Hiroichi 2003: 346-54; and YOU Ziyong 2005.
A memorial presented on 13 viii of Dali 8 (4 Sept. 773) by Da Guangzhi Bukong, Tripiṭaka Śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial

大聖文殊師利菩薩佛剎功德莊嚴經一部三卷(并寶鈿函)

右,不空先奉綸旨,令譯此經;天恩曲臨,並已成辦。參校唐梵,詳定言音;年月處所,筆受、證義,僧俗之名,咸題卷中。文殊事跡,緣起根由,始于發心,至成正覺,莊嚴淨土,此經具載。諸佛理體,菩薩行門,法界有情,無生實相,分明表示。功德廣大,餘經罕儔。願此勝因,上資聖祚。伏乞宣示寰宇,以福生靈。特望天恩,所是新置文殊院,大寺七僧小寺三僧,於文殊院中,長時為國講宣誦習,有闕續填。是使法燈,繼明不絕。靈神庶類,孰不歡心?幸因輪王降誕之辰,天人嘉會之日,冀茲景福,上益壽山;願以法流,添於聖海。謹隨狀陳進以聞。如天思允許,請降墨敕。

大曆八年十三日特進試鴻臚卿三藏沙門大廣智不空狀進

XII.

XZ: In the winter, on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month (30th Jan. 774), the top beam of the Mañjuśrī Pavilion was installed. All expenditures were at the imperial grace. Yet, there were additional bestowals, which were so many that the couriers could see each other on the way.

774, DALI 9, 70 SUI

I.

XZ: In the first month of the ninth year, spring, [His Majesty] vouchsafed [the master] sixty bolts of multi-colored silk. 九年春正月，賜綵六十疋。

IV.

XZ: In the fourth month, summer, [His Majesty] vouchsafed [the master] three hundred bolts of silk tabby to contribute to his personal fund. 夏四月，賜絹三百疋，充衣鉢。

BZJ: “A Memorial of Condolence on the Demise of Perfected-One Qionghua” 瑭華 (Jade-Blossom) 奉慰瓊華真人薨表一首

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I, Śramaṇa Bukong have the following to say. Humbly, I received [the announcement of] the death of Perfected-One Qionghua, which saddens Your Sacred Affection and grieves people on the road. I am myself inept at maintaining health and have been [ailing] in bed for quite some time. Your Sacred Grace does not mind that I am a mediocre monk and make Her Perfectness my adopted daughter; thus my grief is extreme, indeed, far worse than is often the case.

When the condition of Her Perfectness worsened, because my own poor condition makes me sluggish and weak, denying me enough energy to immediately get to the palace and pray for the divine blessing. Yesterday, the twenty-seventh day [of this lunar month] (10 Jun. 774), I struggled to prop myself up and tried to request an audience with Your Majesty; when approaching the southeast corner of the palace, I received the baleful news of Her Perfectness. Thus I turned back halfway. I call up the remembrance of her life and find unacceptable to bid her farewell. I have no way to vent my sorrow, and I am stricken by the anguish indeed.

I hope that Your Sacred Mercy allows me to exert myself to join the cortege and offer the service of sutra-recitation and the mindful ritual (zhuannian 轉念) on the second day of next month, so that my feelings and etiquette would be given expression and it would become a fortunate thing in the unfortunate. Over and over again, I make pious vows and present them to various Buddhas: May the soul of the deceased be protected by the power of the Dharma. I pray Your Sacred Mind shows your percipient understanding. Upon gaining some recovery, I will exert myself to approach your imperial presence and offer my consolation. Sincerely, I present this memorial.

In grief and anguish, I, Śramaṇa Bukong, stated.

A Memorial present on 29 iv of Dali 9 (12 Jun. 774) by Tripiṭaka Śramaṇa Da Guangzhi Bukong, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial.631

631 Daizong’s reply is omitted here.
真人乖攝之時，不空身正因懼，不獲力，疾就內加持。昨二十七日，扶策欲請對；行至子城東南角，已承真人凶諱。中路卻迴，追感平生，無由取訣，哀情莫展，痛迫實深。望伏聖慈，許不空來月二日，扶力就真人喪次轉念。獲申情禮，實為悲幸。每虔誠發願，上向諸佛，庶憑法力，保護亡靈。伏惟聖心，俯垂昭鑒，不空稍侯痊減，即冀扶持奉慰。謹奉表以聞。

沙門不空誠悲誠慟謹言。

大曆九年四月二十九日特進試鴻臚卿三藏沙門大廣智不空上表

The Rescript of Emperor Baoying Yuansheng Wenwu 寶應元聖文武皇帝批

Her Perfectness was my lifetime favourite; she had long suffered from illness, and [her well-being] relied on the fields of dharmic blessing; my master, you are so compassionate and recognize her as your adopted daughter. [Her disease had spread to] the vitals and was beyond cure, a situation truly deplorable. Master, you have suffered from ill health for quite some time, and your physical condition is rather weak. You had better stay in for recuperation and should never exhaust yourself to join the funeral procession. We look forward to hearing of your recovery.

真人平生朕深所鍾念。以其久疾，依怙福田；和上慈悲，養之為女。膏肓莫救，憫悼誠深。和上乖侯多時，體氣虛弱；且宜將攝，不可勞到喪次。伏聞痊復也。

BZJ: “The Last Will of Master Tripiṭaka” 三藏和上遺書一首

I proclaim broadly to my disciples of Four Groups. The great Teaching of Dhāraṇī is inexhaustively vast and deep; as to the mystery of the Yoga, who can fathom its fount? Since I renounced my household in my youth, I had been depending on my late master and pursuing  

