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CONTENTS

The Lord of All Virtues HUDAYA KANDAHJAYA	1
Bianhong, Mastermind of Borobudur? HIRAM WOODWARD	25
Theravāda in History PETER SKILLING	61
Tsongkhapa on Tantric Exegetical Authority and Methodology DAVID B. GRAY	95
Nāgārjuna's Worldview: Relevance for Today KRISTIN LARGEN	119
Pattern Recognition and Analysis in the Chinese Buddhist Canon: A Study of "Original Enlightenment" LEWIS LANCASTER	141
Basing Our Personhood on the Primal Vow JUNDO GREGORY GIBBS	183
Shinjin and Social Praxis in Shinran's Thought TAKAMARO SHIGARAKI, TRANS. DAVID MATSUMOTO	193
The Metaphor of "Ocean" in Shinran TAKANORI SUGIOKA, TRANS. MARK UNNO	219
World Macrohistory and Shinran's Literacy GALEN AMSTUTZ	229

The Daoist Facet of Kinpusen and Sugawara no Michizane Worship in the <i>Dōken Shōnin Meidoki</i> : A Translation of the <i>Dōken Shōnin Meidoki</i> TAKUYA HINO	273
The Taoist Priest (Daoshi) in Comparative Historical Perspective: A Critical Analysis RUSSELL KIRKLAND	307
<i>Pì xiè jí 闢邪集: Collected Refutations of Heterodoxy</i> by Ouyi Zhixu (藕益智旭, 1599–1655) CHARLES B. JONES	351
Initiation and the Chinese <i>Hevajra-tantra</i> (T. 18, 892) CHARLES WILLEMEN	409
A Comparison of the Tibetan and Shingon <i>Homas</i> RICHARD K. PAYNE	417
BOOK REVIEW	
<i>Readings of the Lotus Sūtra</i> , eds. Stephen Teiser and Jacqueline Stone TAIGEN DAN LEIGHTON	451
BDK ENGLISH TRIPITAKA SERIES: A PROGRESS REPORT	459

Bianhong, Mastermind of Borobudur?

Hiram Woodward

Walters Art Museum

BIANHONG, A NATIVE OF JAVA, arrived in Chang'an in 780. The brief Chinese biography of Huiguo (746–805), the monk who studied with the prolific esoteric master Amoghavajra and was in turn the teacher of Kūkai (774–835), states that Bianhong 辨弘 came from Holing (Java) and presented Huiguo with a copper cymbal, two conches, and four vases, expressing interest in the teachings of the Womb Mandala.¹ According to Kūkai—a towering figure in the history of Japanese Buddhism—Bianhong had already studied esoteric texts in Java, and in Chang'an, Huiguo initiated him into the Womb (but not the Diamond) Mandala.² (Kūkai was initiated into both.) It is not known whether Bianhong ever went home to Java.

The hypothesis that Bianhong did return and was involved in the design of Borobudur was proposed by Hudaya Kandahjaya.³ Brief inscriptions on Borobudur's covered base belong on palaeographic grounds to the 820s, and it has been suggested that the monument was founded by King Warak (r. 803–827).⁴ Bianhong could well have participated in planning sessions in the early 800s. To the question, "Was Bianhong the mastermind?" the answer is surely, "Quite possibly." Still, since the true answer is essentially unknowable, the question is not really a good one. More fundamental are two distinct matters, one being the degree to which the monument should be understood in a Chinese context, the other being whether there is a tantric element.

In regard to tantric, or Mantrayāna, elements, a case can surely be made that by 800 there was awareness of esoteric texts in Central Java. There were the texts Bianhong himself studied before his departure to China. Very likely the excerpts from such texts as the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* (also known as the *Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi-tantra*) preserved in Java in the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānan Mantranaya* were circulating in the eighth century.⁵ Evidence dating from the 790s indicates that there were links between central Java and the Abhayagiri Monastery

in Sri Lanka, where Amoghavajra was presumably in residence in the 740s.⁶ (He returned to China in 745, where he died in 774.) Finally, the inscription found less than a hundred meters from Borobudur, discussed by Hudaya Kandahjaya in his contribution to this issue of *Pacific World*, may be considered a *dhāraṇī* with esoteric content, and it shows that Buddhists following the Mantrayāna were active in the vicinity of the monument.⁷ That the Buddhists who planned Borobudur were ignorant of these currents is improbable. On the other hand, the content of the reliefs at Borobudur is not esoteric. It depends on a scripture concerning the law of cause and effect (a *Karmavibhaṅga*), the *Lalitavistara*, the *Jātakamālā* and other *jātaka* and *avadāna* texts, the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, and the *Samantabhadracārya-praṇidhana* (Vows of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, the *Bhadracarī*).⁸ The monument, in its overall thrust, surely conforms with the doctrines of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, of which the *Gaṇḍavyūha* and the *Bhadracarī* are the final parts. (Sometimes the arrangement of the buddhas overlooking the galleries, with *jinas* of the center and of the four directions of space, is considered evidence of esoteric content, but these buddhas may simply be buddhas who have descended from pure lands in various galaxies to pay homage to the teaching.) All this means that the planners must have chosen one of several paths: they could have suppressed all knowledge of the Mantrayāna in their efforts to create a monument proclaiming Avatamsaka (Ch. Huayan) tenets; or, they could have embraced certain Mantrayāna beliefs but re-interpreted them in their own way; or, on the other hand, they could have decided they wanted to build a monument that simultaneously had dual or multiple meanings, or, perhaps, meanings specifically outer, inner, and secret.⁹ If Bianhong was an important player in the decision-making process, this last alternative is the only one possible—though it could be added that he likely regarded the Avatamsaka content as both undergirding and totally consistent with his own beliefs. All of this supposes that Borobudur presents a coherent message, that it is not the product of one ideology grafted onto another in the course of construction. Although there is evidence of changes in plans while the monument was being built, the upper terraces and the galleries in their final form must have been planned together; otherwise there would not have been seventy-two panels devoted to the *Bhadracarī* on the fourth gallery and seventy-two latticed *stūpas* on the terraces.¹⁰ Of course, to the possibilities just listed above, various nuances could be added, such as that Borobudur's

Avatamsaka was already tantricized, and so there was not necessarily a strong consciousness of two distinct paths.

As for China, the very fact that Bianhong is a historical figure implies the existence of forgotten Javanese monks who also traveled to China. Once a Chinese factor is assumed, many conjectures can be made about the meaning of Borobudur, and discussion will be found in the pages that follow concerning the design of the terraces, the role of assemblies (*hui*, 會), cause and fruit, sudden enlightenment, and other matters. It has to be granted, however, that identifying elements for which no other explanation can be found than knowledge of Chinese thinking is a somewhat different matter, simply because there survives so much more evidence on the Chinese side than on the Indian. An example is the matter of the *Gaṇḍavyūha-Bhadracarī* sequence, the first text depicted in the reliefs of the second and third galleries, the second on the fourth. These two scriptures had existed independently until brought together in the eighth century, perhaps not until the creation of the text sent by the ruler of Uḍra (modern Orissa) to the emperor of China in 795. This was translated in Chang'an by Prajña in 796–798.¹¹ The Bhadracarī illustrations at Borobudur best conform in certain details to the text translated by Prajña.¹² Bianhong arrived in China in 780, but nothing is known about how long he stayed. If he was still there in 796, then he could have studied the text with Prajña and returned with it to Java. On the other hand, ties between Java and Orissa are attested by art-historical evidence, and recent excavations at the site of Udayagiri will doubtless strengthen the evidence for close communication.¹³ Therefore the text translated by Prajña could have reached Java directly from Orissa, without any Chinese connection at all.

My focus will be on Borobudur's upper terraces. Since their design is unique in the Buddhist world and because they are relatively mute—especially in comparison with the illustrations of the identified Buddhist texts in the gallery spaces below—there is no way to understand them without making imaginative leaps. The interpretations I have made in the past, as they are the basis for the proposals in this paper, will be first reviewed. Then I shall focus on the place of the alphabet diagram (*prastāra*), as found in esoteric texts, in the designing of the terraces, and on the implications this dependence has for the understanding of Borobudur.

INTERPRETING THE TERRACES

Early on, I suggested that the designers of Borobudur were familiar with the story of the demonstration by the Huayan master Fazang (643–712) of the nature of the *dharmadhātu* (“truth realm”).¹⁴ He placed ten mirrors in a room, four on the walls, four in the corners, one on the ceiling, and one on the floor. In the middle he put a Buddha image lit by a bright torch. Fazang installed a permanent version of his mirrored hall at the Jianfu Temple in Chang’an, which Bianhong presumably visited, since it was still in existence in 814.¹⁵ Fazang is said to have declared: “Your majesty, this is a demonstration of Totality in the Dharmadhātu. . . . [I]n each and every reflection of any mirror you will find all the reflections of all the other mirrors, together with the specific Buddha image in each, without omission or misplacement. . . . right here we see an example of one in all and all in one—the mystery of realm embracing realm ad infinitum is thus revealed.”¹⁶

This led to my supposition that the *stūpas* of the Borobudur terraces were originally gilded, or intended to be gilded—a proposal unlikely ever to be demonstrable archaeologically because the *stūpas* would have been covered with plaster before any gilding was applied. They reflected not only each other but also the visitor, who saw his own reflection mingled with the sight of the Buddha Vairocana inside. This visitor, it can be imagined, has become an inhabitant (*vihārin*) of the pavilion of Maitreya.¹⁷ In the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* the Bodhisattva Maitreya gives the pilgrim Sudhana a tour of this pavilion (*kūṭāgāra*), a tour depicted in an extensive sequence of reliefs in Borobudur’s third gallery. There, however, the visitor to the monument perceives the architectural elements of the tower as a tourist would but not as a true inhabitant—an enlightened being for whom everyday experience is no different from the pavilion. For such a person the entire world is like Indra’s net, “where principal and satellites reflect one another,” representing “the nature of things manifesting reflections multiplied and remultiplied in all phenomena, all infinitely.”¹⁸ This understanding is like the *samādhi* (concentration) of oceanic reflection (*sāgara-mudrā-samādhi*), which the Buddha had entered before he uttered the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*—especially if imagined as a nighttime sea become suddenly calm and reflecting the stars.¹⁹ The Chinese title for the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* was “Entering the *Dharmadhātu* Chapter,” and it can be said that on the Borobudur terraces, the visitor has actually entered the *dharmadhātu*.