632 An error for 困.
633 It means that the princess’s health was maintained by the dharmic merit generated by the various projects in support of Buddhism which were mounted in her name.
634 An error for 侯.
635 It is an error for 佇.
636 The translation is made based on the work done by Raffaello Orlando (1981:106-130).
637 Buddhists are divided into four groups: the male clergy, the female clergy, the male laity, and the female laity. Bukong refers to his disciples according to this categorization.
638 Here by “the Teaching of Dhāraṇī” and the “Yoga” Bukong may have refered to the Vajroṣīṣisa Yoga. He, on another occasion, combined the two terms together into “the Yoga teachings in the Dhāraṇī Division (yuqie zongchi jiao 瑜伽總持教). See T0915.18.0940b16 and T2120.52.0836b18-19.
Buddhist commitment; I had delved in Sanskrit scriptures for twenty-odd years—working day and night diligently and reverently rendering my consultations and reports—and only then [my master] imparted to me the teachings of the Yoga in four thousand verses. Ridden by my karmic defect, [I underwent the adversity that] my master’s life came to an end. Having nowhere to dwell and nobody to consign myself, what could I rely on in order to advance my studies? Therefore, I travelled far away to India, setting sail and braving dangers. [There, I conducted] exhaustive studying of the teachings of the Yoga and personally paid homage to the holy traces [left by the Buddha]. [Finally, I] obtained the seal of approval and the impartation of Dharma-treasure in one hundred thousand [verses]; then I came back to the capital of the [Tang] empire and, in this blessed land, started the mission to spread the teachings. Thus, while I served as the Emperor’s Attendant in one dynasty, I acted as the imperial preceptor for three reigns; to all three sovereigns, I have imparted the teachings of the Yoga and secretly taught mudrās. Ever since [the reign of] the current Sage (i.e. Daizong), the Buddhist teachings have been enlarged the most profoundly. The Yoga of Eighteen Assemblies has been all established, and rituals are performed towards each and every of the Thirty-Seven Venerated Ones. Thus, every time entering the sanctums, we devoted ourselves to the mindful chanting according to schedules. His Majesty himself regularly contemplates on the Mind of Five Wisdoms, and all ministers at court all commit themselves to the practices of the Three Mysteries.

吾普告四眾弟子等。大教總特, 浩汗深廣; 瑜伽祕密, 誰測其源? 吾自髫齓出家, 依師學業; 討尋梵夾, 二十餘年, 晝夜精勤, 伏膺諮稟, 方授瑜伽, 四千頌法。奈何積釁深重, 先師壽終。栖託無依, 憑何進業? 以其遠遊天竺, 涉海乘危; 遍學瑜伽, 親禮聖跡。得十萬頌法藏, 印可相傳; 來歸帝鄉, 福地行化。然一朝供奉, 為三代帝師; 人主盡授瑜

639 This refers to the *Jin’gangding yuqie zhong lüechu niansong jing* 金刚顶瑜伽中略出念诵经 (T866), the incomplete version of the STTS.
640 It refers to the eighteen texts of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga cycle.
641 It is an error for the character 持. See the manuscript versions of Shōren-in (118) and Ishiyama-dera (Takeuchi 1992: 86, 116).
伽，密傳法契。爰自今聖，弘教最深。十八會瑜伽，盡皆建立；三十七聖眾，一一修行。每入道場，依時念誦。九重萬乘，恒觀五智之心；闕庭百寮，盡持三密之印。

I have held the position of Abhiṣeka [Master] in the dynasty for almost thirty years, I entered the mandala and conferred the Dharma, and disciples are quite a few. I have been drilling my disciples in the teachings of the Five Divisions, and made eight persons accomplished, while with the perishing of two, only six remain. Who have obtained [the teachings of Five Divisions]? They are Hanguang 金閣含光 of the Jin’ge 金閣 Temple, Hyecho 慧超 from Silla, Huiguo 慧果 of the Qinglong 青龍 Monastery, Huilang 慧朗 of the Chongfu 崇福 Monastery, and Yuanjiao 元皎 and Juechao 覺超 of the Baoshou Monastery. When subsequent students have questions, you six persons [are responsible to] give instructions. Ensure the Dharma-lamp never extinguishes so as to requite my kindness.

吾當代灌頂，三十餘年，入壇授法，弟子頗多。五部琢磨，成立八箇；淪亡相次，唯有六人：其誰得之？則有金閣含光、新羅慧超、青龍慧果、崇福慧朗、保壽元皎、覺超。後學有疑，汝等開示；法燈不絕，以報吾恩。

I am already seventy [sui], and my vitality is ebbing; considering that the majority of you are still young [in terms of Dharma age], I make testament to you first. Clerical disciples of my chapel, Huisheng 慧勝 and the like, have been serving me ever since childhood; [you all] are deferential, scrupulous, and never slack; you have been toiling for years and years and indeed deserve compassion. Although you have never been exposed to the teachings of Five Divisions, it is certainly quite enough for you to attain Buddhahood if only perfecting [the practices of] one divinity [that you have respectively obtained]. [In the future], exhort yourselves, as if I were with you. Do live in harmony and jointly maintain [the chapel]; if there appears anyone damaging [the

642 Usually the word 餘 means “odd” or “slightly over”. If one counts from Tianbao 5 (746), when Bukong returned to the Tang court from Sri Lanka and Emperor Xuanzong conferred the title on him, the total years for him to hold this position is twenty-eight, rather than thirty-odd. It seems that Bukong uses the work to express the idea “almost” or “slightly fewer than”, instead of that of “slightly more than”, as we will see another such instance.
643 Cf. Jinhua Chen’s discussion (2010: 178-81) for the background of this monastery.
645 i.e. the Scriptural Translation Chapel (fanjing yuan 翻經院) of the Great Xingshan Monastery.
harmony of the community, my spirit will not protect you. The vajra-bell and vajra-mallet that I received [from my master] and usually employ, the silver plate, bodhi-seed rosary, crystal bead rosary and their containers, these are to be presented to His Sage (i.e. Daizong), with the request to be accepted into the palace.

況吾年登七十，氣力漸衰；汝等幼稚者多，故先遺囑。當院僧弟子慧勝等，少小事吾，恭謹無怠，勤勞歲久，實可矜憐。雖五部未霑，並一尊精熟，修持成佛，是646可有餘。各自策勵，如吾在日。必須和睦，同共住持；若有害群，吾不祐汝。吾受持金剛鈴、杵，並銀盤子、菩提子念珠、水精念珠并合子，並進供奉聖人請入內。

As for all you disciples of the Baoshou, the Huadu 化度, the Xingshan, and other monasteries: During my lifetime, you all depend on me, and I protected and cared about you. After my death, you depend on the state and must commit to the state, and you must be strenuous and devotional in practicing mindful chanting for the state. If the country is prosperous and the people are at peace, my wish will be fulfilled.