An argument made subsequently was that was that the three rings of 16, 24, and 32 *stūpas* could be understood as alluding to the sun, the moon, and the planets and stars, the latter comprising five-times-five planets and the seven stars of the Big Dipper, in accordance with a Daoist sequence that culminates in “pacing the mainstay” (*bugang*, 步綱).²⁰ These celestial bodies, the “Three Originals,” can also be found inside the human body, below the navel. At the same time, I proposed that the circular configuration of the perforated *stūpas* indicated a familiarity with the *cakrākṣara*, “wheel letters” or circle of phonemes, as illustrated in a text in Chinese attributed to Amoghavajra (T. 1020), but I did not attempt to explain the meaning or function of the wheel (fig. 1). In addition, I argued that the square- and diamond-shaped openings in the *stūpas* were also breaths, which the Javanese initiation text the *Advaya Sādhana* describes as having geometrical shapes.²¹

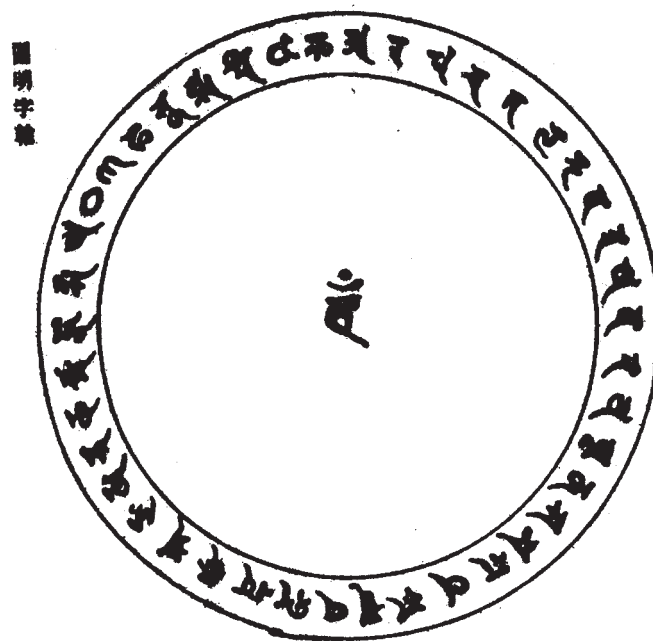


Figure 1. *Cakrākṣara* with the forty-two letters of the Arapacana syllabary, as it appears in the Chinese text T. 1020. Reproduced from Lokesh Chandra, “Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan,” in Lokesh Chandra, *Cultural Horizons of India*, vol. 4 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1995), 402.

There is yet another connection that can be proposed, one that appeared in my publications of 2004 and 2005.²² This is that the three terraces are like the *cakras* of the interior yogic anatomy in the *Yoginī* tantras and in *kuṇḍalinī* yoga: they are imaginable as lotuses, each petal bearing a letter.

LETTER DIAGRAMS

It has long been apparent that the numbers of the perforated *stūpas* on the three terraces correspond to those of a simple grid of 81 squares, in which the outermost ring has 32 squares and the ones next to it 24 and 16 squares.²³ Interpretations of the numbers of *stūpas* on the terraces, 16, 24, and 32, for a total of 72, have to take into account that the numbers were generated by this grid. What we don't know is the form in which such a grid became known to the Borobudur designers and what its associated content was. I propose that the grid was known in the form of a letter diagram (*prastāra*).

Such a letter diagram has been reconstructed by Toru Tomabechi on the basis of the Tibetan text of the *Uttarottara-tantra* of the *Sarva-buddhasamāyogaḍākinījālasaṃvara*.²⁴ Figure 2 is a re-drawing of Tomabechi's diagram, substituting Roman letters for Devanagari, and adding numbers that represent the order of the letters in the Sanskrit alphabet. The lost "root" *Sarva-buddhasamāyogaḍākinījālasaṃvara* is thought to be the text briefly described by Amoghavajra in his *Introduction to the Yoga of the Eighteen Sections of the Vajraśekhara-tantra* (T. 869), which has been translated into English by Rolf Giebel.²⁵ The same letter diagram appears in a Hindu tantra, the *Vīṇāśikha-tantra*, with which the Buddhist text must bear a close relationship. This tantra, which can be read in an English translation by Teun Goudriaan, is one of the texts claimed by a Cambodian inscription of 1052 to have been used in a ceremony of 802, 250 years previously—a claim that might be considered dubious, were it not for the fact of knowledge of the comparable Buddhist tantra in mid-eighth-century China.²⁶ In both of these texts, the letter diagram exists for the primary purpose of extracting a mantra.²⁷ The identity of the mantra can be disguised when it is described in terms of the position of the phonemes in the letter diagram.

There is a third such *prastāra*, one found inscribed on stone slabs at the Buddhist temple of Bat Cum at Angkor in Cambodia (fig. 3).²⁸ It has only been published in the form of a sketch, in which the Khmer characters are replaced by Roman letters, and lacunae indicated with

(17) k	(18) kh	(19) g	(20) gh	(21) ñ	(22) c	(23) ch
(24) bh	(10) ḷ	(1) a	(2) ā	(3) i	(7) ṛ	(24) j
(39) b	(15) ḥ	(42) y	(46) ś	(43) r	(4) ī	(25) jh
(38) ph	(16) ṁ	(49) h	kṣaṁ	(47) ṣ	(5) u	(26) ñ
(37) p	(14) āu	(45) v	(48) s	(44) l	(6) ū	(27) ṭ
(36) n	(9) ḷ	(13) o	(12) āi	(11) e	(8) ṛ	(28) ṭh
(35) dh	(34) d	(33) th	(32) t	(31) ṇ	(30) ḍh	(29) ḍ

Figure 2. Letter diagram (*prastāra*) according to the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, as reconstructed by Toru Tomabechi, redrawn with numbers indicating the order of the letters in the Sanskrit alphabet.

conjectures in parentheses. Very likely it dates from 953, the date of the Buddhist inscription at Bat Cum—though it is sometimes held that the site was originally that of a Hindu temple constructed early in the tenth century.²⁹ This diagram is of great importance because the outlines of lotuses are inscribed in the grid: this means that it is possible to imagine the letters in a circle, on the petals of a lotus, and to visualize them in three dimensions, one lotus above the other.

In the diagram (fig. 2), *kṣaṁ* appears in the center; *kṣa* is considered a fiftieth letter, added to the Sanskrit alphabet in tantric texts to make a more satisfying number than 49.³⁰ Eight letters (numbers 42–49 in the alphabet) lie in the innermost square, then letters 1–16,

the 16 vowels, in the middle square, and finally the 24 letters 17–40 in the outer square. The missing letter is *m*, letter 41, the last of the twenty-five consonants. The forty-nine letters cannot be figured in such a diagram without adjustments. George Cœdès, who published the Bat Cum diagram (fig. 3), had thought the missing letter was *k*, the first consonant. Other than this, and the absence of a letter in the center, the only difference in the Bat Cum diagram is the location of the vowels 7 to 10, which start in the southeast corner in Tomabechi's reconstruction and in the northwest corner in the Cambodian design.



Figure 3. Reconstruction by George Cœdès of a lithic inscription found at Bat Cum, Angkor, showing a letter diagram (*prastāra*). The numbers (indicating the order of the letters in the Sanskrit alphabet) have been added. After G. Cœdès, "Un yantra récemment découvert à Angkor," *Journal Asiatique* 240 (1952): 465–477.

The alphabet diagram is the matrix from which any mantra can be derived.³¹ It may also be considered to represent the emanation of speech, beginning with the supreme *aum* and extending to the primary phonemes, as well as an ideal totality. In the Chinese text, the place of the assembly (*hui*, 會) for the teaching of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-dākinijālasaṃvara* is a “mantra palace” (*zhenyan gongdian*, 真言宮殿).³² Perhaps this mantra palace is the letter diagram itself. In the Tibetan text, an aspect of the diagram is called a *gṣal yas khañ*, equivalent to Sanskrit *kūṭāgāra*, a word that of course had great significance for the Borobudur planners.³³

Knowledge of the *prastāra* helped shape the design of the terraces. If this argument is granted, then it has to be asked how much of its content carried over. Surely there is sound of some sort on the terraces; this is especially the case if the openings in the *stūpas* really are breaths. In Kūkai’s words, “No sooner does the inner breath of living beings vibrate the air of the external worlds than there arises voice (*shō* [聲, *sheng*, “voice”]).”³⁴ The nature of the sounds may be open to dispute, however. They could be basic phonemes, just as in the *prastāra*. They might be a selection of these phonemes, re-arranged in the form of either three different mantras or a single mantra of 72 syllables.³⁵ The syllables of a mantra could indeed be visualized in circle, corresponding to a ring of *stūpas* at Borobudur. Finally, the sounds could be those of discursive speech, if this speech is mantra-ized, so that its very sounds stand for the apprehension of Truth. Here arises the question of the *Bhadracarī* and of how the 72 panels correspond to the 72 *stūpas*.

It is contended here that the sounds are those of an extended alphabet. After all, this is the most direct way to deal with the planners’ understanding of the *prastāra*. The sixteen *stūpas* are the sixteen vowels, sounds that are the first to emanate, and which may be conceived spatially as the most celestial of the sounds.³⁶ In the second ring are the sounds characterized by an increased degree of voiceness, namely the consonants.³⁷ Since there are 25 consonants (letters 17–41) and only 24 spots, the letter *m* must be missing, just as in the *prastāra*. There is a passage in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* (or, at least, in the Tibetan text) that could be considered corroborative evidence, because it also omits the letter *m*. The consonants plus the eight semivowels and spirants (letters 42–49) are said in the commentary to the passage to be emblems of aspects of the “intrinsic nature of emptiness.”³⁸ So that there are 32 rather than 33 letters and the absence of *m* is not

immediately apparent, the nasals (*ṇ*, *ñ*, *ṇ*, *n*, plus *m* if it were there) are pulled out of their ordinary sequence and put at the end.

That leaves the third ring, which at Borobudur has 32 *stūpas*. But there are only eight letters left, the semivowels and spirants. Augmenting the alphabet so that it conforms to an ideal number is well attested; vowels can be divided in half, for instance, and nasalized sounds added at the end.³⁹ No alphabet with 72 phonemes has been found, but here it is proposed that at Borobudur the third ring was identified with the semivowels and spirants, letters 42–49, each followed by the sounds *a*, *ā*, *aṃ*, and *aḥ* (8 x 4), a means found in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* to turn 25 consonants into 100 letters.⁴⁰

CELESTIAL BODIES

Having constructed a provisional alphabetic sequence of phonemes, it must be asked what these sounds stand for: first, celestial bodies, and second, something more elusive—in the words just quoted, aspects of the intrinsic nature of emptiness. An allusion to celestial bodies is incontrovertible, even if there may be a question about which bodies are at stake. In the *Vīṇāśikha-tantra*, the following verses appear, in connection with the *prastāra*:

248. *anenādhiṣṭhitam devī cakravat parivartate |*
yathā tāraṇaṃ sarvaṃ grahaṇakṣatramaṇḍalam ||
 249. *dhruvādhiṣṭhitam tat sarvaṃ acalaṃ paravartate |*
tadvac charīraṃ devasya sarvabījagaṇaṃ hi yat ||

This is translated by Goudriaan as follows:

248. (this whole system) revolves like a wheel under His presidency, just like the complete host of stars, the orbit of planets and celestial bodies,
 249. the whole of which, presided by the Pole Star, revolves although being immovable. In the same way the body of the God which is identical with the complete host of Bījas [“seed syllables”].⁴¹

Transporting the *prastāra* (with its numerical sequence of 1, 8, 16, and 24) to the Borobudur terraces, the central and surrounding *stūpas* would be visualized as follows:

- (1) Pole star (*dhruva*)
 (16) Stars (*tāra*)
 (24) Planets (*graha*)
 (32) Lunar mansions (*nakṣatra*)

Here the numerology holds for the lunar mansions, if their number is augmented from 27 or 28 to the ideal number 32. As the structure of the *prastāra* is like that of the sacred diagram (the Vāstupuruṣa Mandala) used in consecrating the site upon which a temple is to be built, the literature on this subject can be considered relevant—especially the fact that Utpala, in his commentary on the *Bṛhat Saṃhitā*, repeated some of the *nakṣatra* in order to turn a list of 27 or 28 into a list of 32.⁴²

In Indian thought, the number 16 has had an enduring association with the moon.⁴³ A day, sunrise to sunrise, has 24 hours, and the day replicates the year.⁴⁴ This means that a correlation proposed by Mark Long and Caesar Voûte is very likely the correct one:

- (16) Moon
- (24) Sun
- (32) Lunar mansions⁴⁵

My thinking has changed since 1999, when I proposed that the configuration 16-24-32 was actually dependent upon knowledge of a Daoist sequence (sun; moon; 5 x 5 planets plus seven stars of the Big Dipper).⁴⁶ Since the Borobudur design, instead (it is argued here), arose from the alphabet grid, what can be said is that when Bianhong went to China he might have become aware of other interpretations and that he would have considered them evidence of the fundamental universality of the *prastāra*. If, indeed, Huiguo had performed the Daoist *kaozhao* 考召, “inspecting [demons] and summoning [spirits],” as Michel Strickmann believed, then Bianhong could have become aware of the cosmic significance of the numbers 16, 24, and 32 through his teacher.⁴⁷ Strickmann, however, may have misunderstood the meaning of the characters *kao* and *zhao* in Huiguo’s biography.⁴⁸ Also arguing against such a scenario is the fact that although there is plenty of evidence for the incorporation of the seven stars into Buddhist practice, that seems not to have extended to the number 32.⁴⁹

There could have been, however, reinforcement of the cosmic aspect elsewhere. The *mingtang* of the Empress Wu (625–705), a Buddhist adaptation of a Han-dynasty ceremonial structure, was no longer in existence during the period of Bianhong’s stay, and so we need not be concerned with its actual appearance but, instead, the visual image that formed in his head as he heard about it. Firstly, the name *mingtang* could have been understood as **vidyā-kūṭāgara*, that is, the tower of Maitreya permeated by the sound of mantras. Then Bianhong learned that the *mingtang* was many storied, square below,

like the earth, and round above, like heaven. Lastly he heard that on the ceiling of the round part were depictions of the sun, the moon, and the other heavenly bodies (*riyue xing chen*, 星辰星辰).⁵⁰ Bianhong's mental image of these heavenly bodies could well have corresponded to the eventual Borobudur.

There is an additional possibility. Bianhong was told that a water clock had been part of the *mingtang* complex. If this water clock resembled the well-documented Song-dynasty example, then it had a great wheel with 72 spokes, and among the lesser wheels, one had 16 lugs for striking the double-hours of the day by bells and drums.⁵¹ The visual relevance of these wheels would have been appreciated by Bianhong, who could have seen in them not only echoes of disks bearing letters but representations of the simultaneity of past, present, and future.

THE NATURE OF PHENOMENA

The letters of the alphabet can be arranged in three rings, as seen so far, as well as in other sorts of diagrams and in a single ring, in the form known as a *cakrākṣara*. There was a long textual tradition of *cakrākṣara*, and it is here proposed that to the *prastāra* all the established meanings of the *cakrākṣara* adhered. This traditional single-ring alphabet was not the regular Sanskrit alphabet, however, but another with 42 characters, known as the Arapacana syllabary, which originated in northwestern India.⁵²

In the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the pilgrim Sudhana visits the Good Friend Śīlpābhijña, a scene depicted in panel II.119, on the main wall of the second gallery at Borobudur. Śīlpābhijña's instructions are based on a forty-two-character *cakrākṣara*. His opening words are:

so'vocat-ahaṃ kulaputra śīlpābhijñāvatō bodhisattvavimokṣasya lābhī |
tasya me kulaputra mātṛkāṃ vācayamānasya akāramakṣaram pari-
kīrtayato bodhisattvānubhāvena asaṃbhinnaviṣayaṃ nāma prajñā-
pāramitāmukhamavakrāntam |⁵³

He said, "Son of Good Family, I have obtained higher knowledge of the arts and sciences of bodhisattva liberation. While reading the alphabet, Son of Good Family, when I enunciate the syllable *a* by the power of a bodhisattva, I enter a gate of perfected wisdom named pure sphere."⁵⁴

In Thomas Cleary's translation from the Chinese:

“I have attained an enlightening liberation with higher knowledge of arts. In uttering the phonemes, as I pronounce A, by the associative power of an enlightening being [i.e., bodhisattva] I enter a door of transcendent wisdom called sphere of totality.”⁵⁵

Śilpābhijña then runs through the remaining 41 phonemes. Let us focus on the letter *ṇ*, the 36th phoneme (picked out because the Sanskrit contains the term *cakrākṣara*). The text reads:

ṇakāraṃ parikīrtayataḥ cakrākṣarākāraḥkoṭivacanāṃ nāma prajñāpāramitāmukhamavakrāntam |

“When I enunciate the syllable *ṇa*, I enter a gate of perfected wisdom named speech of the limit of forms of the wheel of syllables.”⁵⁶

In Cleary’s English, again from the Chinese:

. . . pronouncing *ṇa*, I enter a door of transcendental wisdom called voicing the millions of configurations of the wheel of phonemes. . . .⁵⁷

There are two Chinese texts based upon the visit to Śilpābhijña, T. 1019 and 1020, both ascribed to Amoghavajra.⁵⁸ T. 1019 takes the passages concerning the 42 phonemes and augments each of them. Śikṣānanda’s Chinese translation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* text concerning the letter *ṇ* is:

唱拏孺可切字時。入般若波羅蜜門
T. 279, 10.418b21: 名觀察字輪有無盡諸億字

T. 1019 takes the *Gaṇḍavyūha* text as a starting point and adds to it. Here is the entry for the phoneme *ṇa* in its entirety:

T. 1019, 19.708c10: Na 停上字時。
T. 1019, 19.708c11: 入字輪積集俱胝字般若波羅蜜門。
T. 1019, 19.708c12: 悟一切法離諸喧諍無往無來行住坐臥不可得故

The addition comes from a passage concerning *ṇa* in a *cakrākṣara* in the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*:

T. 220, 5.302c11: 悟一切法離諸喧諍無往無來行住坐臥不可得故。⁵⁹

The entire T. 1019 passage means something like “Pronouncing *ṇa* and entering the Prajñāpāramitā gate called ‘voicing the millions of configurations of the *cakrākṣara*,’ I realize (*wu*, 悟) that all dharmas are other than various noisy arguments, are neither coming nor going, [and that] standing, walking, sitting, [and] lying down cannot be perceived [in them].”⁶⁰

The passage combines a positive idea—that *ṇa* stands for all possible (sacred?) speech—with a negative one, that phenomena cannot be pinned down. Dharmas, in the plural, are phenomena,

or more specifically, the finite number of mental elements that comprise consciousness.⁶¹ What is at stake is the “empty” nature of these elements: the enlightened mind realizes not only that standing, walking, and so forth cannot be identified with phenomena when their true nature is understood, but that no such verbal entities apply at all.

It would seem, logically, that the perforated *stūpas* of the terraces should be identified as the “gates” of the text. The image that arises, however, from the Sanskrit term *mukha*, or face, and the Chinese *men* 門, or gate, seems to fit the Borobudur gates that are passed through in the ascent from one gallery to the next so well that it could even be said that the Javanese architects were aware of the meaning of both terms and that both contributed to the design. The correct interpretation, therefore, is that the inhabitant of the terraces has achieved the enlightened understanding of the nature of reality and that the *stūpas* are not the gates, or doors, which have already been entered and passed through. The perforated *stūpa* that hums the phoneme *ṇa*, in other words, contains only the ghosts of the absent concepts, the noisy arguments and the others. In the Sarvāstivādin count, which may have been followed at Borobudur, there are in fact seventy-two conditioned dharmas—but these wouldn’t actually be present on the terraces, only the proper understanding of each.⁶²

The title of *T. 1019* includes a host of terms and concepts that go beyond both the *Gaṇḍavyūha* and the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*:

Dafanguang fo Huayanjing Rufajiepin dunzheng Piluzhena fashen zilun yujia yigui

大方廣佛花嚴經入法界品頓證毘盧遮那法身字輪 瑜伽儀軌

Ritual Procedure for the Syllable-Wheel Yoga of Suddenly Realizing the Dharma-Body of Vairocana, from the “Entering the *Dharmadhātu*” Chapter of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-nāma-mahāvaiṣṭya-sūtra*⁶³

What makes this a Mantrayāna text, it may be surmised, is that the wheel of letters is no longer merely a collection of signs. Instead, the very sounds of the phonemes embody a realization of the concepts they stand for, and this realization can be implanted or sealed through a ritual procedure (*yigui*, 儀軌). “Entering the *Dharmadhātu*” is the Chinese name for the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, and the position is taken here (as in earlier publications) that on the Borobudur terraces we indeed enter the *dharmadhātu*. The title suggests that this entering is equivalent to “Suddenly Realizing the Dharma-Body of Vairocana.”