及保壽、化度、興善諸寺弟子等，吾在之日，汝等依吾，吾護念汝；吾百年後，汝等依國，於國須忠，努力虔誠，為國持念。國安人泰，吾願滿焉。

To Tanzhen 曇貞 of the Qinglong [Monastery], I have imparted the mantras of the great teachings [of Five Divisions], while as for those mudrās, he has not received the instruction. You impart them to him on my behalf. My lay disciple, the Merit Commissioner, Opening-Bureau Li 李 (i.e. Li Yuancong 李元琮) has been receiving the Dharma from me for more than thirty years; he has been industrious and devout, and his filial affection [to me] is deep and generous. When I was in Hexi and in Nanhai647, he travelled back and forth in order to seek instructions from me, and when [in the capital] I stayed in the Jingying Monastery or at the Court of State Ceremonial, he personally ministered to me. The Yoga of Five Divisions I have already imparted to him, and

646 It may be an error for 足, as one version shows. See Editorial Note 3 of the Taishō edition, T2120.52.0844.
647 The term Nanhai here means the province of Guangzhou, and here Bukong speaks of the years he spent in Shaozhou (749-753).
moreover, [the practices centering on] the Seventeen Venerated Ones and [those centering on] the Fifteen Venerated Ones further contribute to his mysteries. My silver instruments, the five-pronged vajra-mallet, and the three-pronged and single-pronged varja-bells are all bequeathed to his Opening-Bureau. Applying them in the practice of mindfulness, he should soon attain the Siddhi. All masters and monks of this chapel, his Opening-Bureau will come back and forth and inspect you, just as has been done during my lifetime; you must live in peace, and seniors and juniors be on good terms.

青龍晏貞，大法真言，吾先授與；至於契印，渠未得之。汝等為吾，轉為授却。俗弟子功德使李開府，依吾受法，三十餘年；勤勞精誠，孝心厚深。河西、南海，問道往來；淨影、鴻臚，躬親供養。瑜伽五部，先以授之，十七、五身，更增祕密。吾銀道具、五股金剛杵、三股、獨股鈴，並留與開府。作念受持，速證悉地。院中師僧，開府往來撿挍，如吾在日；務須安存，上下和睦

Even since the Suppervision Agent, Grand Officer Li, started to inspect me, he has never confronted me with the slightest disagreement. He comes back and forth [under the imperial instruction] and presents reports to the emperor, on all occasions contenting His Majesty. Not only does he serve the state, but also he is a bodhisattva who protects the Dharma. Soon [after he became my Inspector], he began to learn and commit himself to the Mysteries of Samantabhadra; following the teachings of the Great Vehicle, he will certainly attain [the Siddhi]. My silver karma-vajra and four vajra-mallets, as well as the wheel, are bequeathed to him. [I hope he will]

648 A set of Seventeen Venerated Ones occurs in a scripture translated by Bukong, the *Bore boluomiduo liqu jing Dale Bukong Sanmei Zhenshi Jin’gang Satuo pura deng yishiqisheng da mantuluo yishu* 般若波羅蜜多理趣經大樂不空三昧真實金剛薩埵菩薩等一十七聖大曼荼羅義述 (T1004).
649 An investigation is needed to identify these fifteen deities.
650 It refers to Li Xiancheng by the shortened form of his prestige title, Guanlu dafu 光祿大夫 (Grand Officer of Splendid Happiness), although it is unknown what this prestige title exactly is. Perhaps it is part of a set with the Golden Seal and Purple Ribbon (jinzi guanlu dafu 金紫光錄大夫), or perhaps with the Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon (yinqing guanlu dafu 銀青光錄大夫).
651 Bukong meant the highest form of the Great Vehicle, namely the Yoga, as he occasionally did by the term “Mahāyāna”.

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employ them in the practice of mindful [chanting] and thereby take the enlightenment, and [hope him] to protect and sustain the Buddhadharma just as he has done during my lifetime.

監使李大夫自監吾已來，無少違意。往來進奏，皆契聖心。不但輔佐國家，亦為護法菩薩。普賢祕密，尋以受持；踵襲大乘，必當剋證。吾銀羯磨、金剛杵四箇，並輪留與。受持為念，取證菩提。佛法護持，如吾在日。

The worthy Zhao Qian sometimes acted as the Scribe when I was preparing the translation of scriptures; his services of copying and writing on other occasions are also meritorious. If he would like to become a monk, you (i.e. Bukong’s clerical disciples) present a request to the court; if he would like to remain a layman, you also put him at his ease. Latterly, I have translated the *Wenshu jing* 文殊經 in one *juan*, the *Baolouge niansong fa* 寶樓閣念誦法 in one *juan*, and the *Rulaizang jing* 如來藏經 in one *juan*. Although the translation *per se* has been completed, I have not had time to present them to the throne. You take the responsibility to have them copied out and presented.

賢者趙遷，吾為翻經，有時執筆；諸餘鈔寫，亦有其功。若愛出家，為與聞奏；樂之處俗，汝亦安存。吾後翻得《文殊經》一卷，《寶樓閣念誦法》一卷，《如來藏經》一卷。翻譯雖終，未及進奉；勾當寫出，為吾進都652。

Bao Jin’gang 宝金剛 have served me for many years; he is meticulous and filially obedient [to me]. As for the commitment to the mindful chanting, he is vigorous and assiduous far beyond the call of duty. Let him stay in the chapel and be provided board and lodging together [with you].

寶金剛事吾日深，小心孝順，至於念誦，倍更精勤。留在院中，同住供養。

As for those ordinands and novices in this monastic quarter, from the worthy and virtuous down to those retainers, ask the Grand Officer (i.e. Li Xiancheng) to request the throne for their ordination. As for Sudhanayaśas, they should be freed as a commoners and be allowed to marry whomever they choose; or let them stay in the chapel as they wish. As for Ting Xiuwei 庭秀為, whose parents are in Nanhai (i.e. the Guangzhou Province), if he (or she?) intends to take care of them, you tell Opening-Bureau (i.e. Li Yuancong) to free him (or her) to fulfill the filial duty. Ling

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652 An error for 卻, which is confirmed by the Shōren-in version (121).
Qiao 令喬, who has the social status of monastery slave (jiaren 家人),\(^{653}\) has for long been waiting upon me; he accompanied me into the palace, and even the Sage (i.e. the emperor) knows him. He has constantly been asked to run errands, and the toil he has endured is the hardest. Ask Grand Officer Li to request the throne for his ordination. On the estate, there are two cows, reckoned to be worth over ten strings of cash; they will offset the loss of the permanent possessions [of this chapel] because of redeeming Ling Qiao.