“Vairocana” is unproblematic: the identity of the terrace buddhas as the supreme cosmic Buddha Vairocana is what is generally assumed. Furthermore, the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* contains a statement that connects the terrace buddhas (in *dharmacakramudrā*, the wheel-turning gesture) with letters: “Thus this is a single wheel of letters, a single continuum, which revolves like a wheel. If the *mantrin* [one adept at mantra] knows that wheel of letters, he will always illumine [the world], like the Bhagavat Vairocana who turned the wheel.”⁶⁴ Two remaining terms in the title, however, “suddenly realizing” (*dunzheng*, 頓證) and “dharma-body” (*fashen*, 法身; *dharmakāya*) raise issues that can be described in this paper but not entirely resolved—issues in part Buddhological in nature, in part involving the question of the degree to which the terraces stand for different degrees of accomplishment and of how the central *stūpa* is to be differentiated from the perforated ones.

The term “sudden,” or “instantaneous,” most commonly in *dunwu* 頓悟, “sudden enlightenment,” figures prominently in discussions of Chan Buddhism. It was more a Chinese than an Indian concern, and analyzing suddenness on the basis of Sanskrit rather than Chinese texts is no simple matter.⁶⁵ But the term was also important in the Mantrayāna, as is apparent in the title of T. 1019. And it is not absent in Perfection (*pāramitā*) Path Buddhism. It was the opinion of Zhidun (314–366) that sudden enlightenment (*dunwu*) takes place in the course of the seventh of the ten stages of the bodhisattva path; other Chinese Buddhists placed it after the eighth stage.⁶⁶ Since the classic text outlining the ten stages, the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, is part of the *Avataṃsaka* compilation, looking at Borobudur as embodying the stages, with a significant break occurring at the seventh or eighth stage, is entirely appropriate. J. G. de Caparis presented an interpretation along these lines, but later in his career he seemed to pull away from it.⁶⁷

Allowing a degree of suddenness to the passage onto the plateau and upper terraces from Borobudur’s fourth gallery raises the question of whether the Mantrayāna sudden realization of the *dharmakāya* was somehow acknowledged. It is possible to understand Borobudur as simultaneously presenting two paths to a common goal. It is not necessary to trace one’s way through all the reliefs; the axial stairs provide a direct route. The pilgrim who directly ascends the stairs must be arriving symbolically at the same spiritual level as one who has traversed the galleries. But no content is specifically stated; there

is merely the experience of passing through the gates at each level, with their suggestion of processes of death and rebirth. A pilgrim who passes through the galleries can be said to be following the Perfection Path to enlightenment. What remains to be determined is the degree to which just climbing the stairs implies the existence of a simultaneous Mantrayāna gate.

This is one way of addressing the relationship between *Avatamsaka* and Mantrayāna elements at Borobudur. T. 902, a brief text attributed to Amoghavajra, “A Complete Explication of the Meaning of *Dhāraṇīs*,” was translated by Paul Copp in his dissertation. It begins as follows:

For a hundred thousand *koṭis* of *asaṃkhyeya kalpas*, Thus-come Ones [*tathāgatas*, the buddhas] have concentrated their bodhi-endowments and empowered the words and syllables (*wenzi*, 文字) of *dhāraṇī* true words (*zhenyan*, 真言, mantra, Japanese *Shingon*). These [*dhāraṇī*-true-words] correspond to bodhisattvas of immediate awakening (*dunwu*, 頓悟), who immediately gather (*dunji*, 頓集) their endowment of merit and wisdom (*fude zhihui ziliang*, 福德智慧資糧, i. e. *pūṇyajñānasambhāra*).

There are two forms of cultivation for those who would cultivate the bodhisattva way within the Great Vehicle and confirm (*zheng*, 證) the peerless bodhi-way. They consist of what is called cultivating to complete buddhahood by relying on the paramitas and cultivating to complete buddhahood by relying on true words, *dhāraṇīs*, and the three mysteries.⁶⁸

The relatively common term *pūṇyajñāna* appears in a Javanese inscription of 824 (the *sambhāra* considered implied) and is sometimes considered relevant to Borobudur.⁶⁹ If the T. 902 passage is interpreted in the light of the architecture of the monument, it can be understood to mean that the accumulation of merit and wisdom takes place in the galleries, and, having reached their summit, the pilgrim has an opportunity for sudden enlightenment or for sudden gathering (considering the two terms as equivalents of each other). Stepping into the realm of the terraces, becoming a bodhisattva of sudden enlightenment, means complete identification with *dhāraṇī*-true-words. It may be that he who relies on “true words, *dhāraṇīs*, and the three mysteries” can reach the terraces by the staircases, avoiding the gallery reliefs altogether. The content of the reliefs nevertheless stands for the *pūṇyajñānasambhāra* that entitles the bodhisattva of immediate awakening to enter the terraces.

The T. 1019 title speaks of “Suddenly Realizing the Dharma-Body of Vairocana.” There seems to be no simple way to resolve the matter of giving “body” names to the Borobudur buddhas. There are four levels:

crowning *stūpa*
 buddhas of the perforated *stūpas* of the terraces
 buddhas overlooking the galleries
 Śākyamuni in the first-gallery reliefs

There are, however, only three bodies in most systems, *nirmāṇakāya*, *sambhogakāya*, and *dharmakāya*, and so either one of these classifications must do double duty or a four-body nomenclature needs to be invoked. The *nirmāṇakāya* appears in the first-gallery reliefs, depicting the life of the Buddha. The buddhas overlooking the galleries are in my view the *sambhogakāya*; like the buddhas of the *Lotus Sutra*, they are *jinas* who gather from pure lands in the various directions of space to honor the teaching. The buddhas depicted in the upper register of some of the *Bhadracarī* reliefs of the fourth gallery are the same buddhas, assembled for the same reason. (On the other hand, if the gallery buddhas are primarily thought to radiate as the result of the mental accomplishment of the terrace buddhas, they could be understood as the *nirmāṇakāya*.)

If both the gallery buddhas and the terrace buddhas are considered the *sambhogakāya*, then it would have to be said that on the terraces we have entered a pure land and that our relationship to the *sambhogakāya* has been transformed (buddhas above us, in the galleries; approachable, on the terraces). This would presumably accord with Huayan doctrine. As Fazang wrote in “Cultivation of Contemplation of the Inner Meaning of the Hua-yen: The Ending of Delusion and Return to the Source” (T. 1876): “1. Third is the contemplation of the mystic merging of mind (*xin* 心) and environment (*jing* 境). 2. Mind means mind without obstruction; 3. all Buddhas realize this, whereby they attain the body of reality (*fashen* 法身 *dharmakāya*). 4. Environment means environment without obstruction; 5. all Buddhas realize this, whereby they achieve a pure land (*jingtu* 淨土). 6. This means that the Buddhas’ body of reward (*baoshen* 報身, *sambhogakāya*) and the pure land on which it is based merge completely without obstruction.”⁷⁰ For Fazang, the distinguishing feature of the dharma-body was that it was mental (*xin*, 心) while the *sambhoga*-body had location (*jing*, 境). The terrace buddhas have a location, conceivable as a pure land or perhaps

in the sun, moon, and lunar mansions. The crowning *stūpa*, in such a scheme, could stand for the *dharmakāya*.

Perhaps Fazang would also have said that on the terraces we enter a Vairocana assembly (*hui*, 會). In a letter he wrote to his Korean friend Ŭisang, ca. 690–692, there is a passage that seems to offer a window onto popular Buddhism: “Humbly, I pray that in the generations to come, after we have left behind [these] bodies and received [others], together, in the Assembly of [Vai]Rocana, we may listen and receive such an inexhaustible and excellent Law and train in the practice of such inexhaustible vows of Samantabhadra.”⁷¹ Sometime in a future existence, that is, we will ascend to a Vairocana Assembly. There we will dwell in accordance with the *Bhadracarī* and with the sounds of the *Bhadracarī*.

The Mantrayāna viewpoint is different. The title of *T. 1019* speaks of immediately realizing the *dharmakāya* of the Buddha Vairocana, and so, perhaps, in agreement with the Mantrayāna position that the *dharmakāya* actually preaches and that word provides direct access to it, it is this body that is depicted. It was Kūkai who articulated a new vision of the *dharmakāya*, and quite possibly the *T. 1019* title influenced his thinking.⁷² (Whether Bianhong and Kūkai might together have discussed this matter will never be known.) The invocation of the *prastāra* as shaping the design of Borobudur seems inexorably to lead to the conclusion that the terrace buddhas are the *dharmakāya*. One way to reconcile this position with the Huayan outlook would be to presume that Bianhong would have said, “Followers of the Perfection Path perceive a pure land, but those in the Mantra Path know this truly is the *dharmakāya*.”

Some other term, then, needs to be found to characterize the crowning *stūpa*—if indeed it stands for a buddha-body at all. The Old-Javanese text the *Advaya-sādhana* offers *divārūpa*, “being like the sky,” a condition superior to the sun and moon, and perhaps an equivalent to Mahāvairocana, as distinct from Vairocana.⁷³ An alternative is to use a different term for the terrace buddhas, such as the *bodhimaṇḍakāya*, found in Buddhaguhya’s *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* commentary and defined by Hodge as “the abode of being which is the embodiment of All-knowing Awareness, taken on by Buddhas at the time of their Enlightenment.”⁷⁴ This term is an attractive one, for it can be taken to allude to the moment of the original teaching of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, said to have occurred immediately following the

Buddha's enlightenment. Another alternative is to invoke the four bodies named at the end of Amoghavajra's *Introduction to the Yoga of the Eighteen Sections of the Vajraśekhara-tantra* (T. 869): *nirmāṇa-*, *sambhoga-*, *svabhāva-*, and **niṣyanda-kāya*.⁷⁵

THE BHADRACARĪ

Fazang's letter—just quoted—indicates that a Vairocana assembly is pervaded by the sounds of the *Bhadracarī*. And the fact that on the fourth gallery there are seventy-two panels illustrating the sixty-two stanzas of the extant text of the *Bhadracarī* confirms a place for this text on the terraces. If the sounds emitted on the terrace are really just phonemes, however, then, in accordance with conclusions already proposed, these phonemes would not simply denote the stanzas; the sound of each phoneme would itself contain the essence of the stanza, and be the seed from which its words have evolved.

The text of the *Bhadracarī* may itself provide clues to the nature of a sound beyond ordinary language, but the evidence is not clear cut. This is the fourth stanza:

teṣu ca akṣaya-varṇa-samudrāṃ-svarāṅga-samudra-rutebhiḥ
sarva-jināna guṇāṃ bhaṇamānas tāṃ sugatāṃ stavamī ahu sarvāṃ

This can be translated as follows: “And of them, with the sounds of the ocean of all voice qualities, I praise all those buddhas, by exalting the virtues of these buddhas, which are like oceans of imperishable phonemes.”⁷⁶ The word *varṇa* need not be taken in the sense of “word” or “phoneme,” and so this translation is essentially a Mantrayāna interpretation. Two sounds are juxtaposed in the stanza, and in both cases the word “ocean” (*samudra*) figures: one sound is that of the speaker's praise (an ocean), the other (oceans) is like that of the virtues (*guṇa*, qualities) of the buddhas. The second will always surpass the first, it seems, but if these two sounds can be melded into one—at least in a Mantrayāna reading—full identity and hence buddhahood is achieved. The oceanic aspect of the two sounds evokes the *samādhi* of oceanic reflection and suggests, again, the close connection between primal sound, the enlightened mind, and the Borobudur terraces.⁷⁷

There is another sort of connection between the *Bhadracarī* stanzas and the latticed *stūpas*, also somewhat speculative in character. The Indian monk Atiśa (982–1052) arrived in Tibet in 1042, and there he composed a text known in English as *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*.

Atiśa had earlier studied in Southeast Asia with Dharmakīrti, probably in Jambi, Sumatra, and determining the extent to which Dharmakīrti may actually have passed down teachings from a lineage traceable to the Buddhists responsible for Borobudur is a fascinating problem.⁷⁸ *Lamp for the Path* is a poem in sixty-eight stanzas outlining the Buddhist path, culminating (stanzas 60–68) in a brief explication of the *vajra* way (which by this time had progressed far beyond the Mantrayāna that figures in this paper). Stanza 8 is from a section intended to arouse the aspiration for buddhahood and runs as follows:

With the seven-part offering
From the [Prayer of] Noble Conduct [=Bhadracarī]
With the thought never to turn back
Till you gain ultimate enlightenment, . . .⁷⁹

It was believed that the first twelve stanzas of the *Bhadracarī* (including stanza 4, translated above) outlined a seven-part practice of offerings. The question that is raised, therefore, is whether there might have been a tradition in Java and Sumatra that the *Bhadracarī* as a whole encapsulated the path to buddhahood.⁸⁰

CAUSE AND EFFECT

That the nature of cause and effect was a matter of importance to the planners of Borobudur is apparent from the choice of text for the reliefs of the base, reliefs that were covered over after their completion.⁸¹ Actions and their fruits are depicted; taking life, for instance, is rewarded with a rebirth in a hell. Two kinds of question arise. One is the philosophical understanding of the nature of causation, or dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*; *yuanqi*, 緣起); the other is whether the monument as a whole can be understood in terms of cause and effect.

According to Huayan teaching, comprehension was progressive. Putting the ultimate teaching about the nature of causation at the top of the list, the four stages of penetration were:

- (4) *Dharmadhātu* (*fajie*, 法界) causation
- (3) *Tathāgatagarbha* (*rulai zang*, 如來藏) causation
- (2) Storehouse-consciousness (*ālaya*; *laiye*, 賴耶) causation
- (1) Karmic (*yegan*, 業感) causation.⁸²

The initial teaching corresponds to Borobudur's covered base, with its scenes of cause and effect: this happens, then that. If the relationship

holds, the Mahāyāna doctrines of *tathāgatagarbha* and *ālaya* would be somehow implied by the gallery reliefs—though confirmation of this awaits discovery of a passage in the commentarial literature. On the terraces, we could say that there appear exactly the same events as depicted on the covered base, now properly understood as interreflective, simultaneously present, and ultimately alike, as in the *dharmadhātu*. Understood this way, Borobudur clearly embodies Huayan teachings about the nature of causation.

It is possible to see Borobudur as two distinct, similarly structured systems: the plateau = the covered base; the first ring of *stūpas* = the first gallery; likewise, the second and third; and the crowning *stūpa* = the fourth gallery. That the gallery system is cause, the terraces effect, is an interpretation that finds support in the religious currents of the late eighth century in Chang'an, as found within Huayan, for instance, in the writings of Chengguan (738–839), subsequently considered the fourth Huayan patriarch. If Bianhong remained in Chang'an in the 790s and was part of the circle of Prajña in the course of the *Avataṃsaka* translation project, he surely knew Chengguan. In one text within his vast output (T. 1882), Chengguan explicated a triad of deities, the two bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra and the Buddha Vairocana, who together stand for the teachings of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra represent (among much else) cause (*yin*, 因); Vairocana, meanwhile, is fruition (*guo*, 果).⁸³ The two bodhisattvas appear at the end of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* and are depicted in the Borobudur reliefs, and Vairocana is the buddha within the perforated *stūpas*.

The Shingon Buddhism of Japan, founded by Kūkai, made a pair of mandalas, one the womb, based on the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, the other the diamond, based on the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*. In Shingon thought, the Womb Mandala, which pairs Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi (rather than Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra), is cause; the Diamond Mandala is result.⁸⁴ “The double maṇḍala tradition,” Charles Orzech has written, “probably arose in the generation after Pu-k'ung [Amoghavajra] . . .”—that is, exactly the time Bianhong was in Chang'an.⁸⁵ Historically speaking, the placement of the effect realm above the cause realm is likely to precede the Shingon arrangement, in which two painted mandalas are placed on facing walls.

This hypothesis is enriched and complicated by the existence of two large tenth-century cloth paintings from Dunhuang, now in the Musée Guimet, and only published in 1995.⁸⁶ One of them depicts the

nine assemblies of the *Huayan Sutra*, precisely in the form seen in various Dunhuang caves. (An embroidery with this subject matter, “Seven Locations and Nine Assemblies” [*Qichu jiuhui*, 七處九會] was commissioned in Japan in 742.)⁸⁷ The other has been described by Dorothy Wong as follows:

The second silk painting illustrates the *Daśabhūmika* chapter of the *Huayan jing*, enumerating the ten stages of bodhisattvahood. The only known depiction of this subject, the painting is divided into four registers, consisting of twelve scenes. The ten transcendent assemblies symbolic of the ten stages are shown from left to right, top to bottom. In the bottom register, the two extra squares show Samantabhadra in the lower left and Mañjuśrī in the lower right, flanking the assembly of Vairocana in the center. The presence of the boy Sudhana among the entourages of Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī makes reference to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, suggesting that the painting embodies the teachings of both the *Daśabhūmika* and *Gaṇḍavyūha* chapters of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. In doctrinal terms, the painting is an exposition of the path of spiritual advancement, from a description of the progressive stages of bodhisattvahood to Sudhana’s pilgrimage and realization of enlightenment under the guidance of the two great bodhisattvas.⁸⁸

Wong goes on to state, “The French scholar Giès suggests that these two liturgical paintings are related to each other dialectically. Perhaps hung on temple walls facing each other as a ritual presentation, they set up a visual hierarchy analogous to the scholastic exposition of both a general theory and a scheme of practice.”⁸⁹

Since the two Guimet paintings are of somewhat different dimensions and seem not to have been painted by the same artist (although, believes Giès, they are the product of the same workshop), it cannot be stated with certainty that they formed a pair—though it seems quite likely. Elements in common with the Shingon mandalas include the pairing of bodhisattvas in one painting and the presence in the other of nine compartments (either nine assemblies or nine sub-mandalas), a configuration no doubt indebted to a traditional Chinese one-and-eight arrangement.⁹⁰ Since the theme of cause and effect seems so integral to the Huayan beliefs, the Shingon pair is likely to have been modeled upon a Huayan concept embodied at Borobudur in one way, in lost prototypes for the unique Guimet paintings in another.⁹¹

THE FUNCTION OF BOROBUDUR

Three occurrences of the Chinese term *hui* 會, assembly, appear to yield insights into Borobudur. One, the nine assemblies of the *Huayan Sutra*, has just been discussed. Another occurrence is in Fazang's letter to Ūisang, where the concept of the Vairocana assembly is found. The idea that the spirits of the deceased might dwell in a Vairocana Assembly permeated by the sounds of the *Bhadracarī* opens the way to a revival of an interpretation of the monument by J. G. de Casparis.

It could be presumed that on the Borobudur terraces the spirits are those of the royal ancestors, and that the monument, as De Casparis proposed, was a dynastic memorial.⁹² In 1985, Robert W. Hefner, in *Hindu Javanese: Tengger Tradition and Islam*, described funeral rites of the Tengger, a non-Islamicized people living in a remote mountainous part of eastern Java. Ceremonies are held not for individual ancestors but for a group, whose souls ascend to heaven, when purified by the chanting of a text.⁹³ Analogously, the texts illustrated in Borobudur's galleries ensure by their presence that the ancestors' souls have been purified.