院內行者、童子，上從賢德，下至汝\(^{654}\)奴，汝仕\(^{655}\)大夫為奏與度。其蘇但那野奢\(^{656}\)，並放為良，任從所適；樂在院中，亦任本意。其庭秀為，老親見在南海，欲得侍奉，亦語開府，放去養親。令喬為是家人，久以祗\(^{657}\)承，隨吾入內，聖人亦識。每偏驅使，辛勤最多。件\(^{658}\)李大夫與奏出家。莊上有牛兩頭，可准錢物拾餘貫，將陪常住，用充價直，收贖令喬。

[Equipment to] meet the need on various occasions (yingyuan 應緣) in this chapel and all articles of the sanctum—banners, flowers, images, statues, and other facilities of dharmic merit\(^{659}\), felt carpets, mats, rugs, beddings, copper and ceramic ware, and ladles and cups—are donated to the sanctum of the Mañjuśrī Pavilion, as the permanent sancraments. They must not be scattered and lost or be lent to outsiders. All my clothes have been dispensed without any left; there is eighty-seven taels of gold and two hundred and twenty and half taels of silver, which will be both donated to the two temples of Jin’ge and Yuhua on Mt. Wutai, [for the purpose of] furnishing them with furnishings of dharmic merit. All [my] household utensils, sundries, lacquerwares, ironware, crockery, beds, mats, felt carpets, beddings, meditation seats, sitting cushions, as well as things in

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\(^{653}\) For a discussion on the notion *jiaren* 家人, see YANG Jiping 1996: 57-59.

\(^{654}\) Other versions have the character as 海. See T2120.52.0844, Editorial Note 7.

\(^{655}\) In the Shōren-in (122) version and a manuscript version (T2120.52.0844, Editorial 8) this character is changed into *使*, while the Ishiyama-dera version has it as 仗. See Takeuchi 1992: 89, 117. Although the exact phrase here is not clear, it certainly refers to those lay postulants of lower social positions.

\(^{656}\) Orlando transliterates this two terms as above, following the ODA Tokunō’s *Bukkyō daijiten* 織田仏教大辞典. See Orlando 1981: 122.

\(^{657}\) A variant for 祇.

\(^{658}\) It should be recognized as a variant for 使. The Shōren-in version (122) render the character as 使.

\(^{659}\) The term *gongde* 功德 may refer to the Buddhist image. See *Tang Wudai yuyan cidian* 唐五代語言詞典: 140. It may not be limited to one thing, however.
all varieties, I am leaving these to this chapel for use, so that disciples who come and go might be
provided with lodging. As for [my] Sanskrit scriptures, deposit them together with the Buddhist
canon placed upstairs in the Mañjuśrī Pavilion. The canon and [some of those Sanskrit] scriptures
are granted by the imperial decree, to be kept there for effecting the divine safeguarding of the
chapel. For the sake of the state, you must regularly recite the sutras, practice mindful [chanting],
burn incense, and make offerings. Protect them from being scattered or lost.

I requested His Sage to create this Pavilion, where

the statue of Mañjuśrī is installed
downstairs while Buddhist scriptures in Chinese and Sanskrit are placed upstairs. It is the field of
dharmic merit of the state, where offerings must be made for all generations to come. The general
remodeling of the structure has been completed, while because builders are owed the payment, the
decoration has not yet been finished. Neither are the balconies, verandas, portal, and monks’
chambers. All those square-lumbers and rafters that are scattered about, you and Grand Officer
make an account, and then properly send a report [the result] to His Majesty and bring construction
to completion. With the completion of the Pavilion, for the welfare of the state install twenty-one
monks, who will devote themselves to the practices of sutra recitation and mindful chanting. I hope
this arrangement fosters the longevity of His Sage and fulfill my original vows.

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660 The character 轉 here seems redundant, which in other two versions is absent. See Shōren-in version (122) and
Editorial Note 14 of the Taishō edition (T2120.52.0844).
661 A version has the character as 漆, which is followed here. See Editorial Note 15 of the Taishō edition,
T2120.52.0844.
At the stupa of my master (i.e. Vajrabodhi) in the East Capital, you are to handle, on my behalf, the establishment of the monastic quarters of masters and their disciples and the estate. As for the chariots and cows, the estate Xiaonan zhuang 洨南莊 in the Hu 鄜 County, the newly purchased land, and the paddy field newly bought in the valley of Yusu chuan 御宿川664 and the vegetable farm in the south of the street—I left them all to the sanctum of the Mañjuśrī Pavilion, for those masters and disciples [who would be commissioned to] the practice scriptural recitation and mindful [chanting]. [The crop yield] will permanently serve as their food supply, as well as [the expense of] the incense, oil, charcoal, lamp, and other items used for devotional offerings; they are not allowed to be squandered outside the chapel. Do not allow any outsiders, whoever they may be, to hold back [the fair use of them] or appropriate them. The estate of Xiangguzi-zhuang is to be added to the permanent property [of this chapel]. Deliver the title deeds of the estate to the party of the monastery.