It is unlikely that the mere presence of the reliefs, however, is sufficient to purify the ancestors' souls. We should imagine a tantric ceremony that committed the ancestors to service as overseers of the welfare of the kingdom and the dynasty. Bianhong need not have been the priest who carried out such a rite, but he could have been. That brings us, once again, to the relationship between Huayan and Mantrayāna elements and to the third occurrence of the word *hui* 會. Amoghavajra's *Introduction to the Yoga of the Eighteen Sections of the Vajraśekhara-tantra* (T. 869) is the text that includes the brief description of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinījālasaṃvara*, as the fifteenth assembly. Since the author recognizes that the eighteen sections prescribe different methods and rites, he needs to address the question of how they are compatible. The answer is provided in the conclusion:

They [the eighteen assemblies] interpenetrate one another just as the radiance of the pearls of Indra's net is reflected from one to another in endless progression. If the practitioner properly masters this general purport of *yoga*, he will be like the Buddha Vairocana, with every part of his body, every pore, each [of the thirty-two] characteristics and each [of the eighty] minor features [of a buddha], every stock of merit and every stock of wisdom [=puṇyajñānaśaṃbhāra] abiding in

the state of fruition, proclaiming the Buddha's teaching of *yoga* not shared with the Two Vehicles.⁹⁴

In other words, Bianhong could well have carried out initiations at some distance from Borobudur, knowing full well that the Borobudur's terraces embodied an ultimate truth, one conforming with the Huayan doctrine of Indra's net, and one that fuses the deities invoked in his initiation, as well as the phonemes of the alphabet, the celestial bodies, and the stanzas of the Bhadracarī.

BOROBUDUR AND DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENTS: A BROADER PERSPECTIVE

There is one other thing the terraces must embody, however, and that is the internal *cakras* of the mystic yogic anatomy found in the *Yoginī* tantras and in Hindu *kuṇḍalinī* yoga. To say this, however, is to open up disputed issues concerning the dating of texts, the role of Chinese influences, and the relationship between Buddhist and Hindu paths. It must also involve deciding whether Borobudur stood on a cutting edge, whether it was in the loop, or whether it was a relative backwater.

The *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinījālasaṃvara* is recognized as a pioneering text because it has a strong sexual element, and as studies of it appear, issues involving the development of the *Yoginī* tantras will no doubt be clarified.⁹⁵ At any rate, if the *Hevajra-tantra* dates from no earlier than the late ninth century—a dating that can be reconciled with the art-historical evidence—then Borobudur could well represent an earlier phase of the *cakra* system.⁹⁶ What the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinījālasaṃvara prastāra* demonstrates is the degree to which the *cakra* system must have its roots in an alphabet diagram. This could well extend to the terminology if each of the three rings in the diagram is considered a *cakrākṣara*. Here is one way to see the system proposed at Borobudur evolving into the *kuṇḍalinī* system, with its *cakras* in the form of lotuses bearing letters on the petals (recognizing circularity in the discussion, because the *kuṇḍalinī* system has informed the Borobudur hypotheses):

Borobudur	<i>Kuṇḍalinī</i> yoga
Top ring: letters 1–16 (vowels)	Throat <i>cakra</i> : letters 1–16
Middle ring: letters 17–40	Heart (letters 17–28) and navel (29–36) <i>cakras</i>
Lowest ring: letters 42–49 (x 4)	Sex organs (letters 39–44) and <i>mūlādhāra</i> (45–48)

The number of *cakras* in the *Hevajra-tantra*—four, at the head, throat, heart, and navel—matches up better, but the letters less well (except that the throat *cakra* likewise has sixteen petals).⁹⁷

In a recent, thorough study, Geoffrey Samuel concluded as follows: “We are unlikely ever to know precisely how the ‘internal yogas’ of Tantric Śaivism and Buddhism developed. All we can really say at this stage is (1) we have evidence for similar practices in China many centuries before our earliest Indian evidence, and we know that there had been several centuries of active interchange along the China-Indian trade routes by the time that these practices appeared in India, and (2) from their earliest appearance in India, these practices were conceptualized (or reconceptualized) within a specifically Indian framework.”⁹⁸ In terms of the material presented in this article, we know that Bianhong is likely to have understood that the cognate celestial bodies in Daoism (sun; moon; planets plus seven stars) can be found inside the body. It would not have been a difficult step to move them from below the navel to stages along a central channel in the body, in front of the spinal cord.⁹⁹

Bianhong has probably already been credited with too much, however. There were other figures who might have been key inventors and synthesizers in the late eighth century. An excellent example is Śrīsiṃha, who was born in China, studied tantra on Mount Wutai, traveled to India, and at Bodhgaya uncovered tantric texts that had been sealed underneath the Buddha’s adamant throne—that is, he wrote them.¹⁰⁰ At any rate, it may be hoped that scholars who read and study texts will in the coming decades find ways to integrate Borobudur into histories of doctrinal developments.

NOTES

* I express gratitude to Paul Copp, Arlo Griffiths, Imre Hamar, Amy Heller, Hudaya Kandahjaya, Yu-min Lee, Rob Linrothe, Richard Salomon, Nancy Steinhardt, Jeffrey Sundberg, Peter Sharrock, Peter Szanto, and Dorothy Wong.

1. T. 2057, 50.295b16–18, translated by Hudaya Kandahjaya, “A Study on the Origin and Significance of Borobudur” (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 2004), 94. I should make it clear that I do not read Chinese; the fact that I am able to explore Chinese texts to a limited degree is primarily due to the Digital Dictionary of Buddhism (<http://buddhism-dict.net/ddb>), which provides access to the online Chinese Buddhist canon and to the character-searching capability of a computer.
2. Kandahjaya, “Study,” 95; Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 126.
3. Kandahjaya, “Study,” 165, 251.
4. Jeffrey Roger Sundberg, “Considerations on the Dating of the Barabudur Stūpa,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (BKI)* 162, no. 1 (2006): 95–132.
5. Hiram Woodward, “A Review Article: Esoteric Buddhism in Southeast Asia in the Light of Recent Scholarship,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, no. 2 (2004): 339.
6. Jeffrey Roger Sundberg, “The Wilderness Monks of the Abhayagirivihāra and the Origins of Sino-Javanese Esoteric Buddhism,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (BKI)* 160, no. 1 (2004): 95–123. For questions regarding the biography of Amoghavajra, see Woodward, “Esoteric Buddhism,” 338–339.
7. See also UNESCO, *The Restoration of Borobudur: Jewel of a Golden Age* (Paris: UNESCO, 2004), 157.
8. For the law of cause and effect, see Jan Fontein, *The Law of Cause and Effect in Ancient Java* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1989). Sundberg has proposed that the presence of *vajra* finials in structures depicted in relief nos. 1a15 and 1b81 represent an overt acknowledgment of the Vajrayāna. See Sundberg, “Considerations,” 103.
9. For outer, inner, and secret exegesis, see Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Elaborations on Emptiness: Uses of the Heart Sutra* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 83, 109–115 (an example approximately contemporary with Borobudur). For the capacity to use sign systems from another perspective, see Anthony Diller, “Sriwijaya and the First Zeros,” *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 68, no. 1 (1995): 53–66.
10. The case for changes in plan is associated with Jacques Dumarçay, e.g.,

Borobudur, ed. and trans. Michael Smithies (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991).

11. Robert Gimello, "Ch'eng-kuan's Meditations on the 'Three Holy Ones,'" in *Kegongaku ronshu*, ed. Shigeo Kamata (Tokyo: Daizo Shuppan, 1997), 144.

12. Kandahjaya, "Study," 197, 218, 250, 260.

13. See Archaeological Survey of India, "Excavations - 2000-2005 - Orissa," http://asi.nic.in/asi_exca_2005_orissa.asp.

14. Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., "Barabudur as a *Stūpa*," in *Barabudur: History and Significance of a Buddhist Monument*, ed. Luis O. Gómez and Hiram W. Woodward, Jr. (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1981), 129.

15. Eugene Y. Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2005), 259, 428n78. A modern reconstruction of the demonstration appears as fig. 5.8.

16. Translation from Garma C. C. Chang, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), 24. For a critical account, see Jinhua Chen, "More than a Philosopher: Fazang (643–712) as a Politician and Miracle Worker," *History of Religions* 42, no. 4 (2003): 334–335.

17. For "inhabitant" of the *kūṭāgāra*, Luis O. Gómez, "Observations on the Role of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* in the Design of Barabudur," in *Barabudur: History and Significance of a Buddhist Monument*, ed. Luis O. Gómez and Hiram W. Woodward, Jr. (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1981), 175.

18. Fazang, "Cultivation of Contemplation of the Inner Meaning of the Hua-yen: The Ending of Delusion and Return to the Source" (T. 1876, 45.640b28–640c03), in Thomas F. Cleary, *Entry into the Inconceivable: An Introduction to Hua-yen Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 168.

19. My image, inspired by Francis H. Cook, *Hua-yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977), 74.

20. Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., "On Borobudur's Upper Terraces," *Oriental Art* 45, no. 3 (1999): 34–43.

21. Ibid., 38; Lokesh Chandra, "Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan," in *Cultural Horizons of India*, ed. Lokesh Chandra, vol. 4 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1995), 406–407.

22. Woodward, "Esoteric Buddhism," 343; Hiram W. Woodward, "Temple: Buddhist Temple Compounds in Southeast Asia," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, Mircea Eliade, and Charles J. Adams (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 9052–9056.

23. Hudaya Kandahjaya, *The Master Key for Reading Borobudur Symbolism*

(Bandung: Yayasan Penerbit Karaniya, 1995), 60–63.

24. Toru Tomabechi, “The Extraction of Mantra (*mantroddhāra*) in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogatantra*,” in *Pramāṇakīrtiḥ: Papers Dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, ed. B. Kellner, H. Krasser, H. Lasic, M. T. Much, and H. Tauscher, 2 pts., *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde*, vol. 70 (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 2007), pt. 2, 903–923. I thank Amy Heller for alerting me to the publication of this article.

25. Rolf W. Giebel, “The *Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei*: an Annotated Translation,” *Journal of Naritatan Institute for Buddhist Studies* 18 (1995): 107–202; ninth assembly, 179–182. I thank Hudaya Kandahjaya for making a copy of this publication available to me.