東京和上塔所, 師僧院舍莊園, 汝亦為吾勾當成立。其車牛、鄠縣洨南莊, 并新買新地及御宿川貼666得稻地、街南菜園, 吾並捨留當院文殊閣下道場, 轉念師僧, 永充糧用, 香、油、炭、火等供養, 並不得出院破用。外人一切不得遮蘭及有侵奪。其祥谷紫紫莊, 將倍常住。其莊文契並付寺家。

Again, I advise all my disciples: You must mark my words, that life is impermanent and nobody can escape this fact! In the way that the Buddhist master and disciple [treat each other],

662 The character 搏 here should be redundant; it does not appear in the Shōren-in version (123).
663 The character should be recognized as 桴.
664 For a study on the location and the literal meaning of this place, see XIN Yupu 1997.
665 The Shōren-in version (124) has the character as 汶, while the collation note of the Taishō edition says another version has the character as 汝.
666 It should be recognized as 賈, a variant for 賈.
667 Another version has the character as 柴.
affectionate bonding arises from the Buddhist law and justice, which completely differs from blood relations in secular case. If following my words, you are my Dharma sons; if disobeying my instruction, you are not my Dharma relations. After my death, never ever put on the mourning apparel or wail and lament at the funeral. If you think of me, be diligent in mindful chanting—then you will be requiting my kindness. You should neither splurge on grand rites and a funeral procession nor construct a mausoleum, only to waste manpower. What is needed is only a bed, and you only commit yourselves to mindful chanting. Carrying my body to the suburb, you hold the cremation service according to the Dharma. [After that,] get my ashes and pray for the divine blessing, and then have them scattered. You must not set up a funeral table or paint my portrait. Even the seventy-two students of Confucius understood what mind funeral was\footnote{The term xinsang 心喪 comes from the chapter of “Tanggong shang” 檀弓上, where it refers to the practice of mourning for one’s teacher in mind without dressing up in funeral apparel, according to Zheng Xuan’s 鄭玄 annotation. See \\textit{Hanyu da\allowbreak c\allowbreak di\allowbreak di\allowbreak an}: 7, 385.}, of my teachings which are passed down through \textit{abhiśeka}, the students cannot do likewise?

You are all born from the mouths of Buddhas and emanated from the Buddhadharmā, and have obtained your own share of Buddhadharmā. You selves are the same as Samantabhadra; undertaking the conduct of Samantabhadra and abiding in the mind of Samantabhadra; expand [your mind], perfect it, and make it illuminating to the utmost, and then the Five Wisdoms arise at the same time. Should you cultivate yourselves in that way, you are in accord with my heart. Why bother to hustle and bustle around, pursuing matters that are against the Buddhist law and to no benefit? This is my admonishment, and you must follow my instruction. In case that in the future
there is no authentication, I request the Three Cords, the Labour Steward, and others disciples [of the Great Xingshan Monastery] to sign their names and give their witness.

Hereby as your master I speak.

This is the ninth year of the Dali Era, Jia-Yin in the sexagenary cycle of years, in the fifth month or the Ji-Hai month in the sexagenary cycle of months, on the seventh day, or the day of Yi-Si in the sexagenary cycle of days. (24 Jul. 774)

Labour Steward Huida 慧達
Seat-Manager Mingyan 明彥
Administrator Fagao 法高
Temple Head Daoyu 道遇
Superior Incumbent Qianzhen 潛真

汝等諸子，是從佛口生，從法化生，得佛法分。即同普賢身，行普賢行，住普賢心；圓明廓周，五智齊現。修行如此，是契吾心。何勞驅驅營營，非法不益之事？吾所告焉，汝等須依吾此處分。恐後無憑，仍請三綱，直歲徒眾等著名為記。

邬波馴耶告
大曆九年歲次甲寅五月己亥朔七日乙巳
直歲慧達
典座明彥
都維那法高
寺主道遇
上座潛真

VI.

*BZJ*: “A Decree Permitting the Request to Install Chanting-Monks at the Two Sanctums in My Monastic Quarters in the Great Xingshan Monstery”  請於興善（寺）當院兩道場各置持誦僧制一首

669 For discussions of the duties and the historical changes of those monastic posts, see LIN Yunrou 2012: 177-95.
Of my disciples, I request that the monks Huilang 慧朗, Hyecho 慧超, Huican 慧璨, Huihai 慧海, Huijian 慧見, Huijue 慧覺, and Huihui 慧暉 be commissioned to practice mindful chanting routinely at the Abhiṣeka Sanctum in my chapel for the sake of the state.

[As for my disciples,] the monks Huigan 慧幹, Huiguo 慧果, Huiyan 慧嚴, Huiyun 慧雲, Huixin 慧信, Huizhen 慧珍, Huisheng 慧勝, Huishen 慧深, Huiying 慧應, Huixing 慧行, Huiji 慧積, Huijun 慧俊, Huixian 慧賢, and Huiying 慧英, I request that these monks be commissioned to routinely practice the brief-recitation of the imperially granted Buddhist canon at the Pavilion of Great Sage Mañjuśrī for the sake of the state.

I, Da Guangzhi Bukong, the Tripiṭaka Śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, have previously mentioned to Your Majesty [the arrangement]. I have lived in this monastery for almost twenty years, where I established sanctums and carried out projects involving Esoteric chanting for the sake of the state, and where, on more than one occasion, the numinous response [from various Buddhist divinities] has occurred—truly ineffable. The Pavilion of Great Sage Mañjuśrī, financed by your imperial grace, is nearing completion. Not only the Sanskrit scriptures but the imperially granted canons are installed within, a situation that warrants aggrandizement and operation, with the hope of contributing to your great blessing.

Huilang and others, the twenty-one monks in total, have been all exploring the Esoteric Treasury for a long time and are thoroughly conversant with the Ultimate Vehicle. Having perfectly mastered the monastic precepts, they are paragons in the Dharma community. I hope that Your Majesty accepts the above [request] and commissions them to practice the mindful chanting and brief-recitation of the canon, and should any contingencies happen, please select monks who are illustriously accomplished in the Way and fill the resulted vacancies. May the Dharma-lamp never be extinguished and may your sacred longevity be infinite.

670 Bukong was affiliated to this monastery in the year of 756, not long after the fifth month. Until his death there in the sixth month of 774, he had lived there for a full eighteen years. The “twenty-odd years” claimed here seems to be a rhetorical exaggeration. This is another case that Bukong used the word 餘 to express the notion “almost”.
弟子僧慧朗、慧超、慧璨、慧海、慧見、慧覺、慧暉。右件僧等，请於當院灌頂道場，常為國念誦。僧慧幹、慧果、慧嚴、慧雲、慧信、慧珍、慧勝、慧深、慧應、慧行、慧積、慧俊、慧賢、慧英。右件僧等，請於大聖文殊閣下，常為國轉讀勅賜一切經。

以前特進試鴻臚卿大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空奏：住此寺院，二十餘年，建立道場，為國持誦，靈應非一，不可名言。其大聖文殊閣，恩命賜錢，修造向畢。既安梵夾，又有御經。理合弘持，以資景福。

其惠朗等二十一人，並久探秘藏，深達真乘；戒行圓明，法門標準。望依前件，常令念誦轉經，如後有事故，即請簡擇灼然有道行僧填闕。庶法燈不絕，聖壽無疆。

The Secretariat-Chancellery issues the following government notification to Da Guangzhi Bukong:

The notification: A decree saying “[The request] should be accommodated” has been received, and upon the arrival of this document, act pursuant to the imperial decree, hence the notification.

A government notification issued on 6 vi of Dali 9 (19 Jul. 774).

BZJ: “An Imperial Decree Conferring the Prestige Rank ‘Opening Bureau and the Peerage of ‘Duke of the State of Su’’ 加開府及封肅國公制一首

The Decree:

The operation of the great Way brings various characteristics into agreement; the ultimate principles of the sovereign finds its entire origin in the correct Dharma. Confucianism and

671 The phrase dadao zhixing 大道之行 is taken from the “Liyun” 禮運 chapter of the Liji (SSJZS: 412A [Legge 1885a: 364]):

Confucius replied, “I never saw the practice of the Grand Course and the eminent men of the Three Dynasties, but I have my object [in harmony with theirs].” When the Grand course was pursued, a public and common spirit ruled all under the sky. 孔子曰: “大道之行也, 與三代之英, 丘未之逮也, 而有志焉。”大道之行也, 天下為公。
Buddhism equally achieve success in transforming and perfecting—why talk about them treading different paths! Therefore, emperors of the previous generations, without exception, commend and defer to [the Buddha’s teachings]. The promulgation of the Dharma keeps abreast of the times.

Da Guangzhi Bukong, Tripitaka Śramaṇa of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Lord Specially Advanced and Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, is our venerable patriarch and people’s [spiritual] helmsman. His Reverence is superb in mastering the Three Learnings, while he is free of the attachment to his personal view; he engages in myriad practices but constantly embodies [in actions the principle of] fickleness and cessation. He adheres to the disciplines of the vinaya and has dispensed with the bondage of affliction; he maintains the precepts and set the injunctions. Having inherited and developed the aspiration to spread the good teaching, he accepts the invitation of the king of men.

When at the former court, we already heard about the gist of his Way; ever since receiving his entrustment of the Dharma, we have constantly taken refuge in him. Every now and then, he holds scriptures in the hall of the palace and starts the lecture sitting on the front mat, and we rest ourself on the table observing the proper courtesy in a school; we ask questions in reverent attitude just as [Huangdi did to Guangcheng Zi] in Mt. Kongtong. Thus, the wondrous message [of

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672 The notion huacheng 化成 originates from the Yijing (SSJZS: 84A [Legge 1882: 239]): “The sages persevere long in their course, and all under the sky are transformed and perfect.”

673 The Three Learnings refer to the three cardinal fields of Buddhist training, namely the learning of precepts, the practice of meditative concentration, and the development of wisdom.

674 The verb jiming 继明 originates from the Yijing (SSJZS: 74A [Legge 1882: 304]): “The great man, in accordance with this, cultivates more and more his brilliant [virtue], and diffuses its brightness over the four quarters [of the land].”

675 The term shanjiao 善教 or “good instruction” comes from the chapter of “Jinxin I” in the Mencius (SSJZS: 231B [Legge 1875: 349-50]): Mencius said, “Kindly words do not enter so deeply into men as a reputation for kindness. Good government does not lay hold of the people so much as good instructions. Good government is feared by the people, while good instructions are loved by them. Good government gets the people’s wealth, while good instructions get their hearts.”

676 The wording here is an allusion derived from the chapter of “Zaiyou” in the Zhuangzi, which tells that Huangdi 黃帝 went to Mt. Kongtong 崆峒 in the effort to seek the instruction from the recluse Guangcheng zi 廣成子.
the Buddha] is perfectly expounded, and the practice of Mysteries is adopted internally. [He is always ready to be consulted, like a giant bell] waiting to be strike, and [he replies] in full flow; whether the inherent or the beyond, he understands everything. He cleanses and eliminates ignorance and illusion; he soothes and subjugates the demons and foes. The heavenly beings purify their minds in his gate of salvation, while nāgas and ghosts receive assignments under his divine seal. Indeed, regarding the auras, he wiped out those causing scourge, and regarding the welfare, he brought about propitiousness. Indeed, to us, he has aggrandized my military achievement, not merely that he benefits us by admirable benefits; there should be a promotion of his official rank, so as to manifest the imperial favour and courtesy. Having such an illustrious master, we could savour the Way all the more profound; thus, after much consideration, we decide to accord him higher official titles, however strained they are [for the transcendental sort of people like him], and so doing will bespeak our above wish.

子, who was known for his knowledge the supreme truth. In presenting his inquiry, Huangdi’s deportment demonstrates remarkable reverence and sincerity (381 [Legge 1891a: 298]):

Guangcheng zi was then lying down with his head to the south. Huangdi, with an air of deferential submission, went forward on his knees, twice bowed low with his face to the ground, and asked him, saying … 廣成子南首而臥，黃帝順下風膝行而進，再拜稽首而問曰……

The word duo 多 could mean meritorious military service, which fits the context in parallel with 利 or benefits. See Hanyu da cidian: 3, 1175.

The exact meaning of this sentence is not quite clear. The diction of the latter part, however, seems to be drawn from the section of “Wenyan” 文言 in Yijing (SSJZS: 16 [Legge 1882: 415]):

The “greatness” and “originating” represented by Qian refer to it as [the symbol of] what gives their beginning [to all things], and [also] secures their growth and development. “The advantageousness and the correctness and firmness” refer to its nature and feelings [as seen in all the resulting things]. Qian, [thus] originating, is able with its admirable benefits to benefit all under the sky. We are not told how its benefits are conferred; but how great is [its operation]! How great is [what is emblemed by] Qian! 《乾》“元”者，始而亨者也。“利貞”者，性情也。乾始能以美利利天下，不言所利，大矣哉!