26. Teun Goudriaan, *The Viṇāśikhatantra: A Śaiva Tantra of the Left Current* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985). For this text and Cambodia, see 24–27; see also Alexis Sanderson, “The Śaiva Religion among the Khmers, Part I,” *Bulletin de l’Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient* 90 (2003): 355–358, and Alexis Sanderson, “Religion and the State: Śaiva Officials in the Territory of the King’s Brahmanical Chaplain,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 47 (2004): 233–238. According to Sanderson, the title is *Viṇāśikha*, not *Vīṇāśikha*. Since neither the term *devarāja*, attested in the ninth century, nor its successor, *devarāja*, appears in this text, the meaning of these two words, found in Cambodian inscriptions, remains to be resolved. See Hiram W. Woodward, “Practice and Belief in Ancient Cambodia: Claude Jacques’ *Angkor* and the *Devaraja* Question,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, no. 2 (June 2001): 249–261. An inscription not cited therein is K. 1141, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand, 972 CE, in which a K. A. *ta rāja* has its eyes opened; see Saveros Pou, *Nouvelles inscriptions du Cambodge II & III* (Paris: Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient, 2001), 115–117.

27. On extraction, see André Padoux, “Contribution à l’étude du mantraśāstra I, La sélection des mantra (*mantroddhāra*),” *Bulletin de l’Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient* (1978): 65–85; Elizabeth English, *Vajrayoginī: Her Visualizations, Rituals, and Forms* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2002), 52–54 (cf. also p. 115 for a three-ring alphabet).

28. G. Cœdès, “Un yantra récemment découvert à Angkor,” *Journal Asiatique* 240 (1952): 465–477. A fourth *prastāra*, in Tibetan script, appears in a ca. eleventh-century painting; see Pratapaditya Pal, “Cosmic Vajravarahi,” *The Arts of Kashmir* (New York, Asia Society, 2007), fig. 116, 108–109.

29. Jacques Dumarçay and Pascal Royère, *Cambodian Architecture: Eighth to Thirteenth Centuries* (Leiden, Boston, and Köln: Brill, 2001), 18–19, 66.

30. André Padoux, *Vāc: The Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras* (Delhi: Sri Satguru, 1992), 156.

31. Harvey Alper wrote, "One wonders further whether the *prastāras* and *gahvaras* were ever used after being drawn either as *yantras* or as vehicles for mystical or meditative speculation. Such a use might seem natural since, for example, the *gahvara* is (Goudriaan and Gupta 1981, 1.76, citing the *Yonigahvara*), 'considered the womb of all *mantras*.'" Harvey P. Alper, "A Working Bibliography," in *Understanding Mantras*, ed. Harvey P. Alper (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991), 416. The reference is to Teun Goudriaan and Sanjukta Gupta, *Hindu Tantric and Śakta Literature* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1981).
32. Rolf W. Giebel, "Chin-kang-ting ching," 178–179.
33. Tomabechi, "Extraction," 907. I thank Peter Szanto for confirming the equivalence.
34. Abé, *Weaving*, 282. The relationship between breath and sound had long been a matter of speculation in India. See, for instance, *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1.3; Patrick Olivelle, trans., *Upaniṣads* (Oxford: University Press, 1996), 100–101. Reference to this passage from Guy L. Beck, *Sonic Theology: Hinduism and Sacred Sound* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1995), 38–39.
35. Mark Long's proposal, that a mantra in the chap. 9 of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* is relevant, may be found on his web site (http://www.borobudur.tv/lanka_03.htm), but this proposal was not incorporated into his book, Caesar Voûte and Mark Long, *Borobudur: Pyramid of the Cosmic Buddha* (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld Ltd., 2008).
36. For the spatial aspect, see Padoux, *Vāc*, 17n41, citing the *Aitareya Aranyaka*.
37. For increasing voiceness, see Beck, *Sonic Theology*, 39.
38. Stephen Hodge, trans., *The Mahā-vairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra with Buddhaguhya's Commentary* (Abingdon and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 368. Cf. Chikyo Yamamoto, trans., *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 2001), 160.
39. Padoux, *Vāc*, 161–165.
40. Hodge, *Mahā-vairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra*, 344 (chap. 21, "The Arising of the Hundred Letters"). This is more succinctly explained in Chandra, "Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan," 397.
41. Goudriaan, *Vīṇāśikhatantra*, 78, 123
42. Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 2 vols. (Delhi, Varanasi, and Patna: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976), 1:34.
43. For instance, see Padoux, *Vāc*, 90.
44. Edward C. Sachau, ed., *Alberuni's India* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1989), 343; Teun Goudriaan, *Māyā Divine and Human* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass,

1978), 279.

45. Voûte and Long, *Borobudur*, 272. Another possibility (moon, sun, sun) appears on p. 282.

46. Woodward, “Borobudur’s Upper Terraces,” 39.

47. Michel Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins: Le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 214, 235. The gloss “inspecting [demons] and summoning [spirits]” comes from Kristofer Marinus Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 2:1077 (entry by Poul Anderson).

48. According to Dr. Yu-min Lee (verbal communication), the characters *kao* and *zhao* do not form a compound in this sentence (T. 2057, 50.295a19). It is the emperor who summons.

49. For instance, see Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008), 134–173 (in the chapter “Under Stellar Protection”). For the seven stars in Japan, see the various articles in the journal *Culture and Cosmos* 10 (2006).

50. Antonino Forte, *Mingtang and Buddhist Utopias in the History of the Astronomical Clock* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente; Paris: Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient, 1988), 186.

51. Joseph Needham, Ling Wang, and Derek J. de Solla Price, *Heavenly Clockwork: The Great Astronomical Clocks of Medieval China*, Antiquarian Horological Society Monograph, no. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 38–39. In the diagram of the wheel for the jacks exhibiting the watches of the night, twenty-four jacks are shown.

52. Richard Salomon, “New Evidence for a Gāndhārī Origin of the Arapacana Syllabary,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110, no. 2 (1990): 255–273.

53. Text online: Digital Sanskrit Buddhist Canon, <http://www.uwest.edu/sanskritcanon/dp/old/sutra/roman/Sutra%2016/Su-16R-47.html>.

54. Translation by Hudaya Kandahjaya (e-mail message, 13 November 2008).

55. Thomas F. Cleary, *The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra* (Boston & London: Shambhala, 1993), 1440–1441.

56. Translation by Hudaya Kandahjaya, who has explained (e-mail message, 13 November 2008),

The Chinese translation took *koṭi* in the sense of “ten millions” or “millions.” But the Tibetan took it as “limit,” as in the compound *bhutakoṭi*, meaning “true end” or “true goal.” The latter is a synonym of *paramārtha*, the supreme truth. Other meanings of *koṭi* include “end or top of anything,” “edge or point (of a sword),” “the highest point,”

“eminence,” “excellence,” etc. Looking at the Sanskrit compound *ākārakoṭi*, the Tibetan way of taking *koṭi* as limit or end makes sense. Though it is possible that the compiler plays with all those words and meanings. Then, by the same token, we may compare the whole compound *cakrākṣarākārakoṭivacanam* with *buddhavacanam*, the speech or the words of Buddha, thus making *cakrākṣarākārakoṭi* comparable to *buddha*. In other words, it sounds like this gate cryptically talks about the speech of Buddha.

57. Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1442.

58. See George J. Tanabe, Jr., *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), 140–141:

This short treatise [T. 1020] explains the general significance of the forty-two-character mantra, which is arranged in a wheel of letters. It, too, gives specific instructions on posture and so forth, and focuses on the central vision of a “radiance that shines everywhere like the empty sky.” The forty-two letters are arranged in a disc of the moon, and all together the Sanskrit letters are said to radiate a golden light that illuminates the ten directions. In each ray of light, there will be countless spheres of countless beings between which no obstruction can be found. A vision of this would constitute, as the title of the work indicates, a sudden insight into the Kegon realm of an interfusion made visible by radiance. This is exactly the same vision sought by Myōe, and it is clear that Amoghavajra was an even earlier proponent of Esoteric Kegon.

59. I thank Dr. Yu-min Lee for finding this passage, which appears also at T. 220, 7.82a17, as well as in the *Amoghapāśakalparāja* (trans. Bodhiruci), at T. 1092, 20.300c13. See also the *Pañcavimsati*, T. 221, 8.26c14–15. A connection between *ṇa* and quarrel (*cheng*, 諍) carries over into Amoghavajra’s treatise, T. 880 (at 18.338c20) and from there to Kūkai (Abé, *Weaving*, 292). The Sanskrit wheel of letters in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* has a similar content, but the letters *dha*, *ṇa*, and *ta* are absent in the Chinese text (they should fall between T. 848, 18.10b06 and T. 848, 18.10b07); see Hodge, *Mahā-vairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra*, 132.

60. I thank Dr. Yu-min Lee.

61. For lists, see Junjirō Takakusu, *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy* (Honolulu: Office Appliance Co., 1956).

62. Somewhat altering the suggestion in Woodward, “Barabudur as a Stūpa,” 137n38.

63. The translation of the title comes from the entry (by Iain Sinclair) in the Digital Dictionary of Buddhism (<http://buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb>).

pl?59.xml+id('b5927-65b9-5ee3-4f5b-82b1-56b4-7d93-5165-6cd5-754c-54c1-9813-8b49-6bd8-76e7-906e-90a3-6cd5-8eab-5b57-8f2a-745c-4f3d-5100-8ecc'), accessed December 8, 2008). There appears to be a reference to *T. 1019* in *T. 2154* (*Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, 開元釋教錄) by Zhisheng (668–740) at *T. 2154*, 55.700b27, strengthening the possibility that it really was the work of Amoghavajra.

64. Hodge, *Mahā-vairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra*, 253.

65. Luis O. Gómez, “Indian Materials on the Doctrine of Sudden Enlightenment,” in *Early Ch’an in China and Tibet*, ed. Whalen Lai and Lewis R. Lancaster (Berkeley: Buddhist Studies Series, 1983), 393–434.

66. A. Stein, “Sudden Illumination or Simultaneous Comprehension: Remarks on Chinese and Tibetan Terminology,” in *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, ed. Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987), 56; Young-Ho Kim, *Tao-sheng’s Commentary on the Lotus Sūtra* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 31. I thank Imre Hamar for sending me a copy of his paper, “Practice and Enlightenment in Chengguan’s Philosophy,” which appeared in *Enlightenment and Its Cultural Aspects in the Modern Perspective* (Seoul: Academic Institute of Songchol Son Buddhism/White Lotus Buddhist Cultural Foundation, 2003) (cited in *Reflecting Mirrors: Perspectives on Huayan Buddhism*, ed. Imre Hamar [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007], 14). In the passages concerning sudden enlightenment discussed in this article, Chengguan appears to be reflecting his training in Chan rather than engaging with the *Daśabhūmika*.