The word sheng 盛 has been well known for the praise of Confucius present in the chapter of “Jinxin I” 盡心上 of the Mencius (SSJZS: 56B [Legge 1875: 169]):

So the sages among mankind are also the same in kind. But they stand out from their fellows, and rise above the level, and from the birth of mankind till now, there never has been one so complete as Confucius. 聖人之於民，亦類也。出於其類，拔乎其萃，自生民以來，未有盛於孔子也

The term qiangming 強名 is derived from chapter 25 of Daode jing (Legge 1891a: 67): I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Dao (the Way or Course). Making an effort [further] to give it a name I call it The Great. 吾不知其名，字之曰道，強為之名曰大 In this original context it articulates the weakness of language in indicating the Way; while it serves here as a foil to Bukong’s unworllyd achievement that goes beyond any bureaucratic title.
Within the wondrous domain, there are august and splendid lands; as for the ranks in Buddhism, there are distinctions among the stages of fruition. This is based on the principle of commending the virtuous and in deference to the contemporary institution. Promote him to “Opening Bureau and Unequalled in Ritual Status”, and ennable him as “Duke of the State of Su” with a [nominal] fief of three thousand households; other existing [posts and titles] remain as they are.

11 vi of Dali 9 (24 Jul. 774)

勅:

大道之行，同合於異相；王者至理，總歸於正法。方化城之齊致，何儒釋之殊途！故前代帝王，罔不崇奉，法教弘闡，與時偕行。

特進試鴻臚卿大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空，我之宗師，人之舟檝。超誦三學，坐離於見取；修持萬行，常示於化滅。執律捨縛，護戒為儀。繼明善教之志，來受人王請。

朕往在先朝，早聞道要；及當付囑，常所歸依。每執經內殿，開法前廗，憑幾同膠序之禮，順風比崆峒之問。而妙音圓演，密行內持。待扣如說，自涯皆晤。滌除昏妄，調伏魔冤。天人洗心於度門，龍鬼受軄於神印。固以氣消災癘，福致吉祥。實惟弘我之多，寧止利吾之美；當有命秩，用申優禮。而得師為盛，味道滋深；思復強名，載明前志。

夫妙界有莊嚴之土，內品有果地之殊。大乎尚德，敬順時典。可開府儀同三司，仍封肅國公，食邑三千戶。餘如故。
大曆九年六月十一日

*BZJ: “A Memorial Laying Out the Personal Feelings of the Master Tripiṭaka Nearing the End of His Life” 三藏和上臨終陳情辭表一首*

I, Śramaṇa Bukong, have the following to state.

I served my late master since a tender age, and [from then until his death,] it is two dozen years. I have been obliged to imperial kindness since early in my life and so far for thirty-odd years. While unfolding the Dharma-gate of the Yoga, I have received the favourable concern from successive Sages.

Ever since Your Majesty exercised the governance, the special imperial favour [bestowed upon me] turned ever deeper: [Your Majesty] granted a residence in the palace for me to spend the disengaged hours⁶⁸⁹ and oftentimes descended from the imperial hall to consult me about the Way. Your Majesty lavished on me imperial favours, which, over days and months, have built up a colossal accumulation. Even though I have worked more vigorously and earnestly, how could I requite one portion of ten thousand [of your imperial kindness]!

Now, the dew or the lightning hardly stays, and the big catkin willow is among those plants that the soonest wither. I have been confined to sickbed from spring through summer, and Your Majesty showed deep solicitude and sent your caring regards over and over again. The eunuch envoys and renowned doctors [you sent to visit me] could see one another on their way. Notwithstanding, since it is the kind of disease that damages the vitals, I could be hardly rehabilitated by the treatment of either acupuncture or medication; subject to arising and dissolving, how could this constitution be fortified because of attachment and pity? Last night, I suddenly found my physical strength yet more weakened and as if the body did not belong to me. Every next instant, I could gasp my last, and my consciousness is on the wane; being about to bid farewell to Your hallowed reign, I am overwhelmed by the feeling of loathness.

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⁶⁸⁹ The term huangge 黃閣 was used to refer the department of Chancellery. It seems that here it means the buildings in the palace that were built not for the emperor but for officials to carry out government activities.
Now I have already lived a mediocre lifetime\textsuperscript{690}, and I am certainly not dying an early death. This said, in former years, I sailed across the South Sea and travelled extensively in the Five Indian Regions, in search for [any Buddhist teachings that] I had not heard about and to learn those that I did not understand. The sūtras of the Vajroṣṇīṣa Yoga—which alone total one hundred thousand verses—and [scriptures] of various systems of the Mantra [Teaching], as well as other sūtras and śāstras that I obtained [in that meanwhile] are of five hundred thousand verses in total; I intended to translate them all in the hope of slightly requiting the kindness of the state. How could it be that my lifetime has slipped away while my abiding wish remains unfulfilled! This is what I am regretting.

It is my humble view that Your Majesty bestows the compassionate bounties of various Buddhas and accommodates the people’s wish. Previously, I presented the translation of the \textit{Dasheng Wenshu focha jing} 大聖文殊佛剎經, and then Your Sacred Appreciation soon granted the imperial permission to announce it to both the capital and the regions. I humbly request Your Sympathy to consider my last word, which, I believe, would bring the royal house blessing and effect propitiousness throughout the numerous generations to come. Indeed, it is the very honour and happiness that a monk lives and dies for.

The five-pronged vajra-bell and vajra-mallet that were bequeathed to me by my late master, together with a silver plate, a bodhi-seed rosary, a crystal bead rosary, as well as the containers—these are presented to Your Majesty accompanying this memorial. Facing the paper, I weep a flood of bitter tears. Parting eternally from the hallowed dynasty, I could not cope with the feeling of the utmost loathness and admiration.

Sincerely, I entrust this memorial to Supervisory Agent Li Xiancheng to say my final goodbye. In earnest sorrow and attachment, Śramaṇa Bukong state.

\textsuperscript{690} There are different versions concerning how long a lifetime could be deemed as \textit{zhongshou} 中壽 or mediocre lifetime: over ninety sui, over eighty, over seventy, and over sixty. The version of over sixty years is appropriate for the death of Bukong, at the age of sixty sui.
A memorial presented on 15 vi of Dali 9 (28 Jul. 774) by Da Guangzhi Bukong, Tripiṭaka Śramana of the Great Xingshan Monastery, Opening Bureau and Unequalled in Ritual Status, Probationary Chief Minister of Court of State Ceremonial, and Duke of Su State.

沙門不空言。不空幼事先師，已過二紀，早承天澤，三十餘年。演瑜伽之法門，奉累聖之恩眄。自從陛下臨御，殊私轉深。賜黃閣以宴居，降紫微而問道。積恩重疊，日月相繼。雖復精懇，豈酬萬一。而露電難駐，蒲柳易衰；一從伏枕，自春往夏，陛下深嘆，存問再三。中使名醫，相望道路。但以膏盲之病，雖針藥而難生。生滅之質，寧戀惜而能固。忽從昨夜已來，頓覺氣力彌惙，身非己有。瞬息掩掩，心神寖微。違謝聖朝，不任戀慕。不空今者，年過中壽，未為夭逝。但以往時，越度南海，周遊五天，尋其未聞，習其未解；所得《金剛頂瑜伽》十萬頌、諸部真言，及經論等五十餘萬頌，冀總翻譯，少答國恩。何夙願之未終，忽生涯之已盡。此不空所以為恨也。伏惟，陛下降諸佛之慈惠，下從人之所願。不空先進《大聖文殊佛剎經》，聖情尋許，頒示中外。伏願哀愍，念臨終之一言，冀福皇家，滋吉祥之萬劫，實為僧人，生死榮幸。五鈷金剛鈴、杵，先師所傳，并銀盤子、菩提子，及水精念珠并合子，并謹隨表進奉。臨紙涕泣，悲淚交流。永辭聖代，不勝戀慕之至。謹附監使李憲誠奉表陳辭以聞。沙門不空，誠悲誠戀謹言。

大曆九年六月十五日開府儀同三司試鴻臚卿肅國公大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空表上

The Rescript of Emperor Baoying Yuansheng Wenwu

Master, you have attained the Tenth Stage [in the accomplishment of Buddhist practice], and you come from the Five Indian Regions. You spread and expound the teachings of the Yoga

691 The character 之 is added according to the Shōren-in version, which grammatically brings the sentence and the following sentence into couplets.
692 It should be recognized as 睚, a variant for 眷. See the versions kept in XKYL (T2156.55.0754c02) and ZYL (T2157.55.0890b07).
and interpret and disseminate Sanskrit scriptures. You made an extensive expedition, having travelled ten-thousands of li, and your court service spanned three successive reigns. You have lusted and translated of the sacred words [of Buddhas], and have personally received ācāryas’ impartation of Dharma. Meeting with the upturn in the imperial fortunes in the hands of sagacious kings⁶⁹⁴, you pass down the wisdom flame of former masters. You enlarge the mind of a Bodhisattva and fall ill because various sentient beings are ill.⁶⁹⁵ You have been in extremis for some time, and in the meanwhile, our sorrow grows increasingly deep. All your requests are granted.

和上行登十地，來自五天。敷演瑜伽，宣流梵夾。周遊萬里，踐曆三朝。先譯聖言，親承師授。當下武之興運，繼前薪之火傳。而弘菩薩心，為眾生病；彌留有問，宸悼增深。並宜依所請也。

XZ: On the eleventh day of the sixth month (24 Jul. 774), there was an edict promoting his prestige rank to “Opening-Bureau and Unequalled in Ritual Status” and enfeoffing him “Duke of the State of Su” with a nominal fief of three thousand households, with other [posts and titles] remaining as they are. [The master] declined again and again, which [His Majesty] disallowed. His disciples ran over to offer congratulations, but the great master was displeased, saying, “During their august appearance, the holy ones stretched out their hands to soothe me. It will be the time of their august appearance, the holy ones stretched out their hands to soothe me. It will be the time of

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⁶⁹³ According to the schema given in the Renwang jing, which was translated by Bukong and well studied by Daizong, the tenth stage is called the Ground of the Cloud of Dharma (Skt. dharma-meghā) and is the highest stage among the ten Bodhisattva stages in one’s spiritual progression to the Buddhahood. In other words, the level is next to the enlightenment.

⁶⁹⁴ The allusion xiawu 下武 comes from the ode “Xiawu” 下武 in the Shijing: “Kings die in Zhou, and others rise, and in their footsteps tread. Three had there been, and all were wise. And still they ruled, though dead.” 下武維周，世有哲王。三后在天，王配于京 In writings of later periods, the term was employed to refer to the worthy rulers that could carry forward the imperial cause of former sage-kings. See Hanyu dacidian: 1, 315.

⁶⁹⁵ This is to compare Bukong to the bodhisattva Vimalakīrti. During his illness, Vimalakīrti made the following remark in response to Mahājñāna who came to visit him: “From stupidity there is affection, and hence the generation of my illness. All sentient beings are ill, and therefore I am ill. If the illness of all sentient beings were extinguished, then my illness would be extinguished. Why? Bodhisattvas enter samsara on behalf of sentient beings. Because there is samsara, there is illness.” 從癡有愛，則我病生。以一切衆生病，是故我病。若一切衆生病滅，則我病滅。所以者何？菩薩為衆生故入生死，有生死則有病 See T0475.14.0544b20-23; McRae [trans.] 2004: 108.

⁶⁹⁶ The Shōren-in version (137) and those kept in XKYL (T2156.55.0754c23) and ZYL (T2157.55.0890b27) all have the character as 光.
my departure when the bright moon becomes full. Why do I appropriate fame and status when approaching the quietus!” Returning the imperial writ with his firm and respectful refusal attached, the great master passed away.

六月十一日，有詔就加“開府儀同三司”，封肅國公，食邑三千戶。餘如故。累讓，不許。諸弟子相次馳賀，大師不悅曰：“聖眾儼如，舒手相慰；白月圓滿，吾之去時。奈何臨終，更竊名位！”附令懇讓，大師自去。
### Appendix B

Texts Translated, Composed, and Attributed to Bukong

1. 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集 (T2120)
2. 大唐貞元續開元釋教錄 (T2156)
3. 貞元新定釋教目錄 (T2157)
4. 諸阿闍梨真言密教部類總錄 (T2176)

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<td>金刚頂瑜伽般若理趣经（一卷）（大樂金刚不空真实三摩地耶经般若波罗蜜多理趣品）</td>
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