67. J. G. Casparis, *Inscripties uit de Çailendra-tijd*, Prasasti Indonesia diterbitkan oleh Djawatan Purbakala Republik Indonesia, I (Bandung: A. C. Nix, 1950), 202 (English summary). For a recent analysis along these lines, see Julie A. Gifford, “Picturing the Path: The Visual Rhetoric of Borobudur” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2004), 285.

68. Paul F. Copp, “Voice, Dust, Shadow, Stone: The Making of Spells in Medieval Chinese Buddhism” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2005), 151–154. (I thank Paul Copp for writing me that he no longer believes Amoghavajra was the author of this text; of course, if it dates from the time of Huiguo, its relevance is enhanced.)

T. 902, 18.898a04: 總釋陀羅尼義讚

T. 902, 18.898a05: 三藏沙門大廣智不空奉詔解釋

T. 902, 18.898a06: 如來於百千俱胝阿僧祇劫。

T. 902, 18.898a07: 積集菩提資糧加持陀羅尼真言文字。

T. 902, 18.898a08: 令頓悟菩薩與此相應。頓集福德智慧資糧。

T. 902, 18.898a09: 於大乘修菩薩道二種修行。證無上菩提道

T. 902, 18.898a10: 所謂依諸波羅蜜修行成佛。依真言陀羅尼三密門修行成佛。

69. Kayumwungan inscription of 824, verse 3; see Kandahjaya, “Study,” 120.

For *bhūmisambhāra* in the Tri Tepusan inscription of 842, see *ibid.*, 256, and J.G. de Casparis, “The Dual Nature of Barabudur,” in *Barabudur: History and Significance of a Buddhist Monument*, ed. Luis O. Gómez and Hiram W. Woodward, Jr. (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1981), 61.

70. “Cultivation of Contemplation of the Inner Meaning of the Hua-yen: The Ending of Delusion and Return to the Source” (T. 1876; trans. Cleary), in Cleary, *Entry into the Inconceivable*, 147–169, esp. 166. I have inserted some Chinese terms into his terse translation (see T. 1876, 45.640a25–27).

71. Antonino Forte, *A Jewel in Indra’s Net: The Letter Sent by Fazang in China to Uisang in Korea* (Kyoto: Istituto Italiano de Cultura Scuola di Studi sull’Asia Orientale, 2000), 34.

72. David Lion Gardiner, “Kūkai and the Beginnings of Shingon Buddhism in Japan” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1995), 113; Abé, *Weaving*, 214–218.

73. Chandra, “Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan,” 374–375, 384–386.

74. Hodge, *Mahā-vairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra*, 564. There are also °*cakrakāya* names (Woodward, “Esoteric Buddhism,” 345n47).

75. Giebel, “The *Chin-kang-ting ching*,” 200.

76. I follow the structure of Idumi’s translation: “And of them, with an ocean of voice in which all notes of sound are found, I praise all those Buddhas, by exalting the virtues of these Buddhas, which are like the ocean of inexhaustible nature.” Both the Sanskrit text and the translation come from Kandahjaya, “A Study,” 189. The translation was originally published in Hokei Idumi, “The Hymn on the Life and Vows of Samantabhadra,” *The Eastern Buddhist* 5, nos. 2–3 (1929): 226–247. I substitute “with the sounds of the ocean of all voice qualities” on the basis of Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, 2 vols. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972), 2:616 (the entry for *svarāṅga*). For *akṣaya-varṇa-samudrāṇi*, I pluralize *ocean*, to agree with *guṇāṇi* (qualities, virtues), take *varṇa* in the sense of phoneme, and translate *akṣaya* as “imperishable” (a common Sanskrit meaning, recognizing that “inexhaustible” may be more appropriate in a Buddhist context; see Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid*, 2:3). For *varṇa* in this technical sense, see Padoux, *Vāc*.

77. I will not attempt to address the question of whether Chinese translations permit the same interpretation (Amoghavajra, T. 297, 10.880a15; Prajña, T. 293, 10.847a08).

78. Woodward, “Esoteric Buddhism,” 347.

79. Ruth Sonam, trans., *Atisha’s Lamp for the Path: An Oral Teaching by Geshe Sonam Rinchen* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1997), 58.

80. For alerting me to the relevance of *Atisha’s Lamp*, I acknowledge a debt to the paper presented by Julie Gifford, “Training the Mind at Borobudur: Śaileन्द्रa

Buddhism, the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, and the Development of Tibetan Lojong Practice,” paper presented at the panel “Borobudur in International Perspective,” International Association for Buddhist Studies, Atlanta, GA, 27 June 2008. For the *Bhadracarī* and the Borobudur terraces see also Gifford, “Picturing the Path,” 286. I have reached a parallel position by a different route.

81. Fontein, *Law of Cause and Effect*.

82. Forte, *Jewel in Indra’s Net*, 41–42.

83. Robert Gimello, “Ch’eng-kuan’s Meditations” (note 11 above), 136, 168 (T. 1882, 45.671a14).

84. Ryūjun Tajima, *Les deux grands maṇḍalas et la doctrine de l’ésoterisme shingon* (Tokyo: Maison franco-japonaise and Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1959), 48–49. Benjamin Rowland alluded to the relevance of the two Shingon mandalas in “Barabudur: A Study of Style and Iconography in Oriental Art,” *Art in America and Elsewhere* 29, no. 3 (1941): 114–127. Rowland seems to have picked up the idea from Shoun Toganoo, *Rishukyō no Kenkyū* (Kōyasan: Kōyasan Daigaku, 1930), abstracted by Paul Demiéville, *Bibliographie bouddhique* 4–5 (1931–1933): 96–98. Rowland made a similar observation in *The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain* (London: Penguin Books, 1953)—though dropping it in later editions—and this stimulated the analysis of Alex Wayman, “Reflections on the Theory of Barabudur as a Maṇḍala,” in *Barabudur: History and Significance of a Buddhist Monument*, ed. Luis O. Gómez and Hiram W. Woodward, Jr. (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1981), 173–194. See Heino Kottkamp, *Der Stupa als Repräsentation des buddhistischen Heilweges* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz), 368–369.

85. Charles D. Orzech, “Maṇḍalas on the Move: Reflections from Chinese Esoteric Buddhism Circa 800 C.E.,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 19, no. 2 (1996): 216n18.

86. Jacques Giès, ed., *Les arts de l’Asie centrale: la collection Paul Pelliot du Musée national des arts asiatiques–Guimet*, 2 vols. (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1995), 1:51–72.

87. Dorothy Wong, “The Huayan / Kegon / Hwaōm Paintings in East Asia,” in *Reflecting Mirrors: Perspectives on Huayan Buddhism*, ed. Imre Hamar (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 338. On the nine assemblies, see also the entry “jiuhui 九會,” Digital Dictionary of Buddhism (<http://buddhism-dict.net/ddb>); and Gimello, “Ch’eng-kuan’s Meditations,” 202–203. There is a treatise by Chengguan, T. 1738, *Explanations of Verses on the Seven Locations and Nine Assemblies* 新譯華嚴經七處九會頌釋章.

88. Wong, “Huayan,” 343.

89. Ibid., 344.

90. As pointed out in Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The*

Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 172–173.

91. The matter of the existence of visual connections between the Huayan Nine Assembly paintings and Borobudur cannot be explored here. At the bottom of the Nine Assemblies is depicted a large lotus containing a compartmentalized cityscape, thought to be the *cheng* 城 (“walled city”) described in Book Five (Lotus Repository World) of the sutra. (I thank Dorothy Wong for writing me about this.) There are mentions of *cheng* at T. 279, 10.40b14 and 40c08 (Cleary, *Entry into the Inconceivable*, 208, “Lotuses of jewels form castles”). In the surrounding border are roundels with symbols which, to the best of my knowledge, have not been explicated. In regard to Borobudur, mention should also be made of passages in Book Four, descriptions of Pure Lands that are “covered with webs of jewel lights” or round, square, triangular, and octagonal. (Cleary, *Entry into the Inconceivable*, 187, 189; T. 279, 10.36a31.)

92. De Casparis, “Dual Nature,” 67 (his earlier views, which he mentions, might be the most relevant).

93. Robert W. Hefner, *Hindu Javanese: Tengger Tradition and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 163, 171.

94. Giebel, “The *Chin-kang-ting ching*,” 200. For a discussion of the term “yoga,” see Charles D. Orzech, “The ‘Great Teaching of Yoga,’ the Chinese Appropriation of the Tantras, and the Question of Esoteric Buddhism,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 34 (2006): 29–78, esp. 47–48.

95. Ronald M. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), see the index. Jacob Dalton, “The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Buddhist Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32 (2004): 5n7, writes, “The *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga Tantra* appears numerous times throughout the Tibetan Dunhuang materials. This work seems to have been of considerable importance in the history of early tantra. . . . Unfortunately, the title refers to a complicated series of texts in several editions and has yet to be examined in any detail.”

96. Dalton, “Development,” 25n68, “late ninth or early tenth century,” referring to Davidson; Geoffrey Samuel, *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra* (Cambridge: University Press, 2008), 285, “perhaps dating from the late ninth century in its present form.” For the art-historical evidence, see Rob Linrothe, *Ruthless Compassion: Wrathful Deities in Early Indo-Tibetan Esoteric Buddhist Art* (London: Serindia, 1999).

97. David Gordon White, *Kiss of the Yoginī* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 224. The phonemes in the *kuṇḍalinī* system may be found, among other places, in P. H. Pott, *Yoga and Yantra* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), table 1. The evidence of the *Samvarodaya-tantra*, briefly described in

Woodward, "Esoteric Buddhism," 343, is also relevant. See also David Gordon White, "Yoga in Early Hindu Tantra," in *Yoga: The Indian Tradition*, ed. Ian Whicher and David Carpenter (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 143–161.

98. Samuel, *Origins*, 285.

99. As for other elements in *kuṇḍalinī* yoga, the goddess Kuṇḍalinī herself no doubt has connections with an earth goddess: see Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body: The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 116. As for the side channels, connections with temple door jambs and river goddesses play a role: see Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., "The Lakṣmana Temple, Khajuraho, and its Meanings," *Ars Orientalis* 19 (1990): 27–48.

100. Lopez, *Elaborations on Emptiness* (see note 9 above), 12–13.